

Why Not Uganda? Why Must the State of Israel be in the Land of Israel?



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Israel Should Be in Germany

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Israel and Palestine are warring again. Civilians are dying again. Families are losing their homes, and chaos persists. Again. This would not be happening if Israel were located somewhere that makes more sense: in Germany.

No matter where you stand in the "Israelis vs. Palestinians" political arguments—in which both sides are hopelessly entrenched and unmoving—it seems fair to acknowledge that there are some fundamental problems with the location of the nation of Israel. For one thing, it was carved out of land already occupied by someone else. Whether or not you think Israel was justified in carving itself a nation out of Palestine, you must admit that the act of doing so was bound to cause some resentment. And, indeed, it did. It caused a lot of resentment, and anger. Emotions that still exist today. And which have fueled a more or less constant state of war against Israel since Israel was created.

It is just not an ideal situation. Yes, of course, the Jewish people had ample reason to want their own homeland, what with the centuries of vicious persecution and discrimination. And yes, of course, in the wake of WWII, it was perfectly natural for the Jewish people to feel that the time was right to establish their own nation. Let's stipulate that both of these positions, at the time of the founding of modern Israel, were reasonable:

Jewish people: We have been persecuted too long. We want our own state!

Palestinians: Okay, but don't take my stuff to get it, please!

So the establishment of Israel, regarded by many as a towering achievement of historic justice, will forever be tainted by the fact that it was established by taking land from people who had done nothing wrong. That act laid the groundwork for the nonstop conflict that continues to this day.

What if, when it was time to establish Israel, the land had instead been taken from people who did do something wrong? From people who had, in fact, just finished perpetrating one of history's greatest crimes, against the Jewish people? The Nazis! The Holocaust! At the time Israel was being established, the Nazis had just been defeated. Germany was at the mercy of the Allies. What if—instead of snatching land in the Middle East and setting the stage for perpetual war and hatred—the Jewish people had just been awarded, say, half of Germany? It's not like the Germans would have had a good case against it, after what they just did. Hell, give the Jews the best half of Germany. Give them Berlin. Give them the nice picturesque country villages and the thick forests. It's the least that Germany could do.

An Israel established in Germany would have had several advantages to its current location. It would have been much larger. It would have been richer in natural resources. It would have a strong moral justification for its existence in that place. And, to top it all off, it would not be surrounded by Muslims committed to destroying it. It just makes sense. Half of Germany is certainly worth much more, in an economic sense, than the land of modern Israel. It would have been a better prize. And it would have set the stage not for seven decades of hatred and war, but for a nation of Israel located squarely in the midst of Western Europe, the most stable and economically developed place on earth.

Some will say that Israel had to be located where it is now, because of the "Holy Land" and all that. Well, sorry—a mystical and empirically unjustified belief in the "holiness" of some particular place is not a reason to march in and take it from someone else, by force. Grow up.

It may be a bit late to move Israel to Germany now. But when you consider the prospect of another seven decades of war over that little sliver of land, the idea does not sound so bad. Germany would still acquiesce to it, if the demand was made before the last Nazis die out. It's really the very least that they could do.

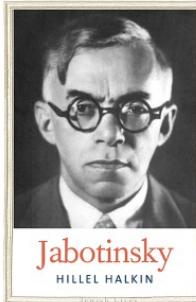


Yet at the sixth Zionist Congress, the melody was changed without warning. Herzl's keynote address, Jabotinsky informed his readers, dropped a bombshell. The El-Arish plan had fallen through. The British government, however, was now offering another territory, in the well-watered, temperate highlands of East Africa, where Jews would be allowed to enjoy home rule as a British protectorate. Given the urgent need to provide Eastern European Jewry with a reliable asylum, he, Herzl, favored accepting the proposal as long as Palestine, "the land of our forefathers," remained the ultimate goal. As a first step, he was asking the delegates to appoint a committee to investigate the prospects and report back.

