

זה היום עשה ה'
נגילה ונשמחה בו



ZEH HAYOM

YOM HA'ATZMAUT
3RD IYAR 5781
14TH & 15TH APRIL 2021
OMER DAY 18

LOVING THE LAND

BEN ROTHSTEIN

SHEVET AVICHAH



One of the ways in which a man can betroth a woman is through the medium of *keseif*, money. This is accomplished nowadays by the giving of a ring under the chuppah, at which point the monetary value of the ring is acquired to the bride.

The Gemara (Kiddushin 4b) derives this law by a tradition of a verbal analogy: in reference to marriage, the word קיחה is used, and when Avraham purchases *Me'arat HaMachpela*, the burial place for Sarah, the word קיחה is used – just as the verse tells us explicitly that Avraham used money to purchase *Me'arat HaMachpela*, so too money can also be used to effect marriage. The question arises: what relevance does marriage bear to the purchase of a cave? Is this comparison suggesting that we view marriage as just another transactional arrangement?

Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz answers that the opposite is true – rather than land teaching a lesson about marriage, marriage teaches a lesson about land; specifically, the Land of Israel, where *Me'arat HaMachpela* is situated. This essence of this comparison indicates that one should be in love with the Land of Israel, as one is in love with a spouse. The

Gemara elsewhere (Ketubot 112a-b) relates the love the sages had for the land: Rabbi Abba would kiss the stones of the Land of Israel, Rabbi Chanina would re-cobble the streets so that no one would speak badly about the paving of the land, Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi would never stand in the sun if it was hot, or in the shade if it was cold, lest they come to complain about the difficulty of settling the land, and Rabbi Chiyya bar Gamda would roll around in the dust of the land, in fulfilment of the verse “for your servants have desired its stones, and its dust they have favoured” (Psalms 102:15).

These specific examples each teach something different. Rabbi Abba demonstrates a passionate love for the physical land itself, Rabbi Chanina is concerned with the infrastructure set up in the land, Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi avoid coming to criticize living in the land of Israel not only because of any inherent difficulties but even secondary ones, such as the heat or the cold, which exist everywhere, and finally Rabbi Chiyya bar Gamda bases his actions on a scriptural source.

There are many people who object to many parts of living in Israel. Some feel no connection to the land whatsoever, having been conditioned in the diaspora to associate it with the “Zionist heretics.” Rabbi Abba shows us the love we must feel for the physical land in any case, Zionism aside. In the Satmar Rebbe’s magnum opus *Vayael Moshe*, page after page is filled with praises of the land of Israel, its beauty and its sanctity. Where is this loving devotion in the current religious anti-Zionist movement?

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Loving the Land

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Others may love the land of Israel, but lose no love for the establishment that facilitates a functioning society, runs public services, protects the nation, and funds the yeshivot who criticise its very existence. Are there problems with the government? Undoubtedly. Is there room for change and criticism of its actions? There must be if we are to continue to improve Israel and help it realise its position as a light unto the nations. However, Rabbi Chanina teaches us that this must be done in a constructive way, and that often this demands a personal investment. Those who have criticisms must take an active role in rectifying the situation. Yet others love the land, support the existence of the state, and nonetheless find every reason to complain about Israel. How often have the sounds of complaints about Israeli attitudes, culture, weather or any of the myriad hindrances to making Aliyah been heard among the halls of the so-called Zionist diaspora?

Aside from recalling that an entire generation of Jews was sentenced to death in the desert be-

cause 10 people spoke badly about the land and its inhabitants, Rabbi Ami and Rabbi Asi show us that we cannot sit back as armchair critics and grumble about the state of affairs; it is our responsibility to ensure that we do not come to speak badly about the land, and we must go out of our way to achieve this.

Finally, Rabbi Chiyya bar Gamda teaches arguably the most valuable lesson of all. Everything written in the last three paragraphs notwithstanding, an individual who does not feel connected to the land, or the state, or Aliyah, *must nonetheless take actions to cultivate such an attitude*, because this is what is mandated by the most authoritative source in our religion. Clearly, the ideal is to love the land, support the infrastructure and enjoy living in Israel because this flows naturally; however, the *hashkafa* indicated by the Tanach is clear in valuing this attitude. Thus we must undertake at all times to behave in a manner befitting *Hashkafat HaTorah* and love the land of Israel even, and especially, at those times when it does not come naturally to us.

BEN IS ROSH NIVCHAR 5781.

EDITOR'S CORNER

We are delighted to present this year's edition of 'Zeh Hayom', Bnei Akiva's special Yom Ha'atzmaut publication!

For nearly 2000 years, our ancestors kept a dream alive against all odds. 73 years ago, that dream became a reality; Jewish sovereignty once again existed in Eretz Yisrael, our homeland, with the establishment of Medinat Yisrael.

However, Eretz Yisrael is more than just an ancestral land, it is central to our entire national existence. Rambam (Sefer haMitzvot Positive Commandments, 153) explains that were the Jewish presence in Eretz Yisrael to cease, so too would the Jewish nation. Inversely, how great is it when the Jewish presence is strong in Israel! How much gratitude must we have to Hashem for giving us the tremendous gift of Medinat Yisrael, the greatest supporter of Am Yisrael b'Eretz Yisrael.

