

A Match Made In Heaven?

An analysis & celebration of the most peculiar, successful
& glorious union of the past 2 millennia!!!

Yom Haazmaut 5779/2019 Rabbi Danny Myers

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1. Introduction (The purpose of this booklet)

a) Various approaches to Medinat Yisrael

- 1) Satmar
- 2) Charaidi Litvish
- 3) The Rav
- 4) Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook

b) 2 types of debates

In pure Halachik areas, such as Sefirat Haomer and Hilchot Pesach, there is usually not much room for extreme arguments, as the Halachik approach of Chochma, Bina & Daat limits that. However, when it comes to historical issues, a very different reality emerges where new movements such as Chassiduth, Mussar, Zionism, etc emerge with one side heralding the beginning of a beautiful era in Judaism, while the second side claims 'Chadash Assur Min Hatorah.' Without a simple anchor in clear Halachik sources, the great giants of each generation debate & wrangle over the issues. According to the Rav, by historical arguments, sometimes God Paskins according to one side.

c) Maintaining balance during the storm

Netziv-Introduction to Bereshit: Our challenge is to passionately embrace our view while not labeling others as heretics Chas V'shalom. What is the definition of heresy? According to the Rambam, a rejection of any of the 13 Principles of Faith. The Klal has embraced this approach with the daily recitation of Yigdal and Ani Maamin.

2) Is this marriage truly a match made in Heaven?

a) Welcome Home?

While it may not be surprising that many non-observant Jews led the Nation Home-Lo Machsivotai Machshivotaichem-but how are we to understand the Pesukim and Tefilot which ostensibly reject such a phenomena?

b) Is God pleased when Sabbath desecrators settle in the Land?

(A question of Redemption by Rabbi Bergman, translated by Lichtman)

The Land spits out sinners, why do the Zionists bring them back?

Isn't it preferable for sinners to commit their misdeeds in Chutz LaAretz?

The Land Rejects Sinners- The Torah states in numerous places that Eretz Yisrael does not tolerate sinners. In fact, we are currently in exile because we sinned and the Land spit us out. The Torah warns: Do not defile yourselves through any of these acts, for through all of these acts the nations that I cast out before you defiled themselves. So the Land became defiled, and I visited its iniquity upon it; and the Land vomited out its inhabitants. You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, and not commit any of these abominations... For the inhabitants of the Land who are before you committed all these abominations, and the Land became defiled. Let not the Land vomit you out when you defile it, as it vomited out the nation that was before you. (VaYikra 18:24-28) Rashi comments (based on Sifra, Kedoshim 10; Sifrei, Devarim 38): This can be compared to a prince who ate something repulsive. It will not remain in his stomach; rather, he will vomit it out. Similarly, Eretz Yisrael does not retain sinners. These sources take on new meaning in light of the Ramban's commentary. Religious Zionism draws much of its support from the Ramban's outlook on Eretz Yisrael, but in this case, he seems to contradict its principles. In many places (especially VaYikra 18:25), the Ramban explains that all 613 mitzvot can be performed to their fullest only in Eretz Yisrael. Although the Torah commands us to keep many mitzvot outside the Land, that is only to ensure that we remember how to do them when we return to Eretz Yisrael, where they are meant to be kept. One fulfills a mitzvah's ultimate purpose and receives its full reward only in Eretz Yisrael. One cannot compare the quality of a mitzvah carried out in Chutz LaAretz to the lofty stature of a mitzvah performed in the Holy Land. Obviously, this concept should motivate every Torah Jew to make aliyah as soon as possible. How sad it is to see Jews putting so much effort into the embellishment of mitzvot – spending large sums of money on a beautiful etrog, for example – while they remain in the Diaspora. A simple, inexpensive etrog in Eretz Yisrael is more becoming and accomplishes much more in the supernal realms than the most expensive etrog in Chutz LaAretz.

C) Besides arousing religious Jews to make aliyah, however, this concept should also (apparently) affect our attitude towards irreligious Jews. Just as mitzvot are more weighty in Eretz Yisrael, so are sins. A sin committed in the Holy Land entails much graver consequences than one committed in Chutz LaAretz. This explains the Land's propensity to spit out sinners. Eretz Yisrael is HaShem's castle, "the Palace of the King," where every violation of His will is subject to severe punishment. Is it proper to come to the Land and defile it with more sins? The secular Zionists introduced Sabbath desecration and foreign cultures into the Land. Shouldn't

Torah Jews, like ourselves, lament this fact? Can we really support and encourage secular Zionism, or would it have been better, perhaps, had this movement never arisen? When the prophet Yirmiyahu complained about the nation's sins, he said, I brought you into a plentiful land, to eat its fruit and bounty; but you came and defiled My land, and made My heritage into an abomination (Yirmiyah 2:7). Can we not apply this very complaint to modern Zionism?

d) The Tashbetz 59 writes as follows concerning the mitzvah of immigrating to Eretz Yisrael:

One is permitted to go as long as, from now on, he will be ascetic, careful of all sin, and will fulfill all the mitzvot that apply there. For if he sins, he will be punished more severely. After all, Hashem constantly scrutinizes the Land; His eyes and Divine providence are always upon it. One cannot compare someone who rebels against the King in His palace to someone who rebels outside the palace. (Tashbetz Kattan 559) The Tashbetz goes on to explain that this is why no other nation ever succeeded in settling the Land. Since they were steeped in sin, the Land rejected them. He then concludes: Those who go there with the intention of acting frivolously and quarreling recklessly are included in the verse: You came and defiled My Land (Yirmiyah 2:7) and Who asked this of you, to trample My courtyards? (Yeshayah 1:12). However, those who go there with lofty intentions, to conduct themselves sacredly and purely, will receive endless reward. How can we possibly promote secular Zionism, when it brought so many sinners into the Land? Can this be the beginning of redemption? Many anti-Zionists use this argument to explain their position, and many Jews rationalize their failure to fulfill the mitzvah of aliyah by saying that they are not ready, spiritually, to live in Israel.

e) Seemingly Contradictory Sources

Thus far, we have quoted sources that imply that God resents it when irreligious Jews settle in the Land. However, several rabbinic sources seem to contradict this premise. The first one can be found in Yalkut Shimoni (Eichah 1038). R. Chiya taught a parable: A king once went to Chamat Ga'der (a place with therapeutic springs) with his children. At one point, they angered him, and he swore not to take them again. The next time, he remembered them and cried, "If only my children were with me, even though they anger me." This is the meaning of the verse Oh, that I were in the desert in a lodging place (מלון) of wayfarers (Yirmiyah 9:1). The Holy One Blessed be He said, "If only My children were with Me as they were in the desert when they complained (מלינין) against Me." Similarly, The House of Israel dwell on their Land and they have defiled it (Yechezkel 36:17). The Holy One Blessed be He said, "If only My children were with Me in Eretz Yisrael, even though they defile it." The words of the Yalkut seem to utterly

contradict the principle that we developed above. According to this source, HaShem prefers having His children live in Eretz Yisrael even if they transgress His will. True, He exiled the Jews because of their sins, but He regrets doing so and weeps over it. The people of Israel are God's nation and His children, even when they sin, and He always wants to be close to them. If they stir themselves and long to return to the Land, our Father and King will receive them with abounding love.

f) Omri and Achav

In addition to this Yalkut, many other sources indicate that HaShem loves and rejoices over every new "building" in Eretz Yisrael, even if sinners erect it. An instructive example appears in Tractate Sanhedrin (102b) regarding King Omri. R. Yochanan states that Omri deserved to become the king of Israel because he added a city onto the Land of Israel. The Midrash adds that this special merit helped his son (Achav), grandson, and great-grandson reign as well: Tana DeVei Eliyahu: Once, I [Eliyahu HaNavi] was sitting before the Sages in a study hall in Jerusalem. I asked: "My masters, why was Achav son of Omri... different from all the kings that preceded him? None of their sons succeeded them as king, until Omri came along and had three of his descendants inherit his throne!" They replied, "We do not know." I said to them, "My masters, it is because he added a great city to the Land of Israel. [Omri] thought, just as Jerusalem is [the capital] for the kings of Yehudah, so will Shomron be [the capital] for the kings of Israel." (Yalkut Shimoni 2:207, on I Melachim 16; Tana DeVei Eliyahu, Parashah 10) Apparently, these Sages did not imagine at first that the merit of building Eretz Yisrael would stand by Omri, for he was an evil, idolatrous king. Besides which, his entire motive for building the city was to subvert Jerusalem's status as the capital of Israel. The same R. Yochanan (cited on the same page in Sanhedrin, 102b) relates that Achav posted the following declaration on the gates of the city that his father built: Achav denies the God of Israel; therefore, he has no portion in the God of Israel. Thus, the city that Omri built gave rise to heresy and sin. Nonetheless, the very act of developing the Land was beloved and pleasing to God.

g) Ezra and Nechemyah's Generation

A particularly instructive example for our generation is the return to Zion at the beginning of the Second Temple era. According to the first approach presented in this chapter, only righteous Jews are fitting to enter Eretz Yisrael. However, a much different picture emerges from the actions of Ezra and Nechemyah. Whom did they bring back to the Land? The tzaddikim of the generation? The Talmud states that ten types of Jews ascended from Babylonia with Ezra (Kiddushin 69a). Included in this list are Mamzairim, Challalim (disqualified priests), freed

slaves, foundlings, and Shetukim (illegitimate children). Anyone who reads the books of Ezra and Nechemyah realizes that many of the returnees were far from righteous. Not only did the masses marry foreign women, but so did the children of the ruling class: The people of Israel, the Kohanim, and the Levi'im have not separated themselves from the peoples of the lands... For they have taken of their daughters as wives for themselves and for their sons, and the holy seed have intermingled with the peoples of the land. And the hand of the officers and the deputies has been primary in this offense (Ezra 9:1-2) Even though Ezra convinced the people to divorce their foreign wives, intermarriage was still prevalent in the days of Nechemyah (see Nechemyah 13:3, 23). Furthermore, the returnees were so ignorant of Torah law that they did not even know that there was a mitzvah to build a Sukkah and take the Four Species on the holiday of Sukkot (ibid. 8:14). They desecrated the Sabbath publicly and designated Saturday as the market day in Jerusalem (ibid. 13:15-18). Nechemyah had to fight a tough battle until he finally eradicated these evil practices. Once, when Nechemyah had to leave the city for a while, the people stationed a Samaritan priest in one of the chambers of the Beit HaMikdash (ibid 13:7).

h) Chazal tell us even worse things about the returnees.

For example, R. Abahu asserts that they engaged in sodomy and adultery, thus increasing the number of illegitimate children in the Land (Kiddushin 70a). Most shocking, however, is the Talmud's statement that, despite all their sins, they were holy and beloved to God: And these are the ones who went up from Tel Melach, Tel Charsha, Keruv (כרוב), Addan (אדן), and Immer (אמר) (Ezra 2:59)... R. Abahu said, "The Master (אדון – i.e., God) said (אמר), 'Even though they acted like leopards [who mate indiscriminately], they are as important to Me as a cherub (כרוב).' " [Rashi: "(They are) as holy as the holy cherubs, like the holy chayot, about whom it is written, the face of the cherub (Yechezkel 10:14)."] Why did Ezra and Nechemyah bring such people to Eretz Yisrael? Would it not have been better to leave the sinners in Chutz LaAretz? Were these righteous leaders not concerned about defiling and desecrating the Land? Despite these queries, the return to Zion of that period was undoubtedly the beginning of redemption. Today, no one denies that that redemption, which led to the building of the Second Temple, came through sinful Jews. This is probably why the majority of Jews remained in Babylonia, refusing to go up with Ezra and Nechemyah. They reasoned that the redemption could not possibly come in such a fashion. However, the Talmud sharply criticizes those who remained in exile: Reish Lakish was swimming in the Jordan River. Rabba bar Bar- Chanah came along and gave him his hand [to help him out of the river]. [Reish Lakish] said, "By G-d, I hate you! [Rashi: I hate all residents of Babylonia, who did not ascend (to Eretz Yisrael) at the time of Ezra, thus preventing the Shechinah from returning and resting upon the Second Temple.] As it is written, If she be a wall, we will build upon her a battlement of silver; and if she be a door, we will

enclose her with a cedar board (Shir HaShirim 8:9). Had you made yourselves like a wall and ascended all together at the time of Ezra, you would have been compared to silver, which does not decay. Now that you went up like doors, you were compared to cedar wood, which decays. [Rashi: A gate which has two doors is opened one door at a time; similarly, you ascended by halves (i.e., insufficiently)]. (Yoma 9a) In other words, Ezra's redemption was incomplete because so many Jews neglected to return to Eretz Yisrael.

i) Had they discarded the excuses and abandoned the comforts of exile, the final redemption would have arrived 2,300 years ago. The Second Temple would have stood forever, and the Jewish people would have been spared immense suffering. The Netziv of Volozhin provides another reason why so many Jews refused to return to the Land at the time of Ezra: They [the antagonists] would do well to see Shir HaShirim Rabbah on the verse: I am sleeping, but my heart is awake; the sound of my Beloved knocks (Shir HaShirim 5:2). Chazal explain that when the sound of my Beloved – that is, HaShem (may He be blessed) – knocked by way of Cyrus [King of Persia]... many [Jews] refused to ascend [to the Land], saying, I have washed my feet, how shall I soil them? (ibid. 5:3). Chazal interpret this to mean: I have washed my feet from the filth of idolatry, [and] that place [Eretz Yisrael] entices me to worship idols. In their deficient minds, [these Jews] thought that they had a good, solid argument. Nonetheless, HaShem complained about this later on in the Holy Song. 62 (Shivat Tzion, sec. 2, p. 18) Clearly, then, God does not accept the argument of those who refuse to make aliyah on “religious” grounds.

j) The Wicked Eisav

The Netziv (ibid.) quotes another source that is relevant to our discussion. After twenty years of exile in Charan, Ya'akov Avinu returns to Eretz Yisrael. On his way back, he meets up with Eisav and is very scared: Ya'akov was very frightened and distressed (BeReishit 32:8). Why is Ya'akov so worried? Is it just Eisav's physical strength that intimidates him? Chazal explain that he was primarily afraid of Eisav's spiritual might. He was concerned about the few mitzvot that Eisav was privileged to fulfill over the past twenty years, which he – Ya'akov – was unable to keep in exile:

[Ya'akov] said, “All these years [Eisav] has dwelt in Eretz Yisrael; perhaps he is coming against me with the strength of living in Eretz Yisrael. All these years he has been honoring his parents; perhaps he is coming against me with the strength of honoring one's mother and father.” (BeReishit Rabbah 76:2) According to those who want to prevent sinners from entering the Land, why was Ya'akov afraid of Eisav's merit of living in Eretz Yisrael?

