



ISRAEL EDITION
VOL 7 • NO 3
TISHA B'AV 5784

המזרחי HAMIZRACHI

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Finding Comfort

Pictured: Kfir Zar, a soldier injured in Gaza, returning home after 5 months in hospital on a ventilator. On Erev Pesach, he received a lung transplant from Dor Zimmel, a 27-year-old soldier killed on the northern border.

See page 13 for his story.

Dedicated to the full and speedy recovery of the thousands of wounded soldiers and civilians since Simchat Torah, October 7th.



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

HAMIZRACHI

PUBLISHED BY WORLD MIZRACHI IN JERUSALEM

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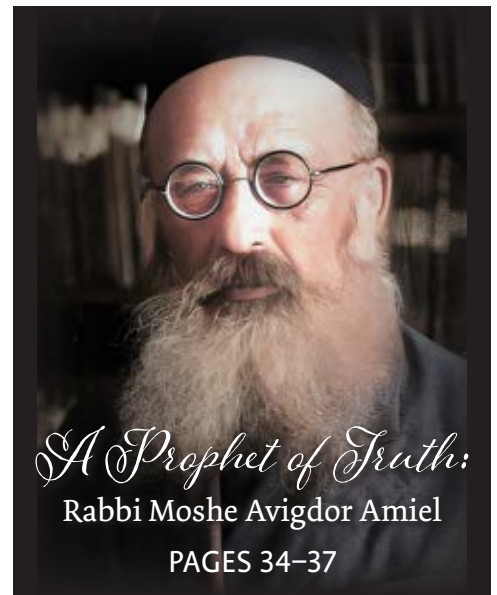


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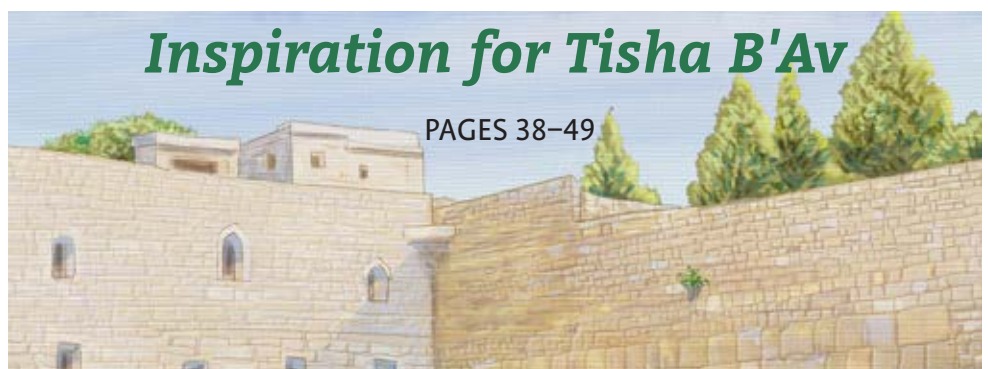


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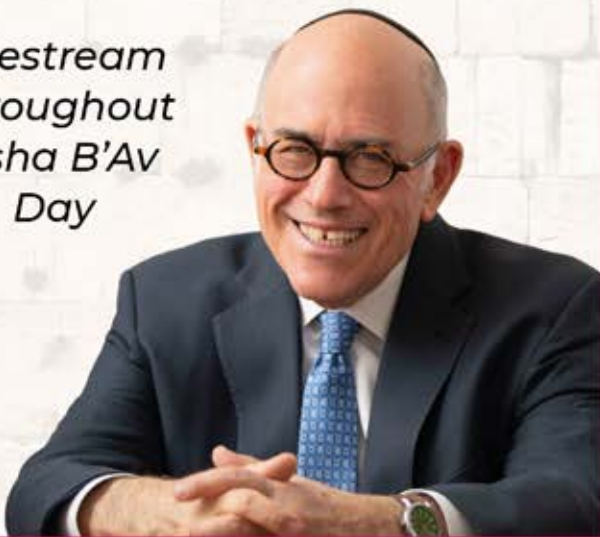
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Comfort Amongst the Mourners for Zion and Jerusalem

Rabbi Doron Perez

How is it possible to continue living any semblance of normal life when someone so dear to us has been torn out of our lives? Life can never be the same. What should be our happiest occasions at *semachot* and family gatherings contain some of the most painful moments – the absence of our beloved’s presence is so deeply and painfully felt.

Over and above the pain of rupture and brokenness is often a feeling of intense loneliness. Even with many people around us, we are bereft of someone we dearly love and yearn for. A deep sense of solitude and sadness is often unavoidable. It is part and parcel of sorrow and grief.

What can we possibly say or do to offer comfort or consolation to a grieving mourner in their brokenhearted and lonely state?

The meaning of comfort

I believe the only way to understand what may give comfort is to analyze the Hebrew word for comfort in the Torah – נחם. Herein lies the key to understanding the transformative power of נחמה, of comfort.

The Hebrew word נחם first appears in the very first *parsha* in the Torah – Bereishit. At the end of the *parsha*, before the onset of the flood, we find the word נחמה in an unusual context: “And Hashem regretted (וַיִּנְחַם) that He had made man on the earth... (Bereishit 6:6). What is the connection between regret and comfort which seem to have nothing to do with each other?

Rashi unlocks the mystery by explaining what the word נחם means whenever it appears in Tanach: “And He regretted: G-d’s thinking (so to speak) was altered... So too, any time the word נחם appears in Tanach it means changing one’s mind...” (Rashi, Bereishit 6:6).

Regret is part of a broader pattern at the heart of נחום, comfort – of shifting a

mindset and altering one’s thinking. Initially, this surprised me. How are comfort and mind-shifting related? After contemplation, I realized that this is exactly what happened to me.

It was Monday, October 9th, two days after that fateful day, and I felt paralyzed from shock. One of our sons, Yonatan, was shot in the thigh and injured, and the other, Daniel, was missing. I was in a dark hole and didn’t know how to lift my head out of it. The turning point for me, which shifted my perspective, came in the form of a short video recorded on that Monday morning by Rabbi Shlomo Weitzen, the Rav of Psagot, whose married son Amichai had been killed on October 7th. Along with other religious families, his son had moved with his family a number of years ago to the secular *kibbutz* of Kerem Shalom on the Gaza border, creating a harmonious small community of both religious and secular Jews. On that fateful day, Amichai fought for six hours against scores of terrorists as part of the *kibbutz*’s civil defense team, until they were overrun and killed. They saved hundreds of lives. Rabbi Weitzen mustered what seemed to me to be superhuman strength. Looking into the camera, he said that although he was in great pain, he knew that his son had saved many lives. This, he said, amounts to thousands of Jewish lives for generations to come. Even saving one life is saving an entire world. This is what his son had done on the last day of his life! From this, he drew strength.

This blew my mind – how could a father in so much pain say this so soon after his son’s tragic passing? It taught me that perhaps I could begin to step out of my black hole and shift my perspective. Perhaps I could find some light in the darkness

Shifting the mourners’ mindset

When we are broken and in a dark place of pain, there seems to be no way out.

Comforting a mourner is a noble act of attempting to shift the darkness with a perspective of light. But how can this be done? Surely there is nothing that we can say to offer comfort, especially in the early stages?

Indeed, according to our Sages, there is nothing we can say. There are no words. Nothing can be expressed during the *shiva* that can offer comfort after such a tragic loss. Often, the more we say, the more we detract. The most appropriate response, therefore, is silence. It is for this reason that we are prohibited according to Jewish law to say anything – we should not speak unless spoken to by the mourner (*Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh Deah 376:1*). But there is certainly something we can do. We can show up and be present with the mourner in their time of grief.

Silence is a profound language of the human heart. Being silent in someone’s presence is not a passive activity but rather a proactive undertaking requiring great presence of mind – to ‘be’ with another person. What our Sages term “נושא געויל” – to aim to bear a small measure of the enormous burden of the tragic loss. Truly being with someone requires deep reservoirs of empathy – the ability to be fully present with an open and compassionate heart. A mourner is in such pain of brokenness and aloneness that being with them brings a measure of comfort. I have come to be with you, to share some of your enormous pain. You are not only broken and forlorn – we care about you and love you and the one who has passed. Our presence alone can be a נחמה and shift some pain and perhaps ever so slightly, shift the mourner’s mindset.

The blessing of comfort

Although there is nothing we can say to offer comfort, our Sages have formulated a remarkable blessing of comfort to wish and bestow upon the mourner.



The unusual blessing of comfort we are all familiar with is: “הַמְקוֹם יְנַחֵם אֶתְכֶם, בְּתוֹךְ שָׂרָר אֲבִלִי צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם, May *HaMakom* (Hashem, or literally, ‘the Place’) comfort you amongst the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem.” This blessing contains layers of profound depth of potential comfort with the ability to shift a mourner’s mindset.

1. Comfort can only come from Above

The only source of possible human comfort is from Above. Nothing on earth can compensate for our loss – comfort can only come from Heaven. It is for this reason that only G-d can comfort and therefore the opening of the blessing – “May Hashem comfort you.”

The Sefat Emet says that this is the reason we refer to G-d as “בְּעַל הַיְשׁוּעוֹת וּבְעַל הַנְּחֻמוֹת, the G-d of salvation and of comfort” (*Retzei, Shabbat bentching*). Only Hashem can offer comfort and only He can transform pain and sorrow somehow for the good (Sefat Emet, *Vayeitzei*, 1898). As the blessing of the Sephardic tradition states, “מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם תְּנַחֵמָה, May you be comforted from Heaven.”

Only G-d can provide consolation because in His world we are never alone. We are always in His presence – bringing us to the second insight into the dynamics of consolation.

2. HaMakom – in G-d’s world we are never alone

If we live in our world, we feel alone and detached. If we live in His world, we are never alone. Never.

“Even when I walk in the valley of death, I will not fear evil, because You are with me” (Tehillim 23:4).

This explains the rare and unusual word used for G-d in the blessing of comfort – הַמְקוֹם, the Place.

Our Sages remarkably say: “ה’ מְקוֹמוֹ שָׁלֵם, עוֹלָם, וְאֵין הָעוֹלָם מְקוֹמוֹ, G-d is the place of the world and the world is not His place” (*Bereishit Rabbah*, 68:9).

The entire realm of place is G-d’s – His presence is truly everywhere. The Zohar further states “there is no place that is void of His presence” (*Tikunei Hazohar* 122:2). He is called “The Place” because He is everywhere all the time. Even in the shadow of death, the depths of darkness, and in a painful, broken heart. As the Kotzker Rebbe famously said, “Where is G-d? Wherever we let Him in.”

3. The klal ‘amongst the other mourners’

Why do we tell a mourner that they are “amongst the other mourners of Zion and Jerusalem”? What does their personal loss have to do with the loss of the *Beit HaMikdash*?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe says that just as all Jews are mourning for the *Beit HaMikdash* in Jerusalem, so too are the Jewish people together with the individual mourner. We have family, and we are part of a larger family of mourners. We are part of an entire people who are together in this. We are not alone.

One of the foundational principles of Judaism is the indivisible link between the individual and the collective. It is for this reason that even individual Jewish prayers are articulated in the plural. The most intensely private and personal prayer, the silent prayer, is a perfect example. Although entirely personal and uttered in silence so that only the penitent should hear it, it is written in the plural throughout. Our personal story is always linked to the larger story of the Jewish people.

4. Zion and Jerusalem – hope and meaning

Our larger story is one of eternal hope – the knowledge that mourning is temporary no matter how long it takes. There is a happy ending. Jerusalem and the Temple will be rebuilt. This is what is symbolized by Zion and Jerusalem.

Incredibly, we sit collectively on Tisha B’Av mourning for the Temple in exactly the

same way an individual sits for a personal loss – literally sitting *shiva*.

Yet Tisha B’Av is also a great day of hope and comfort. We don’t say the sad *Tachanun* prayer, as if this sad day is somehow a happy one. In the afternoon, we start rising from our collective *shiva* – we sit on regular chairs and say the *Nachem* prayer of comfort. As Rav Soloveitchik explains: “The entire character of Tisha B’Av changes between morning and afternoon... Tisha B’Av is a day of limitless sadness and despair and limitless hope and faith. At Mincha, the tragedy is intensified (the burning of the Temple), and at Mincha, *nechama* commences...” (The L-rd is Righteous in All His Ways, 45).

Jerusalem and Zion will be rebuilt – this is a prophetic certainty. Mourning is temporary. So too is our personal mourning. The soul lives forever and we will all eventually be united with our loved ones. The revival of the dead is mentioned every day in our silent prayer and is one of our core principles of faith. We will all eventually be together – no matter how long it takes.



Rabbi Doron Perez
is the Executive Chairman
of World Mizrahi.



MIZRACHI

Bringing Inspiration from Israel

USA



World Mizrachi's Executive Chairman Rabbi Doron Perez was presented with the Torat Tziyon Award at the Yeshiva University RIETS - Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary Chag HaSemicha.

At the event, Rabbi Perez gave a keynote speech, speaking about the role of YU today, how it is more critical than ever – in particular in the areas of Torat Emet, to ensure that the truth is spread, and of Torat Tziyon, spreading the light of the Land and State of Israel.

(Photos: Yeshiva University)



World Mizrachi's Executive Chairman Rabbi Doron Perez and Acting CEO Rabbi Danny Mirvis visited the New York/New Jersey area giving many inspirational keynote speeches and Divrei Torah, and met with some of Mizrachi's partner organizations. They were accompanied by Gael Grunewald and Roi Abecassis, Mizrachi's representatives in the World Zionist Organization.

FRANCE



Mizrachi France held a special Yom Yerushalayim Gala event in Paris. The event featured the leadership of World Mizrahi and its representatives in the World Zionist Organization: Rabbi Doron Perez, Gael Grunewald and Roi Abecassis. Held on the banks of the River Seine, also in attendance were leading rabbinic, communal and Zionist leadership in France, and was hosted by Mizrachi France President Isaac Barchichat.

During the course of their visit, Rabbi Perez, Gael and Roi visited many schools and communal institutions. (Photos: Alain Azria)

SPAIN



This year, the Straus-Amiel annual conference for European Shlichim and Rabbinic leaders was hosted by the Jewish community of Barcelona, Spain. The immersive and enriching three-day program featured presentations by World Mizrahi's Rabbi Yechiel Wasserman, Rabbi Danny Mirvis and Roi Abecassis, and a pre-recorded interview with Rabbi Doron Perez.



The
Simchat Torah
PROJECT

A PROJECT OF  MIZRACHI

Dancing Through Tears

Simchat Torah is a day of joy, festivity, and *hakafot* – we dance and celebrate. But Simchat Torah 5785 will also mark the first *yahrzeit* of the victims of October 7th. How do we, the Jewish people, respond? How do we commemorate this poignant and difficult anniversary?

“There is a time for everything under the Heavens... a time to mourn and a time to dance.” This Simchat Torah, with tears in our eyes, we will dance.



Join the Simchat Torah Project as 1,600 communities around the world join to dance with Sifrei Torah bearing the name of one of the victims. On Simchat Torah, one Sefer Torah will be adorned with a new *me'il* (Torah cover), designed to mark the first *yahrzeit* of October 7th.

Communities from Mexico City to Melbourne, London to LA, Baltimore to Buenos Aires will dance with these Torah scrolls connecting tens of thousands through this project.

- 🌸 Register your community on the website to join the project.
- 🌸 The team will contact you to confirm details about the *me'il*, the events in Israel and help with fundraising if needed. The basic cost is just \$1,800, which covers the *me'il* as well as an invitation to Israel for the launch (excluding flights and accommodation).
- 🌸 A unique *me'il* will be made for your community, bearing the name of one of the *kedoshim*.
- 🌸 The launch will be on September 2–3 in Israel where you will be receiving your *me'il*. There will be a powerful ceremony, broadcast worldwide, from the Kotel where the *me'ilim* will be on display.
- 🌸 Your community will also receive materials about the person you are remembering for display on Simchat Torah.

More details about the project, including FAQ and registration form, can be found at:

www.TheSimchatTorahProject.org

The Eyes of Comfort

An Introduction by Rabbi Aron White

In the winter of 2002, the community of Otniel was searching for comfort. On a Friday night in the midst of the Second Intifada, two terrorists from Palestinian Islamic Jihad broke into the Otniel Hesder Yeshiva and murdered four students. The terrorists had planned to get into the dining room packed with 100 students enjoying their Shabbat meal, but the four students in the kitchen locked the kitchen doors, sacrificing their own lives to save the lives of many. Yehuda Bamberger, Gavriel Hoter, Zvika Ziman, and Noam After were killed *al kiddush Hashem*, and the community of Otniel was devastated.

Rabbi Beni Kalmanson, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Yeshivat Otniel, turned in his *hesped* to the ultimate comforter in Jewish tradition, Rabbi Akiva. The final passage of *Makkot* describes how when the Sages were walking together and saw the ruins of the Second Temple, while they cried, Rabbi Akiva laughed. “Just as the prophecies of destruction have come true, so too the prophecies of redemption will come true,” he told the surprised rabbis. “*Akiva nichamtanu, Akiva nichamtanu*, Akiva you have comforted us, Akiva you have comforted us,” the rabbis replied. What was it, asked Rabbi Kalmanson, that allowed Rabbi Akiva to maintain this positive attitude? How could he see the ruins of the Temple and still be able to laugh as he saw a positive future? What allowed him to survey destruction but envision redemption?

Rabbi Kalmanson quoted another *Gemara* that sheds light on the spiritual uniqueness of Rabbi Akiva. The Talmud describes how four Sages entered the “*Pardes*,” the realm of spiritual speculation and mysticism, and while three Sages were “harmed,” Rabbi Akiva emerged unscathed. Homiletically, the Talmud is teaching that Rabbi Akiva was able to delve into the spiritual depths of the Torah to a different level than other Sages. But for Rav Kalmanson, this became a defining feature of Rabbi Akiva’s personality. The depths of Torah were open to him, as he recognized that there was deeper meaning than the plain *pshat*, the plain meaning of words. And what is true for Torah is true in life; when he witnessed tragedy, he was not bound only by what he saw in front of him but was able to perceive and understand

even that which is not immediately seen. “That which is visible is sometimes fleeting, and partial, and not reflective of the fuller, deeper truth... To understand things truly, one needs the eyes of the *Pardes* and the ability to see beyond that which is visible.” This was the uniqueness of Rabbi Akiva, who could perceive reality beyond what was physically visible. And in moments of tragedy, this ability made him uniquely able to comfort.

Nationally, we have experienced tremendous loss this year, and we are seeking comfort. On a personal level, Rabbi Beni Kalmanson himself experienced loss when his son Elchanan *hy”d* heroically gave his life in Be’eri on Simchat Torah, having driven from Otniel to save people from their safe rooms (“Gibor Yisrael: The Heroic Story of Elchanan Kalmanson”, *HaMizrachi* Chanukah 5784, Vol. 6, No. 6). And if we merely look at what meets the eye, there has been much that is depressing. An ongoing war, an ongoing hostage crisis, tens of thousands of Israelis displaced from their homes, too many young people being killed for their homeland, and a returning political divide. If we only look at what we see in the news, we can fall into depression. We too need the eyes of Rabbi Akiva, to not be bound only by what meets the eye, but to be able to see and envision something beyond. “שְׂמֵחֵנוּ כִּימוֹת עֲנִיתֵנוּ” (Tehillim 90:15). Bring us joys like the days of our suffering”

May we too see the prophecies of redemption fulfilled and experience days, months, and years of joy after this difficult chapter.



Rabbi Aron White
is the Managing Editor of HaMizrachi magazine.

Finding Nechama

The Journey of Family Young

On October 7th, Nathanel Young was killed by Hamas, who overtook the Yiftach base where he was serving. Nathanel, a recent immigrant from the UK, was one of the first victims of October 7th to be buried. Since then, much has happened for the Young family: Nathanel's parents, Chantal and Nicky, have made Aliyah, and the family has welcomed four new grandchildren.

Rabbi Aron White spoke with Chantal, Nathanel's mother, and Elliot, Nathanel's brother, to hear their story of pain, loss, and the search for comfort.

Thank you for sharing your story with HaMizrachi readers. Chantal, can you tell us about your family and Nathanel's upbringing?

Chantal: I am from Paris, and in 1984 I married my husband Nicky who is from England. We raised our family in London, and were blessed to have 5 children. We wanted to make *Aliyah*, but it never quite worked out; the children were too young, then the children were too old. But then in the end, 4 out of 5 of our children made *Aliyah* before us. Nathanel is our youngest, and so when he made *Aliyah* we became empty nesters, and we started the process for making *Aliyah* ourselves.

