

THINKING OF MAKING ALIYAH?

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From Hachshara to Aliya

Abi Brull

What have been your Hachshara highlights?

It is very difficult to pick one highlight as it has all been amazing; but for me the best part has been the Pesach seminar. During the seminar I enjoyed learning about the land and all the different types of people who live here. I also really enjoyed working on the kibbutz during the seminar. Here I was literally living the ideology of Torah V'Avodah which Bnei Akiva has instilled in me. Seder night on Hachshara was without a doubt one of the best *sedarim* I have ever attended. We all brought our different customs to the *seder* and shared them with everyone. The Pesach seminar was such an amazing environment.

What are your plans for next year? Why did you choose to do this?

Next year I am doing Sherut Leumi at Hadassah Ein Kerem hospital. I chose this particular place to carry out my national service as I want to give back to Israeli society in a truly meaningful way and help those in need.

What do you think you will miss most about living in the UK?

Apart from my parents and close friends, the thing I will miss most is Kosher Chinese food. I haven't yet found a decent Chinese restaurant. Another thing I will miss is decent tea. I have now become a big coffee drinker!

What are you most looking forward to about life in Israel?

I am really looking forward to spending more time with my brothers and their wives, who have both made Aliya already. I am looking forward to living in the Jewish homeland and making my dream a reality.

Abi Brull is in Shevet Ne'eman, and is on Hachsharat Torani at Midreshet Harova.

Yom Ha'atzmaut
6 Iyar 5777
2 May 2017
Omer day 21

Parashat Acharei Mot - Kedoshim
10 Iyar 5777
6 May 2017
Omer day 25

תנועת בני עקיבא
BNEI AKIVA UK

זה היום עשה ה'
נגילה ונשמחה בו
Zeh Hayom Asah Hashem

The First Flowering of our Redemption

Rafi Cohen

Yom Ha'atzmaut was the answer to a dream which can be dated back to many different eras. The dream of the Jewish people returning to the Land of Israel goes back to the publication of Herzl's *Der Judenstaat* in 1896, and before that to the Aliyot which followed the expulsion in 1492. The dream goes back further, to the minting of coins bearing the inscription "To the freedom of Yerushalayim" during the Bar Kochba revolt in 132 CE, and further still to the exiles who lamented by the rivers of Babylon "If I forget you, O Yerushalayim! May my right hand forget its skill" (Tehillim 137:5).

In all that time, there have been very few idyllic periods for the Jewish People in the Holy Land. Social tensions were just as prevalent in the Second Temple period as they are now, and comparisons can be drawn between crusader violence and terrorism today. It can often be a struggle to see the modern state with all its difficulties as a part of the divine plan for the ultimate redemption of the Jewish People.

When students asked Rav Yehuda Amital (founder and Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Etzion, 1924-2010) if the State of Israel really is to be considered "the first flowering of our redemption" he replied with a story of Reb Levi-Yitzchak of Berdichev (1740-1809):

One Yom Kippur, during Neila, Reb Levi-Yitzchak found he was unable to complete the bracha *melech sole'ach* ("King Who pardons all the iniquities of Israel...") due to a terrible accusation being brought against the Jewish people in the heavenly court. When he discovered there was nothing he could do to change the verdict he finished the bracha loudly and clearly. He later explained that he remembered as a child persuading his mother to give him treats by reciting the bracha *shehakol* loudly next to her, if she didn't give him anything it would constitute a bracha *le'vatata* (blessing in vain). So too, by reciting *melech soleach*, Reb Levi-Yitzchak was giving God no choice but to forgive the Jewish people, otherwise it would cause a bracha *levatata*!

In the same way, Rav Amital told his students, perhaps if we recite the phrase "the first flowering of our redemption" with special concentration it will indeed come true. This is our mission, our Zionism. To see the fulfilment of the prophecies that tell of the full and complete redemption. May our endeavours bring us only closer to that ultimate goal, and may we all merit to celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut next year in an Israel free from all troubles and distress.

Rafi Cohen is in Shevet Na'aleh, and is the Rosh Nivchar of the Hanhalla

Editor's Corner

Shalom!

We are delighted to introduce 'Zeh Hayom Asah Hashem', Bnei Akiva's special Yom Ha'atzmaut publication.