On the contrary, the fact that Eisav lived in the Holy Land should have encouraged Ya'akov. After all, sins committed in Eretz Yisrael are far worse than those committed outside the Land, and since Eisav rebelled against the "King" in His "palace," his punishment should be worse. Ya'akov should not be afraid; he should feel confident. Obviously, all of these sources need to be reconciled. Why did Ezra and Nechemyah bring sinners into the Land when the Torah states clearly that the Land cannot tolerate such people? And why did Ya'akov fear Eisav's merit of living in Eretz Yisrael if sins are more reprehensible when committed there?

k) Many answers have been given to these questions.

1. Which Sins Cause Exile? R. Yehonatan Eliasberg provides a simple answer based on a Mishnah in Pirkei Avot. Granted, sins cause exile, but not all sins. The Mishnah states clearly: Exile comes to the world because of idolatry, licentiousness, murder, and working the land during Shemittah (the Sabbatical year). (Avot 5:11) The Land rejects us only when we commit these four sins. Concerning all other sins the Midrash states, "The Holy One Blessed be He said, 'If only My children were with Me in Eretz Yisrael, even though they defile it.'" (R. Eliasberg's answer is found in Shivat Tzion, sec. 1, p. 102.) The Talmud (Shabbat 33a) concurs, citing the scriptural source for each sin: The sin of bloodshed causes the Beit HaMikdash to be destroyed and the Shechinah to leave Israel, as it says, You shall not contaminate [the Land in which you are, for blood contaminates the Land]... And you shall not defile the Land in which you live, in whose midst I dwell (BeMidbar 35:33-34). This implies that if you defile it, you will not remain there and I [God] will not rest in its midst. The sins of licentiousness, idolatry, and working the land during Shemittah and Yovel (the Jubilee year) bring exile to the world. [HaShem] exiles the [Jews], and others dwell [in the Land] in their stead, as it says, For the inhabitants of the Land who are before you committed all these abominations... (VaYikra 18:27). It also says, So the Land became defiled, and I visited its iniquity upon it... (ibid., v. 25), and let not the Land vomit you out when you defile it (ibid., v. 28). In reference to idolatry it says, I will cast your carcasses [on the carcasses of your idols] (ibid. 26:30). Then it says, I will make your sanctuaries desolate... and I will scatter you among the nations (ibid., v. 31-33). Concerning Shemittah and Yovel it says, Then the Land will appease its sabbaticals during all the years it lies desolate, while you are in the land of your enemies... (ibid. 26:34). It also says, All the years it lies desolate, it will rest (ibid., v. 35). A careful look at the sources that discourage the aliyah of sinners (cited at the beginning of the chapter) reveals that they all refer to these four sins. All the verses in the Torah that speak of exile and the Land's tendency to spit out sinners refer only to these sins. Even the Ramban, who speaks of the severity of sins committed in Eretz Yisrael (see above), concludes his comments as follows:

Behold, the Land which is the heritage of the Glorious [King] will spit out anyone who defiles it, and it will not tolerate idol worshippers and adulterers. (Ramban, VaYikra 18:25) This interpretation makes logical sense, as well. The Yalkut cited above compares our relationship with God to that of a father and a son (see above). Granted, most fathers love their sons and want to be near them, but there is a limit to what a person is willing to tolerate in his home. If the son becomes a murderer, God forbid, the father has no choice but to throw him out of the house. Most secular Jews in our generation are not infected with these grievous sins. Many of them believe in God and perform mitzvot, at least partially. Murder and idolatry are very rare, and adultery – with a married woman – is uncommon. Relatively few people are farmers, and the heter mechirah saves those who are from violating the laws of Shemittah. In any event, today's wayward Jews certainly do not sin intentionally. They were simply not fortunate enough to receive a proper Jewish education.

2. The Avnei Neizer's Answer

With all of its merits, the previous answer is insufficient. According to R. Eliasberg zt"l, we should discourage sexually immoral people from coming to the Land. We saw above, however, that Ezra brought with him people who committed some of the most immoral acts, including sodomy. Furthermore, the merit of dwelling in Eretz Yisrael stood by Eisav even though he committed all three cardinal sins (see BeReishit Rabbah 63:10). The author of Responsa Avnei Neizer explains that Eisav's adherence and submission to his righteous father, Yitzchak, is what stood him in good stead: We stated above that the mitzvah of dwelling in Eretz Yisrael applies only to righteous individuals for whom the redemption is worthy to come. We must [reconcile] this with the Midrash that says that Ya'akov was afraid of Eisav because he was worried that the merit of honoring his father and living in Eretz Yisrael might stand by him. Now, Ya'akov knew of Eisav's wickedness, as he said when buying the birthright from him, "This rasha (wicked man) is not fitting to offer sacrifices to the Holy One Blessed be He." If so, what mitzvah did [Eisav] fulfill by living in Eretz Yisrael? We must answer that since he honored his father, yielding and negating himself to Yitzchak, the Land tolerated him on Yitzchak's account and refrained from spitting him out. (Avnei Neizer, Yoreh De'ah 454) The Land spits out murderers and adulterers only when the entire community is party to the crime. However, if there are righteous individuals who interrelate with the masses, their merit protects the entire nation. Nowadays, secular Israelis do not appear to be submissive to the religious community. In actuality, however, all that they have built in Eretz Yisrael has improved and elevated the status of Torah and Judaism throughout the world. We already demonstrated at length that the establishment of the State brought great salvation to the Torah world. Even though the leaders of the State did not have this in mind, that is what they actually accomplished. Today's secularists protect observant Jews and support their yeshivas and kollels. Should this merit not stand by their sides?

3. HaShem Does Not Want to Lose His Children

In chapter six, we quoted the Chafetz Chayim as saying that the redemption will come specifically in our generation, despite – and actually because of – our low spiritual state. The entire purpose of exile is to bring Jews back to God, not to distance them from authentic Judaism, God forbid. Recently, however, the hardships of exile have caused vast numbers of Jews to abandon their faith. Therefore, exile no longer serves its purpose, and since HaShem does not want to lose His children, He is forced (so to say) to redeem them. Thus, even the deeds of the irreligious bring the redemption closer. This idea has special relevance to our topic, as well. Even when the Land rejects the sinners, God does not want to eradicate them. His goal is to arouse them to penitence. The Talmud asserts that the robbers of Eretz Yisrael are more righteous than the thieves of Babylonia (Avodah Zarah 26a). This shows that the holy atmosphere of Eretz Yisrael can have a positive influence even on criminals. Due to the longevity of exile, today's situation is very different from that of the past. In the past, exile fulfilled its purpose – to arouse Jews to penitence. Today, however, Jews who remain in Chutz LaAretz run the risk of being irrevocably lost from the Jewish nation. Many of them intermarry and becloud their souls with forbidden foods. Those who live in Eretz Yisrael, on the other hand, transgress fewer sins and are much more likely to return to God (if not them, then their offspring). Anyone who is concerned with the spiritual well-being of the entire Jewish nation – not just that of religious Jews – understands that immigration to Israel saves many Jewish souls from utter destruction. The Land receives them today with open arms, in order to preserve them as Jews and eventually bring them closer to the ways of the Torah.

4. Self-Sacrifice for the Land

“Dwelling in the Land of Israel is equal to all the mitzvot of the Torah” (Sifrei, Re 'eh 28). When a Jew labors arduously to build the Land, not feeling satisfied with just living there because it is his birthplace, he earns great merit, which will stand by him in time of need. This is the meaning of the Talmudic passage cited above regarding Omri. The merit of building a city in Eretz Yisrael stood by him and saved him from being expelled from the Land.

The pioneers who returned to Zion a century ago did not just work hard to rebuild the Land; they did much more – they literally devoted their lives to the Land. They were even willing to die for it, endangering their lives to drain the swamps that had formed over centuries of desolation. They suffered from malaria, poverty, scarcity, and enemy attacks. Until

this very day, the soldiers of the Israeli army put their lives on the line to defend the country. 66

The Maharil (Teshuvot, sec. 72) and the Chatam Sofer (Yoreh De 'ah 333) assert that a Jew who is killed because he is Jewish is considered holy and pious, even if he died a wicked man. This is certainly true if the person was willing, during his lifetime, to endanger his life and sacrifice himself to defend the Jewish State. Everyone who serves in the Israeli army knows that he may be sent on a dangerous mission from which he will not return. Most soldiers cannot explain why they do it; they simply act on the inherent Jewish feelings that burn deep in their hearts.

5. We Are Confident that They Will Repent

One of the clearest sources in support of bringing non-observant Jews to Eretz Yisrael is the story of Ezra and Nechemyah (cited above). Most of the Jews who returned to the Land at the time were very far from Torah and mitzvot. Within a few decades, however, the condition of the fledgling Jewish state improved dramatically, reaching a spiritual crescendo during the Hasmonian period, when the Jews regained sovereignty over their Land (see Rambam, Hilchot Chanukah 3:1). 68 This idea helps explain our issue, as well. Ezra and Nechemyah were confident that they would eventually be able to change the situation. Perhaps they made an astute assessment of the nation's standing and of their own ability to influence the masses. Or perhaps they knew, through prophecy or Divine Inspiration, that they would succeed. Either way, they knew that everyone would eventually repent and that everything would turn out for the best. Therefore, they encouraged all types of Jews, even sinners, to return to the Land.

l) Rav Aharon Solovaichik-Logic of the Heart, Logic of the Mind

m) Rav Aharon Lichtenstien-Mivakshai Panecha

n) Rav Eli Sadan

3) Can we praise all of the participants of this lofty union?

a) The question is: what is the Issur of Chanufa?

Rav Eliezer Melamaid

חנופה לרשע ומחירה

איסור חנופה לרשעים

בהקשר ליחסו של יעקב אבינו לעשיו הרשע, יש מקום לברר את סוגיית החנופה והיחס לרשעים. ונפתח תחילה בכך שאסור להתחנף לרשעים, כפי שלמדו חז"ל מן הפסוק: "ולא תחניפו את הארץ" (במדבר לה, לג, ושם בספרי). משמעות המצווה היא שהתורה מדריכה אותנו שלא להסכים עם מציאות הרשע בעולם. כשאפשר, נצטוונו להוכיח את החוטא, שנאמר: "הוכח תוכיח את עמיתך". וכשאי אפשר להוכיח, כי רק נזק יצמח מהתוכחה, נצטוונו לכל הפחות שלא לחזק את הרשע בדברי שבח וחנופה. שהרי כל המחניף לרשע מחזק ומעודד אותו להמשיך בדרכיו, ונמצא שנעשה שותף בחיזוק הרע בעולם. וזהו שנאמר (משלי יז, טו): "מצדיק רשע ומרשיע צדיק - תועבת ה' גם שניהם". וזהו שאמרו חז"ל (סוטה מא, ב) שהמחניף לרשע עונשו שנופל בגיהנום, ואפילו עוברים שבמעי אימן מקללין אותו, ולבסוף יפול הוא או זרעו בידי הרשע שאותו חזק בחנופתו. מדוע העוברים כועסים על החנפן

ולמה העוברים שבמעי אמן מקללים את החנפן? מפני שהעוברים שבמעי אימן מבטאים את העתיד המיוחל. את כל מה שאנחנו לא הצלחנו לתקן, אבל הם, שיבואו אחרינו, בעזרת ה' יצליחו לתקן. אבל כל זה בתנאי שלפחות נשמור על גרעין האמת, שממנו אח"כ יצמח הטוב. שלפחות נעמוד ונתריע מפני הרשע. אבל כאשר איש טוב מתחנף לרשע, גרעין האמת נעלם מן העולם. בני הדור החדש, שירצו לבנות דבר טוב יותר, יתעו ויחפשו, ולא יידעו מה הטוב ומה הרע, מה אמת ומה שקר. וכל זאת מפני שזה אשר החניף לרשעים גרם שהטוב נחשב לרע והרע נחשב לטוב. ולכן העוברים שבמעי אימן מקללים אותו, על שהרס להם את הסיכוי לתקן את העולם.

וכן מסופר בתלמוד (סוטה מא) על אגריפס המלך, שהיה מזרע גויים ומלך שלא כדיון. פעם כשקרא בתורה במעמד הקהל והגיע לפסוק "לא תוכל לתת עליך איש נכרי", זלגו עיניו דמעות, שהצטער על שהוא מולך על ישראל בניגוד למצוות התורה. אמרו לו הקהלי: אל תתיירא אגריפס, אחינו אתה, אחינו אתה. אמרו חכמים: באותה שעה נתחייבו (שונאי) ישראל כליה, שהחניפו לו לאגריפס. אלא היו צריכים לשתוק.

b) Shaarai Teshuva by Rabainu Yona

שערי תשובה ג:קפט

החנף אשר יהלל רשע לפני בני אדם, אם בפניו אם שלא בפניו, אף על פי שלא יצדיקנו על חמסו ולא יכזב על משפטו, אבל יאמר עליו כי איש טוב הוא.

ועל זה נאמר (משלי כח ד): (עוזבי תורה יהללו רשע". כי לולא אשר עזב את התורה, לא הילל העובר על דבריה ומפר מצוותיה.

וגם כי לא ישבח את הרשע זולתי במה שנמצא בו מן הטוב, ויליץ עליו בפני בני אדם להגיד לאדם ישרו, גם זו רעה חולה, כי בהזכירו את הטוב ואת הרע לא יזכיר, ועל כל פשעיו יכסה, צדיק ייחשב אצל השומעים, ויתנו לו יקר, וירים ידו וגבר. וכבר הקדמנו להודיעך המכשולות והשחיתות הנמצאות בכבוד הרשעים (סימנים קמט-קנב). על כן, לא נכון להזכיר צדקתם, בלתי אם יזכיר רשעם וכסלם, כמו שנאמר (משלי י ז): (ושם רשעים ירקב". ונאמר (ישעיהו נז יב): (אני אגיד צדקתך ואת מעשייך ולא יועילוך". פירוש: "לא יועילוך מעשייך הטובים להצילך מרעתך בקומי למשפט, בערכי לעומתם רוב פשעיך ומעשה תעתועיך, כי דברי עוונותיך גברו מהם". וכמו שאמרו רבותינו כי (ראש השנה טז ב): (מי שעוונותיו מרובים מזכויותיו, נכתב ונחתם לאלתר למיתה".

c) Igroth Moshe

שו"ת אגרות משה אורח חיים חלק ב סימן נא

בענין לכבד באיזה כבוד בביהכ"נ לאחד שהוא מעוברי עבירה והרבים צריכים לו לרפואה וכדומה טבת תש"כ.א. מע"כ ידידי הרה"ג מוהר"ר שמעון אריה עקשטיין שליט"א .