When and why did Nathanel decide to move to Israel and serve in the IDF?

Elliot: I remember when he was 10 or 11, he already said "I am going to be in the IDF." By that time, I had made *Aliyah*, and any time something happened in the news, he called to check that we are OK. He felt very connected to Israel, to making sure people in Israel are safe. He always wanted to serve. Even when he did join the army, he spent much of his free time with his siblings and nieces and nephews around Israel.

Chantal: During COVID, he began the process of trying to join the army as a *chutznik*, first through *Garin Tzabar*, and then through *Machal*. He was told on both



of these programs that his profile wasn't high enough and the army wasn't for him, but he was determined. He worked really hard – he decided to make *Aliyah*, as it would make the process of enlisting more likely, and he also trained incredibly hard, doing a combat fitness program for 6 weeks, crawling up sand dunes early in the morning and other intense training. Eventually he enlisted in August 2022, and he joined Golani's Brigade 13. He did almost a year of training, and at his *Tekes Hashba'a* in July 2023, received the honor of being given his commander's beret.

I had been nervous about him joining the army, but I always wanted to support my children's decisions. When he came to London for a break in his army service, he was just radiating happiness – it was like he had struck gold, he felt so fulfilled. There is no better feeling as a parent than to see your child content, and he was just living his dream and so proud of himself, it was marvelous.

His dream was ultimately cut short, but he died doing exactly what he wanted to do, and not many people can say that.

What did you know and hear on October 7th?

Chantal: Nicky and I were in France for *Yom Tov*, at the seaside town of Deauville with some of my family. It was a beautiful day, and I went for a lovely walk on the beach with my sister, and when I came back Nicky had a long face. "News is going round that there's a bad situation in Israel." I started to see that my phone was pinging with tons of messages – I opened my phone, and there were messages that Nathanel was injured. Elliot said he was going to Barzilai Hospital in Ashkelon to see if he could find Nathanel. Elliot told me to keep my phone on me – I had never gone to *shul* on Simchat Torah before with my phone.

Elliot: I drove to Ashkelon to the hospital – the rockets were still being fired, and only later would I learn that Barzilai Hospital was hit while I was there. I was looking for Nathanel for two-and-a-half hours, but couldn't find him in the hospital. Just after midnight, I learned from someone that he had been identified as killed. I was going to call my parents, but the army said I had to wait – by official army protocol, my sister Gaby was listed as Nathanel's next of kin in the country, and there had to be an official announcement given to the next of kin. They said this would only be possible the next day, due to the general chaos in the country. I said there is no way I can withhold this information from my parents for that long, and they managed to dispatch a team to Gaby's house shortly after. Then, Gaby and I called our parents. It was the most difficult phone call I have ever made, to inform them that Nathanel had fallen.

Chantal: We were in absolute shock, I think Nicky and I just sat there for about an hour, totally unable to move. Elliot, Gaby and Daniel were in Israel, and they made the arrangements with the army for the funeral. Nicky and I had a torturous drive back to London, where we had to get our home ready for *shiva*, and then fly to Israel for the *levaya*. We arrived in Israel, not having slept, for Nathanel's funeral on Monday, October 9th.

When you are in this state you are barely on this planet, you aren't able to think straight, but the army and people who took care of us were incredible. We got to Har Herzl, and I saw a small group of friends and family, but it was only as we got into the mountain that we saw how many thousands of people were there. Even after the funeral, people were showing me videos and only then I realized how many people were there.

During Gaby's speech at the funeral, the sirens sounded, with rockets being fired at Yerushalayim. I was worried, as three of my daughters and daughters-in-law were pregnant and I was



worried about the shock. Magen David Adom on the site took very good care of them, making sure they were OK after we got up.

As we were leaving the funeral, some friends of Nathanel came up to me. Nathanel had been on a trip to Amsterdam with them, and had bought me some magnets with Van Gogh pictures on them for me, as I like Van Gogh. He had never got to give them to me, but his friends gave me the gift from Nathanel as we were leaving Har Herzl.

Nathanel was one of the first soldiers to be buried, and when you were sitting shiva it was still during the earliest days of the war. What was the shiva like?

Chantal: The *shiva* was full with so many people, with friends, family, people we hadn't seen for decades, and people we didn't know who just wanted to be there for us. There were 18-year-old seminary girls who came just to sit with us. There was a *chassid* from Meah Shearim who didn't speak any English, who showed me a message he had written using Google Translate, saying that if we needed anything we could call him.

Elliot: Firstly, even the fact that we were informed of his death the night after October 7th was itself a *nechama* – for many families, they didn't get the news until days, weeks or even months later.

On the first day of the *shiva*, a woman walked in shaking, telling us that she had just come from a *brit milah* of a child who had been named after Nathanel. The parents didn't even know us – they had just heard the story, and felt very connected and named their son after Nathanel. A few weeks later we got to meet the family in a very emotional meeting.

There also was hardly a local business that didn't provide us with something. From the local coffee shop to bakeries, every

business sent us something, just as a way of showing us that they were there for us.

Since then, there are still many times in the weeks and months since that people who I don't even know will come over to me and offer a comforting word, or just say they are thinking about us.

It's interesting you mention that, because it's a topic a lot of people wonder about. It is not uncommon for people to bump into someone who has lost a family member in this war, and they don't know the person but recognize them from the news or online. People are often unsure what to do - "What do I say? Should I say anything?" What do you think about that?

Elliot: It is always appreciated when you say something comforting, and tell a bereaved family member that you are thinking about them. Sometimes I am in the mood for a conversation, to share more, and sometimes I am not, and then appreciate when the person gives me my space. But offering a comforting word or thought is always meaningful.

It's also important to remember that there really isn't a formula for what to say. I have been to *shiva* houses since October 7th, to comfort other families who have lost relatives, and I still don't know what to say. In the end, it's always the thought that counts a lot more than what you say.

Only a few weeks after Nathanel was killed, you and Nicky made Aliyah. How did it feel coming to live in Israel after the loss you had experienced?

Chantal: *Aliyah* was the best decision we ever made, and we are so happy here - I actually just passed my *ulpan* exam today! It was our dream, and Nathanel's dream, that we should live here, and we are happy to live that dream even if now we can't live it with Nathanel. I also spend a lot of time with Nathanel's friends

- I actually need them, and they need me. You don't have to be a family member to be deeply affected by a loss like this. Spending time together gives a lot to me and to them.

During the *shiva*, a friend also offered us to live in their holiday home when we made *Aliyah*, so we lived there for a few months, which helped a lot. Now we have found a place in Ir Yamim in south Netanya. There is just something indescribable in the feeling of home here in Israel - even though we just moved here, it feels like home in such a deep way.

And in the months after, you have been blessed that your family has grown.

Chantal: Yes, in the months since Nathanel was killed we have been blessed with four wonderful new grandchildren, who bring us so much joy! You can't ask for something better than that - there are three new girls and one new boy. At the *brit milah*, when they named him Natan after Nathanel, it was very emotional but so meaningful.

Elliot: Our daughter was born a few months after Simchat Torah and we named her Nili Nechama. Nili is an acronym for "*Netzach Yisrael Lo Yeshaker*, The Eternal One of Israel does not betray," and I felt it really represented Nathanel and his commitment to the Jewish people. Nechama was for the comfort that this new addition to our family brings. After the *shiva*, I really felt that even just going to the park with my kids was the most amazing comfort.

We don't understand Hashem's way, but He made sure we had these children coming to give us this incredible joy amongst all the sadness. ■



Cover Story

Yossi Zar, the father of injured soldier Kfir, sent the following message to HaMizrachi telling the story of Kfir's injury and recovery.



Kfir Zar is 25 years old, married to Shirel, and father to three-year-old Noam. He is a student at the Sderot Yeshiva, and Shirel is a special education teacher in the Ulpana in Sderot. They were in Sderot on Simchat Torah, and evacuated to a hotel in Yerushalayim. Kfir had just recently finished his mandatory service in the tanks corps, where he had served as a tank commander. He didn't receive an official call-up, but he volunteered to serve, and was taken as a loader for a tank.

He fought for a month in Gaza, and on December 11th, his tank was hit by an anti-tank missile, and he was rushed by helicopter to Soroka Hospital in Be'er Sheva. The main damage was to Kfir's lungs, as he had inhaled smoke and other poisonous substances, and he also had severe burns to both legs and his left hand. He was placed on a ventilator and an induced coma, and was admitted to the ICU at Soroka.

After two weeks, an infection in his legs began to worsen, and became life threatening. He was transferred to Assaf HaRofeh Hospital, where he received 22 treatments and skin grafts that eventually helped stabilize his condition.

For the next 4 months, Kfir remained in the induced coma and attached to the ventilator, but then the functioning of his lungs began to worsen, and after two weeks it became clear that he needed a lung transplant. Kfir was transferred to Sheba Hospital, and put on the waiting list. On Erev Pesach, a match was found – lungs were donated by Dor Zimmel, a soldier who had been killed on the northern border. The transplant to Kfir was successful, and the limbs donated by Dor saved a total of 7 lives.

After 5 months, Kfir was now able to leave intensive care, able to breathe by himself with healthy lungs.

He spends most of his week in the rehabilitation wing of Sheba Hospital, learning to walk and breathe again.

Thank you, and *besorot tovo*t to Am Yisrael,
Kfir and his family.



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FROM NOVA TO YERUSHALAYIM

Rabbi Aron White

No place saw more destruction and death on October 7th than the Nova festival, where hundreds of people were murdered by Hamas. 9 months later, 150 survivors of the massacre gathered in Yerushalayim for a unique Shabbaton to unite and find healing. Rabbi Aron White joined for part of the Shabbat program.



On the morning of Simchat Torah, there were about 4,000 partiers at Re'im participating in the Nova festival. That day, 374 partiers and policemen were killed at the Nova by Hamas. Since then, survivors have attended various retreats and received other forms of therapeutic treatment – but none quite like a *Shabbaton* recently held in Yerushalayim for 150 of the survivors.

The *Shabbaton* was organized by Keshet Yehudi, an organization that works to bring unity between the *Charedi* community and wider Israeli society. In peacetime, the organization focuses on dialogue between *Charedi* and *Chiloni* students, but since the war it has shifted to organizing other events. From a *tefillah* evening in the first month of the war for 2,000 *Charedi* women to a *Shabbaton* for families of Israeli hostages, Keshet Yehudi, led by Mrs. Tzili Schneider, has brought inspiration to those most directly affected by the war.



The *Shabbaton* was a truly remarkable experience – including *tefillot* at the *Kotel*, a moving memorial ceremony, music led by Yonatan Razel and inspiration from Shuli Rand. The *Shabbaton* made a deep impression on the participants and also shed light on Israeli society as a whole.

Remembrance

The slaughter at the Nova festival is the single worst terrorist attack in Israel's history. On the night of October 6th, thousands of people gathered near Re'im, 5 kilometers from the Gaza border. The festival had been approved by the army only a few days before – there were senior IDF figures who thought it was too dangerous to have the event so close to Gaza. For a night, it was like a new town was set up in the area, much larger than any of the nearby *kibbutzim*, and with much less protection.



Approximately 4,000 partiers attended the Nova festival. At 6:29 am, the first rockets were fired from Gaza, and the police shut down the party. By 7:00, the first Hamas terrorists arrived at the festival and on the surrounding roads, shooting at those heading out of the area. 374 civilians and policemen were murdered at the Nova festival, and 44 more were kidnapped by Hamas. Some hostages, such as Mia Shem, were freed in November in a hostage deal. Others, like Noa Argamani, were freed in rescue operations of the IDF. Others, such as Hersh Goldberg-Polin, remain in captivity at the time of writing.



Since October, there have been many initiatives to support the survivors of the attack. In the initial days, therapeutic areas were set up for people to be able to walk in and receive various forms of emotional and psychological support. Various retreats, both in Israel and abroad, have been organized for the survivors. However, there is no official organization representing those who were at the Nova as there is for the families of hostages or for soldiers. The government provided support in the first few months, but this support has been reduced as time passed. Most of the programs that support Nova survivors are private initiatives, spread by word of mouth, like this *Shabbaton* in Yerushalayim.

The weekend started emotionally, with a memorial ceremony and tears of remembrance. Every one of the 150 Nova attendees on the *Shabbaton* knew people who were murdered that day, as well as people who are still held hostage. The program began with words of remembrance and then everyone lit a *ner neshama*, a memorial candle, to begin the proceedings. A number of people brought with them photos of those who had been killed. Some shared stories of heroism, such as the story of Eliakim Libman, who helped to save many lives on October 7th before he himself was killed. His death was only confirmed in May, 210 days after the attack. Often on a *Shabbaton*, it takes a few hours, or until *seudah shlishit* for it to reach an emotional peak. But this was no normal *Shabbaton*. Tears were flowing within 10 minutes of the start of the program.

The uniqueness of the *Shabbaton* was also felt within the first few minutes. Keshet Yehudi is a *Charedi* organization, and so several volunteers at the *Shabbaton* were dressed as mainstream *Charedim* (albeit of the more open-minded variety). As the singing of *Acheinu* and *Shir LaMa'alot* began, women with tattoos stood shoulder-to-shoulder singing with women wearing *sheitels*. The week of the *Shabbaton* was the very week the Supreme Court ruled that *yeshivot* whose students did not serve in the army would not be eligible for government funding. Yet the images in the media of *Charedim* protesting the decision were a far cry from the images I saw at the David Citadel on this *Shabbaton*.

Alongside the Nova attendees, the family of Agam Berger, one of the 5 female soldiers held hostage by Hamas, joined for the Shabbat. Agam's mother Meirav has been a very vocal activist in Israel and around the world, and Agam's father Shlomi spoke to the group before Shabbat. He said it was important for his family to join the group, to give them strength.



The group was also addressed by Shmuel Rieder from Monsey, who had sponsored the entire Shabbat, as well as Rabbi YY Jacobson. Both addressed the spiritual underpinnings of the event. "We are one family, and we share one soul, and connection through Hashem," said Shmuel Rieder. "On a spiritual level, we share this essential unity that is inseparable," said Rabbi Jacobson.

Stories everywhere

After the memorial ceremony, the participants got ready for Shabbat, before a pre-Shabbat concert with Yonatan Razel. As the participants continued to arrive before Shabbat, one could see the full range of people who had been at the Nova. One woman, Eilat, was attending the *Shabbaton* with her 4 children. She had gone to the party with her husband Shai, and though she

survived, he had been killed. Eilat hid in a tree for hours, repeatedly saying *Shema* as bullets flew around her. Her son, Gefen, 16, said *kaddish* for his father throughout Shabbat. Another attendee brought her two-month-old baby with her, who had been in utero during the attack.

As we walked to the *Kotel*, survivors and participants shared stories. “A policeman told us to run towards the sun, as that way is east, away from Gaza,” one young man told me. “We tried to drive away, but Hamas terrorists were killing people on the road. We started to hear the gunshots getting closer, hearing the windows of nearby cars shattering. We got out of the car and ran for hours, until we got to Patish (about 12 kilometers from Re’im).” The serenity of the Mamilla mall, bathed in the golden glow of the setting sun, stood in stark contrast to the stories of horror that were bubbling up for the participants as they spoke with each other. “A whole group of people crept out just before us, so Hamas didn’t come to check for more people,” said one woman. “I am just glad my parents didn’t know I was there,” said another young man, “so the first they heard from me was when I called from my friend’s house in Be’er Sheva.”

When the music started

As befitting a *Shabbaton* for those who had been at the Nova festival, music played a central role in the *Shabbaton*. Yonatan Razel ran a pre-Shabbat *kumzitz*, with the sounds of *Am Yisrael Chai* resounding through the hotel. As we walked to the *Kotel*, the group started singing the *Chassidic* style favorite, *Machshavot Tovot, Diburim Tovim*. At the Shabbat meal, from *Shalom Aleichem* to *Shabechi Yerushalayim*, there was singing throughout. Yonatan Razel framed the singing in a beautiful way at the beginning of Shabbat. “When music met electricity, it conquered the world. We can now bring music to tens of thousands of people at a time, to our cars, to our phones – everywhere. Music can move, it can take us to new places. And on this Shabbat, we are going to use music to heal and comfort.” At the Shabbat *seuda*, we danced together singing “*Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Anachnu Ohavim Otcha*,” and I couldn’t stop thinking about the popular refrain of the Nova survivors – “We will dance again.”

After the Shabbat meal, there was what I can only describe as the most unique *tisch* I have ever attended, led by Shuli Rand and Tzufit Grant, a unique husband and wife duo. Shuli Rand is a movie director, actor and singer who was *chozer biTeshuva* through Breslov *Chassidut*. Tzufit Grant, also an actress and TV personality, describes herself as *shomeret Shabbat* and has moved towards a religiously observant lifestyle. They sat at the head of the dais, offering words of perspective and inspiration, to the 200 people in the room.

“Rav Nachman would tell his students that following a crisis, we can choose to go to our corners and get lost in our feelings of guilt and victimhood, or we can join together, and choose to get through it together. That is what you are all doing by being here on this Shabbat,” Shuli said. If the origin of a *tisch* was when those broken by life came to seek spiritual guidance and support, then this was the truest form of that.

Shuli went on to offer perspective based on the concept of *bechira*. “We do not choose, and we do not understand why tragedies like this happen. But we do have a choice about how we will respond, how we will heal, and what light we look to bring to the world after.” After his words, we began singing *Ayeka* – a deeply personal song, written by Shuli as an open discussion with Hashem about searching for Him in this world. Tzufit Grant then shared some of her journey, and the transformative impact of Shabbat in her life.

Sitting at a *tisch*, hearing Breslov Torah from Israeli TV personalities, singing one of their deeply spiritual songs together with partiers who had been at the Nova, was an “only in Israel” moment I will never forget.

Takeaways

The most important feature of the Shabbat was the comfort that it brought to the Nova survivors. “I like events like this, just being together with other people who went through the same thing,” said Shimon, who lives in Yerushalayim and works as a security guard. “Often, people don’t really know how to treat me, and sometimes go too far, wrapping me in cotton wool. I want to be normal and move on, and just being around other people who get it is comforting.” For others, the religious and spiritual nature of the Shabbat was particularly meaningful. “Coming to Yerushalayim, going to the *Kotel* for Friday night, it fills up your soul,” said Eran from Haifa. “When you see all the thousands of Jews together there, it just makes you go ‘wow.’” Participants from previous *Keshet Yehudi Shabbatonim* in this war talked about how observing a *halachic* Shabbat itself was something meaningful and impactful. “Since the war started, I have been on my phone non-stop,” said one of the family members of a hostage, who attended a *Shabbaton* in February. “For the first time, on this Shabbat I wasn’t on my phone for 24 hours. Shabbat allowed me to be a person again.”

But there was much about the *Shabbaton* that speaks to deeper messages that apply more broadly to Israel and the Jewish people.

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch comments on the verse “*Olam chessed yibaneh*, the world is built on kindness,” that the natural world is full of interlocking, mutually interdependent relationships. Ecosystems are made up of hundreds and thousands of organisms, all of whom contribute something to the system, and receive something in return. Our world is built on kindness – everything in the system is giving something to the system.

I thought about this verse as I took in this *Shabbaton*, and how and what everyone was contributing. A family from thousands of miles away, sponsoring a Shabbat to bring comfort and inspiration to those affected by crisis. Survivors of the Nova tragedy, joining to pray for those held in captivity today. The family of a hostage, coming to give inspiration to the survivors. In this mutual web of giving, it becomes unclear who is the one giving inspiration and who is receiving it. We are caught in a system of constant giving, with everyone wanting to give something, anything. Isn’t this a microcosm of what the Jewish world has experienced for the last 10 months? From the soldiers, to the missions, to the donations, haven’t we all been in a quite remarkable ecosystem of *chessed*, with everyone looking to give something to the greater Jewish collective? War, unfortunately, has been a feature of humanity for as long as history. The outpouring of *chessed* and support from people around the country and thousands of miles away is not a feature, but an absolutely remarkable outlier.