On Yom Hazikaron we remember and mourn those who gave their lives for Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael. On Yom Haatzmaut we recognise the incredible value of what they gave their lives for.

For those of us who have not made Aliyah yet (*bimhera b'yameinu!*) we are facing an unprecedented situation as a result of Covid-19: the vast majority of us are unable to travel to Eretz Yisrael. Over the last 12 months, for the first time, the country has effectively closed its borders to Jews around the world, albeit temporarily. Perhaps we can gain a small taste of the longing for our home that our ancestors had for centuries past.

Bnei Akiva UK's annual Yom Ha'atzmaut and Yom Hazikaron ceremony is taking place as always, but on this occasion it will be online instead of in a packed hall at Kinloss! Nevertheless, we hope you enjoy this very special evening as we commemorate Yom Hazikaron and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut together as a community. Please join us in singing Hallel, Yad Achim, and Hatikva, and may we all merit to celebrate next Yom Ha'atzmaut in a rebuilt Jerusalem.

Moadim leSimcha leGeula Shelema!
B'Virkat Chaverim l'Torah v'Avodah!

Daniel Ross
Chinuch Worker 5781

NOT THE TIME TO DREAM

RAV JOEL KENIGSBERG
RAV SHALIACH



There is a familiar story told at the end of Masechet Makkot (24a-b). Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azarya, Rabbi Yehoshua, and Rabbi Akiva approached the site of Har Habayit, after the destruction of the Bet Hamikdash. As they saw

the desolation of the holy site, the Sages began to cry, with the exception of Rabbi Akiva who began to laugh. When questioned about his strange behaviour, Rabbi Akiva explained the reason for his optimism. He had just witnessed the fulfilment of the prophecies of destruction. He could have no doubts as to their veracity. Surely then, the same must be said about the prophecies of rebuilding. If Har Habayit lay in ruins in fulfilment of the most dire of prophecies, the time would certainly come when the words of Zechariah: "There shall yet be old people sitting in the streets of Jerusalem" (Zechariah 8:4) would too be fulfilled. Rabbi Akiva didn't just see the devastation that lay before him, he saw a vision of the future in his mind's eye. He was able to console his fellow Sages because he so strongly and vividly believed in the words of the prophets.

Fast forward 2000 years, there is a significant difference between us and Rabbi Akiva. We no longer believe in the words of the prophets. Unlike Rabbi Akiva, we don't believe in so many of the words of the prophets because we don't have to – we see them before our very eyes. The process of redemption has begun to unfold and all it requires from us is to open our eyes and see the reality.

In Tehillim 126, the chapter we recite before Birkat Hamazon every Shabbat and Yom Tov meal, we say the words:

שיר המעלות בשבוע ה' את שיבת ציון היינו כחולמים
"A song of ascents. When Hashem returns us to Zion, we shall be like dreamers."

The commentators offer various explanations as to what the analogy to dreamers is meant to convey. According to the Ibn Ezra it is the process of Geula that would seem like a dream during the long years of exile. In the midst of that suffering, the thought of redemption would seem so far off, so wondrous, that it could only be compared to a dream.

Radak offers a different explanation, in the name of his father. It is the exile itself, he argues, that would retroactively seem like a dream once the redemption had come. The joy of returning home and ending the bitter exile would make all that we had experienced previously pale in comparison and seem like a bad dream – long and hard to endure at the time, but felt to be over in an instant once one wakes up.

But there is another approach, suggested by Rav Chaim Drukman, that can be uniquely understood in our generation of Geula.

Sometimes a person can be awake, but they can be dreaming. They can be sitting in one place, but so distracted by their thoughts that they fail to see that which is in front of their eyes. They can be transfixed on something else, staring out the window, so engrossed that they can't even see or hear somebody standing in front of them. They can physically be in one place, but their dreams can take them somewhere else altogether.

**THE PROCESS OF
REDEMPTION HAS
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ALL IT REQUIRES FROM
US IS TO OPEN OUR EYES
AND SEE THE REALITY.**

200 years ago, nobody could have predicted that our national revival would occur in the way it did. Some might still be waiting for the redemption to happen in an instant, in the way that we'd always imagined it. Some might still be dreaming, and in so

doing not even notice the cataclysmic changes that have taken place around us.

We live in unprecedented times. We have witnessed the fulfilment of prophecies, the ingathering of exiles, the revival of an ancient language and a spiritual revival unparalleled in human history. It is no longer the time to dream. It is time to appreciate the moment and to understand that the words of Yechezkel, Yeshayahu and Zecharya are no longer prophecies of the future, they are a description of the present.

זה היום עשה ה' נגילה ונשמחה בו
"This is the day Hashem has made us, let us rejoice and be happy on it."

May we merit to recognize the miracles, to give thanks and to bear witness soon to the complete and ultimate redemption.

Moadim leSimcha e'Geula Shelema!