הנה בדבר רופא יהודי מהמפורסמים שבמדינה שרבים צריכים לו להיות בהתקרבות אתו והוא איש בעל מדות רחמים וצדקה באופן גדול וגם עושה הרבה טובות לעניני הקהלה, אבל הוא נשוי נכרית ומטעם זה אין מכבדין אותו בביהכ"נ בשום כבוד והרופא רואה בזה התרחקות מהקהל ומדוכא מאד מזה ולכן רוצים כתר"ה וראשי העיר לכבדו לפעמים בפתיחת וסגירת הארון וכדומה. וגם הוסיף כתר"ה להעיר שמצד הקפדתו על אנשי העיר ברור שרק כל זמן שאמו הזקנה שהיא שומרת תורה בחיים עושה מה שעושה לטובת הקהל אף שמקפיד עליהם ואחר חייה יתרחק מן הקהל ויהיה הפסד גדול להקהל בכלל וליחידים בפרט ורוצה כתר"ה לידע דעתי בזה .

והנה עיקר הנידון בזה הוא משום איסור חניפה שיש במה שיכבדו אותו בדברים שאין מן הראוי לכבד לבעל עבירה כזו, דמצד עצם ענין פתיחת וסגירת הארון להניח לבעל עבירה ליכא שום איסור. ואף לקרא לתורה אם הוא רק בעל עבירה לתיאבון ליכא איסור בעצם אם איננו כופר, דכופר ומומר להכעיס יש לאסור בעצם משום דאין כוונתם ללמד תורת ה' בקריאתם והוו דבריהם בקריאתם רק כקריאת דברים בעלמא לא כקריאת דברי התורה תורת ה' .

וא"כ אפשר שכל איסור חנופה הוא רק בכגון זה דהוא כהסכמה על האיסור ועל דין שקר כהא דאיתא התם /סוטה דף מ"א/ באגריפס שאמרו לו אחינו אתה שנמצא שאומרין שבשר למלכות, שאם היו אומרין כן בפירוש היה זה בדין יהרג ואל יעבור, לכן אף שלא אמרו בפירוש שהוא כשר דיש לפרש דכוונתם שכיון שאחינו אתה במצות, כדפי' התוס' ביבמות, איננו מקפידין מלעבדך כמלך אף אם אינך כשר למלכות, ולכן לא היו מחוייבין למסור נפשם ע"ז אבל מ"מ עברו איסור חנופה שבדבריהם החזיקוהו שישאר במלכותו ואף אם גם בלא דבריהם היה נשאר במלכותו מ"מ אסור להחניף בדבר שהוא כהסכמה על מה שנעשה שלא כדון תורה. וזכר הא דיעקב דאמר לעשו כי על כן ראיתי פניך כראות פני אלקים שהוא ג"כ כשיקר הדין שהרי אסור להסתכל בפני אדם רשע ואיך שייך ליהנות מזה. אבל הוא רק בדין חנופה משום שכוונתו על הפיוס והרצון שנעשה בראיית פניו כדמסיק ותרצני אבל חנופה עכ"פ הוי, והיה מותר משום שמותר בעוה"ז לרשב"ל. וכן הא דאומר לרשע צדיק אתה הוא חנופה משום שג"כ נדמה שאומר על מעשיו שהוא בצדק ובדין, אבל כיון שאינו אומר על איזה דין מיוחד אין בזה משקר ממש בהדין אלא הוא בדין חנופה, שלכן היה מקום להסתפק שיהיה אסור אף במקום סכנה והוצרכו התוס' להוכיח שמקום סכנה שרי .

אבל להחניף בענינים שלא שייכים לומר שהוא מסכים להאיסורים ודברים הרעים שעושה אפשר שליכא איסור כלל כגון לשבח בפי' ובחכמתו בעניני העולם ובמדותיו אף אם מגזמים מעט משום שצריכים לו אפשר ליכא איסור כיון שאין זה כאלו שבגמ'. וכן הוא לכבדו בפתיחת וסגירת הארון וכדומה שהוא רק ענין כבוד בעלמא ולא

נראה מזה שום הסכם למעשיו הרעים, כי להכל ידוע על מה מכבדים לו שהוא בשביל שרבים צריכים לו ויש לו גם מעלות הרבה במעשיו שבין אדם לחברו שראוי לכבדו בשבילם אך שבדברים שבביהכ"נ הנהיגו שלא לכבד לבעלי עבירה כזו שנשואין לנכריות שהוא כפי הראוי וכשיכבדו לזה יהיה זה לחניפה על שצריכין לו, עב"פ כיון שאין בזה שום שייכות להסכמה למעשיו וגם הוא ידוע שאין מסכימין למעשיו אך שמכבדין אותו בשביל שהוא רופא מפורסם ושצריכים לו אין זה בכלל החנופה שאמרינן בסוטה .

ולכן אף שגם מזה צריך להתרחק אף מחנופה כזו, שהוא כשמשבחו יותר ממה שהוא ראוי, כי לשבחו במה שהוא ראוי באמת ודאי ליכא איסור דרק בעכו"ם נאמר לאו דלא תחנם לא תתן להם חן בע"ז דף כ' אבל בישראל אף בעוברי עבירה ליכא איסור זה אבל לשבחו ביותר יש להתרחק, ואולי יש גם איסור בדבר לא רק מצד מדבר שקר תרחק אלא גם מצד חנופה, דמצד שקר כיון שהוא לכוונת שלום אין לאסור כהא דכתובות דף י"ז, וא"כ גם לכבדו בפתיחת וסגירת ארון שאין בזה ענין שקר נמי אולי יש איזה איסור מצד חנופה. אבל כיון שאין איסורו ברור ויותר נוטה שאין בזה איסור אלא מעלה טובה הוא להתרחק אף מחנופה כזו יש להקל אם רואה כתר"ה וראשי העיר אשר יש צורך גדול להקהל ולאנשי העיר שיכבדו אותו באיזה דבר בביהכ"נ כהא דפתיחת וסגירת הארון וכדומה. אבל לקריאה בתורה אין להתיר מטעם שכתבתי לעיל. ידידו מוקירו, משה פיינשטיין___.

d) One aspect is justifying the person's sinful deeds:

however, Rabainu Yona writes (Shaarai Teshuva 189) that one is not allowed to praise a Rasha, even if he does not justify his sins. He can not even say that he is a good guy, because then people will regard him as a righteous individual and honor him. He only permits praise of the Rasha if it is balanced out with one mentioning their wickedness and folly!! See Shulchan Aruch Choshen Mishpat Siman 34.

e) Rav Moshe is more lenient, when he writes (O"C 2:51) that one can praise a Rasha for the good things that he does. Rav Moshe bases his Shita on Tosfoth (Sota 41b), who apparently disagrees with Rabainu Yona. Rav Moshe also goes so far as to say that the whole discussion doesn't get off the ground unless one praises the rasha "יותר ממה שהוא ראוי" but if he would praise him באמת ראוי, that is in the category of לא תחנם which doesn't apply at all to Jews, only to non-Jews.

f) One may say that the person is not violating b'maizid, rather he is a Tinok Shenishba, and NOT a Rasha. See Chazon Ish Yoreh Daiah.

Even if he is defined as a Tinok Shenishba, do we maintain that the Issur of Chanufa does not apply to a Tinok Shenishba? The Saifer L'raiacha Kamocha explicitly writes that one can not praise a rasha, even if he is a Tinok Shehishba. (volume 1 page 103)

g) Rav Moshe's approach may also be the simplest reading of the sugya. The Gemara criticizes the Chachamim for comforting Agrippas by saying אחינו אתה, which

encouraged him to stay on as king even though he wasn't fit for the job. But right before that the Gemara justifies the fact that the Chachamim praised Agrippas for reading the Torah standing. Apparently the fact that they praised him in this way was ok, it was only the fact that they implicitly encouraged him to keep doing something wrong that was the problem.

Even according to Rabbeinu Yona, the problem with praising a rasha for his good deeds is that if one gives a one-sided appraisal of the person, people will think he is a tzaddik and he will become more influential and a role model for others. I am not sure this is a problem with public figures and the like who are not observant. Everyone knows that they are not tzaddikim, and everyone knows that the praise is directed at their public works rather than their personal lifestyle.

There does seem to be a difference in how they are defining the issur of chanufa. Rav Moshe (based on Tosafos) defines it as related to sheker and ziyuf haTorah. Rabbeinu Yona (at least partially) relates it to lifnei iver.

h) Summary of a Rav Amital essay below by Rav Yitzie Blau:

Modernity presents a unique challenge to traditional Jewry in that most of the Jewish people are not observant. How should *shomrei mitzvot* relate to contemporary secular Jews? R. Yehuda Amital, founding Rosh Yeshiva of Yeshivat Har Etzion, offers an important perspective in the Summer 1988 issue of *Tradition*. R. Amital notes how halakha is often harsher in theory than in practice (death penalties, an eye for an eye). He cites many of the standard arguments for a more moderate approach. 1) Hating the sinner must be accompanied by love for the sinner. 2) We have no right to hate the sinner since we are incapable of giving adequate rebuke. 3) A doubting skeptic is not the same as a heretic. 4) Contemporary secularists have the status of a *tinok she'nishba*. He also adds a few novel points. 5) If *acharonim* in the early parts of the twentieth century wrote with understanding about the struggle to maintain faith in modernity, how much more so after the *Shoah*. 6) Now that anti-Semitism has changed from religious persecution to racial hatred, our corresponding *ahavat yisrael* should be directed towards every Jew. 7) The blessing of the Jewish state depends upon cordial relations between all sectors of the nation.

<http://traditionarchive.org/news/originals/Volume%2023/No.%204/A%20torah%20Perspective.pdf>

Part 2-5779-2019: Another miraculous year for Medinat Yisrael!!!

4) Spiritual Achievements

a) Torah learning

עולם התורה בישראל - המספרים המלאים

הנתונים שנאספו עם פתיחת 'זמן אלול' בישיבות, מלמדים על פריחה וצמיחה מתמשכת של עולם התורה בארץ ישראל



צילום: ישיבת הכותל

אחרי שלושה שבועות של הפוגה ומילוי מצברים, קול התורה חוזר לבתי המדרש ולהיכלי התורה ברחבי הארץ. מאחורי המספרים היבשים לכאורה, מסתתרת משמעות 'עסיסית' ומרגשת, המלמדת על פריחה וצמיחה מתמשכת של עולם התורה בארץ הקודש

אל 33 בתי המדרש של הישיבות הגבוהות-הציוניות, נכנסו בתחילת השבוע כ-550 תלמידים לשיעור א'. בסך הכל ישנם כ-3450 בחורים בישיבות הגבוהות הציוניות בשנת התשע"ז

בשנת התשע"א למדו בישיבות הגבוהות כ-3000 תלמידים ב-26 ישיבות, ואילו בשנת התשס"ז היו רק 16 ישיבות גבוהות בהן למדו כ-2700 תלמידים

הנתונים מלמדים אם כן, על גידול של 18% במספר התלמידים בישיבות הגבוהות בתוך כעשור, שאף הכפילו בזמן זה את מספרן

ישיבות ההסדר רושמות גידול נאה של כ-25% במספר התלמידים בתוך עשור. על פי נתוני 'איגוד ישיבות ההסדר', בשנת התשס"ז היו 7,997 תלמידים שהתחלקו בין 50 ישיבות. כעבור חמש שנים, בשנת תשע"א,

למדו 9,007 תלמידי הסדר ב-69 ישיבות

ישיבת ההסדר החדשה ביותר נפתחה השנה בכרמיאל, ובשנה שעברה נפתחו גם 2 ישיבות הסדר חרדיות, שתלמידיהן משרתים בצה"ל במשך 24 חודשים

”

הצטרפו כ-2100 תלמידים לשיעור א' שבכלל ישיבות ההסדר, עם פתיחת זמן אלול לקראת שנת התשע"ז מישיבות ההסדר, יש גם מסלול 40 ישיבות ההסדר. בתוך כ-75 תלמידים ב-10,200 כבר כ- ובסך הכל ישנם פנימי של ישיבה גבוהה' בו התלמידים דוחים את שירותם הצבאי וממשיכים לעסוק בתורה. ישיבות הסדר חרדיות 2 ישיבת ההסדר החדשה ביותר נפתחה השנה בכרמיאל, ובשנה שעברה נפתחו גם שתלמידיהן משרתים בצה"ל במשך 24 חודשים.

תלמידים, כאשר מספר 1150 ילמדו השנה כ- ב-23 אולמות בתי המדרש של המכינות הקדם הצבאיות המכונה גם 'אם המכינות', 'בני דוד' המכינה הראשונה. כ-8% מדי שנה התלמידים במכינות רושם גידול של שלה 29 שהוקמה ביישוב עלי – פותחת השנה את המחזור ה- הסמוכים למסגרת הישיבות בכוללים. 3100 הנשואים במוסדות הציונות הדתית עומד על כ- האברכים מספר אברכים 1200 לומדים קרוב ל- הגבוהות ציוניים שאינם בישיבות, בהם כוללים 50 אברכים, ולצדם עוד כ- 800 בכוללים של ישיבות ההסדר לומדים כ- אברכים 1100 לומדים כ-

מחזיקים בממוצע תלמידי הישיבות הגבוהות. חודשים 60 של תלמיד ישיבת הסדר הינו משך הלימוד הממוצע על פרק הלימוד שלהם כתלמידים רווקים נוספים, חודשים 48 – בכולל ושל האברכים, חודשי לימוד 80 של בישיבה

בציבור החרדי פועלים כיום כ-1400 ישיבות וכוללים, בהם, על פי שנתון הציבור החרדי שהתפרסם בשנה מוסדות ללימוד תורה, 1550 בחורים ועוד כ-72,600 אברכים. בסך הכל ישנם כ-35,700 שעברה, לומדים כ- 67-18 איש בין גילאי 126,000 נאמד כיום בכ- ובסך הכל, מספר לומדי התורה המתחלקים פחות או, תלמידים 9,000- מספר הבחורים שנכנסו השנה לשיעור א' בישיבות החרדיות נאמד בכ יותר, באופן שווה בשווה בין הישיבות הליטאיות, החסידיות והספרדיות



לא פחות מעניין לבחון את נתוני הגידול של לומדי התורה בציבור החרדי. מדי שנה במספר הלומדים 4% בין השנים תשנ"ט לתשע"ג, חל גידול של לאחר ירידה קלה שנרשמה בשנתיים האחרונות (סביב השלכותיו השונות של חוק הגיוס) חזרה מגמת הצמיחה בשנה האחרונה

מספר האברכים העצום בציבור החרדי מעורר השתאות, ובשים לב לעובדה כי לרובם הגדול (76%) יש פטור משירות צבאי, ברור שהלימוד הממושך בכולל איננו תוצאה של דחיית הגיוס, אלא מתוך אהבת תורה עלה השמימה, שנה אחורה. עם ישראל ועולם התורה בארצות אירופה 75 אבל הכי מרגש זה פשוט להסתכל ואותיותיו פרחו באוויר עם השריפה הגדולה אשר שרף השם גוויליו נשרפו

ישיבות בלבד. המספר הוכפל בשנת הקמת 28 בעיצומן של שנות הזעם, בשנת תש"א פעלו בכל ארץ הקודש ישיבות 62 המדינה, התש"ח, ועמד על

צמח עולם התורה בשיעור של פי ישיבות בכלל המגזרים, ומאז ועד היום 150 בשנת התשכ"ב כבר נספרו כ" ישיבות וכוללים ללימוד תורת השם התמימה. כולם 1550 עשרה. ערב ראש השנה התשע"ז ישנם כבר אהובים, כולם ברורים, מיניה ומיניה יתקלס עילאה ("הנתונים כולם יתפרסמו בעלון השבת "קרוב אליך")



b) Yafeh Talmud Torah Im Derech Eretz

Will Haredim soon join the Israeli Air Force?