Secondly, and more importantly, the *Shabbaton* highlighted the significant role Judaism plays in Israeli society. While religion is often viewed as a divisive issue in the public sphere, particularly regarding contentious topics like the draft of *Charedim* and the settlements in Yehuda and Shomron, Judaism is actually a unifying force. This *Shabbaton* exemplified that. Songs such as *Shalom Aleichem*, *Shir HaMa’alot*, and *Anachnu Ma’aminim* were sung effortlessly, requiring no instruction. Similarly, traditions like lighting Shabbat candles and giving a Shabbat blessing

were naturally observed. The teachings of Rav Nachman resonated deeply, feeling authentic and fitting seamlessly into the experience.

We often categorize people's Jewish engagement based on their *halachic* observance, and by these traditional standards, the attendees of the Nova festival might not be considered *halachically* observant. However, they embraced Judaism as a tradition and a source of spirituality and inspiration in a very natural way. The *Shabbaton* was not about *kiruv* (outreach), as there was no need to teach or introduce anything new. It was simply a gathering of Jews with different lifestyles, coming together to celebrate what they share. The name *Keshet Yehudi* perfectly encapsulates this deeper truth. Judaism has the power to unite us. While political issues are important and must be addressed, they do not define the entirety of what Judaism means in Israel. During this Shabbat, Jewish songs, traditions, and ideas provided a genuine sense of comfort and unity. ■



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Mizrachi and Yeshiva University Present
Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter
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Monday Evening, August 12 / ליל תשעה באב

Tisha B'Av in the Aftermath of October 7th



7:45 PM at Shivtei Yisrael (Har Sinai 17)

Maariv

Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter: Intro to Eicha
Shiur: On the Commemoration of
Jewish Tragedy

7:50 PM at KLR (Ahuza 198)

Maariv

Rabbi Doron Perez: Intro to Eicha
Shiur: Eicha – How could this
happen?

Tuesday, August 13 / תשעה באב

Full Day Kinot and Commentary Program
with Rabbi Schacter at Ohel Ari (Ravutsky 98)



8:00 Shacharit

8:45 Introduction to Kinot – The Impact of October 7: Present and Future

10:45 Break

11:00 Kinot and Commentary

13:30 Mizrachi Tisha B'Av videos
featuring Rabbi Doron Perez, Jen Airley and Michal Santhouse

14:15 Kinot and Commentary

17:00 Mincha

The program will also be broadcast live at mizrachi.org/kinotlive

The program this year is dedicated in honor of the bravery of all our soldiers, in memory of all the fallen soldiers and civilians since Simchat Torah/October 7th and to the comfort of all their families, for the speedy return of all our hostages and for the full and speedy recovery of all our soldiers.

*Sponsored by Martin and Irene Kofman, Shuli and Avi Rockoff,
The Barth, Fiedler and Ratzersdorfer families, and two anonymous donors.*



ANAVA
VINEYARDS

“This is what we are fighting for”

Fighting with one hand, planting with the other

When Nadav Jesselson returned to Anava Vineyards from his first round of Miluim in the Gaza envelope, he felt depressed. “My head was still in the combat, and I was finding it hard to focus and move on. Then, I saw some groups of volunteers who had come to Israel to show support, and it started to give me perspective. At Anava vineyards, we are building the land, we are connecting Jews from around the world to the land – this is what we are fighting for!”

Adam Montefiore, the Israeli wine expert who consults for Anava in their unique aim of enabling people to own their own Israeli vineyard, also sees Anava’s work as connected to Israel’s situation. “Fighting for our country and planting in our country are two sides of the same coin,” he says. “We are not fighting just for some feeling of victory, but for the ability to live in this land and develop it. Anava allows people from around the world to continue building the land of Israel, each with their own personal connection.”

As all businesses in Israel, Anava has been affected deeply by the war. One worker lost his brother in law, and another his cousin in Israel’s war in Gaza. As they work in the vineyards in the Judean foothills, booms can often be heard from Gaza. Nadav has had to work with his staff to try and coordinate their reserve schedules so that enough people are available to keep working on the vineyards. “Working as a winemaker is not the type of job you can do over Zoom!”



As a historian of wine in the region, Adam is aware that our situation is actually not new for the Jewish people. “If you would go back to the Judean Wine Region thousands of years ago, then too we had to hold our weapons with one hand while we planted with the other. This is part of who we are, and we are connected with a deep thread to the previous generations and their similar experience.”

For Nadav, there is something almost spiritual about the stability of the vineyard during the uncertainty of Israel’s situation. “When you come back to the vineyard, it doesn’t know about the war, it needs to be cared for and grown. We are planting something that will be there for years and generations, with all the ups and downs that come.”

Tisha B’Av is actually the time when grapes are harvested – and as we mourn for so much loss this year, Anava offers the opportunity to take your part in rebuilding the land of Israel.

Parcels of land begin at \$65,000. For more information, contact Anava at info@anavavineyards.com

From the Desk of Gael Grunewald

Protecting the North

As part of the work of the *Chativa LeHityashvut*'s northern region, they held a community leadership convention on community resilience. Local leaders met with *Chativa LeHityashvut* professionals and the Minister of Settlements and National Missions, who oversees the Division's work. Additionally, the Division runs peer learning sessions with evacuated communities from both the north and south. The *Chativa LeHityashvut* is heavily involved in supporting these communities – socially, communally, and in terms of accommodation.

On the way home, we stop in a temporary settlement

The *Chativa LeHityashvut* is currently completing the placement of hundreds of temporary homes in Chatzerim for Be'eri residents. These buildings – constructed within a very short time – serve as homes until the residents can return to the *kibbutz*. The location allows families and *kibbutz* members to maintain their family and communal life as much as possible, so they can return home as a strong and united community. Recently, members of Kfar Aza have moved into their new temporary homes in Mishmar HaEmek, and Kissufim residents have relocated to a new temporary neighborhood in Omer.



Establishing a new settlement in the Negev

The *Chativa LeHityashvut* accompanies several settlement groups across the country. Garin Yatir is one such group that formed a few years ago. Following the government's recent decision to establish a new settlement in the Negev, the Division has begun laying the infrastructure for the first neighborhood, where Garin Yatir will begin its new journey.

Agricultural farms

To preserve State lands in open areas, the *Chativa LeHityashvut* encourages the activities of agricultural farms in rural spaces. These farms are operated by young farmers who look after herds and flocks. Through their pastures, they are maintaining control of State lands that could otherwise be vulnerable to intrusion by hostile elements.

At the farmers' convention – the first of its kind, organized by the *Chativa LeHityashvut* – farmers learned about the launch of the "Security for Young Settlement" program. This program, costing more than NIS 70 million, enables the purchase of protective equipment for the most frequently threatened farms. In partnership with the Defense Ministry and other security bodies, a security plan and appropriate equipment have been formulated and approved for each farm – including ATVs, drones, advanced cameras, and more.



Gael Grunewald

is Deputy Chairman of the World Zionist Organization, Chairman of the Rural Growth and Development Division (*Chativa LeHityashvut*), and Chairman of the Mizrahi faction in the National Institutions.

A special send-off event took place for the 75 teacher shlichim who are going on shlichut from the WZO Department of Education, joining the 180 already in the field around the world. The Department, led by Mizrachi's representative Roi Abecassis, sends out shlichim to over 100 Jewish schools across the globe, inspiring and influencing thousands of Jewish children. Wishing them all much hatzlacha!



PHOTOS: REBECCA KOWALSKY

LEGEND OF DESTRUCTION

THE MOVIE OF
THE CHURBAN, AND A
WARNING FOR TODAY



In summer 2021, “Agadat Churban” (Legend of Destruction) made its debut, captivating Israeli audiences with its innovative approach to storytelling. This 2-hour film, directed by Gidi Dar and co-written by Shuli Rand, recounts the destruction of the Second Beit HaMikdash using a unique cinematic technique of still images and dialogue. Despite its complex subject matter and unconventional style, the movie resonated deeply with Israeli society, its portrayal of social discord and its destructive consequences striking close to home in modern Israel. This summer, World Mizrachi plays a crucial role in bringing the translated version to English-speaking audiences worldwide.

The film’s creators, Gidi Dar and Shuli Rand, bring their own fascinating dynamic to the project. Dar, a secular filmmaker, and Rand, a ba’al teshuva, previously collaborated on the groundbreaking 2004 film “Ushpizin.” That earlier work, directed by Dar and starring Rand, paved the way for religious themes in mainstream Israeli cinema. Rabbi Aron White sat down with both directors to discuss “Legend of Destruction” and its message for today’s Jewish community.

It is an honor to meet you. When you made Ushpizin in 2004, that marked a benchmark in religious themes in Israeli movies. Did you then want to work on other religious stories, like in this movie?

Shuli: Ushpizin blazed a path for religious themes in cinema that changed Israeli culture. Until then, Israeli movies tended to focus on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, but since then Jewish themes are much more central – look at TV shows like Shtisel, Shababnikim and more. I think that there still is a focus on religious themes from a social and anthropological point of view – namely, Hashem is not the main character leading the story in these movies, they still focus on the people. Nonetheless, there is no question that religious themes and stories now play a central role in Israeli cinema and TV.

Gidi: As a secular person, I deeply believe that Israeli cinema needs religious themes. We had about 100 years of Hebrew and Israeli culture that often didn’t feel that connection, but for me it is essential. In some ways, it’s even more essential for *Chilonim* – as a religious or *Charedi* person, you are engaging and processing your Jewish heritage all the time. But specifically for someone *Chiloni*, finding ways to engage with our own cultural heritage is incredibly important.

This new movie is about the story of the destruction of the Second Beit HaMikdash. When did this idea develop, and

how did you go about tackling such a huge topic?

Gidi: In 2013, I read a book about Josephus. Like every Israeli, I had learned the story of the *Churban* in 10th grade, and like the vast majority of them, I had forgotten it totally. As I read the book, I was struck by how incredibly significant the story is – how could it be that I, and many of my contemporaries, don’t know this story better? That planted the seed to create a documentary about the *Churban*.

It was clear to me that to produce an action version would require a budget that would be a lot even for Hollywood, so I toyed with the idea of having interviews, interspersed with sketches. I called David Polonski, who agreed to work on the sketches. We made a few minutes of it, and realized that to our surprise the movie actually really “worked” with dialogue and the sketches, and we didn’t need the interview part. When you think about it, for most of human history we have told our story through still pictures and words, so we are actually very adept at being able to follow the story without needing the moving images. In fact, scientifically, our brain is always filling in the gaps as we watch a traditional movie, so this method of still images really began to work well.

As we started to work on more of the dialogue and the details, that was where Shuli came in.

Shuli: One of the most difficult parts of making a movie like this is the language of the dialogues. We had to strike a balance

between making it sound relevant to today’s audience, but authentic to how the *Gemara* and *Midrashim* talk as well. There is such a fine balance that you are constantly working on – not wanting to use modern phrases and slang, but also not wanting it to sound archaic, such that it doesn’t land for the modern ear. We incorporated quotes from the original sources when we could, such as “כָּל הַמְּרַחֵם עַל הַרְחֻמִּים עַל הָאֲכֻזִּים סוּפוּ לְהִתְאַזְרֹר עַל הַרְחֻמִּים, one who shows mercy to the cruel will ultimately be cruel to the merciful,” to maintain its authentic feeling.

Shuli, I have a question specifically for you as a religious person. How do you feel about portraying figures like Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai in a film? Is there a trepidation about how to portray them, from how they look to how their actions will be perceived?

Shuli: After I continued in cinema when I was *chozer b’teshuva*, so many people said to me, you need to make a movie depicting King David, or you need to make a movie depicting Rabbi Nachman of Breslov. I said to them that I will make a movie about a soldier in King David’s army, but not about King David himself. For me, the *tzaddik* is *ein sof*, spiritually infinite, and I cannot touch or portray him. A soldier in King David’s army, and how he would see and perceive David, that I do feel I can portray. For me, something like Charlton Heston depicting Moshe receiving the Ten Commandments – what a *tzimtzum* (restriction) of the *tzaddik*!

In *Agadat Churban*, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai is actually a secondary character; the main character is his nephew Ben Batich, the head of one of the zealot groups. That was a balance that felt comfortable to me.

Gidi: When we had to choose how to visually depict Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai, we made him look similar to Rav Froman *zt"l*, a remarkable and unique figure. In particular, Rav Froman had a wonderful smile, and I wanted this to be the image of a rabbi, as opposed to a more stereotypical, stern depiction.

Gidi, you mentioned earlier that as a secular person, it's very important to bring Jewish themes into Israeli cinema. Why?

Gidi: I see Zionism as one of the greatest chapters in the Jewish story, but it is a rebellious chapter. Many of the Zionist pioneers, my grandfather included, wanted to throw away everything related to the exile – they wanted to return to working the land, and wanted to throw away tradition. Zionism had an unbelievable spirit, and even Rav Kook who didn't agree with their approach to tradition recognized that something remarkable was happening. This spirit allowed Zionism to achieve the creation of the Jewish state, which I consider to be one of the greatest political miracles in history.

But what happens when you succeed? What happens when you fulfill your dreams? What do you do then? If I would have shown my grandfather, as he was draining the swamps, the skyline of Tel Aviv today, he wouldn't believe me. Zionism achieved more than anyone dreamed of. But what happens when the dream of making the state has been fulfilled? Life is built on dreams, and if you don't have a dream you can then fall into a spiritual crisis, and this is a critique I direct to my own community, the *Chiloni* community. We have become more individualistic, hedonistic, as if we are just another country like America. I think that for our spiritual vibrancy, *Chiloni* Zionists need to fix the bridge they burned to their past.

I actually realized this when I went to America to study. When I saw American cinema, it was very clear to see how there is a cultural continuity throughout American history, and even non-religious cinema today still has a cultural continuity to a more religious, Christian milieu in America. So what about *my* culture? As an Israeli, does my culture begin with the "Hebrew" culture of the late 1800s? We have thousands of years of tradition and culture, and we cannot just ignore that.



Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai and his nephew Ben Batich, from *Legend of Destruction*. (CREDIT: 7THART)

Personally, I think that the Churban does play a central role in early Zionism. HaTikvah talks of the 2,000-year hope of returning to sovereignty, and the symbol of the State of Israel is the restored Menorah from the Arch of Titus. What you have done in this movie is a reframe – rather than saying “Zionism is the correction to the Churban” you are saying “Zionism has to ensure we don't make the same mistakes as the time of the Churban.” That is quite a new frame.

Gidi: I agree, but it really isn't us, it's *Chazal*. As I read more of the *aggadot*, I really felt *Chazal* were sending us a message from history – “look what happened to us, look what went wrong.” *Chazal* are so open about it – they point out the critiques of all the groups, including the rabbis, for staying silent in the story of Kamtza and Bar Kamtza and for the decisions of Zecharia ben Avkulas. Learn it well, it can happen to us. In the movie, we also try to depict how all the different groups have some truth to them, but they were right all the way until the destruction. For society to function, groups have to be able to compromise to work together.

Shuli: If you look at *Chazal*, you also see that the majority of the stories are about *bein adam lechaveiro* (matters between man and man) – Kamtza and Bar Kamtza, the *Sandler*, etc. The message is how we destroyed ourselves from within – we include that in the movie, that at one point the Romans delayed their attack, because the Jews were weakening themselves from within!

The movie came out three years ago and was frequently discussed during the tumultuous months of protest concerning judicial reform. How do you think the movie's message lands post October 7th?

Gidi: I think that post October 7th, we have an opportunity to repair some of the societal tears. On the battlefield, the settlers and the left-wing hippies are fighting for each other, risking their lives for each other. I actually believe that had Hamas waited another year before their attack, we might have weakened ourselves even more and been in a worse place.

I actually think that the message of the movie is not only for Israel, but the West as a whole. The story of different groups arguing, not being able to work together, and tearing society apart from within, definitely applies to many Western countries. How did this happen? How did some of the most successful societies become so divided, their politics so extreme, and the center so weak? The story of the *Churban* is a cautionary tale not only to Israel, but to the West as a whole. If you can only focus on how right you are, and cannot compromise and work with other groups, then society cannot function. The movie's message is still cautionary and deeply relevant for Israel and the world. ■



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The Tisha B'Av Kinot and October 7

Rabbi Dr. Jacob J. Schacter

There is a long history of liturgical poems that were written to be recited on Tisha B'Av to commemorate tragic events that occurred during ancient and medieval times. For example, the Ashkenazi rite on Tisha B'Av includes *kinot* mourning for the “Ten Martyrs” killed in the second century; for the communities of Speyer, Worms, and Mainz that were attacked during the First Crusades at the end of the eleventh century; and for the burning of two dozen wagon loads of *sifrei kodesh* in Paris in the middle of the thirteenth century.¹ Liturgical poems were also written to remember the murder of more than thirty Jews in the French town of Blois towards the end of the twelfth century.² Such liturgical works were also written in the wake of the Chmielnicki Massacres in Eastern Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century. They were not included in the Tisha B'Av rite because a separate fast day was established on which they would be recited, the twentieth of the month of Sivan.³

This practice continued during and after the *Shoah* when *kinot* were composed to mourn for the destruction of European Jewry. Already during the war, in the summer of 1944, a *kinah* was composed entitled, “If Only My Head Would be Water,” patterned after a *kinah* by that title recited on Tisha B'Av commemorating the destruction of Ashkenazi communities during the First Crusades.⁴ After the war, in 1945, Yehudah Leib Bialer composed a *kinah* entitled “Eli Eli,” one that achieved almost canonical status in the following years.⁵ In 1965, Rev. Abraham Rosenfeld printed a *kinah* he composed for the Holocaust.⁶

On Tisha B'Av 1971 Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kasher told an acquaintance

that it is impossible for him to mourn for the destruction of the Ashkenazi Jewish communities of Speyer, Worms and Mainz while paying no attention to the cries of the Jews murdered in Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka. “They do not speak to me after the horrific *Shoah* in Europe.” He also argued that composing and disseminating a *kinah* for the victims of the Holocaust, a destruction the likes of which has not occurred since the creation of the world, was particularly necessary since it was beginning to be forgotten even in the Jewish community. As precedents for his efforts, Rabbi Kasher noted that new fast days were established to commemorate a number of medieval Jewish tragedies (the Blois Massacre of 1171, the burning of wagon loads of Hebrew manuscripts in Paris in 1242, and the Chmielnicki Massacres of 1648–1649). Even if he considered such a more extreme step not to be appropriate in the case of the Holocaust, composing a new *kinah* to be recited on Tisha B'Av certainly would be. In the end, however, Rabbi Kasher abandoned his efforts when he realized that he was not getting the support he needed in the *Chassidic* and *yeshiva* communities that he felt was indispensable for his effort to be successful.⁷

But efforts continued. In the 1970s Rabbi Chaim Uri Lifschitz reached out to a number of *Chassidic* *rebbe*s, and to Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, stressing the importance of authoring an “official” *kinah* for the Holocaust that would be universally accepted.⁸ On January 19, 1976, Rabbi Lifschitz wrote Rabbi Feinstein that it is disingenuous to cry on Tisha B'Av for the destruction of Jewish communities during the Crusades, or for the burning of the Talmud in Paris, or for other tragedies while making no mention of

the hundreds, and thousands, of Jewish communities destroyed in Europe.⁹ But all these efforts were for naught until the mid 1980s when efforts made by Mr. Pinchas Herzke from New York City finally bore fruit.¹⁰ The Tisha B'Av book of *kinot* first published by the Mesorah Heritage Foundation in 1991 included compositions for the Holocaust authored by Rabbi Shlomo Halberstam, the Bobover Rebbe, and by Rabbi Shimon Schwab and in that way, the efforts of Mr. Herzke gained the imprimatur of respectability and acceptance.¹¹ Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv recited the *kinah* authored by the Bobover Rebbe on Tisha B'Av¹² and Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Auerbach recited one authored by Rabbi Michael Dov Weissmandel.¹³ In fact, a number of *kinot* for the Holocaust were composed over the years, and recited in both the Religious Zionist and *Charedi* communities.¹⁴

Following this precedent, *kinot* continued to be written in the Religious Zionist community to commemorate events deemed tragic enough to warrant liturgical compositions. Then Sephardi Chief Rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Ben-Zion Meir Hai Uziel, wrote a *kinah* mourning the destruction of the Old City of Jerusalem on June 26, 1948 (19 Sivan 5708)¹⁵ and a *kinah* was also penned in the wake of the disengagement from Gaza in 2005.¹⁶

The war with Hamas that began on Simchat Torah 5784 has also inspired a number of *kinot*.¹⁷ *HaMizrachi* is honored to print here a new *kinah* (see pages 28-29) authored by Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon commemorating this event that, regrettably, is still very much uppermost in our minds.