The pasuk 'Zeh hayom asah Hashem nagila venismecha bo' translates as 'This is the day Hashem has made, let us rejoice and be glad on it.' There is, however, another way of interpreting it, as 'This is the day Hashem has made, let us rejoice and be glad *because of it*'. There is no truer verse to encapsulate our joy and elation in celebrating 69 years of the State of Israel.

We hope you enjoy this very special evening as we commemorate Yom Hazikaron and celebrate Yom Ha'atzmaut.

Finally... Watch out for all of the events that Bnei Akiva has coming up, including Yom Yerushalayim, pioneering community Shabbat activities in numerous communities and of course Summer Machane. See you there!

Chag Atzmaut Sameach!

THIS WEEK'S SHABBAT TIMES

	🕒	🕒
London	20:16	21:27
Manchester	20:16	21:24
Birmingham	20:23	21:46
Cambridge	20:13	21:36
Leeds	19:30	21:53
Liverpool	20:30	21:56
Jerusalem	18:46	20:03



Binyan Ariel

by Rav Ari Faust

Rabbinical Shaliach for the Jewish Agency to Bnei Akiva and Mizrahi UK

A number of years ago the Israel National Airlines, Elal, released a promotional video in which the CEO invited passengers to feel “the most at home around the world”. It features (actors pretending to be) members of Elal staff describing what home means for them: Some said that home is the place where people always accept you, others said home is confidence, or the springboard from which you set-out on your way. (No one suggested that Elal feels “the most at home” because it’s where everyone argues over who you sit next to on the trip!)

What is home? Israel is the “national home of the Jewish People” (Balfour Declaration). This has *halachic* implications as well: Part of the Jewish marriage includes the signing of a *Ketubah* – a legal document delineating the couple’s responsibilities towards one-another. Stipulated in the *Ketubah* is a monetary amount committed by the husband to pay in the event that the marriage ends. As a rule-of-thumb, if the husband initiates the divorce he must forfeit the money he committed (as part of a comprehensive divorce agreement. It is beyond the scope of this article to address this topic at length).

The exception to this rule would be if the husband initiates the divorce due to certain proven misdemeanour claims against his wife (Mishneh Torah Hil. Ishut 24:10-12). If the husband proves his wife has been unfaithful, behaves with promiscuity or causes her husband to sin, he would not be obligated to pay the *Ketubah* money. The Gemara (Ketubot 110b) teaches an additional exception:

“If the husband desires to go up [to Israel] and his wife refuses she must be pressed to go up; and if she does not consent she may be divorced without a *ketubah*. If she desires to go up and he refuses, he must be pressed to go up; and if he does not consent he must divorce her and pay her *ketubah*.”

Thus, the spouse who refuses to make *Aliya* ultimately bears the monetary brunt and must forfeit the *Ketubah* money. Many understand this source as supporting the notion that it is a *mitzvah* to live in the Land of Israel. However the logic to this argument is flawed: Generally, laxity in *mitzvah* performance is not grounds for someone to forfeit the *Ketubah* money; if a person’s way-of-life doesn’t comply with *halacha* that is their own prerogative, and their spouse cannot (in principal) claim the *Ketubah* because of it. Why, then, would the *mitzvah* to live in Israel be any different; if a person is upset that their spouse isn’t interested in joining them on *Aliya*, that shouldn’t be grounds for them to claim the *Ketubah*!?

The Rambam (Mishneh Torah Hil. Ishut 13:20) clumps this *halacha* within the laws that state that a husband who forbids his wife to visit her parents’ house or forces her to live in a bad neighbourhood must pay her the *Ketubah* money. According to the Rambam, then, this *halacha* is not contingent on any particular *mitzvah*; a person’s desire to live in Israel is far more significant than that, the ramifications of emigrating there are much more far-reaching. Living in Israel is not merely the fulfilment of a *mitzvah*, it is the foundation of the Jewish home.

Living in Israel is not just another *mitzvah*, it is a meta-*mitzvah* (see Responsa Tzitz Eliezer 7:48). Israel is home. But what does that mean? The majority of Jews do not come from Israel, although this number is constantly rising. We are not indigenous to Israel, as even Avraham immigrated there from Mesopotamia; he was effectively the first person to make *Aliya*.