The British offer—although apparently referring to an area in northwest Kenya near Lake Victoria, it immediately became known as the "Uganda plan"—was a sensational breakthrough for political Zionism: a mere six years after the movement's founding, it was being granted an opportunity to establish a semi-independent Jewish polity under the aegis of a major European power. Yet it was a breakthrough with agonizing implications, for Herzl's "Palestine proviso" could hardly be taken seriously. Unlike El-Arish, from which an expansion of Jewish settlement into nearby Palestine was imaginable, East Africa was thousands of miles away; the enormous investment of time, money, and human resources needed for developing an autonomous Jewish region there clearly precluded a similar effort elsewhere. Was it better, Jabotinsky asked in his dispatch, "to sacrifice an age-old tradition [of Jewish attachment to Palestine] for an immediately attainable success, or to reject a noble offer so as to carry on with the struggle for the Holy Land?"

It was an issue of profound historical and existential dimensions. Just who were the Jewish people that Zionism claimed to represent? What was their relation to their national and religious past? How much did or should this past define them? What role, if any, should a nation's founding myths play in its politics? A few days' debate culminating in a show of hands, if only to appoint a committee, was hardly an appropriate way to deal with such issues. Yet a show of hands, which he expected to win easily, was what Herzl wanted—and a bitter debate was what he got.

A majority of the Western Europeans again supported him. Most of them conceived of a Jewish state more as a place of refuge for their persecuted brethren than as an expression of Jewish national and cultural aspirations, and a well-disposed British protectorate in Africa seemed no worse an option than a hostile Turkish Palestine. The Eastern European vote was more divided—and more paradoxical. The Mizrachi voted with Herzl; under attack by the anti-Zionist Orthodox establishment for supporting a Jewish return to the Land of Israel without divine sanction, it sought to demonstrate that it was motivated solely by a desire to relieve Jewish suffering that was untainted by messianic fantasies. Nearly all of the secular Zionists of the "democratic faction," on the other hand, were fiercely opposed; products of the shtetl and its values even after having revolted against them, they could not imagine a Jewish homeland that was not the land Jews always had longed for. What could be the point of Jewish-owned plantations and haciendas in a country without roots in Jewish collective memory? What



1. *Jabotinsky – A Life*
by Hillel Halkin

devotion could they inspire? By turning his back on Zion, it was argued, Herzl had betrayed the movement that bore its name.

The vote took place on the fourth day of the congress, in an atmosphere fraught with emotion. Two hundred ninety-five delegates voted in favor, 176 were against, and 143 abstained. For Herzl, it was a Pyrrhic victory. Sometimes grumbled about but always deferred to at Zionist Congresses until now, he was shocked by the size and intensity of the revolt against him. Worse yet, not only had he failed to command an absolute majority of the delegates, the "nay-sayers" spontaneously walked out of the hall as soon as the last vote was counted and adjourned to a nearby room, where they acted as though a disaster had befallen them. Some wept openly. Others sat on the floor and removed their shoes as Jews did on Tisha b'Av, the day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple.

Despite his admiration for Herzl, who seemed to him "without exaggeration, a giant," Jabotinsky voted with the opposition and joined the walkout—why, he later said, he wasn't sure. He had, he declared in his memoirs, "no romantic love for Palestine." The only explanation he could give was the same willful "because" that had made him leave school and Odessa for Rome.

Had he re-read his last dispatch to *Odesskaya Novosti*, he might have remembered things differently. There was, he wrote there, something genuinely tragic about what he had witnessed. "Think of what it is like," he told his readers, "to belong to a tribe that must weep over its first political victory in 1,800 years!" But although he could identify with both sides, it was the losing Easterners, he believed, "the mourners for Zion," who would prevail in the long run, since they were in touch with something in the Jewish psyche that the Westerners had lost contact with. The Russian delegates reflected the "natural and powerful will of the people." Even were Herzl were to get nowhere with the Sultan for the next twenty years, they

still would say: "No matter. Maybe next time around we'll be luckier—and now let's get on with the work!" Although more of a "Westerner" in outlook himself, he felt in his heart that the "Easterners" were right.

אלֹהֵי הָשָׁמִים וְאֶלֹּהֵי הָאָרֶץ – GOD OF HEAVEN AND GOD OF THE LAND.