1. See Abraham Rosenfeld, *The Authorised Kinot for the Ninth of Av* (London, 1965), 125–28, 132–34, 161–62.

That volume also includes a *kinah* for the Jews of York, England who were massacred at the end of the twelfth century. See pp. 168–72.

2. See Daniel Goldschmidt, *Mahzor le-Yamim ha-Nora'im*, vol. 2 (Yom Kippur) (Jerusalem, 1970), 551–54; A. M. Haberman, ed., *Sefer Zekhirah: Selihot ve-Kinot* by R. Ephraim b. Yaakov (Jerusalem, 1970), 91–96.
3. I discuss these events and the texts written to commemorate them in my “Remembering the Temple: Commemoration and Catastrophe in Ashkenazi Culture,” in Steven Fine, ed., *The Temple of Jerusalem: From Moses to the Messiah* (Leiden and Boston, 2011), 277–95.
4. See *Ha-Pardes* 18:5 (1944):2; Yehudit Tydor Baumel, *Kol Bikhyot: Ha-Shoah ve-ha-Tefillah* (Ramat Gan, 1992), 58, 143. For the earlier *kinah*, see Abraham Rosenfeld, *The Authorised Kinot for the Ninth of Av*, pp. 132–34.
5. See Yehudah Leib Bialer, *Ashdot Yamim: Shirim* (Jerusalem, 1957), 45–48; Baumel, *Kol Bikhyot*, pp. 70, 151–52, 156–57. See too Dan Michman, “The Impact of the Holocaust on Religious Jewry,” in Yisrael Gutman, ed., *Major Changes Within the Jewish People in the Wake of the Holocaust: Proceedings of the Ninth Yad Vashem International Historical Conference* (Jerusalem, 1996), 674–75.
6. See Rosenfeld, *The Authorised Kinot for the Ninth of Av*, pp. 173–75; Baumel, *Kol Bikhyot*, pp. 159–61.
7. R. Yisrael Rosen, “Kinot-Shoah be-Tisha B’Av,” *Zohar* 7 (2001), 153–64. I dealt with these medieval precedents in my “Remembering the Temple,” above, n. 3. Also relevant is my “Holocaust Commemoration and *Tish’a be-Av*: The Debate Over ‘Yom ha-Sho’a,’” *Tradition* 41:2 (2008), 164–97. For *kinot* written in response to other medieval tragedies, see the references cited in Hershkowitz (below n. 14), p. 337, n. 1.
8. See Baumel, *Kol Bikhyot*, p. 82.
9. See Mordechai Meir, *Zekhor ha-Ne’akot ve-Ra’ash ha-Ze’akot’: Kinot le-Tisha B’Av le-Zekher ha-Shoah* (Jerusalem, 2003), 10–11.
10. See the pamphlet entitled, “Kuntres Divrei Drishah ve-Hit’orerut le-Amirat Kinah be-Yom Tisha B’Av le-Zekher Kedoshei Yisrael she-Nishmedu be-Eiropah be-Shnot 5766–5705.” It was published in 1984 by the “Committee Advocating for the Recital of a Lamentation in Memory of the Martyrs of Europe (*Vaad ha-Me’orerim le-Amirat Kinah le-Zekher Kedoshei Eiropah*),” headed by Mr. Hertzke, and again in 1985. I have copies of these pamphlets in my possession.
11. See Avrohom Chaim Feuer and Avie Gold, eds., *The Complete Tishah B’Av Service* (New York, 1991), 384–89. See also Baumel, *Kol Bikhyot*, pp. 199–214.
12. See *Peninei Is”h* 3:129 (Devarim 1979).
13. See *Halikhot Shlomoh al Mo’adei Ha-Shanah: Nisan-Av* (Jerusalem, 2007), 441, n. 36.
14. For more on the *kinot* composed to commemorate the Holocaust, see Meir, *Zekhor ha-Ne’akot ve-Ra’ash ha-Ze’akot’*; R. Mordechai Hakohen, *Pirkei Shoah* (Jerusalem, 1950), 6–8 (a *kinah* by Y. L. Bialer); *Seder Kinot le-Tisha B’Av: Mahadurat “Nehamat Pinhas”* (Jerusalem, 2005), 54–55, 327–50; Esther Farbstein, “Sermons Speak History: Rabbinic Dilemmas in Internment Between Metz and Auschwitz,” *Modern Judaism* 27:2 (2007): 156–58 (a *kinah* by Rabbi Moshe Kahlenberg); idem., *Hidden in the Heights* (Jerusalem, 2014), 859–60; R. Menashe Hakatan (Klein), *Sefer Pirsumei Nisa* (Jerusalem, 2011), 257–63; Yizhak Hershkowitz, “Me-‘Yad Hashem Nag’ah Bi’ad ‘Ba-Avonot Histir Panim Mi-Sokhikhai’: Kinat ha-Shoah shel R. Shalom Moshe Halevi Ungar le-Mahaduroteha ha-Shonot,” in Ephraim Hazan and Avi Shmidman, eds., *Devar Tikvah: Mehkirim*

bi-Shirah u-be-Piyyut Mugashim le-Prof. Binyamin bar-Tikvah (Ramat-Gan, 1996), 337–65.

15. See this document in the “Archion ha-Rav Uziel,” no. 374.
16. This *kinah* written by Rabbi Yehoshua Buch is available at machonshilo.org/he/archive. See too Yonah Metzger, “Kevi’at Ta’anit ve-Kinot al Hurban ‘Gush Katif,” *Sefer Zikaron Iyunim be-Ta’anit*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem, 2010), 928–42.
17. See Yair Tucker, “Yigal Harush Mekonen: ‘Kinat Be’eri,’” available at kikar.co.il/singles-clips/s41v09 (November 13, 2023); Shoshanah Haberman, “Kinah le-Shelom ha-Medinah,” available at thelehrhaus.com (December 26, 2023).



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Kinah for the Events of “Swords of Iron”

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

(Suggestion: To chant to the tune of “Eli Tzion VeAreha”)

Simchat Torah – Shemini Atzeret,
Our dancing was turned into despondent grief;
On this day the fences were breached,
[In] the towns of the [Gaza] envelope, Ofakim and Sderot.

How was our land humiliated,
The land was filled with Hamas,
From the Gaza Strip, the source of the evil,
From the root of Hamas came poison.

How in place of seven *hakafot*,
They fled for their lives for fear of kidnapping,
A cruel enemy ignited fires,
Murdered, degraded, without letting up.

How in place of the Prayer for Rain,
My beloved went down to the scented flower beds,
Roses were murdered, a desecration of G-d’s name,
Do not give a memorial and remembrance to the murderers.

How, in the 76th year,
There were pillars of smoke, blood and fire,
A Jew in hiding, whispering in fear,
Instead of the joy of the holy Shabbat.

How did the precious children of Zion,
Fall into the hands of accursed rapists,
The plucked of cheek were given over to the attackers,
Our brothers were taken captive by the violent ones.

On the day Your name was defiled,
Soldiers fought to advance Your great name,
Look and see – who is like Your people Israel?
Strengthen us and give us courage, and may the redeemer come to Zion.

They fought like iron, the beloved brave ones,
The gentle souls, guarding from the oppressor,
Due to their courage, we have witnessed salvation of worlds,
Our stature was straightened, in a generation of redemption.

On the day our inheritance was defiled,
The bravery of our people was released for publication,
Our courageous ones give up their souls in their palms,
Our Father, Our King, avenge the vengeance of our brothers.

By Your Great Name we are called,
The One Who remembers and mentions the covenant of our forefathers,
From north and south they rise up to destroy us,
But Your covenant remains steadfast for us in our land.

The dictators of Persia initiated plots,
They sent barrages against those who raised a prayer,
They sat in shelters, their eyes hoping,
They saw Your miracles, the Awesome One of praise.

The wings of spirit, the wings of eagles,
We have seen soldiers’ wives,
Parents and children bury their loved ones,
Strengthen and fortify them, the congregation of heroes.

Waves of hate engulf Your world,
Oppressors swarm over those who sanctify Your name,
They chase Your messengers, those who carry Your flag,
May You skip over us with love.

Return the hostages, call for freedom for those in captivity,
Plant those who have been uprooted with everlasting love,
Rehabilitate the wounded, raise up the depressed,
Lead Your congregation with kindness and mercy.

We give thanks to You for our State,
And for our redemption and the salvation of our soul,
United lead us upright in our land,
Hasten the son of David, our righteous *Mashiach*.

קינה על מאורעות חרבות ברזל

הרב יוסף צבי רימון

[הצעה: לומר בניגון של "אלי ציון ועריה"]

עריצי פֶּרַס יִזְמוּ עֲלֵינוּ,
מִטְחִים שְׁלַחוּ לְנוֹשְׂאֵי תַפְלוּת,
סְפוּנִים יֵשְׁבוּ וְעֵינֵיהֶם מִיַּחְלוּת,
אֵת נִסְיָה רָאוּ - נוֹרָא תְהֵלוּת.

אֵיכָה בְּנֵי צִיּוֹן הִקְרִים,
נִפְלוּ בְיַדֵּי אֲנָסִים אֲרוּרִים,
מְרוּטֵי לַחֵי נִתּוּנִים לְמַכִּים,
אֲחִים חֲטוּפִים בְּיַדֵּי חֲמָסִים.

שִׁמְחַת תּוֹרָה - שְׁמִינֵי עֲצָרַת,
נִהְפֶּךָ מְחֹלְנוּ לְתוֹגָה קוֹדֶרֶת;
בְּיוֹם זֶה נִפְרְצוּ הַגְּדָרוֹת,
יְשׁוּבֵי הָעוֹטֵף, אֲפָקִים וְשִׁדְרוֹת.

כַּנְפֵי רוּחַ, כַּנְפֵי נְשָׂרִים,
רָאוּ רְאִינוּ בְּרַעֲיוֹת חַיִּים,
הוֹרִים וְיֻלְדִים אֵת יְקִירֵיהֶם מִקְבָּרִים,
חֲזָקִים וְאֲמָצִם עֲדַת אֲבִירִים.

בְּיוֹם בּוֹ שָׁמַךְ הַתְּחַלֵּל,
לוֹחֲמִים נֶאֱבְקוּ אֵת שָׁמַךְ לְגַדֵּל,
הִבֵּט וַרְאָה - מִי כַּעֲמֹךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל,
חֲזָקָנוּ וְאֲמָצָנוּ, וּבָא לְצִיּוֹן גּוֹאֵל.

אֵיכָה אֲרָצָנוּ הִיָּתָה לְמַרְמָס,
וְתַמְלָא הָאֲרָץ חֲמָאס,
מְרַצְעַת עֲזָה מְקוֹר הַרְשָׁע,
מִשְׂרָשׁ חֲמָאס יֵצֵא צָפֵע.

גְּלֵי שִׁנְאָה שׁוֹטְפִים עוֹלָמָךְ,
שׁוֹצְפִים צוֹרְרִים עַל מְקַדִּישֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ,
רוֹדְפִים אֵת שְׁלוּחֶיךָ נוֹשְׂאֵי דְגָלֶיךָ,
בְּאֵהָבָה יְהִי נָא עֲלֵינוּ דְלוּגֶיךָ.

כַּבְרֵזֶל לַחֲמוֹ אֲמִיצוֹת וְאֲמִיצִים אֱהוּבִים,
עַדִּינֵי נֶפֶשׁ מִיַּד צָר מְגַנְגִים,
בְּגִבּוֹרֶתְךָ רְאִינוּ תְשׁוּעַת עוֹלָמִים,
נִזְקָפָה קוֹמְתָנוּ דוֹר גְּאוּלִּים.

אֵיכָה בְּמִקּוֹם שְׁבַע הַקְּפוֹת,
נָסוּ עַל נֶפֶשָׁם מֵאִמַּת חֲטִיפוֹת,
אוֹיֵב אֶכְזַר מְצִית שׁוֹרְפוֹת,
רוֹצֵחַ, מִשְׁפִּיל, בְּלֵי לְהַרְפוֹת.

הַשֵּׁב חֲטוּפִים, קְרָא דְרוֹר לְשָׁבוּיִים,
נִטַּע עֲקוּרִים בְּאֵהָבַת נְצָחִים,
שָׁקֵם פְּצוּעִים רוּמִם נְדָפָאִים,
נִהַל עֲדַתְךָ בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים.

בְּיוֹם בּוֹ נִטְמָאָה נְחַלְתָּנוּ,
הַתְּרָה לְפָרְסוֹם גְּבוּרַת עַמּוֹנוּ,
נִפְשָׁם בְּכַפֶּם מוֹסְרִים גְּבוּרֵינוּ,
אֲבִינוּ מִלְכָּנוּ נִקָּם נִקְמַת אַחֵינוּ!

אֵיכָה בְּמִקּוֹם תַּפְלוּת הַגֶּשֶׁם,
יַרְדֵּי דוֹדֵי לְעֵרוּגוֹת הַבֶּשֶׂם,
שׁוֹשְׁנִים נְטֹבְחִים, חֲלוּל הַשֵּׁם,
לְמַרְצָחִים אֵל תַּתֵּן יָד וְשֵׁם.

מוֹדִים אֲנַחְנוּ לָךְ עַל מְדִינְתָנוּ,
עַל גְּאֻלְתָּנוּ וְעַל פְּדוּת נַפְשָׁנוּ,
מֵאֲחָדִים תּוֹלֵכָנוּ קוֹמְמִיּוֹת בְּאֲרָצָנוּ,
הַחַשׁ בּוֹ דוֹד מְשִׁיחַ צְדָקָנוּ.

עַל שְׁמֶךָ הַגְּדוֹל נִקְרָא שְׁמָנוּ,
זוֹכֵר וּמְזַכֵּיר בְּרִית אֲבוֹתֵינוּ,
מְצַפּוֹן וּמְדָרוֹם עוֹמְדִים לְכֻלּוֹתָנוּ,
וּבְרִיתְךָ עוֹמְדַת לָנוּ בְּאֲרָצָנוּ.

אֵיכָה בְּשָׁנַת שְׁבַעִים וְשֵׁשׁ,
תְּמָרוֹת עֵשׂוֹן דָּם וְאֵשׁ,
יְהוּדֵי בְּמַחְבּוּא נִחְרַד וְלוֹחֵשׁ,
תַּחַת עֵגֶב שְׁבַת קִדְשׁ.



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Today, we find ourselves in a situation where the environment is pushing us to seriously consider moving to Israel (Aliyah). It is expected that around 1 million people will make Aliyah soon. Whether we already identify as Zionists or not, many of us feel a strong connection to our Jewish heritage and believe we belong in the Jewish homeland.

John (יהודה) Garcia was born in Amsterdam, the Netherlands, and grew up in a Jewish community, deeply involved with Bnei Akiva throughout his life. He dreamed of making Aliyah from an early age. In 1985, John and his wife moved to Israel

but returned after 9 months because they were not adequately prepared. In 2015, at the age of 55, they made their second Aliyah. However, they faced many challenges, such as deciding where to live, choosing a community, finding suitable health insurance, and selecting the best bank.

By Meny Group, John's financial position and future housing are secured by financial investments in various projects, one of which could be their next home.

Living in Israel is not just more comfortable for Jews; John and his wife are grateful every day that they are in Israel rather than in the Netherlands or any other country. Despite the difficulties they encountered, they feel fortunate not to have waited too long to complete the move.

Because of their experiences, John was inspired to work with a company dedicated to facilitating Aliyah for Jews worldwide. At Meny Group, John leads efforts to help individuals and communities achieve their Aliyah dreams through their foundation. Founded by Menachem Mendel Greenbaum, Meny Group continues the legacy of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Kasher, known for his scholarly work and involvement in Israeli real estate.

Meny Group focuses not only on individual Aliyah but also on bringing entire communities to their desired areas in Israel, providing housing solutions that cater to their dreams. They offer opportunities not just to buy existing or soon-to-be-built apartments, but also to invest in land for future construction, which can yield higher returns. Their portfolio includes projects that meet the housing needs of both individuals and communities.

John and his team at Meny Group carefully assess each client's needs and develop personalized plans using their expertise and resources to make dreams of owning land or a home in Israel a reality. John's efforts extend globally, collaborating with institutions and communities to support Aliyah through real estate opportunities.

Reflecting on his journey, John emphasizes the importance of informed decision-making, offering webinars and seminars to empower clients with knowledge and options. Whether clients decide to invest with Meny Group or not, John prioritizes helping them achieve their dreams of living in Israel.



More information: www.menygroup.com +972-8-673-9641

LIGHTS FROM GAZA

RABBI TZVI WOHLGELERNTER

Many months ago, on my first mission in Gaza, I had a fascinating revelation during the briefing before our convoy went in. Various units were part of the mission, each with a specific job. As we mounted the Humvees, it struck me that we were all on one team, headed towards a unified mission, yet we each had our respective roles. We could only be successful if each group performed their assigned tasks. This idea played out in every mission I was on, and I realized that this is really the story of the Jewish people.

In a year where every day felt like Tisha B'Av, what are we to make of this particular Tisha B'Av? The *Gemara* teaches that the underlying cause for the destruction of the Second *Beit HaMikdash* was **בְּאֵין חֶסֶד** – baseless hatred (*Yoma* 9b). Throughout our history, we have struggled with this issue, despite ongoing calls for unity. This year began with tensions among the Jewish people in Israel at what seemed to be a record high. Then came October 7th, and everything changed. There was an outpouring of brotherhood and unity. We began to feel the *achdut* we always preach about. However, not long after, cracks began to appear in this newfound solidarity, and many of us are legitimately concerned that we will lose any progress we made in uniting our small nation and rectifying the sins we still mourn on Tisha B'Av.

What, then, can we do? How can we work on **אַהֲבַת חַיִּים** – unbridled love?

It is not radical to state that the biblically mandated commandment to love our fellow Jew is not enough to motivate us to authentic brotherhood. This personal obligation alone will not suffice to bring true unity, as loving people is challenging. Different people have different views, which may cause us to feel threatened. If we don't learn how to respect other opinions, we will continue to fall into the trap of infighting and destructive discourse.

What is the path forward? I believe an answer can be found within the teachings of Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook. Rav Kook sheds light on how to elevate the challenge of baseless hatred. He explains that the cause of this tension is due to the fact that there are various lights, or



Rabbi Wohlgelernter serving in Gaza.

values, that need to be developed in the process of uplifting the world. Each group has to develop their particular value to the best of their capability. The hatred stems from each group feeling threatened by another group's focus on a different value. Unity will be achieved when we can recognize and appreciate that all of these values are in service of Hashem and are essential for the spiritual rectification of the world.

Much of the tension we were feeling in Israel prior to October 7th had to do with clashing values. However, this is not a zero-sum game. Each side has something to offer and valid points that need to be addressed. We must stop feeling threatened by our fellow Jews who may think differently and start engaging with them in a meaningful way. This begins with respecting our brothers and sisters, regardless of their opinions on particular matters. Once we respect them, we must choose to listen, because only when we are truly open to engaging with our fellow Jews can we begin to appreciate their perspectives. We do not have to agree with everything every group says. We are even

encouraged to think critically, but we must be open to listening authentically.

Rav Kook further elaborates on this idea by describing the Jewish people as a microcosm of the world. Just as the world is made up of different nations with different skill sets and values, our role as the Jewish people is to find a way to unite all of those different values. Once we figure out how to unify ourselves, the world will follow suit, and Tisha B'Av will turn into a day of tremendous celebration. May we soon see that day.



Rabbi Tzvi Wohlgelernter
works for Mizrachi-JLIC at Givat Shmuel.
He is currently serving as a reservist
on an IDF base in the south of Israel.