More than it is the place we come from when we set-out to face the world, home is the place we go to, where we settle-down after our dispersions and travails. It is the place our existence revolves around. Home is the foundation and pillar of our identity, the basis from which our faith is formed. Home is not just a building, it is a story; home is our final destination – our destiny.

The journey may pass through myriad other countries, but Israel is the place we are all going. It may not be the starting point, but it is the end-goal. It may not be the place intertwined with our past – or even our present – but Israel is our destiny; it is the context and theme of our history, which binds past and present with the future. In our many dispersions and travails, fate may have brought us to the United Kingdom, Canada, America or anywhere else in the world. But it is destiny that brings us to Israel.

The journey may have brought us around the world, but on Yom Ha’atzmaut we celebrate how the scene of the Jewish story has shifted as we are coming home from the four-corners of the globe. We celebrate that we live in the generation which fulfils the visions of the ancient Hebrew prophets and the dreams of Jews throughout the ages.

It is no wonder that so many have been moved to “go up” and make this destiny a reality. It is because after the long journey, we can finally return home.

Aliyah: Living the Dream

Alex Cohen



What are you currently doing in Israel?

I'm living in Tel Aviv and eating lots of takeaways with friends - old and new. I'm also enjoying running on the beach, attending *shiurim* and occasionally pretending to be cultured by visiting an art gallery. Workwise, I managed to transfer my job from London and have continued working as a Management Consultant for EY (Ernst and Young). I'm now advising Israel's biggest and most innovative companies - helping them to remain pioneers in their respective fields.

What inspired you to make Aliyah?

My *madrachim*, *chanichim* and fellow Tzevet members in Bnei Akiva. They allowed me to see that Israel isn't only a great place to live but also offers a unique opportunity to contribute to something bigger than myself.

What has been the most challenging part to making Aliya for you?

1. Beer is really expensive.
2. Whenever I wear cufflinks I get asked what purpose they serve. I still haven't come up with a good answer.
3. Management Consulting isn't an industry which translates so easily into Israeli life. Most Israeli business leaders already "know" the answers. When they do want to hear an external perspective they can jump into a taxi and the driver will "know" what they should be doing different. This means my job has changed a fair bit!

What has been your most pleasant surprise?

Before making *Aliyah* I think I saw cultural differences in Israel as something to overcome rather than enjoy. I was inspired by Zionist ideals but when considering the more practical elements of the move (for example whilst on BA's *Aliyah* Pilot Trip) I was looking for ways to "make it work".

I've been really pleasantly surprised by how much I've enjoyed my lifestyle changes. In particular I can see now that I was living for the weekend too much in the UK, barely socialising midweek and often travelling around the UK from Monday-Thursday for work. I'm still working hard here but think I have a better work/life balance and the improvements have mainly come from societal attitudes rather than working fewer hours. When Israelis ask you "what do you do?" they expect to hear you're a yoga enthusiast (I'm not yet) or that you volunteer for a great charity, not necessarily about your job.

Do advice do you have for chaverim in the UK who want to make Aliyah?

1. Find people in the UK who are happy to bring out whisky / Pimms for you.
2. Tel Aviv is a great living option for BA Olim.
3. Whilst obviously not the only way to do it, working for an international company and arranging an office switch can be a great way to make *Aliyah*. You land with a job and retain some familiarity at work whilst everything else is changing.

Alex Cohen is in Shevet Lavi and made *Aliyah* in 5776

Coming up...

Full details of all our events are available on our Facebook page, or call the Bayit on 020 8209 1319 to speak to one of the team.

- Join us tomorrow morning, Tuesday 2nd May, at 8:00am at the London Bayit for Tefillat Chagigit followed by breakfast.
- Bogrim and Shevet Avichai are invited to the customary Yom Ha’atzmaut BBQ from 18:00 at Rav Ari and Chaya’s house. Mincha and Ma’ariv included.
- Bnei Akiva is running educational and inspirational peulot in schools on Yom Ha’atzmaut! Look out for us in Hasmonian Boys’, JFS, Rosh Pinah, Immanuel College, Sinai and Yavneh College!