Is Israel's Air Force the next frontier for haredi integration into the IDF?

Arutz Sheva Staff, י"א בניסן תשע"ט, 4/16/2019

An F-16 flying over Israel's skies conjures up many images in the minds of anyone taking notice, one of them is decidedly not an image of Israel's Haredi population. But if Gavriel Hemo and his Barkai program have their way, the absence of that image will soon belong to the past.

In 2012 the Ministry of Defense's Department of Social and Security Policy approached Hemo with the idea of establishing a program for integrating young Haredi men into the Air Force.

Hemo, who served for many years as Deputy Mayor of the Golan Heights Regional Council, is currently chairman of the "Ruach HaGolan" educational network, which runs twelve unique high schools and post-high school institutions with over 2,000 students.

The Ruach HaGolan network includes the Regavim branch of schools, which integrates rigorous agricultural training and work with a full high school matriculation program. The network includes a school that focuses on excellence in science and technology, the popular Hispin Yeshiva high school, as well as the "Adir Bamarom" Hesder Yeshiva program that combines Torah study with high level technology training for service in the Israel Air Force technology division.

The success of Adir Bamarom prompted the Defense Ministry to approach Hemo and Rabbi Yitzchak Laslow, head of the Yeshiva, with the request that they open a similar track for Haredim. Hemo and Laslow rose to the challenge and Barkai was born.

Realizing the opposition they would encounter within the Haredi community, they approached Rabbi Avraham Borodiansky, grandson of the late venerable Rav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach to take the helm. Although he had a classic Haredi upbringing, studying in the most well-known and respected Haredi Yeshivah, Borodiansky came with a wealth of experience working with Haredi youth who had fallen out of the system and were trying to find themselves while on the periphery of Haredi society.

Bringing Rabbi Borodiansky on board was a real coup as he provided the requisite Haredi gravitas for the program and naturally limited the scope of opposition. His personal standing as both a Torah scholar and talented educator, as well as his impressive lineage, helped secure the seal of approval for Barkai from important Haredi Rabbinic leaders

"Social changes affecting the Haredi community make Barkai an inescapable necessity. Real leaders understand this," argues Borodiansky. "The Haredi sector of the population has grown dramatically forcing the creation of communities beyond the traditional neighborhoods in Jerusalem and Bnei Brak. This migration along with the internet, the expanded need for employment opportunities, the Aliyah of secular-educated Haredim from Anglo-Saxon countries as well as the ubiquitous "Teshuva" movement, has all forced the Haredim to confront the realities of societal integration."

Borodiansky also points to the Shas political party and the Haredization of much of the Sephardic community as a factor spurring change as well. "Sephardic families from the get go didn't identify with the Ashkenazi yeshiva isolationism and antipathy for army service. Influence was not a one way street. The Ashkenazi yeshivot certainly influenced the Sephardic ones in many areas of study and religious norms, but Sephardic Haredim also projected that there was no contradiction between being Haredi and remaining part of Israeli society as a whole. This influence may have been subliminal, but over time it was and remains significant," he says. The numbers speak for themselves. After beginning with a handful of students just seven years ago, Barkai now has 130 students and will be starting the next academic year with over 180. "That number could easily double if space was available," says Hemo. "It breaks my heart that we have to turn so many potential students away because we simply have no room. This has to change and I'm sure that with continued success it will. Everyone involved wants to see the program grow dramatically."

"Everyone" includes those who count the most when it comes to government funding: The Minister of Defense, officials from the Prime Minister's office, the Finance and Education Ministries, IDF generals and IAF commanders. During official visits all officials have promised increased funding. The army chiefs have expressed tremendous satisfaction with the program as the need for smart and disciplined technological support staff is acute.

The program is intense and lasts for a minimum of five years. Because most of the students entering Barkai have not completed high school studies, the first year is dedicated to full high school matriculation. "It is important to remember that the students we accept are of a high intellectual caliber," emphasizes Rabbi Borodiansky. "They are very capable academically but have simply not been given the opportunity to learn anything other than religious studies. It shouldn't be surprising then that they can matriculate and achieve a high school diploma in one serious year of study."

The second and third years of study are dedicated to the specific areas of software and ICT training that lead to a degree recognized by the Ministry of Education in 'practical engineering.' Having completed their basic educational training the students go on to serve in the Air Force

for at least two years. Students who excel can go on to an additional eight month advanced technological training course in the IDF from which they will continue to elite intelligence units and serve for at least another four years.

Economists and state budget planners in the Prime Minister's office and the Finance Ministry see the contribution of Barkai in what happens with the graduates after their army service. As the Haredi population grows, so does the need to integrate more into the workforce.

Otherwise the number of society's dependents will grow and will also put a greater burden on a shrinking workforce. Barkai's graduates are prepared for social integration and workforce participation immediately upon completing their army service. This is Barkai in the macro, a crucial game changer when it comes to long-term economic planning and sustained growth.

Barkai in the micro contributes towards changing individual lives. Eli grew up in Jerusalem, the youngest of eight brothers, none of whom served in the IDF. "It wasn't even a consideration for them, or for my friends and neighbors. We were conditioned to consider anyone a "freiyeir" (loser) who went to the army. The absurdity of it all was the fact that I drifted from yeshiva to yeshiva and spent most of my high school years just hanging out, and that didn't make me a freiyeir. My family and friends see me now; growing, accomplishing and getting ready to make a serious contribution and their attitude has changed."

"When I came to Barkai, I was suspicious," Eli admits, "but I very quickly discovered that there was no cynicism here, no pretentiousness. Rav Borodiansky really cares about me and my future as he does of all the students."

Shiloh from Ramat Gan and Elchanan from Be'er Sheva and agree. Like Eli and most of the students in Barkai, they didn't find themselves in the Haredi Yeshiva system and found themselves wandering aimlessly with no direction. Shiloh says "A person without a daily schedule, without goals and an agenda is going to end up in trouble. This is what happens to guys who aren't fit for the typical Yeshiva program." Elchanan adds, "When I came to Barkai I couldn't do the most basic math. How was I going to get along in life, unless of course I didn't leave the four walls of Yeshiva."

Borodiansky and his staff don't minimize the importance of Torah study - on the contrary. They are all graduates of the most prestigious Haredi Yeshivot, and insist on a Haredi environment for Barkai students both on campus and in the army. "But not everyone is cut from the same cloth, not everyone is made to be a Halachic authority or Talmudic master," emphasizes Rabbi Elchanan Ba'agad. "There is more than one way to sanctify God and bring honor to his name. Barkai is a dream come true, and long overdue. These boys will bring honor to Torah through their service to the country, their knowledge, their behavior, the example they set."

Rabbi Nathaniel Ochana, Barkai's spiritual mentor, points to the changing norms the program has engendered. "Parents originally sent their sons here as a frustrated last resort, almost embarrassed that their boys were leaving the traditional mold. But that's changing. A lot of credit is due to the IAF for this. It is not always easy for base commanders to accommodate our requirements, from mandatory Torah learning time to special Kashrut demands, but they really want to see the program succeed and are always ready to go the extra mile. It is true that some of our students still have to change out of their uniform when they come home for a visit, but as our numbers grow and we continue to prove over time that service in the IDF is compatible with Haredi values and lifestyle, IDF uniforms will be celebrated in Haredi Yeshivot and households. The day is not that far away."

One challenge is already a thing of the past. It has been commonplace that Haredim who enlist have a problem with "shiduchim" (finding a spouse). When asked about this, Eli, Elchanan, and Shiloh all smile. "No problem on that score, says Eli, "on the contrary, there are plenty of Haredi girls who are honored to date IDF soldiers who have maintained their Haredi lifestyle."

Barkai has embarked on an ambitious 10 million dollar building project to accommodate the growing enrolment demand. Half the budget has already been pledged by government ministries and the IDF, and the other half will be raised from private donations. Gavriel Hemo is sanguine about the matching funds: "This is the kind of program that the country has been waiting for, and people understand that it's win-win for everyone involved. Here you have increased social cohesion, economic growth, individual prosperity and the country's defense all wrapped up in one. And, let's not forget that it's on the Golan Heights, which the government of the United States of America just recognized as sovereign Israel."

5) Israel's Political Achievements

a) NETANYAHU AGAIN ON TIME'S LIST OF WORLD'S 100 MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

"Israel is Bibi's nation," Time Columnist David French wrote in a short piece explaining the choice and noting Netanyahu's recent re-election to a fifth term. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu last Tuesday won a fifth term as Israel's prime minister, and on Wednesday he was rewarded by *Time* magazine with inclusion for the fourth time in a decade on its list of the world's 100 most influential people. "Israel is Bibi's nation," Time columnist David French wrote in a short piece explaining the choice and noting Netanyahu's recent reelection to a fifth term.

“The reasons for his enduring appeal are clear,” French wrote. “The Second Intifada undermined Israel’s political left, with fresh memories of suicide bombers rebuking the idea that there exists a partner for peace. Ongoing rocket attacks launched by Hamas show that present dangers are real. And Iran’s power and ambition signal that even two generations after the Yom Kippur War, Israel can face existential threats.” French wrote that in spite of the dangers, Israel is growing more prosperous and powerful, with the elections showing that sufficient numbers of Israelis believe that Netanyahu is not only partly responsible for that success, “but that he’s the nation’s indispensable man.”

Netanyahu made the list in 2011, 2012 and then again in 2015. He is one of only 27 people who have been on the list four times or more, with Barack Obama having made the most appearances (11), followed by Hillary Clinton, Oprah Winfrey and Chinese President Xi Jinping at 10 apiece.

Netanyahu joined another 25 people in the “leaders” category on the 2019 list, including US President Donald Trump, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi, Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, Australian Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, Pope Francis, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed, and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Netanyahu reacted to his inclusion on the list with a tweet thanking *Time* for the choice and saying “I will continue to work with all my strength for our country.”

b) Israel opens embassy in Rwanda.

(TY WIN) After years of diplomatic ties, Israel has opened its first embassy in Rwanda. Israeli Ambassador to Rwanda Ron Adam presented his credentials to Rwandan President Paul Kagame in February. Rwanda’s national airline, RwandAir, is expected to start direct flights to Israel soon.

c) Historic visit by Brazilian President.

Almost the first words that President Jair Bolsonaro spoke on arriving in the Jewish State were “I love Israel” (in Portuguese). He also made the first visit by a foreign leader to the Kotel (Western Wall) accompanied by an Israeli PM. He then opened a new Brazil-Israel trade mission in Jerusalem.

d) A New Zealand MP is a Zionist.

(TY B.I.G.) New Zealand MP, the Honorable Alfred Ngaro, is a Christian, descended from Polynesian, Cook Islanders and a Jewish grandmother. He proclaims the right of Jews to their ancestral homeland and has reestablished the NZ Israel Parliamentary Friendship Group.

e) Honduras and Romania to move embassies to Jerusalem.

(TY Arthur R) Honduras and Romania are to relocate their Israeli embassies to Israel's capital. Both President Juan Orlando Hernandez of Honduras and Romanian Prime Minister Viorica Dăncilă announced their plans during the AIPAC conference in Washington.

f) US recognizes Israel's sovereignty in the Golan.

US President Donald Trump signed a proclamation recognizing Israel's sovereignty over the Golan Heights.

g) Hungary opens embassy branch in Jerusalem.

As promised, Hungary has opened its diplomatic trade mission in Jerusalem, which is considered a branch of the Hungarian Embassy located in Tel Aviv. Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto was in Jerusalem on Tuesday for the dedication ceremony of the new facility.

6) ISRAEL'S MEDICAL ACHIEVEMENTS

a) Preventing strokes without excessive bleeding.

Biotech eXithera is a portfolio company of Israel's Clal Biotechnology. It has developed an anti-coagulant which has successfully completed Phase 1 trials. The treatment delays coagulation rather than prevents it and its effects cease quickly when the treatment stops.

b) Technion printer for human tissues

(TY Nevet) Israel's Technion Institute has set up a 3D center for the printing of cells, tissues and organs. Its purpose is to enable Technion researchers to develop tissues containing blood vessels or 3D scaffolds that quickly connect to the patient's own blood vessels.

c) Bio-inspired robots.

(TY WIN & i24 News) Researchers at Israel's Ben Gurion University have created tiny robots that could soon become part of medical procedures.

d) Growing cells to kill cancer

Israel's Sheba hospital is partnering with Switzerland's Lonza Group to fast-track production of the CAR-T cancer immunotherapy invented by Israeli scientists. Sheba is the first hospital to trial and refine Lonza's Cocoon manufacturing platform for growing cells to treat hundreds of oncology patients.

e) Fast cancer diagnosis.

Israel's Ibex Medical Analytics develops a diagnostic system that uses computer vision, machine learning, and electronic medical records to confirm cancer diagnoses of tissue biopsies. Ibex's technology helps minimize the risk of misdiagnosis. Ibex has just received \$11 million of funding.

f) Manufacturing center for tumor lasers.

I reported previously on Israel's HIL Applied Medical and its focused proton beam lasers to treat tumors. HIL is spending \$5 million to set-up a research and development and manufacturing center at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

g) Age your immune system for a longer life.

Researchers from Israel's Technion and US Stanford University have identified age factors within the human immune system that predict a person's longevity. Eventually you will know which lifestyle changes, habits and medications can advance your immune system and extend life.

h) Complementary medicine works.

Dr. Yair Maimon is head of the Tal Integrative Cancer Research Center at Israel's Sheba Medical Center. Thanks to 30 years' experience of Chinese botanical medicine, his LCS101 botanical formula alleviates treatment side effects, boosts the immune system and kills selective cancer cells.

i) World's 10th best hospital.

"Newsweek" has ranked Sheba Medical Center at Tel Hashomer near Tel Aviv as one of the world's top ten hospitals. "Newsweek" says the hospital is, "a leader in medical science and biotechnical innovation, both in the Middle East and worldwide."

j) Plant research for a healthier planet.