[This phrase is often translated as *God of heaven and God of earth*.¹² Ramban explains that this is not an accurate interpretation:]

– הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יְקָרָא אֱלֹהֵי אָרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל – The Holy One, Blessed is He, is called “the God of the Land of Israel,”¹³ – קָדְבַּתְּבָי “לֹא יְדַעַת מִשְׁפָט אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ” – as it is written, *They did not know the law of “the God of the Land”* (II Kings 17:26); – וּבְתוֹב יְזָרְבוּר אֶל אֱלֹהֵי יְרוּשָׁלָם בְּעֵל אֱלֹהֵי עָמִי – and it is written, *They spoke of “the God of Jerusalem” as of the gods of the peoples of the earth* (II Chronicles 32:19). – וַיְשִׁיבָה סֻדּוֹ שָׁדָן אֲתָבָנוּ בְּשָׁרוֹת קָשָׁם – There is a mystical concept involved in this, which I shall yet write about further, God willing.¹⁴

[Ramban now focuses on what led him to this interpretation:]

– אֶכֶל נְפָטוֹק “לְקָרְבָּנִי מִבֵּית אָבִי” לֹא נְאָמֵר בַּזְּמָנָה בְּאָרֶץ – However, in the verse (v. 7) which states, *HASHEM, “God of heaven,” Who took me from the house of my father and from the land of my birth ..., it does not state, God of heaven and God of the Land*, but only *God of heaven*,¹⁵ כי היה בָּקָרָן או – because that verse describes God as Abraham knew Him while he was still in Haran or in Ur-kasdim.¹⁶

[Ramban now cites a consequence of the fact that God is more directly involved in guiding the affairs of *Eretz Yisrael*:]

– וְכֵן אָמַרְוּ: כִּי רְחוּצָה לְאָרֶץ יוֹמָה בְּאוֹשֵׁן לֹא אָלֹהֵז – And so, [the Sages] said (*Kesubos* 110b), “One who lives outside of *Eretz Yisrael* is as if he has no God,” שָׁמַרְתָּ “בַּיּוֹם מִחְסָפְתָה בְּגַתְּלָתָה דְּלֹא אָמָר לְךָ – as it says, *For they have driven me away this day from having any connection to the heritage-land of HASHEM, saying: Go, and worship alien gods!* (*I Samuel* 26:19).¹⁷

2. Ramban

Bereishis 24:7

3. Ramban
Vayikra 18:25

[Ramban explains the unique position of the Land of Israel and of the people of Israel in this scheme:]

