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Religious Zionism – Ezra 1

וּבִשְׁנַת אַחַּת לְכוֹּרֶשׁ מֶלֶהְ פָּבַּס לִכְלוֹת דְּבַר־יִהוָה מִפְּי יִרְמָיָה הֵצִיר יְהוָה אֶת־רוֹּחַ כְּרֶשׁ מֶלֶהְ פָּבַּס נִיְעָבֶר־ קוֹל בְּכָל־מַלְכוּתוֹ וְגַם־בְּמִכְחָב לֵאמְר: כָּה אָמַר כָּרֶשׁ מֶלֶהְ פָּבַס כָּל מַמְלְכוֹת הָאָׁרֶץ נָתוּ לִי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי הַשְּׁמֵיִם וְהְוּא־פָּקְד עָלַי לִבְנְוֹת־לְוֹ בַּיִת יְהוָהֹ אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁרָאֵׁל הָוּא הָאֱלֹהִים אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשָׁלָם: וְכָל־הַנִּשְׁאִר מְכָּל־ לִירוּשְׁלָם אֲשֶׁר בִּיהוּזְה וְיָבֶן אֶת־בִּית יְהוָה אֱלָהִי יְשְׁרָאֹל הְנְעִי מְלְּמֹוֹ בְּכֶסֶף וּבְוָהָב וּבִרְכִוּשׁ וּבִּבְהַמָּה עִם־הַנְּנְדָבׁה לְבֵית הָאֱלֹהִים הַמְּלְמוֹת אָבְרִשְׁלָ ם: וַיָּלְוּמוּ רָאשֵׁי הָאָבׁוֹת לְיהוּדָה וּבִנְיָמוֹ וְהַכּּהָנִים וְהַלְוֹיֵם לְכֵל הֵעִיר הָאֱלֹהִים אֶת־רוּחוֹ לַצְלְוֹת לִבְנוֹת אֶת־בֵּית יְהָוָה אֲשֶׁר בִּירוּשֶׁלָם:

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, when the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah was fulfilled, the LORD roused the spirit of King Cyrus of Persia to issue a proclamation throughout his realm by word of mouth and in writing as follows: Thus said King Cyrus of Persia: The LORD God of Heaven has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has charged me with building Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Anyone of you of all His people—may his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem that is in Judah and build the House of the LORD God of Israel, the God that is in Jerusalem; and all who stay behind, wherever he may be living, let the people of his place assist him with silver, gold, goods, and livestock, besides the freewill offering to the House of God that is in Jerusalem."

A discussion on Religious Zionism based on Ezra 1: 1-4

Some Textual Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Do you know who King Cyrus was?
- Why is it only now that the prophecy is coming true?
- The source mentions a prophecy from Yirmiyah are these prophecies still coming true?

Some General Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Does this source still apply to modern day religious Zionism?
- Thinking about the Cyrus Declaration, is it similar to the Balfour Declaration?
- Can we draw comparisons between the return to Eretz Yisrael in Ezra and modern-day Israel?
- Would the return to Israel have been different if we had the ease of access given to the Bnei Yisrael by Cyrus?

Some Personal Questions to ask Chanichim:

- Would you ever consider making Aliyah to Israel?
- Do you feel it is an obligation to make Aliyah?
- If you could live anywhere in Israel, where would you live?

Other sources and quotes to bring into discussion:

Yirmiyah Perek ט Passuk י: פָּרֹכֹּהֹ אָמְר יְהוֹּה כִּּי לְפִּׁי מְלְאֹת לְבָבֵּל שִׁבְעִים שְׁנָה אֶפְקּד אֶתְכֵם וַהַּקְמֹתֵי - For thus said the LORD: When Babylon's seventy years are over, I will take note of you, and I will fulfill to you My promise of favor—to bring you back to this place.

Eim Habanim Semeicha: Although the times of redemption are argued to have begun, there is the argument that Galut and the exile from Eretz Yisrael will only when we choose to seek out the three things we were exiled for once again. The three things, according to Chazal, are: The kingdom of Heaven, the kingdom of David and the *Beit Hamikdash*. The problem with this is that we pray for these things every single day and yet Moshiach has not come yet. The author offers a solution, from Mesechet Niddah. This solution is that it is not enough just to pray. That prayer has to be acommopained by action, as seen in Tehillim (27:4), where David Hamelech uses both שאלתי when making a request of Hashem.

Some Interactive Resources:

Youtube – Chief Rabbi Mirvis's Yom Ha'atzmaut adress 5777

Social Media - Hadassah Goldberg (@thereal hadassah on Instagram)'s #whyImadealiyah

hashtag (https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/whyimadealiyah/)

Pictures - The Cyrus Cylinder in the British Museum

A Related Story – Why I Made Aliyah by Hadassa Goldberg (@therealhadassa) on Instagram, June 2020

(https://www.instagram.com/p/CBrGjrxIM85/?igshid=bx4ise49xku8)

"I knew we always would.

The truth is that I don't feel like I made Aliyah when we did in 2004. Technically that's when my family and I moved.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2005 when my brother was born and even though we didn't have family here - we somehow had a full fridge and Brit Mila Hall.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2006 when I landed in Ben Gurion and felt home.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2007 when I realized I could read Chumash, Mishna and Rashi - completely understanding it.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2008 when snow covered Jerusalem in a soft white blanket and we crunched around in it.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2009 when I watched the sunset as the Shabbat Siren wailed.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2010 when I walked to the Kotel on Shavuot with thousands of people for the first time.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2011 when walking home at night didn't scare me and at 15 - I was safe and I felt free.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2012 when my 3 day hospitalization left my side bed table covered in candies and gifts from local volunteers.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2013 when that very same hospital let me in with a guitar and candies to return the favor.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2014 when The Three Boys died.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2015 when we sang "In Eshkachech" under our Chuppah, and again in 2016 when my Husband joined the army and served.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2017 as I hiked through a river.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2018 when I spend Yom Hashoa with Holocaust survivors getting their hair done for free at a local salon.

I chose to make Aliyah in 2019 as we ran to bomb shelters and thanked the soldiers for their service

I chose to make Aliyah in 2020 as we quarantined, and realized so deeply that I was home.

I've chosen to make Aliyah at many points in my life, and in a country as wondrous as this, new reasons to love Aliya and IL always come up.

My old schoolmates wished me "Lots of luck" when we moved in 2004. And BH, after 15 years, I can say I've had exactly that ♥