Scientists at Israel's Weizmann Institute are improving global food security e.g. by figuring out how plants can better resist drought and provide higher-quality nutrition. They have also devised a method of killing a parasitic weed that was destroying corn crops in sub-Saharan Africa.

7) A Nation of Chessed

a) Snow on Mt Hermon – good news for cancer patients.

During the winter, Israeli charity Ezer Mizion often takes oncology clinic kids on a trip to Mt. Hermon. And if their blood count results are anything to go by, the benefits to the children last long after they return from the "sledding, tobogganing and fun, fun, fun!"

b) Rare pediatric double organ transplant.

13-year-old Hila Amram received a new liver and pancreas at Petah Tikva's Schneider Children's Medical Center. The double transplant saved her life and freed her from insulin dependence. The op was even more complex due to the donor's internal organs being reversed - a rare anomaly.

8) Israel's eternal Home-past,present & future

a)The world's largest accessible historical site.

I reported previously ([10th Mar](#)) that Jerusalem had spent millions of shekels on improving the Old City, including access to the sites. The work has paid off, making Jerusalem the largest accessible historical site in the world. There is even a mobility app in eight languages.

b) First Temple seal discovered in Jerusalem.

A bulla (seal impression) and a 2,600-year-old stamp dating back to the First Temple have been found during archaeological excavations in the City of David. The bulla has the words "Nathan-Melech, Servant of the King" - the name of an official of Judean King Josiah (Kings II 23:11)

c) World's longest salt cave.

80 cave explorers from nine countries have mapped Israel's Malcham cave near the Dead Sea and declared it to be the longest salt cave in the world. At 10km it dwarfs Iran's 6.5km 3N cave - the previous longest. Malcham is in Mount Sdom – where, in the Bible, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt.

d) 2000-year-old Jewish village in Eastern Jerusalem.

Archaeologists are uncovering a Jewish village from the Hasmonean period in the Sharafat neighborhood of Jerusalem. It includes a wine and olive presses, a rock-cut dovecote, two large ritual baths, a water cistern and an extravagant burial cave.

e) Highway through history.

(TY [IsraPundit](#)) I reported previously ([see here](#)) on excavations that have revealed a 3000-year-old Biblical city from King David's Kingdom, near the modern Israeli city of Beit Shemesh. This

article gives more details of the discoveries and how the site will be preserved alongside a new highway.

9) Chessed to Israel's Gentile citizens

a) Empowering Druze women.

The Beyahad ("together") program at Ono Academic College provides aspiring Druze women with the opportunity to advance their professional careers while maintaining their traditional lifestyle. Israel has female Druze researchers, engineers and doctors and the program aims to encourage more.

b) What goes around, comes around.

Four years ago, Palestinian Arabs Imad and Ayoub rescued Dr. Eitan and his son when they accidentally drove into a PA village and were attacked by a mob. Recently, Imad's sister-in-law was severely injured in a vehicle accident. Dr Eitan transferred her to Israel's Sheba hospital for treatment.

10) Tikun Olam

a) Clean drinking water for Sierra Leone children.

Israel's Watergen has supplied one of its GEN-350 "water from the air" generators to the St. Joseph's girls' school in Sierra Leone's capital of Freetown. Its 900 liters per day of fresh drinking water is saving the schoolchildren from the many endemic diseases in the country.

b) Environmentally friendly plastic.

Israeli chemical engineer Sharon Barak has produced a product that looks and feels like plastic but dissolves in water within minutes, and the water is drinkable. See Nas Daily's video.

c) Israeli rescuers in Brazil – the inside story.

This video describes the work of Israeli firefighters who flew out to Brazil three days after the 25th Jan dam collapse and subsequent deadly mudslide. The traumatic recovery activities created strong bonds and today Brazil and Israel see each other as true friends.

d) Protecting crops.

More information about the imaging and analysis platform of Israel's Taranis, which is used by some 19,000 farmers in eight countries help prevent disease and pest infestation in crops. It protects about 20 million acres of fields in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Israel, Russia, United States and Ukraine.

e) Drip irrigation across India.

(TY Hazel and [Calcalistech](#)) I reported previously ([2nd Dec](#)) that Israel's Netafim was deploying its drip-irrigation systems to 6,000 farmers in Hungund, India. It has since won a \$100 million contract to install its systems in 100 villages, benefiting 60,000 farmers across India.

f) United Hatzalah opens in Colombia.

Israeli Emergency Medical Service United Hatzalah has just opened a new chapter in Colombia – its fifth country outside of its Israeli base. UH aims to reduce emergency response times in Colombia down from 45 minutes to just three. UH operates in the US, Panama, Ukraine and Brazil.

g) World Down Syndrome Day.

21st March is World Down Syndrome Day and coincided with Purim this year. Israel together with Singapore initiated World Down Syndrome Day in 2006 ([see here](#)). Israel's Yated Association provides parents with reliable information about raising children with DS.

h) Help for siblings of children with disabilities.

Israel has many charities helping children with disabilities. However, only one - "Siblings in the Field" – supports siblings of those children, who might not get as much attention because parents' focus is elsewhere. It currently helps kids aged 9 to 10 in the city of Modi'in.

i) Israel is feeding the world.

(TY Hazel) Israel has over than 300 food-tech and agro-tech startups. Many of them presented at the Israel Export Institute's "Rethinking Food" conference in Tel Aviv. Subjects discussed included eliminating waste, packaging, global partnerships, vegan food and international markets.

j) US to follow Israeli model for army "specials".

The IDF's Special in Uniform program integrates young people with autism and other disabilities into the Israel Defense Forces and, in turn, into Israeli society. US Ambassador to Israel David Friedman said that the US wants to implement a similar model in the US army.

k) Aid to Mozambique.

Israeli humanitarian NGO IsraAID has dispatched an emergency response team to Mozambique, to help victims of the cyclone that devastated the country. IsraAID will distribute relief supplies, deliver psychological first aid and restore access to safe drinking water to affected communities.

l) Keeping Italian police from danger.

I reported previously ([see here](#)) on Israel's Roboteam and its tactical robots. Roboteam has just won a \$10 million order to supply 40 TIGR ground robotic systems to Italy's Carabinieri (police). They are designed to handle suspicious packages and hazardous materials.

m) Special winners in Abu Dhabi.

Israel's 25-member team won 22 medals at the 2019 Special Olympics in Abu Dhabi. They won 4 Gold medals: in the women's 100-meter individual medley; women's 25-meter backstroke, men's 1,500-meter Open Water Swimming and doubles bowling (Unified) competition

11) ECONOMY & BUSINESS

a) 18 of Europe's 100 most promising startups are Israeli.

Every year, the editorial team of Red Herring magazine / news service selects the 100 most promising tech and life-sciences companies for the United States, Europe and Asia. 18 Israeli companies made the Top 100 Europe list for 2019.

b) China is Israel's second biggest export market.

China has now bypassed the U.K. as Israel's second largest export market. \$2.6 billion worth of electronic components were shipped from Israel to China over the past year – 80% more than in 2017. Intel exports most of its Israel-manufactured components to China.

c) Isrotel is building 5 new hotels in Tel Aviv.

Isrotel has announced that it will increase the number of hotels it operates in Israel from 19 to 30 by 2025. Isrotel is currently building 5 hotels in Tel Aviv – a city that it says “combines business and tourism and is becoming a strong international brand.”

d) Israel has thousands of hi-tech companies.

(TY OurCrowd) Israel had 6,673 active high-tech companies and startups as of the end of 2018, according to a report published by the Start-Up Nation Central organization. Of those, over one thousand operated in the area of Artificial Intelligence.

e) Ryanair's Lauda to fly Tel Aviv to Vienna.

Irish low-cost airline Ryanair's Austrian subsidiary Lauda will launch Tel Aviv - Vienna daily flights in October. El Al, Austrian Airlines and Wizz Air also fly from Tel Aviv to Vienna.

Dublin Becomes First European Capital to Endorse BDS for Palestinian Rights & Drops Hewlett

Packard for Its Complicity in Israeli Apartheid"Dublin has offered the strongest response to date to Israel's latest massacre against unarmed Palestinian protesters in the occupied and besieged Gaza Strip. This is the most impressive win yet for the BDS movement in 2018."

f) Dutch BDS supporter triggers huge Israeli wine sales.

An anti-Israel supporter's tweet to boycott Israeli wines at the Dutch Hema supermarket was turned by pro-Israel supporters into a social media buying frenzy. Within hours, Efrat Wines were sold out from Hema's online store and branch stocks were running out fast.

g) Two new Fattal hotels in Jerusalem.

(TY [Janglo](#)) Israeli international hotel chain Fattal is building a new 168-room NYX Jerusalem Hotel near the Mahane Yehuda market. It is also expanding the former Alliance School into a 90-room boutique hotel. Fattal has 200 hotels in 18 countries including the Leonardo chain.

h) Pointer exits for \$140 million.

I reported previously ([see here](#)) on Israel's Pointer Telelocation whose software tracks vehicles for fleet management, insurance purposes and stolen vehicle recovery. US based I.D. Systems is acquiring Pointer in a deal valued at some \$140 million.

i) OrthoSpace exits for up to \$220 million.

I reported previously ([Jan 2014](#)) on Israel's OrthoSpace which develops a biodegradable balloon that can be implanted into injured shoulders, preventing friction and alleviating pain. NYSE-listed Stryker Corp. is acquiring OrthoSpace for up to \$220 million.

j) McDonald's buys Israeli AI startup.

I mentioned previously ([Jan 2018](#)) Israeli startup Dynamic Yield, which uses Artificial Intelligence to deliver a personalized service to customers. Fast food giant McDonald's has recognized DY's potential and has bought the innovative startup for \$300 million.

k) Global demand for Israeli startups.

(TY [Janglo](#)) Investors have been keen to back Israeli startups in Feb. Here is a summary of the top financing deals worth a total of \$445 million in one month for just 11 Israeli companies. Also, see Ambassador Yoram Ettinger's article "Growing global interest in Israel's high-tech".

l) Turkish Airlines to connect Tel Aviv and Izmir.

Turkey's President Erdogan may not like Israel, but his national airline wants Israeli customers. Turkish Airlines is launching a new four-flights-per-week service between Tel Aviv's Ben Gurion International and Izmir's Adnan Menderes airport, commencing 29th May.

m) Elbit's \$3.68 billion revenue.

Total 2018 earnings for Israeli hi-tech giant Elbit were a massive \$3.68 billion - 9% higher than in 2017. Elbit also revealed that it has \$9.4 billion worth of orders in the pipeline.

n) Warren Buffet's company partners Israeli startup.

, A subsidiary of Warren Buffet's Berkshire Hathaway, Guard Insurance, has partnered with Israeli startup Planck Resolution to develop a full digital underwriting offering. Planck develops software that helps insurance companies analyze and risk-assess businesses.

o) BMW to open Israel Tech Center.

(TY [Atid-EDI](#)) I reported previously ([see here](#)) on the links that German carmaker BMW has with Israel. Now, BMW is opening a Tel Aviv tech center to tap into the talent in Israel's startup scene. It will also set up joint research projects with Israeli universities.

p) Historic Burma road now hosts gas pipeline.

In 1948, Israel broke the Arab siege of Jerusalem by building the "Burma" road to ferry supplies. Israel Natural Gas Lines has just inaugurated a pipeline along the Burma road to take natural gas from the coast to supply Jerusalem. The 34-km pipeline cost NIS 290 million to build.

12) Israel & the Nations

a) Hatikvah in Qatar.

(TY Hazel) Hatikvah, the Israeli national anthem, was played in Doha, Qatar after Israeli gymnast Alexander Shatilov won the gold medal for the floor exercise during the FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Cup series. The Arab nation has no diplomatic relations with Israel.

13) Caring for God's creatures

a) A sanctuary for disabled animals.

(TY Hazel) Israel's animal rescue and educational sanctuary at Moshav Olesh serves as a refuge for mostly disabled animals. It is popular with visitors, especially children with special needs. Its residents include a three-legged donkey, a sheep with leg braces, and a blind goat.

14) Kibbutz Galuyoth

a) At the start of January 2019, Israel's population stood at 8,972,000. This is a more than 10-fold increase compared to when Israel was founded in 1948.

b) Diversity & Growth

c) The Jewish population makes up 6,668,000 (74.3%); 1,878,000 (20.9%) are Arabs; and, those identified as "others" (non-Arab Christians, Baha'i, etc) make up 4.8% of the population (426,000 people). In 2017, the population by religion was roughly 18% Muslim, 2% Christian and 2% Druze.

d) When the state was established, there were only 806,000 residents and the total population reached its first and second millions in 1949 and 1958 respectively. Judging by current population trend data, experts predict that the population of Israel will reach 10 million by 2024 or sooner.

e) In addition to these numbers, there are approximately 170,000 people living in Israel who are neither citizens nor permanent residents.

f) The overall population grew by 2% in 2018.

g) Out of the 14.5 million Jewish people in the world, 46% reside in Israel. The Jewish population of Israel now exceeds that of the United States by roughly one million.

h) Some 185,000 babies were born (74.4% Jews, 22.8% Arabs, and 2.8% others) and 45,000 people died in 2018.

i) Israel is the 99th most populous country in the world, not including the over 250,000 illegal foreign workers and African migrants residing in Israel.

j) Of Israeli Jews, 44.3% self-identify as secular, 11% simply as religious, and 9% as ultra-Orthodox. According to the Israel Democracy Institute, the percentage of ultra-Orthodox is slightly higher.

15) SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

a) Most innovative.

TY [Atid-EDI](#) I reported previously ([16th Mar](#)) that there were six Israeli companies on Fast Company's prestigious annual list of the World's Most Innovative Companies (MIC) for 2019. There is now a seventh – Wisdo is a self-care platform that provides users with wisdom from those with similar experiences.

b) Real-time transcription.

I reported previously ([21st May](#)) that Israel's Verbit provided a 4-hour turnaround for its transcription service. , Verbit has now launched a pay per minute, real-time service that automatically transcribes speech instantly at a high accuracy rate.

c) Window-cleaning robots.

I reported briefly previously ([23rd Oct](#)) on Israel's Skyline Robotics. Its automated cleaning system, called OZMO, uses computer vision and machine learning to clean windows at any height. It can clean (safely) a 40-storey building in 7 days - less than a third of the time that 3 human cleaners would take.

d) Enhanced security at Ben Gurion airport.

(TY [Janglo](#)) Security improvements will reduce delays for tourists at Ben Gurion Airport in time for Eurovision. Delegations can be pre-registered. Facial recognition will speed up passengers with biometric passports. And machines will (initially) ask "did you pack your own baggage?"

e) Preventing railway crashes.