FOLLOW RAV JOEL ON FACEBOOK (RAV SHALIACH PAGE) AND ON TWITTER (@JOEL KENIGSBERG)

"FROM GALUT TO GEULA..."

**ZAHAVA HILL
SHEVET MORASHA**



The theme of 'Galut to Geula, *Exile to Redemption*' is not only the slogan of Bet Base Machane, but it is quite possibly a microcosm for the entire Jewish experience. We see this journey from darkness to light throughout our history and are currently in the time of year that recalls two specifically significant examples.

Firstly, we are currently in the Omer period, the seven weeks that build up from the slavery of Egypt to the receiving of the Torah at Har Sinai. Within this time period we also follow the journey of Yom Hashoah, through to Yom Hazikaron and eventually Yom Haatzmaut.

When we sit at the seder and discuss what has happened to our people, to us, and then follow the journey of those same victims of Pharaoh's cruel persecution through until the receiving of the Torah, we are hit by an overwhelming feeling of what Geula means. The splitting of the Yam Suf was only the first step in Geula, it was freedom from slavery, but it was not until we accepted the Torah with 'Na'aseh V'Nishma, *We will do and we will listen*' that we were truly unified. The receiving of Torat Yisrael is what formed Am Yisrael. Although the stories surrounding Matan Torah may include painful experiences, these are all the result of free people exercising free will and making decisions - the ability to choose for yourself, to make decisions and even rebel is what freedom looks like. The understanding we have of Geula here is Torah. Along with Torah came freedom, came unity and came light.

The second iteration of the Galut to Geula story is far more modern, it recalls a similar darkness experienced in the Shoah, further suffering and persecution experienced by Jews without a national homeland. After this suffering we come to Yom Hazikaron and Yom Haatzmaut. Whilst we

again recall darkness and pain, we are doing so this time as free people. Geula is reached when we are able to live freely, in Israel.

When we explore these instances of Geula together, something outstanding occurs to me. In one instance our true understanding of Geula is Torat Yisrael and the inevitable development of Am Yisrael, whilst in the second, Geula is finding a home for that Am, in Eretz Yisrael. The more we explore what redemption is and what Geula means to us, the more we understand that the ideology of our movement is essentially nothing but a desire for Geula. Something we are commanded to do every day.

In the Amida each day we repeatedly ask G-d to bring about the Geula, we ask in the bracha of Tekah b'Shofar for G-d to bring about the sound the shofar and the ingathering of exiles, Kibbutz Galuyot.

As an Olah Chadashah, a new immigrant of Israel, I am currently privileged to witness Kibbutz Galuyot each and every day. I live on Kibbutz Sde Elyahu on a campus with other members of the Ulpan programme as well as lone soldiers. Looking around a room of olim from six different continents and many different countries, speaking in different languages whilst all trying to learn Ivrit, there is an undeniable feeling that this tefilla has been heard and answered. This is what kibbutz galuyot looks like, we wake up to work the land together, to learn Hebrew together. We have language barriers and cultural differences, but we have kibbutz galuyot.

We are in Israel together living out the ideals that we have stood on benches screaming out, singing at the top of our lungs. Our entire ideology recalls Geula and calls for Geula, and that Geula is now something tangible. We don't have a Bayit Shlishi (Third Temple) right now, but what we do have is Torat, Am and Eretz Yisrael, if we choose to act on these things - to work together, to work the land to build our lives in Israel as religious people, maybe we can bring the final Geula a little bit closer too.

**WE ARE IN ISRAEL
TOGETHER LIVING OUT
THE IDEALS THAT WE
HAVE STOOD ON BENCHES
SCREAMING OUT AT THE
TOP OF OUR LUNGS**

**ZAHAVA WAS A PARTICIPANT ON TORANI 5780 AT
MIDRESHET HAROVA AND MADE ALIYAH IN AUGUST.**

BNEI AKIVA
**YOM HAZIKARON &
YOM HA'ATZMAUT 5781**

ORDER OF SERVICE

Messages from the community

Yom Hazikaron

Lowering the flag | Eytan Kleinberg, Shevet Tzion
Candle lighting followed by a minute's silence and Acheinu
Address | H.E. Tzipi Hotovely, Ambassador of the State of Israel

Prayer for the Royal Family | Dayan Shmuel Simons, London Bet Din
Prayer for the State of Israel | Rabbi Andrew Shaw, CEO Mizrachi UK
Prayer for the Israel Defense Forces | Rav Joel Kenigsberg, Rav Shaliach Bnei Akiva UK
Prayer for the Missing Soldiers | Rabbi Nicky Liss, Chair of the RCUS
Azkarah-Memorial Prayer | Rabbi Andrew Davis, Deputy Headteacher, Yavneh College

Yom Ha'atzmaut

Raising the flag | Eytan Kleinberg, Shevet Tzion
Address | Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis
Hallel | Chazzan Jonny Turgel
Address | Nathan Daniels, Mazkir of Bnei Akiva

Conclusion

God Save the Queen, Yad Achim & Hatikva | Ben Rothstein, Rosh Nivchar

Celebration

Bachad Dinner with Rt Hon Lord Eric Pickles
Music from Eitan Freilich and Luis Herszaft