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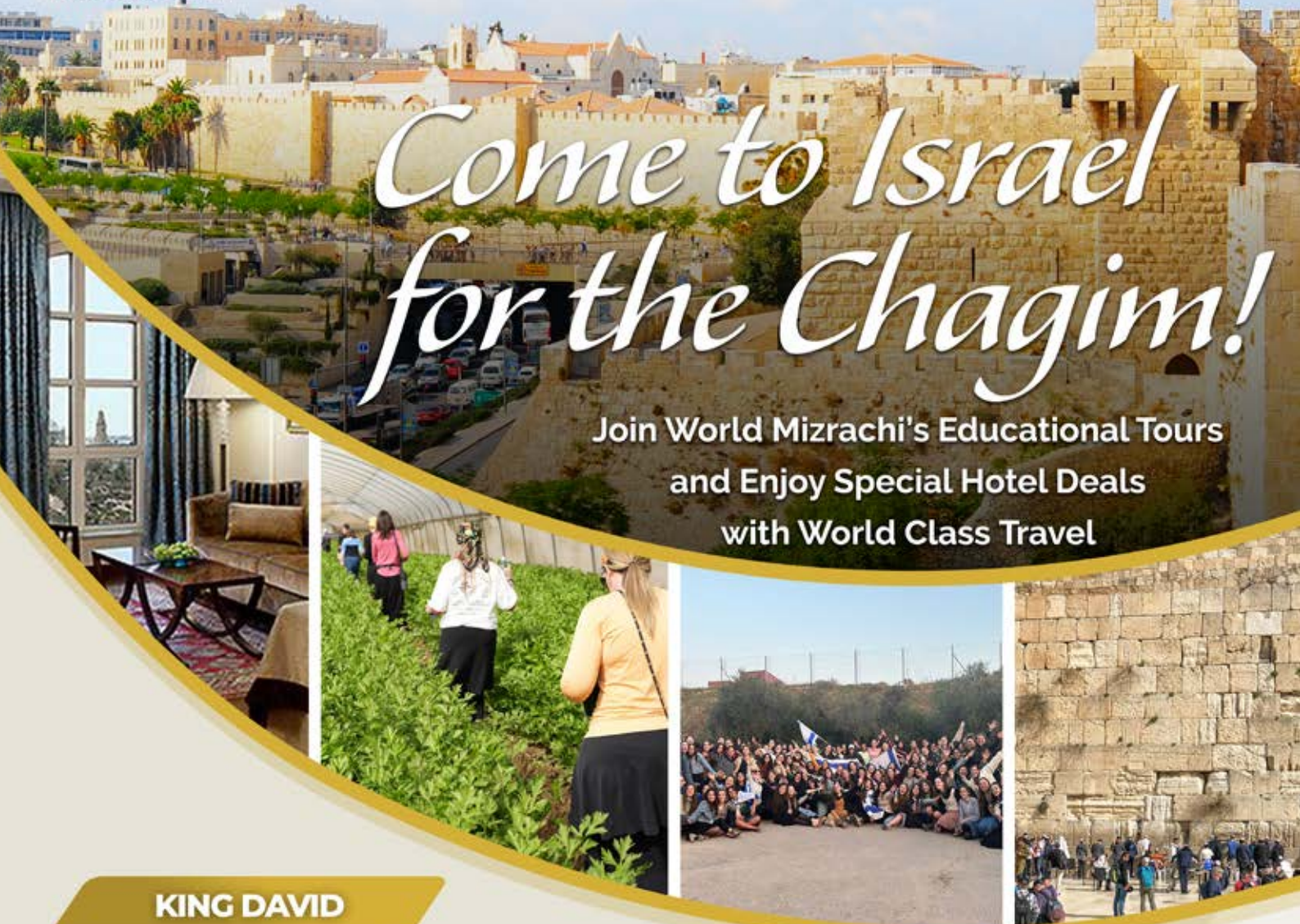


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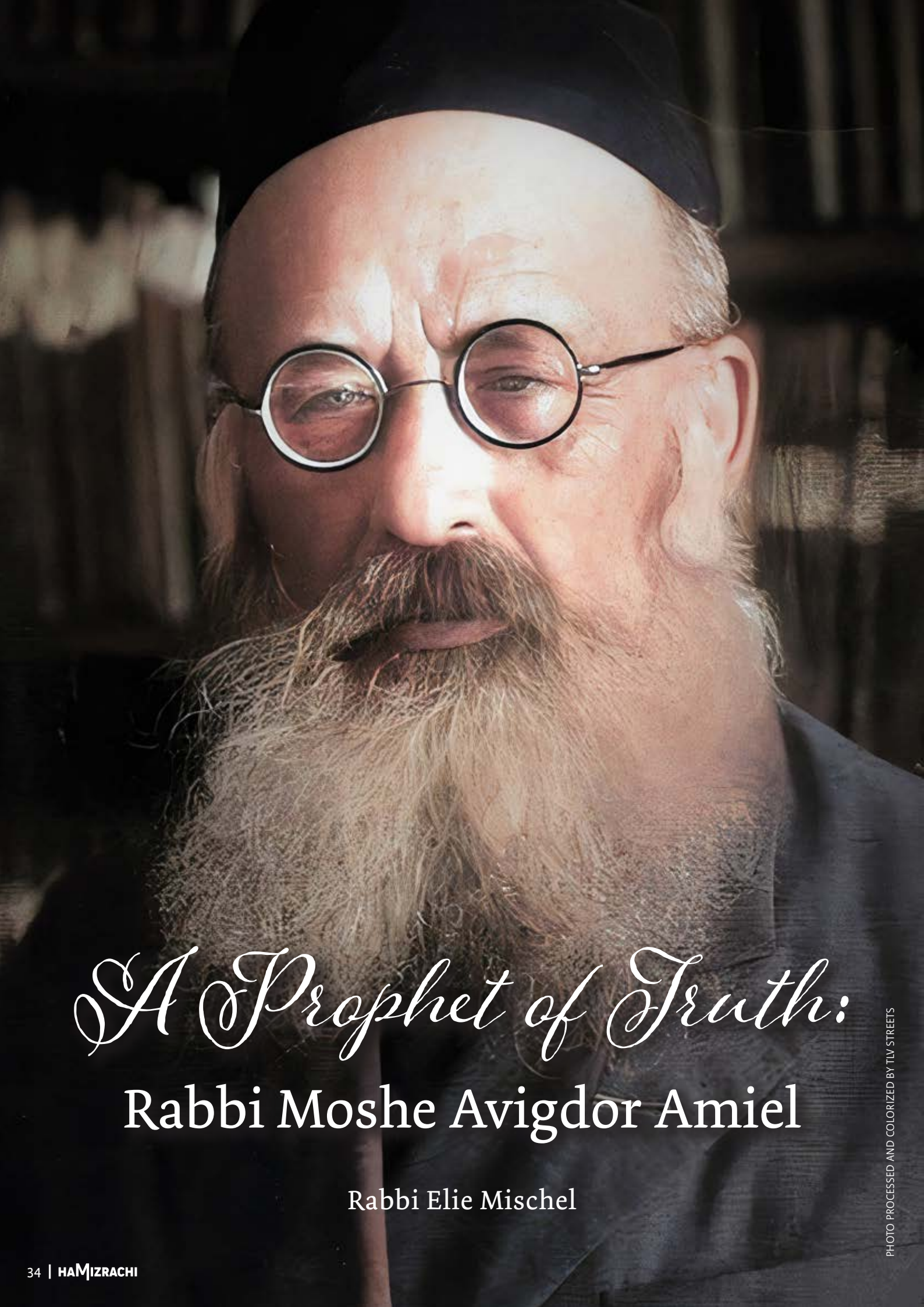
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A Prophet of Truth:

Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel

Rabbi Elie Mischel

To many American Jews, Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel *zt"l* is only vaguely familiar; a minor rabbinic figure who changed the direction of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik's career. When Rabbi Shlomo Aronson, the first Ashkenazi chief rabbi of Tel Aviv, passed away in 1935, three primary candidates were considered to replace him: Rabbi Amiel, the Mizrachi candidate; Rabbi Yitzchak HaLevi Herzog; and Rabbi Soloveitchik, the non-Zionist Agudath Israel candidate. Less than ten years later, Rabbi Soloveitchik would become the chairman of the Central Committee of the Religious Zionists of America, but at the time of the election, he was the least Zionist of all three candidates.

Politically speaking, Rabbi Soloveitchik didn't stand a chance. As Chaim Herzog, Rav Herzog's son, later wrote: "The struggle in Tel Aviv was a political one, and Rabbi Amiel of Antwerp, the Mizrachi candidate, won the war of backroom politics, receiving twenty-one votes to ten for my father and three for the renowned Rabbi Soloveitchik of the United States" (*Living History*, 20–21). Rabbi Amiel was greatly respected, older, and a member of Mizrachi, which dominated religious life in Tel Aviv at the time. Yet it remains one of the great "what-ifs" of rabbinic history. What if Rabbi Soloveitchik had pulled off an upset in the election and never returned to his adopted city of Boston? How would American Judaism have developed without the Rav? And what kind of impact would his presence in Tel Aviv have had on the future of Israel?

But Rabbi Amiel's significance extends far beyond his indirect influence on American Jewry. A leading thinker of the Religious Zionist movement, he approached philosophical questions with the rigor of *Gemara* learning and brought clarity of thinking and intellectual consistency to the Mizrachi movement.

Born in 1882 in Porozov, in the Grodno region of Russia, Rabbi Amiel studied under many of the greatest rabbis of his generation. At 13, he began learning at the Telz *yeshiva* under Rabbi Eliezer Gordon, Rabbi Shimon Shkop, and Rabbi Yosef Yehuda Leib Bloch. He later moved on to study at the Brisk *yeshiva* with Rabbi Chaim HaLevi Soloveichik, and then studied in Vilna under Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzinski.

One of the first rabbis to formally join Mizrachi, Rabbi Amiel used his prodigious writing abilities on behalf of Religious Zionism, becoming a regular contributor to the original *HaMizrachi*, a weekly Hebrew-language newspaper



Rabbi Amiel speaking at the graduation ceremony of the first Israeli pilot course. (PHOTO: ZKLUGERPHOTOS, WIKIMEDIA COMMONS)

launched in Warsaw in 1918. In January 1920, he represented Mizrachi of Poland at the first Mizrachi World Convention in Amsterdam, where he stood out as an exceptional speaker. Soon thereafter, he was chosen to be the Rabbi of Antwerp, one of the wealthiest and most prestigious Jewish communities of that time, where he served until making *Aliyah* in 1935.

As Chief Rabbi of Tel Aviv, he fostered good relations between the religious and secular segments of the community. He also established a *yeshiva* high school, *Yeshiva HaYishuv HaChadash*, that taught both religious and secular subjects and which became the model for Bnei Akiva *yeshivot* established throughout the country. After his death in 1945, the *yeshiva* was renamed *Yeshivat HaRav Amiel* in his honor.

Unconventional Torah commentary

Only the most creative Torah scholars are capable of writing truly original commentaries on the Torah – particularly on the book of *Bereishit*, about which so much has already been said. Yet in his *Hegyonot El Ami*, Rabbi Amiel accomplishes just that, viewing the Torah's foundation stories through the lens of Religious Zionism.

"And Ya'akov was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn" (*Bereishit* 32:25). Why was Ya'akov alone in the middle of the night? The sages explain that Ya'akov had "forgotten *pachim ketanim*, small vessels," and returned for them.

Most Torah commentators explain Ya'akov's strange decision to recross a stream in the middle of the night to retrieve "small vessels" in a positive way. When G-d blesses us with possessions, it behooves us to appreciate them and treat them with care, for even the smallest vessels can be used for holiness. But Rabbi Amiel rejects the standard interpretation, viewing this entire episode as a *criticism* of Ya'akov:

"We must admit the truth, that through exile and servitude to the nations, a smallness of thinking and 'restricted consciousness' has taken root in our people, even in regard to our holy Torah. Many of us vigilantly keep the external aspects of Torah with all kinds of "fences," but completely lose sight of the Torah's inner essence. We carefully guard foolish customs... while entirely ignoring foundational principles... This is the meaning of 'remaining behind for small vessels' even as we abandon the 'large vessels' and everything precious that they contain." Rabbi Amiel argues that because of the decades he spent in exile in Lavan's house, Ya'akov lost sight of the "large vessels" of Judaism. And so "a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn" – a pure and holy angel confronted Ya'akov and showed him the "dawn," the true light of Torah, the "large vessels" that Ya'akov had forgotten.

This is the true significance of the angel's blessing, "Your name shall no longer be called Ya'akov, but Yisrael" (*Bereishit* 32:29). A 'Ya'akov Jew' is one who

“tramples *mitzvot* with his heel (עָקַב),” while a ‘Yisrael Jew’ “struggles with [an angel of] G-d and with men, and prevails.” In other words, a ‘Yisrael Jew’ grasps the greater principles of Judaism and is able to sanctify G-d’s name before the eyes of the nations (*Hegyonot El Ami*, 352). Though Rabbi Amiel does not state it directly, he is clearly critiquing Orthodox Jews who strictly follow the *mitzvot* but fail to appreciate the importance of Zionism, the Land of Israel, and the larger goals of the Torah.

At the end of his life, Ya’akov pleaded with Yosef: “If I have now found favor in your eyes... do not bury me now in Egypt” (Bereishit 47:29). Ya’akov’s antipathy towards Egypt makes little sense, for his final years in that land were the most pleasant of his life. “Even though the only years of pleasure that Ya’akov experienced in his life were in Egypt, and all the years that ‘Ya’akov dwelt (בָּשָׁט) in the land of his father’s sojournings’ (Bereishit 37:1) were years of suffering – for the word ‘בָּשָׁט, dwelt,’ always implies suffering (*Sanhedrin* 106a) – nevertheless, Ya’akov begged Yosef to bury him specifically in the Land of his father’s sojourning” (*Hegyonot El Ami*, 417).

Rabbi Amiel’s words resonate powerfully today. Many people advocate for *Aliyah* by extolling the joys of life in Israel and its practical benefits: “You don’t have to pay tens of thousands of dollars on *yeshiva* tuition or worry about medical insurance!” But Rabbi Amiel reminds us that making *Aliyah* should not be a practical decision in which we weigh the pros and cons of life in Israel versus life in the Diaspora. Even if life in Israel entails great suffering or hardship, a Jew should do everything possible, like *Ya’akov Avinu*, to return to Israel. By the end of his life, Ya’akov no longer sought “to dwell in tranquility” (*Rashi*, Bereishit 37:2). He was no longer tempted by the pleasures or even the peace of mind of life in exile. He yearned for the Land, no matter how difficult life there might be, for in Israel lies the path to redemption.

Rabbi Amiel was not satisfied with a superficial understanding of the text, even if that simple reading supported his own worldview. In his interpretation of the sin of the spies, he rejects the standard view of the spies as men concerned more with their own prestige than with the fate of the nation. Instead, he sees the conflict between the ten spies and Yehoshua and Calev as a profound debate concerning the nature of truth itself.

“There is truth that *describes* reality and truth that *creates* reality... With the first approach, facts determine the truth. With the second, truth itself shapes the facts.”

To illustrate his point, Rabbi Amiel cites a story about the great Rabbi Naftali Zvi Yehuda Berlin (*Netziv*). Once, a visitor from *Eretz Yisrael* came to see the *Netziv*. When asked about conditions there, the visitor only reported bad news. The *Netziv* became very angry, accusing the man of slandering *Eretz Yisrael* with *lashon hara*. The visitor defended himself, arguing that everything he said was true. But the *Netziv* responded: “The spies also told the truth about the Land, yet were punished severely. It is forbidden to tell bitter truths about *Eretz Yisrael*.”

This story, explains Rabbi Amiel, reflects the difference between the ten spies and Yehoshua and Calev. The truth of the ten spies was the truth of “reality,” the truth that our physical eyes can see, the truth of the past and the present. “The land we passed through to explore is a land that consumes its inhabitants... There we saw the giants” (Bamidbar 13:32–33). “And so it was! But the truth of Yehoshua and Calev was not the truth that merely follows and describes reality, but rather the truth that *creates* reality. This higher form of truth is not concerned with the present but rather with the future. The truth of Yehoshua and Calev shapes the future according to its will: ‘If G-d desires us, He will bring us to this Land and give it to us, a land flowing with milk and honey’ (Bamidbar 14:8). For everything follows our will.”

This is the difference, explains Rabbi Amiel, between journalism and poetry. A journalist assesses the facts as they are. But the poet speaks not of facts but of a vision for the future. The poet does not bow to reality; he *shapes* reality!

Rabbi Amiel concludes: “A journalist investigating the Jewish people in the late 19th century would have reported that the Jews are a dead nation without any hope of ever returning to life. This was, of course, the cold reality. Fortunately, however, the Jewish people are not a nation of journalists, but a nation of poets. When the hard reality offers us no hope, we imagine a better future. When all the gates are locked before us, we know that the gates of heaven are still open... With this truth, the truth of the poet, we shape the future” (*Ezer El Ami*, 93–95).

The spies were “journalists,” and for a Jew, this was an unforgivable sin. As Ben-Gurion famously said, “In Israel, in order to be a realist, you must believe in miracles.”

Judaism is not a religion

Many early Zionists frequently argued that “religion is a private matter.” But this view, explains Rabbi Amiel, is more

Christian than Jewish. “Christianity stripped Judaism of the national soul that pervades the *mitzvot*... Only the Christian religion could say ‘Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and unto G-d the things that are G-d’s,’ separating the kingdom of heaven from the kingdom of earth. In the Torah, there are whole sections concerning Caesar, for he, too, must submit to the rule of the Torah!... A large portion of the Torah focuses specifically on the nation, in times of both peace and war... In contrast to Christianity, Judaism is even more focused on the life of the nation than on the life of the individual. Large numbers of *mitzvot* can only be fulfilled by the nation... and the reward and punishment described in the Torah are directed towards the nation – not the individual... Only one conversant in Christianity but ignorant of Judaism can say that ‘religion is a private matter!’” (*Ezer El Ami*, 142–145).

Rabbi Amiel argued that this “Christian” interpretation of Judaism would have devastating consequences for Jewish life in Israel. “Dr. Herzl believed he was going above and beyond what was required of him when he announced at the first Zionist Congress that religion would be a private matter in *Eretz Yisrael* and that there would be no religious coercion of any sort in the renewed Land. Dr. Herzl said this because he was 100% assimilated in spirit and soul, even after he became a Zionist. He thought Judaism was a religion like other religions, and did not grasp that there is a Torah in Israel that cannot be translated” (*Ezer El Ami*, 17–18). Though Herzl was a great man who meant well, he didn’t understand that Judaism is all encompassing and that Torah must shape every element of our lives.

When Torah is reduced to being a “religion,” the results are disastrous. “Both assimilated Jews and secular nationalist Jews cut our living Torah into small pieces in order to choose the pieces they want. But they forget that our Torah is a living Torah; if you only take a small piece of something that is alive, what you have taken will not contain any spirit of life.” Sadly, the collapse of non-Orthodox Judaism has proven Rabbi Amiel correct. Judaism only inspires when we accept it in its totality.

The conscience of Religious Zionism

Though he was a passionate Religious Zionist, Rabbi Amiel was, first and foremost, a man of truth who was unafraid to criticize his own camp. “Rabbi Amiel would include in his speeches, which were penetrating and deep, sharp criticism of Mizrahi’s weakening commitment to

Torah, demanding that Mizrahi increase its focus on Torah education and a greater commitment to religious matters” (Moshe Krone, *Morai V'Rabbotai, Achai V'Rei'ai*, 170).

He frequently noted that religious and political movements retain their names even as their views shift dramatically over time. A “Democrat” or “Republican” in 2024 may have little in common with those who described themselves that way twenty years ago, and the same is true of religious movements like Mizrahi and Agudath Israel. The result is intellectual confusion, as many people remain loyal to movements that no longer accurately reflect their beliefs. Rabbi Amiel wrote hundreds of essays dissecting the views of Religious Zionists, secular Zionists, and *Charedim*, clarifying the underlying beliefs of each movement and calling out hypocrisy as he saw it.

Rabbi Amiel had little patience for Jewish leaders who sought popularity among the masses. In the pages of *HaMizrachi*, he distinguished between “leaders who follow the generation” and “generations that follow the leader.” In every generation, there are many false prophets who pander to the masses, telling people what they want to hear, and as a result gain widespread popularity. “Only a false prophet can speak words of peace to everyone. ‘And they healed the breach of My people easily, saying, ‘Peace, peace,’ but there is no peace’ (Yirmiyahu 6:14). A true prophet, who speaks only the one truth of G-d, must be, as Yirmiyahu described himself, ‘a man of quarrel and a man of contention to the whole land’ (Yirmiyahu 15:10).” But the “truth” of a false prophet dies together with him; eventually, the false prophet’s teachings lose their luster and are exposed as lies. Only the words of a true prophet will stand the test of time.

Leaders must have the confidence to stand on their own two feet. “One who chases after *haskamas* (approbations) from other rabbis for his book demonstrates that he lacks his *own haskama*.” Rabbi Amiel rejected “consensus thinking”; if a rabbi is afraid to speak out without the support of other rabbis, it is a sign that he is not worthy of being a leader.