Israel's RailVision has developed revolutionary technology that prevents accidents involving trains by ensuring they have an adequate stopping time. RailVision's thermal sensor can identify hazards up to two miles away. RailVision has just raised \$10 million.

f) Traffic lights for smartphone users.

(TY [Janglo](#)) Tel Aviv is testing new "zombie" traffic lights, designed to alert pedestrians too absorbed on their smartphone to look up at the signals. Bright LED light strips set into the sidewalks at one Tel Aviv road junction will turn red or green in sync with the traffic lights.

g) Technology to improve driving.

I reported previously ([see here](#)) on the vehicle cyber security systems from Israel's ERM Advanced Telematics. ERM has now launched eVoice for fleet managers to warn their drivers of safety violations. eVoice will issue a real-time audio alert if a driver performs a dangerous maneuver.

h) A drone that can pick fruit.

Israel's Tevel Aerobotics has developed an autonomous drone equipped with a mechanical claw that can pick fruit or prune trees. It uses artificial intelligence to detect fruit quality and ripeness. The prototype is for apples and oranges but is being expanded to other fruits and to function at night.

i) Kibbutzim to share electric cars.

Meshek Energy, an agricultural cooperative society owned by Israeli kibbutzim, has acquired dozens of electric cars. They will be stationed in several dozen kibbutzim and will be used as shared vehicles. Meshek Energy will set up and operate car charging stations at various kibbutzim.

Nechama for the loss of 'A Better Place.'

16) Healthy Culture-Ushmartem Et Nafshotaichem

Jerusalem marathon's 40,000 runners.

(TY Sharon & Jacques) The annual Jerusalem Marathon attracted a record 40,000 participants including some 4,600 from 80 countries. The route passed the Old City walls, Sultan's Pool, Mount Zion, the German Colony, Ammunition Hill, Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives.

17) Miracles of Biblical proportions

a)US Secretary of State visits Kotel.

(TY WIN) Mike Pompeo was the first U.S. Secretary of State to visit the Western Wall (Kotel) in Jerusalem. Accompanied by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and U.S. Ambassador to Israel David Friedman, Secretary Pompeo placed a note in between the ancient stones. Pompeo says God may have sent Trump to save Israel from Iran



US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said it is "possible" that President Donald Trump was sent by God to save Israel from Iran. In an interview with the Christian Broadcasting Network during a high-profile trip to Israel, he said it was his faith that made him believe that. He also praised US efforts to "make sure that this democracy in the Middle East, that this Jewish state, remains". The comments came on a Jewish holiday celebrating rescue from genocide. The holiday, Purim, commemorates the biblical rescue of the Jewish people by Queen Esther from the Persians, as the interviewer noted to Mr Pompeo.

b) What did Pompeo say?

He was asked if "President Trump right now has been sort of raised for such a time as this, just like Queen Esther, to help save the Jewish people from an Iranian menace". "As a Christian, I certainly believe that's possible," said Mr Pompeo, a former member of Congress for Kansas and CIA director. "I am confident that the Lord is at work here," he added. Mr Pompeo came under fire during his tour of the Middle East for holding a conference call and only inviting "faith-based" members of the media to join.

c) How often do US officials invoke religion?

Mr Pompeo is not the first Trump official to suggest a divine will behind Mr Trump's actions: In January, White House press secretary Sarah Sanders told a religious television network that God "wanted Donald Trump to become president". Vice-President Mike Pence and former Attorney General Jeff Sessions have also referenced Christianity or **bible verses in official remarks**. His administration is also the first in 100 years to have a **Cabinet member bible study group** - of which Mr Pompeo was a member.

d)

ועכשיו: בשלבי תרגום והוצאה לאור גם בס"ן

רב מכר
כנרת זמורה-ביתן

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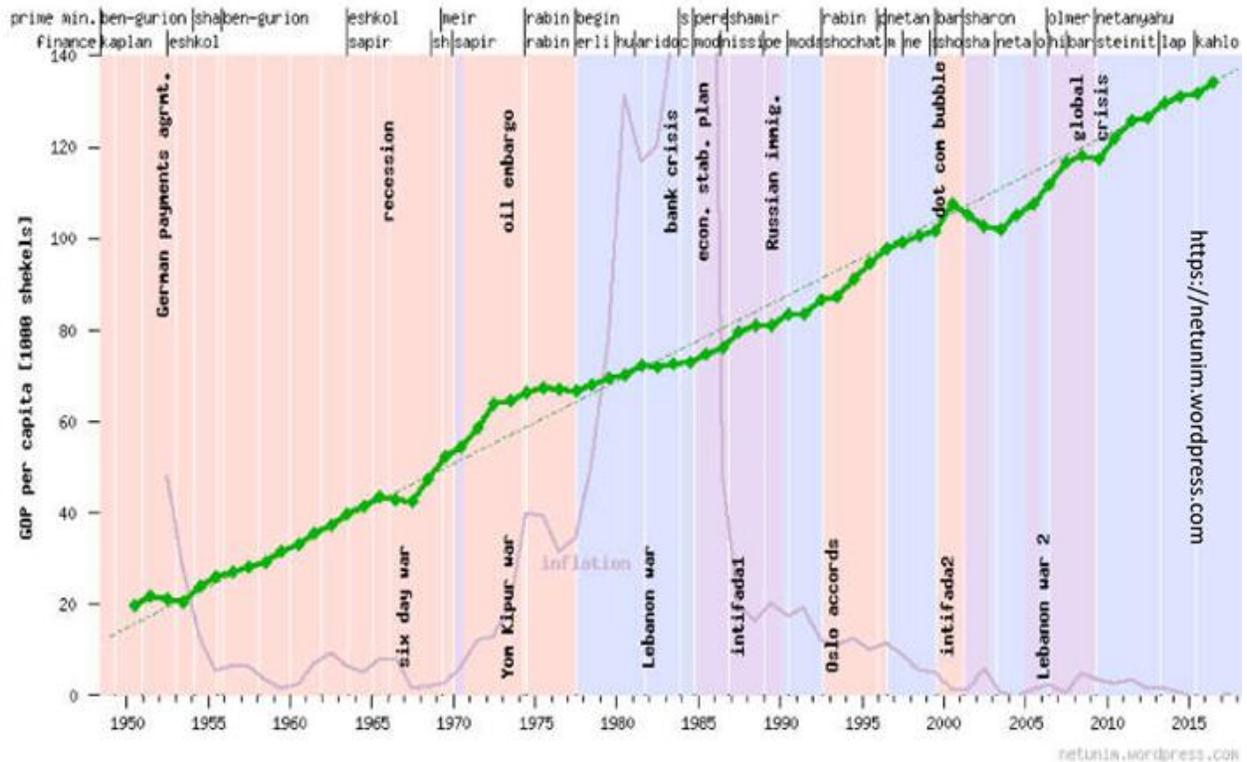
בניגוד למקובל לחשוב,

רק מעט מהצלחתה של ישראל*

ניתן לייחס להחלטות שלטוניות כאלו או אחרות, למפלגה שלטת,
לראש ממשלה או לבעלי תפקידים אחרים

מצאנו שההצלחה הישראלית מבוססת על גורמים אחרים לגמרי...

לדוגמא: לאישיותו של ראש הממשלה, שר האוצר והמפלגה השלטת השפעה מינורית בלבד על צמיחת התוצר לנפש בישראל



ישראל
סיפור הצלחה

הצלחתה של ישראל מבוססת על
ה-DNA הלאומי:

- **היתרון הטכנולוגי-מדעי** שרק הולך וגובר
- **התרבות היזמית** בעוצמה יוצאת דופן ביחס למדינות אחרות
- **היתרון הגלובלי** ה-DNA של היהודי הנוודד, קיומן של קהילות מפוזרות בעולם והכרת תרבויות ושפות כמצופה ממהגרים בני מהגרים
- **היתרון הדמוגרפי** האוכלוסייה הצעירה ביותר ב-OECD, שיעור אקדמאים גבוה, גלי עלייה, ושתי אוכלוסיות (החרדים והערבים) הנמצאים בתחילתה של השתלבות במשק



וגם - נטיה לאומית חזקה **לחוסר שביעות רצון** מתמיד,
המשמש כזרז **לשיפור** מתמיד

Power Rankings



United States

#1 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

The United States of America is a North American nation that is the world's most diverse. ... [READ MORE](#)



Russia

#2 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

The scale of Russia is difficult to imagine. It is the world's largest country by land mass. ... [READ MORE](#)



China

#3 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

Home to one of the world's oldest civilizations, China has been ruled by the Communist Party since 1949. ... [READ MORE](#)



Germany

#4 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

Germany, the most populous nation in the European Union, possesses one of the largest economies in the world. ... [READ MORE](#)



United Kingdom

#5 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

The United Kingdom is a highly developed nation that exerts considerable international influence. ... [READ MORE](#)



France

#6 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

It is difficult to overstate the influence France has on the world, both in the past and today. ... [READ MORE](#)



Japan

#7 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

Japan, one of the world's most literate and technically advanced nations, is an East Asian country. ... [READ MORE](#)



Israel

#8 in Power Rankings
No Change in Rank from 2018

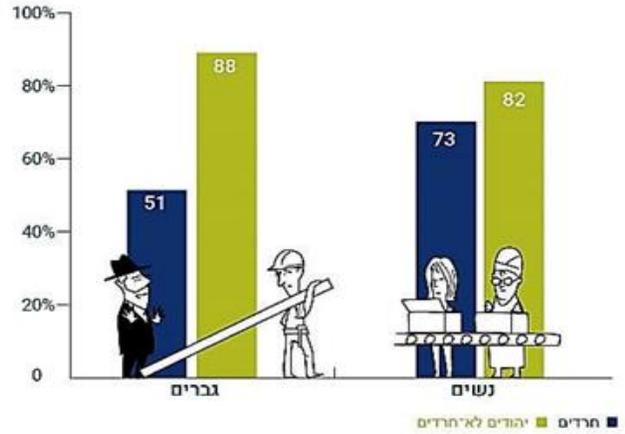
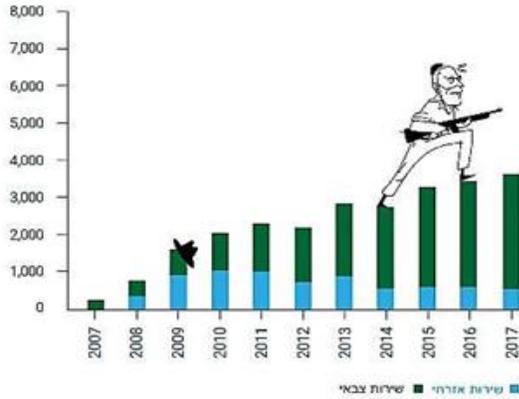
Israel, the only Jewish nation in the world, is a small country on the eastern shore of the Mediterranean Sea. ... [READ MORE](#)



הסיבה להקטנת אי השוויון
נובעת בעיקר
מהצטרפותם של חרדים וערבים לשוק ההשכלה והעבודה.

מועסקות ומועסקים בקרב בני 25-64, 2017

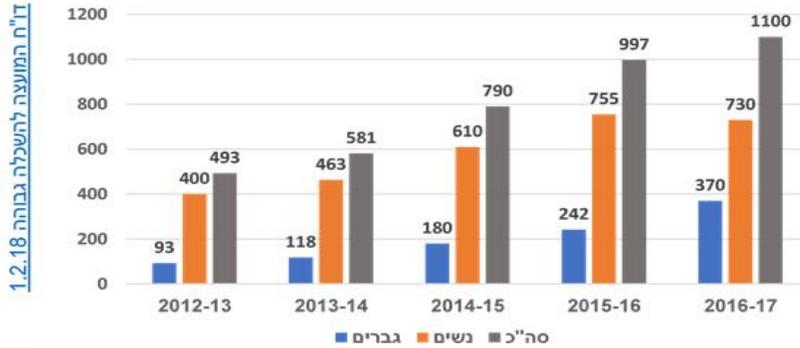
שירות צבאי ושירות אזרחי, גברים חרדים, 2007-2017



ישראל
סיפור הצלחה

שילוב חרדים בהשכלה ובעבודה יצרה מהפכה

מדעי המחשב - חרדים



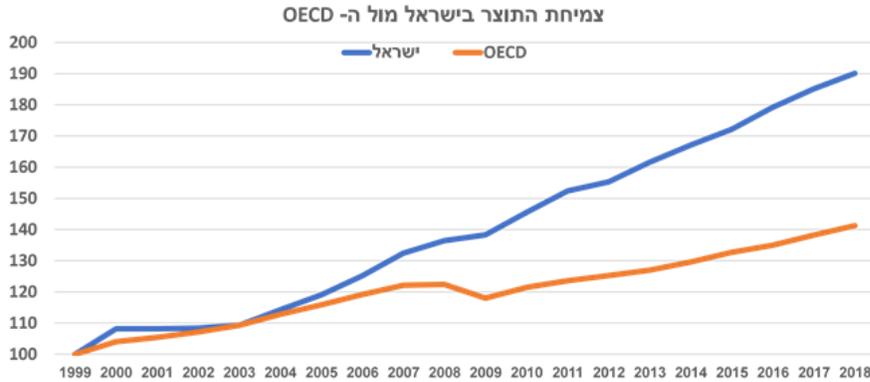
מספר התושבים עלה מ-6.22 מיליון ל-8.96 מיליון והתוצר הישראלי הגיע ליותר מ-365 מיליארד דולר.