Contemplating Kedusha in Geula

Yossi Hambling

“And [the angels] would call to one another, saying: Kadosh, Kadosh, Kadosh is Hashem, Master of Legions; the world is filled with His Honour...” (Isaiah 6:3)

We cite this *passuk* daily in Kedusha, and at the end of Shacharit in *Uva LeTzion Goel* (“A redeemer will come to Tzion”), when it appears together with its Targumic interpretive translation. But why should we include a translation? And what place has such a *passuk* in a tefilla that began talking about redemption?

Firstly, we must understand that, on a simply level, *Kadosh* means ‘separate’. Thus, the *passuk* is saying that Hashem is thrice removed from the world; Targum understands this to mean He is separate from other Heavenly bodies (like angels), unique in His strength over the Earth, and the only Being beyond time. Nevertheless, the Malbim notes that the second clause of the *passuk* is despite the first; although Hashem is totally separate from the world, He is fully involved in it, so much so that it is filled with His Honour.

However, the Radak offers an alternative understanding of the repetition of “*Kadosh*”: He suggests that in the first two instances the angels are referring to each other! They are calling out words of encouragement to one another, exclaiming “Hey you, *Kadosh*-being, *Kadosh*-being! *Kadosh* is Hashem...”

By quoting from Targum, it appears that the authors of our Siddur favoured the Targumic interpretation over that of Radak. But why is this significant?

Perhaps we could suggest the following: When we think about redemption daily, we may become arrogant if we keep proclaiming ourselves to be *Kadosh*. Rather, we must focus on the greatness of Hashem, how He is running everything and involved in everything. However, sometimes we must take a step back to see the bigger picture, through “Radak-tinted glasses”. We must thank Hashem for everything he has done for us yet also recognise how, although He runs everything, He often runs the world through the actions of His *Kadosh* beings, mankind.

Such ideas are key to Yom HaZikaron and Yom Ha’Atzmaut, when we take time out to remember the fallen *Kedoshim* of Eretz Yisrael, and proudly celebrate the miracles that Hashem enacted through all those who contributed to the establishment of *Medinat Yisrael*. Indeed, it is wholly appropriate to consider the physical actions of Am Yisrael in our commemorations and celebrations. Yet we must never forget Who is really in charge, Whose Honour fills the world: Hashem, Master of Legions.

Yossi Hambling is in Shevet Hagevurah and was Chinuch Worker for Bnei Akiva in 5776

SUMMER MACHANE 5777

3 August - 16 August

Year 6, 7, 8 in North Wales

Year 9 in Holland

Year 10 in Spain

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Shlichut Perspective: The Long Zionist Journey

Ma'ayan and Benaya Cohen

“When the nation’s spirit is reinforced through its return to sovereignty in its land, its inner qualities will begin to shine through.” – Rav Kook

Rav Kook made Aliya on the 28th of Iyar 5664, thus realizing his aspiration to settle the Land of Israel. He saw the renewed Jewish settlement of Israel as a fundamental, spiritual principal. Rav Kook believed that the full realization of Jewish collective life cannot be fulfilled in Chutz La’aretz; only in Israel could this take place, when we have full independence and sovereignty.

With the establishment of an Independent Jewish State, there are countless subjects that must be clarified – issues that had not been addressed for millennia. Matters such as the relationship between religion and state, relating to minorities, the place of Israel amongst the nations. The clarification of these issues is central to re-affirming our identity, and establishing our roots in the Land – physically and spiritually – and thus to really flourish there.

In the times we live in, Am Yisrael faces countless challenges. This, however, is a good thing. On the one hand, we are in the process of clarifying essential issues to ourselves, and through the open discussion – by hearing different opinions and voices – we learn to relate to life differently. As such Am Yisrael can be a positive influence on those close-by and far-off. On the other hand, the threats – physical and spiritual – are many, and we must fight to keep our identity strong.

עם הנצח לא מפחד מדרך ארוכה – Our journey may be a long one, but as we celebrate Yom Ha’atzmaut in these exciting times, we invite all those who choose to join us to look towards the bright and promising future together.

Ma'ayan is in Shevet Hatekuma and Benaya Shevet Yechiam and are Jewish Agency Northern Shlichim for Bnei Akiva