By this standard, Rabbi Moshe Avigdor Amiel himself was the very embodiment of a true prophet. May we merit leaders in our own generation who follow in his footsteps!



Rabbi Elie Mischel

is the Editor of *HaMizrachi* magazine and the author of *The War Against the Bible: Ishmael, Esau and Israel at the End Times* (2024).



SHAGRIRIM BALEV

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Uriel and Meir agreed that Shlomo and Sapir were simply meant to be, and evidently, so did Shlomo and Sapir! Now happily married for almost a year, they both are still ambassadors on the site, doing their part in spreading the amazing light they were blessed with themselves.



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How To Find Consolation This Year

Rabbi Reuven Taragin

Typically, we relate more to *Shabbat Nachamu* than Tisha B'Av, as our comfortable lives make it challenging to connect with ancestral suffering and the absence of the *Beit HaMikdash*. However, this year is different. Recent horrors have reconnected us with the historical suffering of Jews, making Tisha B'Av more relatable. Yet, finding consolation is harder given the significant loss of Israeli lives, numerous injuries, and ongoing hostage situation. How can we find comfort amidst such tragedy?

Nechama built in

Nechama (consolation) is fundamental to how Judaism relates to suffering. Inspired by the tradition that *Mashiach* was born on Tisha B'Av, we include *nechama* even within the day of Tisha B'Av. After the intense mourning in the evening and morning, the mourning lightens in the afternoon, as we don *tefillin*, sit on chairs, prepare food, and greet each other.

Chazal understood that even amidst suffering, *nechama* is critical. We can find consolation in three ways: focusing on the future, appreciating the present good, and recognizing the good even within the bad.

Focusing on future good

Rabbi Akiva taught us to focus on the future, using Jewish suffering to reinforce faith in future success. The prophets predicted both our suffering and our eventual redemption. Just as their prophecies of doom materialized, so would their prophecies about redemption. Where others saw present suffering, Rabbi Akiva saw a positive future. Instead of mourning, he celebrated the impending redemption.

Today's extreme antisemitism also fulfills prophecy, defying rational explanation. Like Rabbi Akiva, we should view our suffering as prophetic realization, strengthening our belief in future positive prophecies.

Appreciating the present good

Yes, we are experiencing terrible suffering, but we must also appreciate that Hashem

has blessed us with so much good in our personal and national lives. We live in an era of Jewish return and development in *Eretz Yisrael*. Though attacked, we can now defend ourselves, no longer helpless under foreign rule.

We are living the fulfillment of prophecy, including one Rabbi Akiva used to console his colleagues: "Old men and women will once again sit in the streets of Yerushalayim... and the city streets will be full of children playing" (Zechariah 8:4-5). Rabbi Akiva could only find consolation in the future, but we can get it from the present as well.

Recognizing the good within the bad

Suffering itself can also be a source of consolation.

The Tanna Nachum Ish GamZu asserted that negative experiences are "*gam zu l'tovah*, also for the good" (*Ta'anit* 21a). Nachum's first name may have been rooted in his last one - GamZu. His belief that everything is for the good consoled him at times of suffering.

David HaMelech expressed a similar sentiment when he described himself as being consoled by Hashem's staff (*Tehillim* 23:4). Though Hashem, like a shepherd, sometimes uses His "staff" to punish us, we are comforted by the care He shows us.

Hashem, like a caring father, disciplines us more thoroughly than other nations. Our suffering serves as divine guidance, steering us toward improvement. This is the significance of the occurrence of the *churban* in the month of Av. Though the month brought terrible suffering and is an inauspicious time for us, we should be consoled by the knowledge that it is our "Av" (Father), Who we know has our best interests in mind, Who is behind it all.

Nachum Margolios, like his namesake Nachum Ish GamZu, appreciated this. Nachum was known for always having a smile on his face, though his life was far from easy. He and his wife had only two daughters, and both were killed in an accident. To everyone's surprise, even during

shiva, Reb Nachum continued to appear in good spirits, with a smile on his face. Some of his friends asked how he was able to maintain his happiness immediately after both of his children were killed.

He answered them, "Let me explain with an analogy. What happens if you feel a painful slap? If you turn around and see that it is a stranger who hit you, you are upset at the person and rightfully complain about what he has done to you. But if you turn around and see that it is a close friend, you immediately realize that it is a slap of love. You embrace your friend with compassion and happiness. So what can I say? I felt a massive slap of pain, but when I turned around, I saw Hashem behind me, and I know that He loves me. That is how I can continue to rejoice even now, despite my tremendous pain."

Suffering may be painful, but when we realize Hashem is behind it, the month truly becomes *Menachem Av*.



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Sin of the Spies: Revisiting the Sale of Yosef and Reliving Jewish History

Rabbanit Shani Taragin

The Mishnah enumerates five calamities that occurred throughout history on the 9th of Av, the first of which was the decree that *Bnei Yisrael*, in their second year after the Exodus from Egypt, would not enter the promised Land for another 38 years due to the sin of the ten spies (*Ta'anit* 4:6). Chazal explain: "All the congregation lifted up their voice and cried, and the people wept that night' (Bamidbar 14:1). That night was the night of the Ninth of Av. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to them: 'You wept needlessly that night, and I will therefore establish for you a true tragedy over which there will be weeping in future generations'" (*Ta'anit* 29a). Upon examining the first disaster on Tisha B'Av in *Parashat Shelach Lecha*, numerous parallels to another story become evident: the brothers' hatred toward Yosef and his subsequent exile to Egypt.

In both stories, we hear of the "heads of the tribes" – the founding fathers of the respective tribes who stood against Yosef, and their princely descendants. Rav Yaakov ben Asher, the Ba'al HaTurim, explains that when Yosef stood before his brothers and accused them of spying with the words "*meraglim aтем*" (Bereishit 42:1), he was alluding to their future sin wherein their descendants would speak negatively about *Eretz Yisrael*, in contrast to his descendant, Yehoshua, who would return with a favorable report. Yehuda, the leading speaker, responds – "*Lo hayu*, we were not," thereby defending his descendant, Calev, who would also not sin with the spies (in *gematria*, "*Calev*" and "*lo hayu*" both equal 52). Both stories begin with and are replete with the verb "*shelach*, sending" forth Yosef and the tribal leaders, respectively, to "see" and report (*hashiveni davar*) on the state of the brothers and the Land. Both stories begin in the southern area of Chevron followed by the northern mountains, and in both stories, the brothers / spies return with a false report of devouring (i.e., an animal devoured Yosef, the Land devours its inhabitants).

The most striking parallel, however, is evident in the phrase that only appears in these two stories in the Torah – "*dibbah ra'ah*" – evil speech. The root of the brothers' hatred for Yosef lies in his evil reports (i.e., spying) about his siblings to Ya'akov, and the Torah explicates the report of the spies as evil speech of the Land (Bamidbar 13:32, 14:36). What was the consequence of each of these sins – the sale of Yosef and the sin of the spies? Both stories tell us of the rending of garments (Bereishit 37:29, 34; Bamidbar 14:6), of crying over their loss (Bereishit 37:35, Bamidbar 14:1) of mourning (Bereishit 37:34, Bamidbar 14:39), and most significantly of the punishment of enduring exile, slavery and wandering outside of the promised Land.

The parallels between the stories of the spies and the sale of Yosef offer numerous lessons that we can and must learn. Rabbi David Fohrman elaborates on the emergence of the proper leadership of Yosef (Yehoshua) and Yehuda (Calev) in the aftermath of the sin of the spies, 'fixing' their respective ancestors' mistakes of evil speech (Yosef) and improper leadership of the tribes (Yehuda).

Rav Shneur Ashkenazi highlights one of the primary themes in both stories – the lack of recognition of Hashem's role in natural events. Yosef had to remind them that while they focused on the disastrous consequences of their actions, Hashem was planning their survival (Bereishit 50:20–21). Similarly, their descendants lacked faith in themselves and Hashem, doubting their ability to survive a military confrontation without supernatural miracles. This demonstrated a lack of trust in Hashem's involvement in the natural order in the Land of Israel, which is just as miraculous as supernatural events.

Through these remarkable allusions to the story of Yosef and his brothers, the Torah also teaches us about the horrific consequences of brothers standing against one another. The Zohar explains that the root

of *sinat chinam* (baseless hatred), evident in the brothers' malevolence toward Yosef, led to Ya'akov's cries and Yosef's separation from his father for 22 years. Similarly, when the tribes stood against each other and their leaders with conflicting reports and commentary about the Land of Israel, Hashem decreed future cries of destruction and 22 days of annual mourning, from the 17th of Tammuz through the 9th of Av, over our separation from our Father in Heaven (*Zohar Chadash, Vayeishev* 29:2).

Today, we are unfortunately reliving these stories as we witness national schisms and protests in Israel. It is time to firmly stand with our brothers, not against them, and unite against our enemies. This year, as we hear the lamentations of *Eicha*, composed in the acrostic structure of the 22 letters of the alphabet, reminding us of our transgressions of hatred and division, may we persist in overcoming our strife and merit the 22-day "almond-blossoming" of redemption (Yirmiyahu 1:11 and 31:27)!



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FINDING STRENGTH IN TRAGEDY: LESSONS FROM EICHA

DR. Yael ZIEGLER

Eicha was written about long-ago events in Jewish history, when Jerusalem and her first Temple were destroyed and the Jews who survived the conflagration were sent into exile. Nevertheless, *Eicha* lacks dates or identified persons, allowing the book to transcend its context and function with ongoing relevance for other difficult circumstances in Israel's history.

Rabbinic interpretation frequently assumes a timeless meaning for *Eicha*, whereby *Eicha*'s lamentations incorporate all past tragedies and anticipate all future ones. In the *Midrash*, a verse in *Eicha* can refer to the death of Aharon,¹ the exile of the ten tribes,² the martyrs of the Tannaitic period,³ or the destruction of the Second Temple (which takes place 650 years after the events recorded in *Eicha*). Note, for example the following interpretation of the double language of *Eicha* 1:2:

"She shall surely cry (*bakho tivkeh*) in the night (*Eicha* 1:2). The [double language of the] two cries - what is its purpose? Rava said in the name of R. Yehuda: One is for the First Temple and the other is for the Second" (*Sanhedrin* 104b).

It seems appropriate to use the book of *Eicha* to cope with Israel's contemporary calamities as well; this book functions as a prism through which we regard all catastrophic events that affect Israel.

Eicha teaches us that we cannot allow a crisis simply to wash over the nation, leaving horror and devastation in its wake. Catastrophic events represent opportunities for introspection and profound change. The book teaches us to mourn deeply, to focus inward, and to turn our attention to the blessings that we had and the enormity of their loss.

Eicha also guides us to summon the boldness to question and the humility to accept that we do not always have the answers. Allowing for a modicum of disruption and alienation, *Eicha* shows us

how Israel turns directly to G-d, uncomprehending, and flinging accusations:

"Look, G-d and see! To whom have you done this?!... Young and old lie on the ground in the streets; my young women and young men felled by the sword - You killed on the day of Your rage, You slaughtered and You did not pity" (*Eicha* 2:20-21).

Yet *Eicha* allows for shifting modes in Israel's perception of G-d, who remains the abiding source of hope and goodness: "This I will think about, and I will have hope: G-d's kindnesses do not cease, His compassions do not end. They renew themselves every morning - great is Your loyalty!" (*Eicha* 3:21-22).

Anger, confusion, and pleas collide and commingle, allowing Israel to express a variety of fluctuating feelings. *Eicha* reminds us that humans will never fully comprehend G-d's designs. Yet we can certainly make decisions regarding how we respond to tragedy, whether or not we use it constructively, to grow and change as individuals and as a community.

Indeed, at the center of its central chapter, *Eicha* unexpectedly repeats the word "good," three times in succession, indicating that crisis produces glimpses of good, even as tragedy swirls around: "G-d is **good** to those who hope in Him, to the soul that seeks Him. It is **good** to hope in silence for G-d's salvations. It is **good** for the person to bear a burden in his youth" (*Eicha* 3:24-26).

And as the book winds down, Israel chooses to speak in a collective voice, finding strength, hope, and purpose in unity: "Return us to You G-d, and we will return; renew our days as days of old" (*Eicha* 5:21).

Lessons from *Eicha* gird us today, providing us with the vision and faith to emerge from this difficult time, stronger and better. Rising from the ashes of a shattered nation, we are privileged to witness unparalleled heroism and admirable acts of kindness. We can work toward forging a unified and stronger community,

allowing us to transform paralyzing grief into a communal mission to rebuild.

I conclude with *tefillot* to G-d that we should experience success in this difficult battle and witness a true "*venahafochu hu*" - may Hashem transform our nation's suffering into joy, our darkness into light, and our troubles into redemption.

Dedicated to the success and well-being of our courageous soldiers, to the memory of the fallen, to the refuah sheleimah of the wounded, and to the safe return of all the hostages.

1. *Eicha Rabba* 1:56 explains that *Eicha* 1:21 refers to Aharon's death.
2. *Eicha Rabba* 1:23 (explaining 1:2); 4:20; 5:6.
3. *Eicha Rabba* 2:4 posits that *Eicha* 2:4 refers to the death of the martyrs. *Eicha Rabba* 3:51 explains *Eicha* 3:51 as a lament over the children who died in the siege of Beitar.



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Profits and Prophets

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks זצ"ל

There are few more blazing passages in the whole of religious literature than the first chapter of the book of Yishayahu, the great “vision,” *chazon*, that gives its name to the Shabbat before Tisha B’Av, the saddest day of the Jewish year. It is more than great literature. It expresses one of the great prophetic truths, that a society cannot flourish without honesty and justice. It could not be more relevant to our time.

The Talmud (*Shabbat* 31a) states that when we leave this life and arrive at the world to come, the first question we will be asked will not be a conventionally religious one (“Did you set aside times for learning Torah?”). This question will come later, but the very first question is said to be: “Did you act honestly [*b’emunah*] in business?” I used to wonder how the rabbis felt certain about this. Death is, after all, “the undiscovered country, from whose bourn no traveler returns” (*Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 1). The answer it seems to me is this passage from Yishayahu:

“See how the faithful city has become a harlot! She once was full of justice; righteousness used to dwell in her – but now murderers! Your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water. Your rulers are rebels, companions of thieves; they all love bribes and chase after gifts. They do not defend the cause of the fatherless; the widow’s case does not come before them” (Yishayahu 1:21–23).

Jerusalem’s fate was sealed not by conventional religious failure but by the failure of people to act honestly. They engaged in sharp business practices that were highly profitable but hard to detect – mixing silver with baser metals, diluting wine. People were concerned with maximizing profits, indifferent to the fact that others would suffer. The political system too had become corrupt. Politicians were using their office and influence to personal advantage. People knew about this or suspected it – Yishayahu does not claim to be telling people something they didn’t already know; he does not expect to surprise his listeners. The fact that people had come to expect no better from their leaders was itself a mark of moral decline.

This, says Yishayahu, is the real danger: that widespread dishonesty and corruption saps the morale of a society, makes people cynical, opens up divisions between the rich and powerful and the poor and powerless, erodes the fabric of society and makes

people wonder why they should make sacrifices for the common good if everyone else seems to be bent on personal advantage. A nation in this condition is sick and in a state of incipient decline. What Yishayahu saw and said with primal force and devastating clarity is that sometimes (organized) religion is not the solution but itself part of the problem. It has always been tempting, even for a nation of monotheists, to slip into magical thinking: that we can atone for our sins or those of society by frequent attendances at the Temple, the offering of sacrifices, and conspicuous shows of piety. Few things, implies Yishayahu, make G-d angrier than this:

“The multitude of your sacrifices – what are they to Me?” says the L-rd... “When you come to appear before Me, who has asked this of you, this trampling of My courts? Stop bringing meaningless offerings! Your incense is detestable to Me... I cannot bear your evil assemblies. Your New Moon festivals and your appointed feasts My soul hates. They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; even if you offer many prayers, I will not listen” (Yishayahu 1:11–15).

The corrupt not only believe they can fool their fellow humans; they believe they can fool G-d as well. When moral standards begin to break down in business, finance, trade and politics, a kind of collective madness takes hold of people – the sages said *adam bahul al mamono*, meaning, roughly, “money makes us do wild things” – and people come to believe that they are leading a charmed life, that luck is with them, that they will neither fail nor be found out. They even believe they can bribe G-d to look the other way. In the end it all comes crashing down and those who suffer most tend to be those who deserve it least.

Yishayahu is making a prophetic point but one that has implications for economics and politics today and can be stated even in secular terms. The market economy is and must be a moral enterprise. Absent that, and eventually it will fail.

There used to be a belief among superficial readers of Adam Smith, prophet of free trade, that the market economy did not depend on morality at all: “It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest.”

It was the brilliance of the system that it turned self-interest into the common good by what Smith called, almost mystically, an “invisible hand.” Morality was not part of the system. It was unnecessary.

This was a misreading of Smith, who took morality very seriously indeed and wrote a book called *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*. But it was also a misreading of economics. This was made clear, two centuries later, by a paradox in Game Theory known as “The Prisoner’s Dilemma.” Without going into too much detail, this imagined two people faced with a choice (to stay silent, confess, or accuse the other). The outcome of their decision would depend on what the other person did, and this could not be known in advance. It can be shown that if both people act rationally in their own interest, they will produce an outcome that is bad for both of them. This seems to refute the basic premise of market economics, that the pursuit of self-interest serves the common good.

The negative outcome of the Prisoner’s Dilemma can only be avoided if the two people repeatedly find themselves in the same situation. Eventually they realize they are harming one another and themselves. They learn to cooperate, which they can only do if they trust one another, and they will only do this if the other has earned that trust by acting honestly and with integrity.

In other words, the market economy depends on moral virtues that are not themselves produced by the market, and may be undermined by the market itself. For if the market is about the pursuit of profit, and if we can gain at other people’s expense, then the pursuit of profit will lead, first to shady practices (“your silver has become dross, your choice wine is diluted with water”), then to the breakdown of trust, then to the collapse of the market itself.

A classic instance of this happened after the financial crash in 2008. For a decade, banks had engaged in doubtful practices, notably subprime mortgages and the securitisation of risk through financial instruments so complex that even bankers themselves later admitted they did not fully understand them. They continued to authorize them despite Warren Buffet’s warning in 2002 that subprime mortgages were “instruments of mass financial destruction.” The result was the crash. But that was not the source of the depression/recession that followed. That happened

because the banks no longer trusted one another. Credit was no longer freely available and in one country after another the economy stalled.

The key word, used by both Yishayahu and the sages, is *emunah*, meaning faithfulness and trust. Yishayahu in our *haftarah* twice uses the phrase *kiryah ne’emana*, “faithful city.” The sages say that in heaven we will be asked, “Did you conduct your business *b’emunah*?” – meaning, in such a way as to inspire trust. The market economy depends on trust. Absent that, and depend instead on contracts, lawyers, regulations and supervisory authorities, and there will be yet more scandals, collapses and crashes since the ingenuity of those who seek to sidestep the rules always exceeds those whose job it is to apply them. The only safe regulatory authority is conscience, the voice of G-d within the human heart forbidding us to do what we know is wrong but think we can get away with.

Yishayahu’s warning is as timely now as it was twenty-seven centuries ago. When morality is missing and economics and politics are driven by self-interest alone, trust fails and the society fabric unravels. That is how all great superpowers began their decline, and there is no exception.

In the long term, the evidence shows that it is sounder to follow prophets than profits.



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Beyond Tears: Mourning Jerusalem to See Its Joy

Rabbanit Mali Brofsky

This year has been challenging to contemplate Tisha B'Av. It feels like we have been in mourning since Simchat Torah, October 7th. This year, we don't need a reminder to mourn. Instead, I want to reflect on the famous words of Chazal: "Whoever mourns for Jerusalem will merit to see its happiness" (*Ta'anit* 30b).

What message are Chazal trying to convey? Clearly, there is a deeper conceptual message that goes beyond the literal, for Jews have been mourning the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple for thousands of years and have not yet experienced the complete joy of redemption.

Chazal's exhortation here appears to be prescriptive rather than descriptive. Chazal provide a formula for the Jewish people: to see the joy of redemption, it is essential to actively mourn the suffering and loss of Jerusalem.