תוצר לנפש של מעל 38 אלף דולר בשנה, מעמיד את ישראל

במקום 25 מבין 190 מדינות

המשך הצמיחה שמירה על היתרון מול ה-OECD

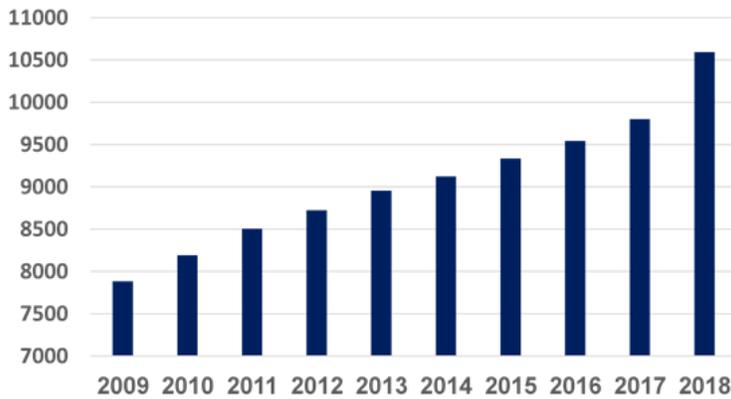
ישראל
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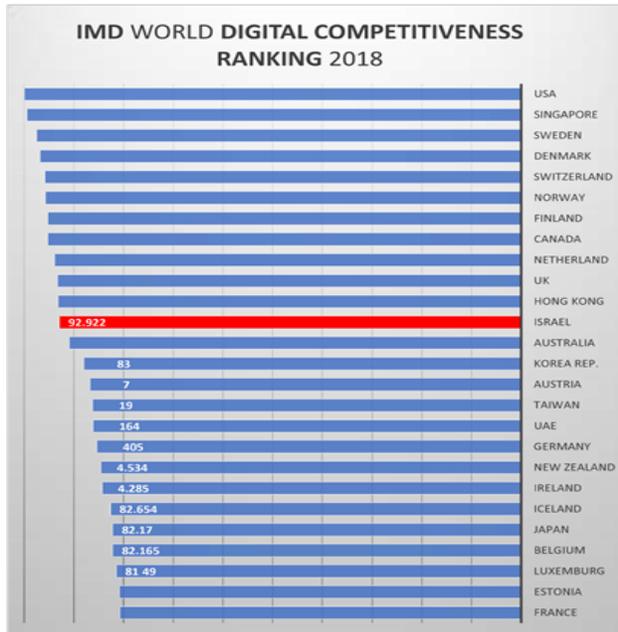
מאז תחילת המאה ה-21 המשק הישראלי צמח בשיעור מצטבר של 90% יותר מכפול מהמוצע של 34 מדינות ה-OECD

34% השכר הממוצע במשק עלה ב-
בעשר השנים האחרונות

ישראל
סיפור הצלחה



זו העלייה הגבוהה ביותר ב-OECD אחרי אסטוניה ופולין. עליות השכר הממוצע ב-OECD היתה רק 3.7% ב-10 שנים.

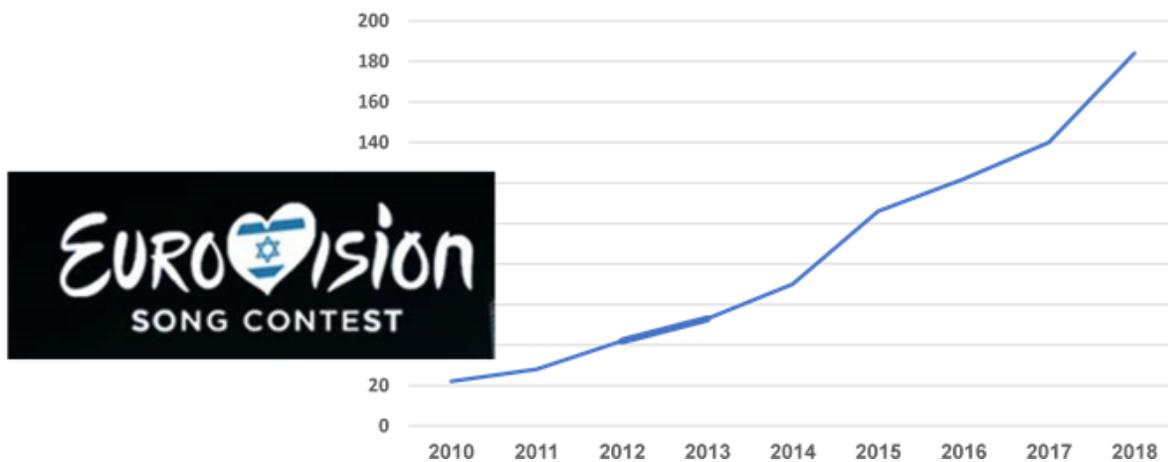


ישראל סיפור הצלחה

בניגוד למתפרסם במדיה, לחרם התרבותי של ה-BDS אין שום השפעה

מאז 2010, קפיצה של יותר מ-8 פי במספר ההופעות של אמנים בינלאומיים בינלי (עוד לפני האירוויזיון!)

מספר ההופעות אמנים בינלאומיים בישראל



ישראל סיפור הצלחה

**בשנת 2018 שיעור המרוצים מהחיים
בישראל עמד על 89%**



ישראל במקום ה-13
במדד האושר העולמי של האו"ם לשנת 2018

**ישראל במקום ה-22 במדד
הפיתוח האנושי של האו"ם (2018)**

המדד מחושב לפי תוחלת חיים, חינוך והכנסה.

ישראל במקום ה-6 הכי פחות אומלל בעולם

לפי מדד האומללות העולמי של BLOOMBERG

מדינות כמו דנמרק, הונג קונג וארה"ב דורגו כאומללות יותר מאשר ישראל. מדד האומללות מתבסס על הרעיון שאינפלציה ואבטלה גבוהות משקפות את מצב הרוח של האזרחים.

ישראל סיפור הצלחה

מרכז טכנולוגי עולמי

• מאות חברות ענק שהשקיעו כאן מתחילת המאה ה-21 קרוב ל-100 מיליארדי דולרים במצטבר. לחברות הענק האלו אינטרסים כבדי משקל בישראל ועובדה זו מעניקה למדינה תוספת של עוצמה אסטרטגית ממדרגה ראשונה.



אתגרים נוספים
(לא חסר)



- שכר חציוני נמוך
- מחירי נדלן גבוהים
- תכנון הצפיפות העתידית
- עודף בירוקרטיה ורגולציה
- הוצאות ביטחון גבוהות
- שיח ציבורי אגרסיבי
- משק בתעסוקה מלאה
- שיפור רמת המורים במערכת החינוך

פרפראות



- בי"ח שיבא נבחר כאחד מעשרת בתי החולים הטובים בעולם
- 168 מדינות מכירות בישראל ומקיימות עמה יחסים דיפלומטיים
- כ-140 חברות תעופה מפעילות טיסות לישראל
- מקום שלישי בעולם בפטנטים רשומים לנפש
- יותר מ-60% מהמבוגרים בישראל מספקים שירותי שמרטפות לנכדים מדי שבוע
- לפחות זאת לעומת כ-45% ב-OECD
- 78% מעבירים כספים כתמיכה כלכלית לעומת 65% ב-OECD (לשם מימון צרכים בסיסיים, קנייה ושיפוץ דירה, רכישה גדולה, אירוע משפחתי ולימודים)



ד"ר אדם רויטר
יו"ר ומייסד חיסונים פיננסיים, חברת ניהול הסיכונים הפיננסיים הגדולה בישראל. מלווה מאות חברות בינלאומיות וישראליות.
adam@immunities.co.il

נגה קינן

יו"ר פורום ראשי החברות
יו"ר פורום CFO



תפקידים ציבוריים: יו"ר העמותה לשילוב סטודנטים אוטיסטים, חברת הנהלה ב"אמץ לוחם", חבר הנאמנים של אונ' בר אילן והמכללה למנהל, חברת הנהלה באגודת הידידות ישראל-ארה"ב, ועדת המנהל והמינויים בנציבות שירות המדינה.

kainan@iel-forum.org

18) To Soar Among the Heavens



Too late to save the lander, but not too late to send back an epic selfie. The photo shows Beresheet headed down to meet the pockmarked moon surface, with its glistening gold legs outstretched, and a matching gold flag unfurled. “Small country, big dreams,” the flag proclaims.

Despite the less-than-ideal conclusion, the SpaceIL mission does set a few new records. It makes Israel the seventh country to orbit the moon, and the first privately funded mission to achieve a lunar orbit

I just watched something that is out of the world — something that has left me with a tear in my eye and a lump in my throat. Something that has stirred my soul and filled my heart with wonder and love and joy and pride. I’ve just watched a rocket launch into space from Cape Canaveral. But this was no ordinary rocket. Aboard this rocket is the first privately built lunar spacecraft that will head to the moon. But not only is this the first privately built lunar spacecraft. It is also the first Israeli spacecraft. It is called “Beresheet,” which is Hebrew and means “in the beginning.” It is also the first word in the Torah — the Jewish people’s oldest and

most precious possession. And aboard this ship of dreams will be our Torah, Israeli songs, drawings by Israeli children, the Israeli national anthem, and our prayers.

I look at this magnificent feat of engineering and I cannot help but gaze upon it with the eyes of a small child, filled with wonder. Sometimes people say the era of miracles has ended, but then I look at this little country and I look at my people and I look at what they have achieved and still do and I know and am convinced more than ever that the era of miracles has not ended — but indeed continues unabated.

There are so many countries that are against Israel and every day brings more resolutions passed against it, passed by corrupt organizations and even more corrupt people. All around the world, anti-Semitism has been normalized leaving Jews in many parts of the world in actual physical danger. And what many Jews face today is not dissimilar to the darkest days of Europe in the 1930s and 1940s.

It leaves many of us feeling emotionally vulnerable, for a little over 70 years ago, we were a broken people whose ashes were spread in unidentified piles of soot, consumed by the hatred of those around us. We were a people who had no place to call home. We had no one to defend us. We stood alone in the world, shattered and shocked, hurt and bruised, broken and traumatized. Empty.

But not defeated, for we were still alive. Maybe barely. Maybe weakly. But alive. For air still filled our lungs and our flame had not yet been extinguished. And from those ashes of despair, we rose again, as we always have and as we always must. So slowly, we reclaimed our ancient homeland. And slowly, we began to return. And slowly, our battered bodies began to repair themselves. And slowly, we reclaimed our dignity. And slowly, we reclaimed our honor. Our enemies still came at us. Still threatened to wipe us out. But we grew stronger and we continued to survive. And not just survive — thrive! And from this poor destitute people, the heart of Israel beat again. And the nation of Israel rose once more. A poor country struggling on life support fought on — against overwhelming odds, defying the laws of history itself. For defeat is not part of our story. And those words, words from thousands of years ago, were still ringing in our ears. The words of God that said to a shepherd who stood alone in the world, I will make of you a great nation.

So today, while our enemies launch rockets to kill, we launch rockets to explore. While they look for ways to destroy the world, we look for ways to visit new worlds. While they look for ways to make life miserable for all, we look for ways to make life better for everyone.

So I look at this rocket hurtling into space, aboard it a ship of dreams. A ship built not of steel, but of hope. A ship built not of aluminium, but of aspirations. A living ship whose heart beats strongly, echoing around the world. A ship with a soul — a soul thousands of years old.

And with a pride that cannot be measured, I look to the sky above, to the stars, to the worlds beyond ours. I look at where we have been, how far we have come, and how far we will go. I look at how our people once grounded into dust have risen to soar among the heavens themselves.

In the beginning of time, there was darkness and then there was light. Tonight, there will be one more light above us, one more star adorned with the flag of Israel, shining and glistening in the beautiful heavens, the same heavens which Abraham once looked upon with hope and wonder. And the same heavens, we will be looking upon tonight.

A fabulous piece of writing! But at the same time, we should remember that it's not only in terms of extraordinary achievements that Israel is to be celebrated. The very fact of it existing and functioning as a country is of tremendous religious value.

b) Hodu Lashem Ki Tov

The Holiest Day of His Life – Voting in Israel's First Elections

March 16, 2015 by Makom

Ultra-Orthodox Rabbi Moshe Yekutiel Alpert, from the old settlement in Jerusalem, was the "Mukhtar" of a few neighborhoods before the establishment of the State. Here he describes his first walk to the voting station (the list he refers to in this piece was the United Religious List. Imagine today's Jewish Home, Shas, Yahadut HaTorah, and Yahad running together on one list, where the commonalities are greater than the differences.)

"At 05:35 in the morning I awoke, and we got up – my wife, my brother Rabbi Shimon Leib, and my brother-in-law Rabbi Netanel Saldovin, and my son Dov. After we had drunk coffee, we put on our best Shabbat clothes in honor of this great and sacred day.

"For this is the day that the Lord made in joy and happiness. For after two thousand years in exile or more, and one might even say from the six days of creation to this day, we have never been honored with a day such as this, that we may go to the elections of the Jewish State, and blessed be that we have lived and existed and reached this time.

"... I and my wife and my brother-in-law went to vote at HaHabashim Street, with our State of Israel identity booklet in our hands. In great and awesome joy we walked that short distance, and all the way I walked as if dancing at Simchat Torah with the Israeli Identity booklet in my hand as the Scroll itself. There was no limit to my joy and happiness.

All the way I walked as if dancing at Simchat Torah with the Israeli Identity booklet in my hand as the Scroll itself.

"The caretaker brought the ballot box, and the Chairman called to me and said, "And thou shalt glorify the elderly", and that since I was the oldest one there, that I would be the first to vote.

“With a thrill of the sacred and awe of the holy I handed over my Identity booklet to the Chairman, and he called out my name from the booklet. The deputy Chairman noted down my name, and gave me the number one. He passed me an envelope and I entered the second room, where all the paper slips of all the lists were laid out. And with a trembling hand and emotions of sanctity I picked up the slip with “Bet”, the United Religious List, and placed it inside the envelope I had received from the Chairman.

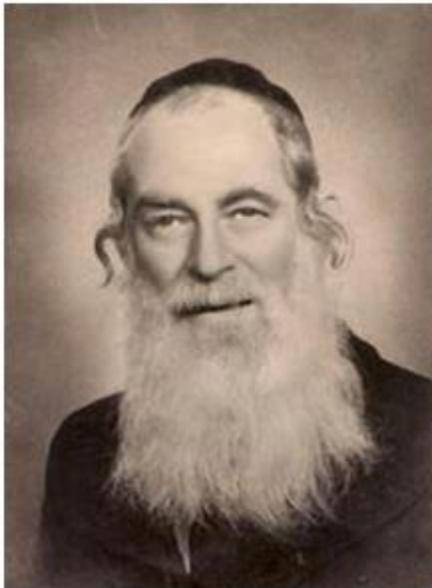
“I returned to the voting room, and showed everyone that I had only one envelope in my hand.

And then came the holiest moment of my life.

“And then came the holiest moment of my life. A moment that my father did not live to see, nor did my grandfather. Only me, in this time, in this life, was honored with this sacred and pure moment. Praised be me, and praised be my portion. I made the “Shehechyanu” blessing, and put the envelope in the ballot box.

“I shook the hand of the Chairman, the deputy Chairman, and all the other committee members, and left the room. I waited in the corridor for my wife, for she was second, and my brother who was third, and after him my brother-in-law who was fourth to vote, and at 06:28 we went home, and I went to pray. A great festive day.

...

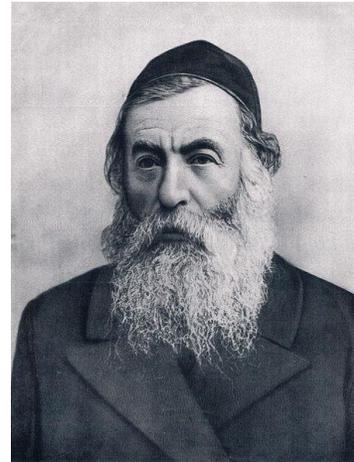


Pictured on the cover next to Theodore Hertzl is Rav Reines, the founder of the Mizrachi movement.

Yitzchak Yaacov Reines

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Yitzchak Yaacov (October 27, 1839 – August 20, 1915) was a Lithuanian Orthodox rabbi and the founder of the Mizrachi Religious Zionist Movement, one of the earliest movements of Religious Zionism, as well as a correspondent of Theodor Herzl.



Biography

Yitzchak Yaacov Reines, a descendant of Meir ben Isaac Katzenellenbogen,[1] was born in Karolin (now a part of Pinsk, Belarus). He studied at Eishistok “Kolel Prushim” and earned semikhah at the Volozhin Yeshiva before becoming the rabbi of Saukenai, Lithuania in 1867.

He then served as rabbi in Svencionys, where in 1882 he founded a yeshiva with a curriculum that included secular subjects.[2] He also founded a modern yeshiva in Lida which attracted many students from throughout Russia. He named the yeshiva Torah Vedaas.

Reines wrote many books on rabbinic literature. Reines developed a rational approach to Talmud study in his *Hotem Toknit Mainz*, 1880; vol. ii, Presburg, 1881) a new plan for a modernized, logical method of studying the Talmud.

He was one of the rabbis and representative Jews who assembled in St. Petersburg in 1882 to consider plans for the improvement of the moral and material condition of the Jews in Russia, and there he proposed the substitution of his method for the one prevalent in the yeshivot.

His proposition being rejected, he founded a new yeshivah in which his plans were to be carried out. It provided a ten years' course, during which the student was to acquire the rabbinical knowledge necessary for ordination as a rabbi, and at the same time secure the secular education required in a government rabbi. But although the plan to supply Russian-speaking rabbis agreed in principle with the aims of the Russian government, there was so much Jewish opposition to his yeshivah that it was closed by the authorities after an existence of four years; all further attempts of Reines to reestablish it failed.

He was instrumental in the establishment of the first “kollel” perushim, for the purpose of subsidizing young married men studying for the rabbinate, under Rabbi Yitzchak Blazer.

In 1870, while rabbi of Lida, his son, Moses was born. Moses Reines was the author of Jewish historical materials for the history of Jewish culture in Russia and for a history of the yeshivot in Russia. Moses died in Lida on March 7, 1891.

Zionist activism

He was a member of the Hovevei Zion movement from its inception. Rabbi Yitzhak Reines joined Rabbi Samuel Mohilever in proposing, ca. 1893, a Palestinian settlement that would synthesize Torah and labor. Mohilever coined the phrase, "Mercaz Ruchani" (religious center), abbreviated as "Mizrachi." Although the settlement did not succeed, Reines revived the Mizrachi name in 1901, for a new religious Zionist movement he founded.

Theodor Herzl recognized the need for rabbis to support the new Zionist movement, and Reines was one of the first rabbis to answer Herzl's call to become part of the movement. As such, Reines attended the Third Zionist Congress in 1899.

At the fifth Zionist congress (1901 in Basel), the Swiss and radical student faction threatened to turn the movement in a direction which would lead away from religion. In contrast, Reines' religious Zionism faction became the strongest branch of the Zionist organization in Russia. He supported the British Uganda Program as a temporary measure to save Jews.[3]

Most of his eastern and western European rabbinical colleagues remained opposed to political Zionism. In 1902, Reines published a book, *Or Hadash al Tzion* ("A New Light on Zion"). In it, he made a call to a Zionist Judaism for all Jews, one that included economic productivity and training, and a renewal of Jewish thought, emotion, and action.

He believed that, whereas medieval Jews saw God's hand in nature, contemporary Jews see God's hand in history - especially surviving the exile to return to modern Zion. He commissioned Ze'ev Yaavetz to write an appropriate work on Jewish history to use in education.

The same year, he organized a conference of the religious Zionist movement in Vilna, where the Mizrachi movement was founded. He was recognized as the movement's leader at its founding convention in Pressburg (today's Bratislava, Slovakia) in 1902.

In 1905, Reines accomplished his own personal dream, with the establishment of a yeshiva in Lida where both secular and religious subjects were taught.

Reines was succeeded by Judah Leib Fishman, a preacher (maggid) and rabbi who met Rabbi Reines in 1900 and took part in the movement's founding conference in Vilna. He participated in the second and subsequent Zionist congresses and was a member of the Zionist General Council. Fishman, who changed his name to Yehuda Leib Maimon, settled in the Land of Israel in 1913, and would eventually become the first Minister of Religious Affairs of the modern state of Israel.

Pictured below is **Rav Doron Perez**, present head of World Mizrachi Movement. What a great Zechut to start off our Derasha with the dreams, hopes & aspirations of Rav Reines in 1902, when Medinat Yisrael was just a fantasy, and complete the Derasha with the appreciation, gratitude & thanksgiving of Rav Perez, when Medinat Yisrael has accomplished more-in a mere 7 decades-then one could have ever imagined!!!



Rav Doron Perez is the Head of the Mizrachi World Movement, a position he has held since he returned to Israel in 2014 from Johannesburg, South Africa.

During his 15-year shlichut in South Africa, Rav Perez fulfilled multiple leadership roles, as Executive Director of Mizrachi South Africa, the Senior Rabbi of the Mizrachi Shul, and Head of the Yeshiva College school, the first and largest Torah school in Southern Africa.

Rav Perez was born and raised in Johannesburg, South Africa, and made Aliyah at the age of 18. He studied for 10 years in some of Israel's leading Yeshivot, served in the IDF as part of the Hesder program, and completed his rabbinic ordination and a Bachelor of Education majoring in Jewish Philosophy. He is currently studying for an MA in Jewish History. He is the author of the book *Leading the Way*, and a sought-after speaker and scholar-in-residence in communities in Israel and around the world.

At World Mizrachi, Rav Perez's major focus is on organizational transformation and invigorating the global Religious Zionist movement with its dual focus on Jewish and Zionist identity and destiny.

Rav Perez lives in Yad Binyamin with his wife Shelley and four children.

ISRAEL: A GREATER MIRACLE THAN THE EXODUS?

By Rabbi Doron Perez

Ibelieve that the story of the return of the Jews to Israel in our time is not only one of the greatest ongoing miracles of the modern era, but indeed of all of Jewish and human history.

Greater in Three Ways

In some ways, the miracle of the Ingathering of the Exiles – קבוץ גלויות – is greater than the greatest of miracles – יציאת מצרים – the Exodus from Egypt. It is true that the 10 Plagues, the Splitting of the Sea, and the Revelation at Sinai are unprecedented miracles in terms of transcending the laws of nature. Nothing compares. Nevertheless, the Ingathering of the Exiles transcends the laws of history in unparalleled, extraordinary fashion. Nothing compares.

Here's why. The Ingathering of the Exiles in our times is greater than that of יציאת מצרים in three ways: 1. the length of exile 2. geographic dispersion and 3. the vast cultural linguistic differences among the returnees.

Firstly, the Exodus came after 210 years whereas the return to modern Israel happened after almost 2,000 years of exile – almost 10 times longer.

Secondly, all of the Jewish people were in one country, Egypt, whereas

in the modern era Jews came from well over 100 countries, having been scattered literally to all four corners of the Earth. And from the most distant places they have returned and continue to return. From Buenos Aires and Baghdad, Washington and Wellington, Manchester and Melbourne, Cape Town and Cochín, Moscow and Minneapolis, Toronto and Tehran, Aleppo and Addis Ababa and Fez and Far Rockaway.

Thirdly and profoundly, Rabbi Tzvi Hirsch Chayot, one of the great Galician rabbinic leaders in the early 19th century, points out a critical difference relating to the cultural linguistic milieu (Maharatz Chayot, Section 1, p. 74). In Egypt, the Children of Israel were confined both to a ghetto in Goshen and to a life of segregation and slavery. They could neither assimilate nor integrate into Egyptian society. Our Sages point out that they maintained their names, their language and their dress code. They spoke Hebrew to each other and were culturally similar, distinct from the Egyptians.

On the other hand, in the Ingathering of the Exiles, the Jews spoke as many as 80 different languages! They were often unable to understand one another, and many had been assimilated or integrated into the

cultural and ethnic environments of their host nations. As Rav Chayot suggests, it would require a separate remarkable miracle to unite so many culturally, linguistically disparate people into one functional society. Yet this is exactly what has happened in modern day Israel.

In truth, this drama is not just a modern saga but rather a chapter in a much bigger story, the plot of which was mapped out thousands of years ago.

Perhaps more than anything else, our Prophets identified the return from Exile to Eretz Yisrael – an almost inconceivable phenomenon – as the single most salient and significant sign of the era of Redemption in all of Biblical literature. The Ingathering of the Exiles appears in hundreds of prophecies and scores of prayers as a distinct indication of the future messianic era.

One such example is in the Book of Isaiah, in what would become the source of the heartfelt prayer about the Ingathering mentioned thrice daily in the Amidah, the silent prayer (Isaiah 11:11-12):

וְהָיָה בַיּוֹם הַהוּא יוֹסִיף ה' שְׁנֵית יְדוֹ
לְקַנּוֹת אֶת שְׂאֵר עַמּוֹ אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁאֵר מֵאֲשׁוּר
וּמִמִּצְרַיִם וּמִפְתָּרוֹס וּמִכּוּשׁ וּמֵעֵילָם
וּמִשְׁנַעַר וּמִחֲמַת וּמֵאֵי הַיָּם. וְנִשְׂא נֶס לְגוֹיִם

ואסף נדחי ישראל ונספזת יהודה יקבץ
מארבע כנפות הארץ.

"And it shall come to pass that on that day, the L-rd shall continue to apply His hand a second time to acquire the rest of His people, that will remain from Assyria and from Egypt and from Pathros and from Cush and from Elam and from Sumeria and from Hamat and from the islands of the sea. **And He shall raise a banner to the nations, and He shall gather the lost of Israel, and the scattered ones of Judah He shall gather from the four corners of the Earth.**"

Isaiah foretold that dispersed, forgotten and forlorn Jews all over the world would eventually return home. Already in Megillat Esther we read of the Jews scattered among the 127 countries of Achashverosh's sprawling empire. The Prophets knew these Jews would somehow defy seemingly immutable laws of history and somehow survive, return and thrive.

Indeed, the Prophet Jeremiah prophesied that the return of the exiles and the future Redemption will be greater than the Exodus from Egypt (Jeremiah 23:7-8):

לכן הגה ימים באים נאם ה' ולא יאמרו עוד
חי ה' אשר העלה את בני ישראל מארץ
מצרים. כי אם חי ה' אשר העלה ואשר
הביא את זרע בית ישראל מארץ צפונה
ומכל הארצות אשר הדחתים שם וישבו על
אדמתם.

"Therefore, behold days are coming, says the L-rd, when they shall **no longer say**, 'As the L-rd lives, Who brought up the Children of Israel from the land of Egypt,' **but rather**, 'As the L-rd lives, Who brought up and Who brought the seed of the House of Israel from the northland and from all the lands where I have driven them, **and they shall dwell on their Land.**'"

The Watershed Moment

What was the tipping point in time which opened the gates of a mass return of Jews to the land as foretold by the prophets? Without a doubt, the greatest watershed moment was the 5th of Iyar, May 14th, 1948, the day of the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel.

The establishment of the State resulted in the following astonishing reality. For the first time since the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. – and certainly since the fall of Beitar marking the end of the Bar Kochba rebellion – Jews could return to Eretz Yisrael with no restrictions imposed on them by a ruling power. Every regime that had ruled the Land, from the Romans through to the British Mandate, had limited Jewish immigration, barring Jews in one way or another from returning to the Land of their ancestors.

But all changed in May 1948. Since then, over the last 71 years, without even a day's exception, the immigration gates have been open



Operation "Ezra and Nehemiah" – Iraqi Jews make aliyah, 1951-52

wide to Jews everywhere. And indeed they have returned. Not in their hundreds or even thousands, but in their millions... over 3 million from every corner of the globe!

In his book, "Israel," Daniel Gordis relates the following regarding the extraordinary transformation in Israel's population immediately after the declaration of the State:

"Jews began to migrate to the newly created State in unprecedented numbers. Between independence on May 14th, 1948 and the end of 1951, no less than 686,739 Jews arrived in Israel. They hailed from 70 different countries and constituted, relative to the size of the population they were joining, the largest single migration of the 20th century. It was, by any measure, one of most extraordinary absorptions of immigrants in modern history" (p. 198).

Indeed, millions have returned and tens of thousands continue to return every year. Today, Israel amazingly has the largest Jewish community in the world, with almost half of all Jews living in the Holy Land. This is particularly striking when one compares the change in Israel's population to that of Diaspora Jewry. Whereas Israel's population has grown tenfold over the last 71 years, Diaspora Jewry has decreased from around 10.5 million to 7.7 million over the same period.

On this, the first anniversary of our HaMizrachi publication, we deeply appreciate the remarkable reality of Israel. With all of its many challenges, Israel is both a phenomenal fulfillment of Biblical prophecy and a dramatic leap forward in the epic story of Jewish and human history.

Rabbi Doron Perez is Chief Executive of World Mizrachi

A Modern Dayeinu

Rabbi Doron Perez

If G-d HAD brought us back to the Land of Israel

But not given us a sovereign state

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had given us a sovereign state and allowed us a taste of freedom and dignity for but a moment

But we would have lost the War of Independence

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had helped us be victorious in the War of Independence

But we would not have succeeded in building a viable country

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had helped us build a viable country

But not brought back hundreds of thousands of Jews from Sephardic and Yeminite backgrounds

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had allowed us to win the Six-Day War

But not given us the ancient biblical sites of Chevron, Beit El, Shiloh, as well as the Golan Heights

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had given us Hevron, Beit El, Shiloh and the Golan Heights

But not allowed us to return to the Old City of Yerushalayim

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had allowed us to liberate the Old City of Jerusalem

But not allowed us to rebuild her ruins

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had allowed us to rebuild His Old City

But not made Jerusalem into Israel's largest city with a population of over 800,000 people

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had made Jerusalem Israel's largest city with a population of over 800,000 people

But not allowed us to live with dignity in secure borders

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had allowed us to live in secure borders

But not created a strong and sustainable economy

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had built for us a strong and sustainable economy

But not ingathered the exiles from almost 100 countries

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had ingathered the exiles from ~~almost 100 countries~~

But not allowed us to rebuild the Torah world in Israel with well over 100,000 men and women studying Torah full-time, perhaps the most in Jewish history

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had rebuilt the Yeshiva and Torah world

But not produced so many outstanding Torah scholars and leaders

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had produced so many outstanding Torah scholars and leaders

But not opened the gates of freedom to the oppressed Russian and Ethiopian Jews

Dayeinu, it would have been enough

If G-d had opened the gates of freedom to the oppressed Russian and Ethiopian Jews

But not made Israel the country with largest amount of Jews for the first time in over 2,500 years