Why is this the case? Rav Chaim of Volozhin draws a parallel to Ya'akov Avinu, who refused to be comforted over the loss of his son Yosef. As long as Ya'akov mourned, and the pain remained alive within him, Yosef remained alive in some sense. On a deep level, Ya'akov had not given up. This refusal to stop mourning embodies a refusal to accept reality. Similarly, the continued mourning over Jerusalem kept it alive in our hearts, against all odds, through thousands of years of exile.

From this perspective, mourning Jerusalem is not just a passive emotional experience, but an active experience that Chazal enjoin us to choose. This recalls Rav Soloveitchik's distinction between personal mourning for a loved one and the national and collective mourning of Tisha B'Av. He explains that when one loses a loved one, the pain is visceral and immediate. Therefore, the laws of mourning follow the natural pattern of human emotional experience: most intense during

shiva (the week of mourning), then during *shloshim* (the first month), and finally tapering off until the end of the first year.

In contrast, we may not feel the pain of mourning Jerusalem and the *Beit HaMikdash* as naturally. Therefore, we build up to it, starting with the three weeks from Shiva Asar B'Tammuz, intensifying on Rosh Chodesh for the Nine Days, then the week of Tisha B'Av, and culminating in the mourning of Tisha B'Av itself.

If so, mourning for Jerusalem contains more than an emotional aspect; it also includes a cognitive, intentional element. Contemplating the significance of the loss, its tragedy, and meaning, is an inherent part of the mourning of Tisha B'Av.

This may answer our question: what is the meaning of Chazal's statement that those who mourn Jerusalem will merit to see its happiness? Perhaps Chazal are suggesting that we should mourn our loss in a deep and sustained way, including *cheshbon hanefesh* – taking stock of our behavior. We should ask: How did we get here? Chazal provide the answer: *sinat chinam* – enmity, hatred, negativity toward each other. If we reflect on this seriously, this will evoke an emotional reaction of mourning.

What will happen next? The answer seems clear. If we seriously contemplate this question and let it penetrate our being and cause us pain, it will hopefully lead to action. We will realize that if we want this pain to end, we cannot wait for others to change their behavior or for an external solution. The only true locus of control we have is over our own actions. Everything else is in G-d's hands. And we will begin to ask ourselves: what can I change? How can I be more loving, kinder, and increase *ahavat chinam*, the love that Rav Kook says will counterbalance the *sinat chinam* and restore the *Mikdash*?

This year, the emotional component of mourning does not elude us as it perhaps has in past years. Yet, perhaps our

response should be to adopt Rav Soloveitchik's approach and mourn not just emotionally but also through deep reflection. This fusion of emotion and reflection will hopefully be the impetus for greater personal and collective change, a seriousness of purpose about what brought us to this place.

When we engage in that seriousness of purpose, small-mindedness melts away. We have no time for it. The stakes are too high. The country of Israel felt that intensity in the immediate aftermath of October 7. This Tisha B'Av, if we recommit to that sense of immediacy, importance, and dire need, something may change. We may continue to have differences of opinion and to disagree. But if this comes from a place of conscious, serious-minded, and urgent mourning, hopefully, it will be sweetened with *ahavat Yisrael*, and the poison of bitterness will be removed. Perhaps that will be the catalyst for true redemption, and we will merit to experience the rejoicing of Jerusalem.



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Olim Giving Back to Israel



Yoni Spigelman

Three years ago, Tali and I took one of our final steps in the *Aliyah* process. We went to the Israeli Consulate in DC with all our papers to get final approval to make the big move home.

It is interesting to look back at this moment. During this stage of our *Aliyah* process, we were filled with emotional ups and downs. It was both scary and exciting. We were both ready and very much unprepared for what *Aliyah* truly meant.

Now, nearly three years into our life in Israel, so much has changed. We've added a little Spigeldude to the family, we've moved (twice), and we have collectively experienced the horrors of these last eight months.

Tali and I have also found meaningful work here. I did not leave the EMS world (as was my plan). Instead, I now work for the world's largest volunteer EMS service, United Hatzalah of Israel, on their Development Team and as an EMT instructor (although it may surprise you that I sit all day in an office). Tali works as a

physical therapist for young children with special needs. Our children play with their friends in rapid-fire Hebrew, and we truly have a life here. It is just crazy to look back at this and see how far we've come.

Making *Aliyah* is more than just a physical relocation. It isn't even just a move 6,000+ miles away from where we grew up. It is a journey – our journey home. It is still scary, overwhelming, and frustrating, but it is also incredible.

Eliana Warshawsky

My year of *Sherut Leumi* was the perfect way to start my journey in Israel. I volunteered in a labor and delivery ward where I learned about Israeli culture, connected with people from many backgrounds, and learned Hebrew. Most importantly, it also helped me realize that I wanted to study nursing.

This year, I started nursing school in Machon Tal, where I'm studying in Hebrew. I couldn't have imagined two years ago, before beginning *Sherut Leumi*, that I would be able to study in Hebrew. While the language does make learning more challenging, serving in *Sherut* gave me the basics to begin, and in school, my Hebrew is continuing to improve.

Machon Tal is a religious college located in Jerusalem. My classes are with other religious girls who are all welcoming and patient with the language barrier. There are many other girls who, like me, are new immigrants, and we support each other through the challenging moments.

Thanks to my year in *Sherut Leumi*, integrating into Israeli society has been so much easier, and I'm so grateful I got the opportunity to serve and give back.

It's been almost a year since I completed my service and made *Aliyah*. I got married, began settling down, and am working towards my degree. *Sherut* was a huge transition, but it led to me being able to build the life I dreamed of, and I can't wait for many more years in the most amazing country!



Laws and Customs of Tisha B'Av

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

“On the 9th of Av, it was decreed upon our ancestors that they would not enter the Land [of Israel], the First Temple was destroyed, the Second Temple was destroyed, and the city of Beitar was captured and plowed over” (*Ta'anit* 26b). Thus, both the First and Second Temples were destroyed on Tisha B'Av. The first *Beit HaMikdash* stood for 410 years (*Yoma* 9a), and the Babylonians entered it on the 7th of Av, set it on fire on the 9th of Av, and most of it burned down on the 10th of Av. Therefore, the laws of mourning begin before Tisha B'Av and continue until the 10th of Av.

Before the fast

From midday onwards, it is customary to study only subjects permitted on Tisha B'Av, although some are lenient about this (*Shulchan Aruch* 553:2).

At the *seudah mafseket*, the final meal before the fast, one should not eat more than one cooked dish (*Mishnah, Ta'anit* 26b). How, then, can one eat a satisfying meal before the fast? Some eat a large meal before Mincha (*Mishnah Berurah*, 552:9) and then the *seudah mafseket* (on the floor, with bread and a little ash). Others eat one meal after Mincha, without a cooked dish, but with other filling foods, and at the end, they sit on the floor and eat an egg with a little ash.

The fast begins at sunset (553:2), at which point one removes their shoes (553:2) and goes to *shul*. In the synagogue, the curtain of the *Aron* is moved or removed (*Rema* 559:2), and the lights are dimmed (*Aruch HaShulchan*).

The fast itself

On Tisha B'Av, five things are forbidden: eating and drinking, bathing, anointing, wearing leather shoes, and marital relations (*Ta'anit* 30a).

Bathing is prohibited, even washing one's hands. Therefore, when washing hands

in the morning, one washes only the fingertips (*Shulchan Aruch* 554:2). The same applies after using the restroom (*Rema* 551:11). If one's hands become dirty, one may clean them with water and, if necessary, soap (554:9).

Medicinal ointments, petroleum jelly, and unscented deodorants are permitted (*Shulchan Aruch* 554:15), as they are not for pleasure. Scented deodorants should be avoided.

Leather shoes or shoes with leather coverings are prohibited (*Ta'anit* 30a). If there is only a leather decoration that does not support the foot, one may be lenient (*Kaf HaChaim*, 214:10). Non-leather shoes are permitted, even if comfortable, but if there are less comfortable shoes or slippers, it is preferable.

One who performs work on Tisha B'Av will never see a blessing from it (*Ta'anit* 30b). However, this is not a prohibition but depends on local custom. The accepted practice is not to work until midday. After midday, important work is permitted, and if there is a significant loss, work is permitted all day (554:23). The reason for the prohibition of work is that it distracts from mourning. Therefore, work that is not distracting, such as turning on lights, driving a car, etc., is permitted. Additionally, after midday, preparations for the end of the fast begin. If food needs to be prepared for children or the ill, it is permitted throughout the fast.

Greeting others is forbidden (554:20), as is saying “good morning.” Torah study is prohibited as it brings joy, but one may study subjects related to the destruction or other sad matters, such as the Book of *Iyov* (Job).

One should not sit on a chair but rather on the floor or a low stool (less than 24 cm high, or up to 30 cm if necessary).

Even if not in danger, one who has fallen ill or whose entire body has weakened is exempt from the fast (554:6) and need not eat in small portions. Up to 30 days after childbirth, a woman is exempt

(554:6), but after that, she is obligated to fast. However, in practice, this depends on her strength, nursing, the baby's age, etc., and she should consult a rabbi. A pregnant woman is obligated to fast, but in practice, there are often leniencies due to concerns for the fetus, and she should consult a rabbi.

Technically, children are exempt from fasting. It is customary to train them to fast for part of the day from the age when they understand the mourning for the destruction. However, since this is only for educational purposes, children should not be overburdened with fasting. Some have them abstain from eating and drinking at night, while others have them fast until 10 AM or a little later. In any case, it is advisable to give children only simple foods so they feel the mourning for the destruction.

After the fast

The fast ends when three medium-sized stars appear, about 26–27 minutes after sunset (according to the Israeli calendar). It is customary to wash hands three times, recite *Kiddush Levanah*, but it is good to eat something before *Kiddush Levanah*.

All the prohibitions of the Nine Days continue until midday on the 10th of Av, as the Temple continued burning, and most of the *Beit HaMikdash* burned on the 10th.



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon

is the Nasi of World Mizrahi.

He is the Founder and Chairman of Sula-mot and La'Ofek, and serves as the Chief Rabbi of Gush Etzion, and Rosh Yeshiva of the Jerusalem College of Technology.

The Unity of Tisha B'Av and Tu B'Av

Mimi Lebrecht

Elie Beer, the founder of United Hatzalah, found an unexpected source of strength amidst the chaos of October 7th and the days that followed. In an interview, Beer revealed the singular thing that kept his team from falling apart: the hugs they shared. Hatzalah volunteers from all walks of life embraced each other throughout the days and long nights. This simple act of human connection provided solace, helping them endure the severe trauma they faced. It was this profound sense of caring, togetherness, and unity that enabled them to stay strong in the face of unimaginable adversity.

The Jewish community often experiences cycles of unity and division. When disaster strikes, we come together as one nation, united by a common cause. In those moments, we are willing to do whatever it takes for our fellow Jews, even those we do not agree with politically or know personally. However, as time passes and the immediate threat fades, we tend to retreat into our own societies, associating primarily with those who share our specific background or beliefs. How can we sustain this unity we all felt?

The *Mishnah* states that there were no days as joyous for the Jewish people as Tu B'Av (15th of Av) and Yom Kippur (*Ta'anit* 4:8). This statement is puzzling. While Yom Kippur is universally significant to this day, if Tu B'Av was such an important festival, why is it now largely ignored?

The *Mishnah* describes Tu B'Av as a day when women would dance in vineyards, and young men were encouraged to choose a bride. But why was Tu B'Av chosen as a day of happiness, celebration, and marriage?

The Talmud (*Ta'anit* 31a) brings several different reasons, including, amongst others: the conclusion of the deaths in the desert of those who sinned with the spies; the allowance for the 12 tribes to marry each other in the era of Yehoshua and the civil war with Binyamin (*Shoftim* 21); Hoshea ben Elah, the final king of the Northern Kingdom, removing the barriers that prevented people from traveling to Yerushalayim; and the conclusion of the annual wood cutting needed for the altar of the *Beit HaMikdash*.

While these reasons seem remarkably disparate and don't appear to link to the practice of the day, a common theme can be discerned: reconciliation and unity. The tribes could marry together, the generation which scorned Hashem and His land finally gave way for a new era, the two kingdoms of ancient Israel reached some level of reconciliation, and the flame on the altar which represents G-d's connection to the world was kept alight.

If you had to choose one day as the day of intense joy and marriage, the merging of the lives of two individuals, a day of reconciliation and unity seems most fitting. The *Mishnah* in *Ta'anit* further records that the women would wear white borrowed dresses when attempting to secure a match. The Talmud explains that the significance of borrowed dresses lies in promoting equality and unity, ensuring that no one would be distinguished by their economic status.

The Talmud teaches that the reason for the destruction of the Second Temple, and the exile we are currently suffering, was "*sinat chinam*," often translated as "baseless hatred" (*Yoma* 9b). But is it fair to say that we walk around with a deep,

baseless hatred? Rabbi Anthony Manning has pointed out, however, that throughout Tanach, the word "*sinah*" means rejection, not hatred. The reason for the destruction was the baseless rejection of those different from us.

If this is all true, and we need unity now more than ever, why don't we commemorate Tu B'Av more noticeably? Rav Tzadok HaKohen explains that after the arrival of *Mashiach* a new *Yom Tov* will be established. It will last seven days, begin on Tisha B'Av, and have its climax on the final day, Tu B'Av (*Pri Tzadik*). Perhaps we don't celebrate Tu B'Av today as it is a festival which belongs to the future. Only once the Jewish people, through our intense efforts, fix the schisms that divide us, will we merit to see the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash* and celebrate Tisha B'Av and Tu B'Av together fully, soon, and in our days.



Mimi Lebrecht

is a Mizrahi UK fellow and Mizrahi Shalhevet graduate, as well as an accountant. Mimi and her husband Rabbi Dovi Lebrecht will begin their roles as the rabbinic couple in Shenley United Synagogue this September.



JEWES with VIEWS

We asked five accomplished Jews from around the world: What has given you comfort since Simchat Torah?



Rachel Dratch

We made *Aliyah* this past summer and have been overwhelmed with gratitude by both the little things and the big things. Since Simchat Torah, this continues.

The ‘little’ and the ‘big’ things – like kindness between people in the supermarket, a song on the radio, flowers blooming, children singing in *gan*, *Shabbat Shalom* between strangers, the “only in Israel” moments, the emails, calls, and WhatsApps from so many friends and family all over the world checking in, sunsets, sunrises, *Hallel*, tears shared at too many funerals, hugs and moments of connection when eyes meet, coffee at the local bakery, Tanach coming alive each week in the garden and in the news, meeting new friends over *kiddush* in *shul*, sustaining old friendships over the phone, and perhaps, most of all, connecting with all kinds of Jews from all over the world to create meaningful learning experiences that promote resilience – a distinctively Jewish kind, through my work at the ANU museum in Tel Aviv. Come visit us and see what I mean, meet the people, and talk to them, share your stories, and listen to theirs.

At the end of the day, it’s the *mifgashim*, those moments of connection, that comfort, sustain, and inspire me, now more than ever.

Rachel Dratch is a proud new olah who lives with her husband in Jerusalem. She serves as Director of Global Education at the ANU Museum of the Jewish People in Tel Aviv and works as an educational coach and consultant. She previously served for many years as Director of Educational Innovation at Prizmah in New York.



Rabbi Marcus Rosenberg

Since Simchat Torah, I have drawn comfort from the stories and examples of heroism, bravery, and selflessness exhibited by Israeli soldiers and civilians, as well as from the State of Israel itself. Soldiers, both religious and secular, are risking their lives not begrudgingly but with profound pride and a sense of answering the call of the hour.

Civilians, including mothers, wives, and parents of soldiers, are engaging in heroic efforts to raise families without their spouses present. Their struggle and suffering are also inspiring. So is that of the business owner, struggling to keep things afloat, pay staff, and carry on. These people are standing up for our nation in our time of need, and they give me hope.

As antisemitism has risen around the world, the existence of the State of Israel also gives me comfort. Many people have been drawing parallels and distinctions between now and the antisemitism that spread across Europe before the Holocaust, but the greatest difference now is Israel. Israel, though embattled and besieged, is still the home to return to where we can defend ourselves with our heads held high.

Thousands of miles from Israel, I draw comfort from the people of Israel and the State of Israel.

Rabbi Marcus Rosenberg is the Rabbi of the Hamayan Minyan and teacher at Mount Scopus Memorial College in Melbourne. He earned his semicha from the Rabbanut in Israel while studying at Yeshivat Har Etzion.



Adi Samson

Even just asking the question, and searching for comfort, is in itself a powerful statement.

In reflecting on the last nine months, alongside the pain, there are three significant anchors of comfort:

Firstly, this war exposed the strengths of love. This was expressed in the massive participation in the funerals of our soldiers, in condolence visits to the families of the heroes, in the citizens' mobilization like Hanoch Daum's project to help reservists' businesses. We also saw the dedication of the Jewish Diaspora through donations and volunteering on missions.

Secondly, the war challenged us to reaffirm our religious beliefs. If until today, the belief that we are living a life of redemption was a matter of learned tradition, the events of this year invited me to relook at those prophecies. Not only in the reality of "each person under their vine and fig tree" but also in the reality of "plunder and devastation," which affect my personal and professional life, my children and grandchildren growing up here in the Land of Israel.

Thirdly, admiration for the heroism: The heroism of the soldiers, the citizens, the families of the fallen, and especially the powerful women among us, who raise a voice of faith as the chosen people, in the struggle for our existence as a Jewish people in our land.

Adi Samson is the CEO of Aseh Lecha Rav, a community rabbinic training program, and an organization and community consultant.



Rabbi Binyamin Zimmerman

Part of the secret of Tisha B'Av is that in the depth of destruction, we recognize the source of consolation. At midday, we arise from our chairs, acknowledging that G-d does not allow the destruction of His eternal people without providing solace.

Amidst the Simchat Torah horrors reminiscent of past pogroms, a nation stands against tyranny in a way unimaginable the day before. On October 6th, characterized by infighting similar to the times before the destruction of the *Beit HaMikdash*, Simchat Torah told a different story. The destruction reminded us of our deep-seated connection.

On October 7th, the barriers that viciously separated us throughout the year vanished overnight. Sometimes, we need our enemies to remind us who we are and what truly unifies us.

That unity brought reserve soldiers of all ages to the battlefield, risking everything for their people, land, and country. It united secular, religious, settler, and every other Jew to stand against evil on the battlefield and in the warzones in universities and neighborhoods worldwide. It is a unity of **יְשָׂרָאֵל אוֹרֵי תּוֹרָה וְקוֹדֶשׁ אֶרֶץ הַבְּרִיחַ הַזֶּה** – the Jewish nation, the Torah, and G-d are one, even if not apparent to all.

After almost a year of fighting and hundreds of days on reserve duty, that unity still overpowers the pain. It contains the key to ending this war and all our troubles, and that is a true consolation.

Rabbi Binyamin Zimmerman is Head of Mizrahi's Musmachim Program. Rabbi Zimmerman is serving in reserve duty since October 7 as part of the Halacha Unit of the IDF Rabbinate and recently received an Outstanding Soldier Award.



Ellie Menora

Initially, the words **בְּיַחַד נִנְצָח** didn't have such a powerful impact on me. On October 7th, I was on *shlichut* in Binghamton, NY with my husband Ben and five kids. Ben was immediately called up to *miluim* and boarded a flight on October 8th. I was left "alone" with five kids and hundreds of students in our JLIC community in Binghamton. But soon I realized I was never actually alone.

I received so much love and support from family, friends, colleagues, our students and even from complete strangers. Packages with toys began to arrive in the mail. Sweatshirts for my kids that read my Abba is a superhero from someone I had never met. An "Eishet Chayil" package of gifts for me, food for an entire Shabbat from some old camp friends, meals from Jewish neighbors in Binghamton, around the clock babysitting help from our students, and I can honestly go on and on.

So what gives me comfort is having actually felt that **בְּיַחַד** – the genuine feeling of knowing that so many Jews out there care about me, and knowing that only together we can get through this and *b'ezrat Hashem* bring *Mashiach*.

Ellie Menora made Aliyah from London. Ellie and her husband Ben are graduates of Mizrahi's Shalhevet program. They recently completed 3 years of shlichut at JLIC at Binghamton University, and are the incoming Directors at JLIC Mizrahi at Reichman University, Herzliya.



Remembering Kurt Rothschild

Chanie Canterman

Sunday, the 18th of Tammuz 5782, a brilliant light that shone for over a century was extinguished. Gershon ben Mordechai – Kurt Rothschild – departed from this world. Israel lost a titan. I lost a friend.

Kurt Rothschild ז"ל was a quiet, diminutive giant of *chessed* who interfaced daily with national leaders, *yeshiva* heads, and hospital directors. Yet he considered no one too insignificant for his friendship.

For me, he was the wise advisor par excellence. At the same time, he was like a dear uncle and confidante, the very soul of discretion.

In the summer of 2012, two years after I launched Friendship Circle in Israel (a branch of the International Friendship Circle - USA, a social organization for youth with special needs), Kurt and Edith Rothschild fulfilled their lifelong dream to make *Aliyah*. At that time, I was struggling to learn the ropes with our start-up NGO. I lacked the training and tools for how to share our story, generate financing, and gather the strength to flourish like other Friendship Circles around the world.

Someone suggested that we meet with Kurt Rothschild, President of the World Mizrahi movement. "Not to worry," we were told, "just walk into his office. Mr. Rothschild can read your heart."

It took a while to muster the courage and knock timidly on his office door at World Mizrahi headquarters. Betty, his loyal and protective secretary, asked if I had an appointment. "No, I don't, but I would like to make one regarding the Friendship Circle of Central Jerusalem." Across the

room sat the shortest man I had ever met, with the kindest, yet most penetrating eyes, radiating the command of an army general. "Who is she?" he demanded of Betty, "I have no time for appointments today or this week." After apologizing for coming unannounced, I said, "My name is Chanale (Chanie) Canterman. I came hoping for Mr. Rothschild's guidance in nurturing my organization for youth with special needs. It was with them in mind that I'd forgone my English manners and knocked on your door uninvited."

Kurt stared hard at me. It was one very long minute.

Finally, in a totally different tone, he said, "Pull up a chair – but you must shout because I don't hear well!"

Ever since then, Kurt Rothschild became a listening ear and an open heart regarding both my community involvement and my personal concerns. And, of course, he became a pillar of the Jerusalem Friendship Circle, helping us grow from two annual programs to our current 18. We would talk at least once a month, in person or by phone.

Kurt instructed me to "send an email regarding every Friendship Circle event; I may just show up to see what you do."

At our second meeting, Kurt reprimanded me: "Why didn't you tell me you are also the Chabad *shlich*a to Talbiya/Mamilla? Google your name! That's another huge part of your life!

"Your first name should be Chanie – Chabad *shlich*a. One of your programs should be the Friendship Circle. It brings honor to your Rebbe whom I so admired.

And now I know that it was your Chabad chutzpah that empowered you to visit unannounced – classic Chabad chutzpah, driven by pure mission. Good," he chuckled, "now we're on the same page."

Over the next decade, Betty would give me a heads-up when Mr. Rothschild would be showing up for an event – whether for Friendship Circle or Chabad.

The first event he attended – and a very unlikely choice – was a year-end girls' volunteer salute in 2014. Yet there he was, sitting in the crowd with our then 70 volunteers, beaming as he watched a roundup video of the year's Friendship Circle programs. As the honored guest, Kurt told the volunteers, "You just made the best investment in life, one that is guaranteed to yield dividends. Giving and being kind to those who deserve it most brings true happiness and extra doses of oxygen that promote a long, fulfilling life. I have been volunteering since I was 12 years old – and I'm still doing it at age 94 – so all of you have a way to go yet! Grab every good deed you can – they will refine this galaxy. In addition, they will serve as your greatest brownie points and advocates when you need them in the world to come."

The next day, he called me to his office. He sat me down and said, "Never postpone goodwill. We do things NOW. Betty, please write."

Then and there he dictated a letter to a donor whom he thought would be interested in becoming involved in Friendship Circle programs. Over the coming years, this scene would repeat itself numerous times.

Kurt was intrigued by the miraculous story of our annual Chanukah project in Mamilla – of how a planned Xmas tree turned into a giant Chanukiah with a concert and dignitaries lighting each night. In 2016, he was our guest of honor, making a Herculean effort to climb the steps in order to light the Chanukiah on Mamilla Avenue. It was a beautiful sight. Until the COVID pandemic, Kurt attended the lightings – never missing an opportunity (and a hot donut), exemplifying his credo of ‘sharing your own light and goodness with others.’

Kurt had a sweet tooth. For each *chag*, I would prepare one of my favorite desserts for his family. It’s the little gestures that mean the most to truly great people. The look on the faces of Kurt and Edith Rothschild when I brought over a Chanie dessert was priceless.

It is a great and rare gift when a benefactor allows you to show appreciation. When this happens, it empowers one to aspire to ever-greater accomplishments. Kurt understood that more than his delight in receiving a cake, he was giving me the gift of reciprocity.

In 2018, Friendship Circle leaders from America came to Israel to experience the trailblazing work of Israel’s superhero organizations – Aleh, Alyn, Shalva, and others. Naturally, I sent Kurt an invitation to the concluding dinner. I repeated what I wrote each time – that this was a ‘What’s News’ email as he’d requested. His presence at the event would be an honor. At 9:15pm, Mr. Rothschild appeared. I was amazed. By then, he was 97 years old.

That night, Kurt spoke from the soul. He had grasped instantly that he had an unequivocal message for leaders of special needs communities – most of them unaffiliated – from across the US. He introduced himself humbly as Kurt from World Mizrahi who helps *Am Yisrael* in Israel. “Every day, I am overwhelmed with gratitude that I have opportunities to help others. *These are life’s treats!*”

“But *you*,” he continued, “are doing holy work, turning impediments into opportunities. *This* is the secret of life. Live to make it gracious and worthwhile for others, and you will never be alone. G-d stands with those who are kind.”

“Moshe had a speech impediment; he had special needs. He pleaded with G-d not to be spokesman for the Israelites. ‘No one will listen to me,’ he cried. G-d promised to accompany him through the challenge, right to the end. Moshe then led his people through the desert to settle miraculously in the holy land. Return to your



Kurt celebrating his 101st birthday with the World Mizrahi staff.

communities, continue your life-changing activities for people with disabilities, and G-d will be with you all the way.”

Pin drop. The delegates were blown away by this humble yet formidable Jewish leader.

COVID-19 was a personal blow to Kurt. For him, working from the office, fielding endless calls, was his life. Kurt felt like a prisoner. Yet he still worked feverishly on the phone and wouldn’t let his people down.

In September 2020, I brought Kurt a Friendship Circle mask along with a blueberry lemon crême brûlée, and wished him Shabbat Shalom from the elevator of his building. Kurt donned the mask and insisted on following me downstairs to talk outside in the Lev Rechavia Gardens. He began to reminisce about life, his children and grandchildren whom he adored, and about his work.

“It is no great feat,” he said, “for people to be charitable if they are affluent. But very few are truly *present* in their *mitzvot*. In mundane matters, it’s easy. We entrench ourselves in the daily doings of life. But G-d wants that in performing *mitzvot*, we be present just as much, ensuring the recipient feels good. It’s a challenge for me to bequeath this to others.” I looked at him, and recognized his frustration.

Kurt celebrated his 100th birthday on Chanukah as COVID was raging. He received his 8th homemade birthday cake with festive balloons and called to give us a blessing. “On the day my *mazal* is a superpower for the hundredth time,” he said, “I bless you with good health, *nachas* and success – from strength to strength.” We expressed our hope that we should celebrate his 101st birthday and more, together in person.

G-d granted our wish. My family merited to sit with Kurt and Edith in their home on his last birthday in this world. We feasted as children do, on apple-cranberry

cupcakes, chocolate soufflés, vodka cake and of course – birthday cake #101. Kurt’s eyes shone. He thanked me for bringing joy to Jerusalem’s exceptional children and showered us with blessings. We thanked him for being the spirit, support and friend behind our *shlichut* and blessed him to live to see the *geulah* in good health together with Edith.

As we reached the door, Kurt made a request. “Chanale, I would like to *bentch* you with *birkat haKohanim*.” I was taken aback, and my knees shook a little as I crouched to receive the blessing, “*Yevarechecha...*” The sound of Kurt’s blessing still reverberates within me. I suppressed any negative thoughts as to why this year specifically, he wanted to bless me. But, of course, he knew. He knew it was soon time to pass the baton to those with whom he’d come in contact. He was sending me off to work with the most cherished Jewish words he knew. Thank you, Kurt. For everything.

The world was blessed to have a diamond that shone a brilliant light upon *Am Yisrael* for over a century. May his memory be a resounding “*Yevarechecha*” for all of *Am Yisrael*.



Chanie Canterman
is the Co-Chabad Shlicha to Talbiya-Mamilla
and Friendship Circle in Jerusalem.

Project Achdut: Forging Unity Amongst Israel's Youth – Hand in Hand

Inbar Gabay Zada

In the heart of Jerusalem, a revolutionary initiative is taking shape. Project Achdut, spearheaded by Sulamot and its visionary founder Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon, in partnership with the Rothenberg Family Foundation, is redefining what unity means for Israel's diverse youth population. As the nation grapples with the aftermath of recent events and long-standing divisions, this groundbreaking program emerges as a powerful force for change, bringing together young people from across the religious and secular spectrum.

"Unity isn't just a concept – it's a practice and a way of life," Rav Rimon explains, his eyes alight with passion. "And it's most powerful when it starts with our young people." This philosophy forms the cornerstone of Project Achdut, which aims to bridge gaps and foster understanding in a practical way among Israel's next generation of leaders.

The project's flagship program, "Yad B'Yad" (Hand in Hand), is a testament to this vision. It brings together 60 youth leaders – 30 from Sulamot's Religious Zionist-identified "TorahNoar" project and 30 from the secular-identified "Chamesh Etzbaot" organization. These young visionaries engage in four intensive workshops, collaborating on real-world projects. The impact extends far beyond these initial participants, as they jointly develop programming for thousands of peers in both organizations. This creates a powerful ripple effect, bridging diverse backgrounds and challenging preconceptions across a wide spectrum of Israeli youth.

Shimrit, a participant from TorahNoar, reflects on the eye-opening experience: "We don't know a lot about each other. That's something that really came out during our joint meetings. And before even trying to understand where we are coming from, we need to get to know each other. To see that there's a whole world of people in my own country that I never even have the opportunity to meet."

This sentiment encapsulates the core challenge that Project Achdut seeks to address. In a country as diverse as Israel, it's all too easy for communities to become isolated, leading to misunderstandings and divisions. By bringing these young people together, the program creates a space for genuine connection and mutual understanding.

Moshe, a participant from Chamesh Etzbaot, adds his perspective on the program's importance: "We were attacked on October 7th when



we were not united. Maybe the *tikkun* (correction) that we need to do is through unity.” His words reflect a growing realization among many Israelis that national unity is not just a lofty ideal but a practical necessity for the country’s resilience and future.

The program’s unique approach combines traditional study methods with physical activities, creating a holistic experience that engages participants on multiple levels. “We feel that physical training creates a feeling of closeness,” notes another participant, Omer, who hails from Chamesh Etzbaot, a movement that focuses on sports as a means to bond and grow. “This innovative blend of mind and body activities fosters a deeper sense of connection among us as we make new friends and are immersed in new experiences.”

Indeed, the program strikes a powerful balance: when TorahNoar hosts, participants engage in *chavruta* study sessions focusing on topics relevant to modern Israeli society through the lens of our Sages. When Chamesh Etzbaot hosts, the focus shifts to sports activities that encourage bonding, teamwork, and trust. This combination of intellectual engagement and physical connection creates a powerful synergy. Participants find themselves breaking down barriers and forming friendships that might have seemed unlikely or even impossible before the program.

Rav Eli Taragin, CEO of Sulamot, shares his vision for the project: “We sat and dreamed about how we can connect Israeli society by starting with the youth from all sectors. Project Achdut is the realization of that dream. It’s about creating a shared language and shared experiences that transcend our differences.”

This shared language is crucial in a society as diverse as Israel’s. By finding common ground and shared values, participants in Project Achdut are laying the foundation for a more cohesive and understanding society. “We’re learning to see beyond labels and stereotypes,” shares Roni. “I feel like I’m recognizing the humanity and worth in people who may seem different at first glance.”

The impact of Project Achdut extends far beyond the immediate participants. As Rav Rimon explains, “Every participant in Project Achdut becomes an ambassador for unity. They carry this experience back to their communities, their schools, their families. It’s how we create lasting change.”

This ripple effect is a key part of the program’s strategy for broader societal impact. By empowering these young leaders with the tools

and experiences to bridge divides, Project Achdut is seeding change throughout Israeli society.

The program culminates in a series of collaborative projects and a grand finale mega-event that is currently being planned. This event showcases the participants’ joint efforts, celebrating their achievements and serving as a powerful demonstration of what’s possible when diverse groups come together with open hearts and minds. It’s not content with mere dialogue or theoretical discussions about unity. Instead, it pushes participants to actively collaborate, to work together on tangible projects that make a real difference in their communities.

“Unity doesn’t mean uniformity,” adds Hovav Ozen, TorahNoar’s project director. “It’s not about erasing differences or creating a homogeneous society. Rather, it’s about fostering a deep respect for diversity while also recognizing the fundamental bonds that unite all Israelis.”

This nuanced approach to unity is particularly crucial in today’s polarized world. As societies around the globe grapple with division and conflict, Project Achdut offers a model for bringing people together without compromising their unique identities and beliefs.

“The invitation is open to all who share this vision,” adds Rav Eli Taragin. “Join us as we write a new chapter in Israel’s story – one of unity, respect, and shared dreams. It’s an ambitious goal, to be sure, but one that feels increasingly within reach thanks to the dedicated efforts of programs like Project Achdut and the generous support of partners like the Rothenberg Family Foundation.”

As the sun sets over Jerusalem and Gush Etzion, Rav Rimon’s final words resonate with a mix of accomplishment and anticipation: “In unity, we find our strength. In action, we forge our future. Project Achdut isn’t just a program – it’s a movement, and it’s only just beginning.”

Together, hand in hand (Yad B’Yad), we’re not just talking about change – we’re making it happen.

Inbar Gabay Zada is Director of Development at Sulamot. For those interested in supporting or participating in Project Achdut, the opportunity to make a difference is just an email away. Contact Sulamot at office@sulamot.org to learn more about how you can be part of this inspiring movement for change.



הַמִּזְרָחִי HAMIZRACHI

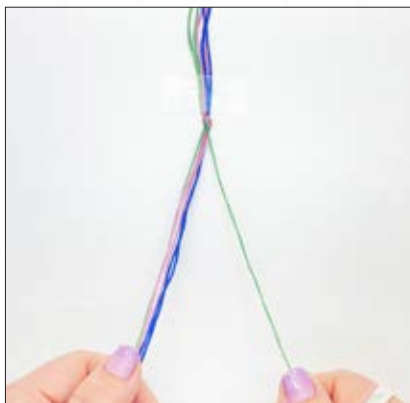
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DESIGNED BY: LEAH RUBIN

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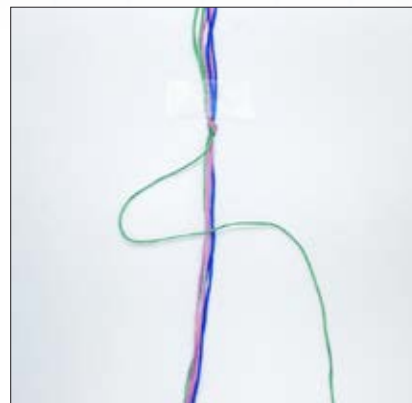
PROMOTE ACHDUT: MAKE FRIENDSHIP BRACELETS FOR YOUR FRIENDS!



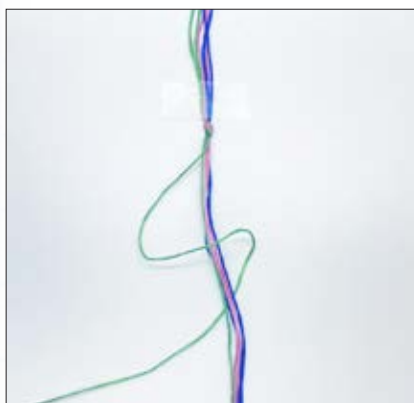
Take 6 colored strings (2 of each color) measured to 45 cm, and make a knot leaving 7 cm at the top. Tape the top of the knot to help hold the bracelet down.



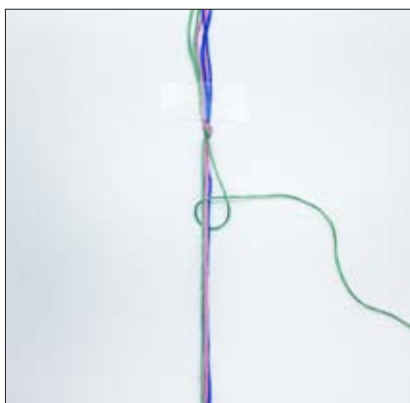
Separate one of the colors from the rest and remember to alternate between each of the same colored strings each time you switch colors.



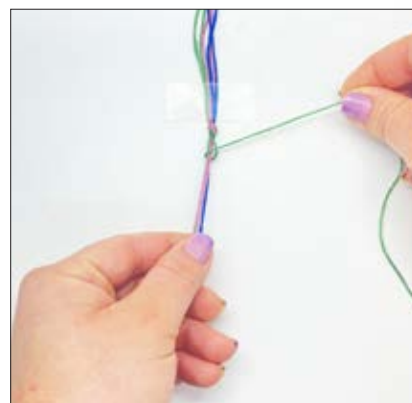
Create a loop across the rest of the strings.



With the first loop still there, take the end of the string and wrap it around the back of the strings.



Then take the end of the string and pull it through the first loop



Using both hands, pull the string up until it knots tightly at the top. Continue this process until you have a small chunk of that color and then change to the next color.



After you have repeated this step with the colors and you measure the bracelet on your wrist, knot off the end of the bracelet.



For an added flair, braid the ends past the knot.



Finally, knot together both ends of the bracelet (best to do this on the person's wrist so you know that it fits!) Enjoy!



MEET YEHUDIT NISAYHO



September 21, 1925 – August 15, 2003 (3 Tishrei 5686 – 17 Av 5763)

Yehudit Nisayho was a spy with thousands of faces. She remembered every detail about any person she saw and was fluent in six languages. Yehudit was born in Holland but moved to Belgium with her family when she was young. Growing up, Yehudit's father served as a major role model for his two children as he would help buy weapons for the underground Haganah organization. When World War II broke out Yehudit's family moved to Tel Aviv. After graduating, she joined Israel's intelligence services. She was able to blend in anywhere and because of this she was chosen for the most important mission of bringing war criminal Adolf Eichmann, the infamous Nazi, to Israel to be tried. After WWII Eichmann had managed to escape to Argentina. Only the best of the Mossad's agents took part in the complex campaign to capture him, and Yehudit was the only woman. At age fifty, Yehudit Nisayho retired from the intelligence service where she was the most senior woman to serve in the Mossad. Yehudit returned to university and studied law and, later on, became the head of the Hebrew Writers' Association and a political activist.



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



DID YOU KNOW?

- Since learning Torah is a joyful activity, it is prohibited to do so on Tisha B'Av.
- Some people sleep without a pillow on Tisha B'Av as to not be as comfortable as they normally would be.
- Tisha B'Av is the only fast other than Yom Kippur that begins the evening beforehand.

Test Your Knowledge



What famous historical event began on Tisha B'Av in 1942?

What is a part of the Seudat Mafseket?

What are the special poems that are read after *Ma'ariv* and *Shacharit* on Tisha B'Av?

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

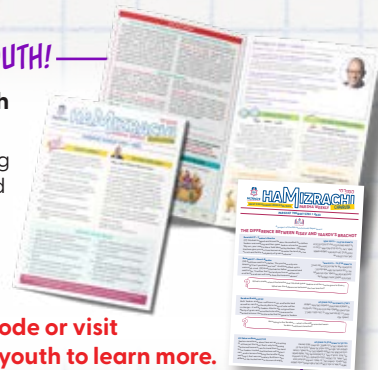
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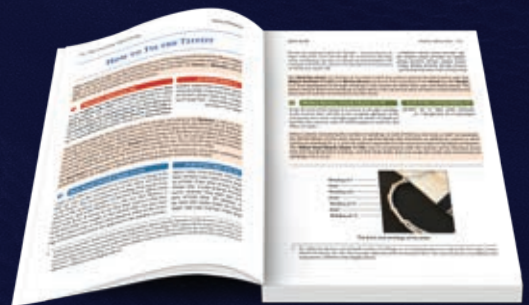
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