– וְהַשֵּׁם הַנְּכָבֵד יְתִבְרֶךְ הוּא אֱלֹהֵי הָאֱלֹהִים וְאֶドְנוֹי הָאָרָוגִים לְכָל הָעוֹלָם – And the Glorious Name (God), may He be blessed – “He is the God of the powers and the Lord of the lords”²⁶⁸ for the whole world.²⁶⁹ – אֶכֶל אָרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל אִמְצָעָות כְּיוֹשֵׁב הֵיא בְּנֵית אַלְמָנָה מִן הַמֶּלֶךְיִם קָצֵן שָׁוֹר – However, regarding the Land of Israel – the center of habitation of the world,²⁷⁰ the “heritage of Hashem,”²⁷¹ which is specially designated for His Name – He did not place over it a “captain, ruler or officer”²⁷² from among the angels,²⁷³ – וְהַנְּקָדוֹל אַוְתָּה לְעַמּוֹ לְעַמְּנָה לְקִינְחָר שָׁמוֹ וְעַד אָוֹבָבָיו – as He designated it as an inheritance to His people who affirm the Oneness of His Name, who are the “descendants of the Patriarchs, the ones who loved Him.”²⁷⁴ – וְעוֹד שָׁנָאָמֵר יְהִי תְּקַעְמִים בְּיַיִל בְּלַהֲרָץ – And this is the meaning of what [Scripture] states: *you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, for Mine is the entire world* (*Exodus* 19:5),²⁷⁵ – וְקֹדֶשׁ תָּהַפֵּצְתָּ לְלִבְנֵינוּ אֶת שְׂתִּינוּ אֶתְּנָהָרִים בְּלַל – and it is written, *so that you will be a people for Me and I will be a God for you* (*Jeremiah* 11:4), meaning that you will not be under the control of other powers at all, for I (God) will control you directly. – קָדְשָׁם הָעָם הוֹשֵׁב אֶרְצָנוּ בְּקָרְשָׁת תְּהִרְיוֹת וְבְרִיּוֹת מִפְּצָוֹת לְקַדְשָׁם – And so [God] sanctified the people that dwells in His Land, i.e., the nation of Israel, with the sanctity of refraining from sexual immorality and with the multitude of other commandments so that they would be sanctified for His Name,²⁷⁶ – וְלֹכֶד אָמֵר לְכָבֵם אֶת חַקְעִין וְנוּ וְלֹא קְאָא אֶתְכָּם הָאָרֶץ – And this is why [Scripture] states: *You shall observe all My decrees and all My ordinances and perform them; then the Land to which I bring you to dwell will not disgorge you* (below, 20:22). – וְבִתְּבִיב “אָמֵר לְכָבֵם אֶת קָדְשָׁם וְאֶת אַתָּה אֶתְּנָהָרִים אֲשֶׁר הַבְּרוּתִי אֶתְכָּם מִן הַעֲמִים” – And it is further written there, *So I said to you: You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to inherit it, a land flowing with milk and honey – I am HASHEM, your God, Who has separated you from the peoples* (ibid., v. 24), – יִאמֶר פִּי הַבְּרוּל אַוְתָּנוּ מִבְּלַתְּעָפָרִים אֲשֶׁר פָּנָן עַלְתָּם שָׁרִים וְאֶלְהִים – where [Scripture] is saying that [God] separated us from all the other peoples, over whom He placed celestial officers and other powers, by His giving us the Land,²⁷⁷ – שִׁוְעָה הָאָהָן בְּנֵרֶךְ לְנֵלְאָלָה וְנֵהָה מִתְּהִרְבָּרָם – so that He, may He be blessed, will Himself be our God and we will be specifically designated for His Name.²⁷⁸ – וְהַנְּהָה הָאָרֶץ שְׁחוֹר – And so the Land, which is the heritage of the Glorious Name (God), disgorges anyone who contaminates it, – וְלֹא תִּסְבַּל טָבְדֵי עֲבָדָה זָרָה וְבְגִלְגָּל עֲרוּזָה – and it does not tolerate those who worship idols or those who engage in sexual immorality.²⁷⁹

[In the previous paragraph Ramban grouped idolatry together with sexual immorality as onerous sins that defile the Land, although these passages primarily concern sexual immorality and do not explicitly mention idol worship. Ramban explains his inclusion of idolatry:]

– הַפְּרָשָׁה הָזֶאת דָבְרָה הַמְּלָךְ לְכָל עֲבוֹדָה זָרָה עַם וּבְרוּתִי – And this passage mentions Molech (above, v. 21) as an example for *all kinds of idolatry*, – עַם וּבְרוּתִי תְּעֻרְיוֹת – together with the mention of sexual immorality, – וְעַל לְלִם אָמֵר “אֶל הַטְּמָאָה בְּכָל אֶלְהָה בְּיַיִל אֶתְּנָהָרִים וְנוּ” – and it is regarding all [these sins] that [Scripture] here states: *Do not become contaminated through any of these; for through all of these the nations that I expel before you became contaminated ... and the Land disgorged its inhabitants.* – וְכֵן בְּפֶרֶשֶׁה הַשְׁנִיה “וְאֶבְדַּל אֶתְכָּם מִן

[Ramban quotes various statements of the Sages that accord with the ideas he has presented above:]

"בְּנֵי תְּהִלָּה – And similarly in the second passage dealing with sexual immorality, [Scripture states: *You shall be holy for Me, for I Hashem am holy; and I have separated you from the people to be Mine* (below, 20:26); תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – which is alluding to the severity of the prohibition of idolatry].²⁸⁰ עַתָּה בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל תְּהִלָּה – And therefore [Scripture] states there that since they are designated for His Name, because of this He gave them the Land, תְּהִלָּה לְתַדְעָה אֶת־יְהֹוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ עָלָיו – as it is stated: *So I said to you: You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to inherit it ... I am Hashem, your God, Who has separated you from the peoples* (ibid., v. 24).²⁸¹

[After discussing God's direct authority over the Land of Israel, Ramban now explains the manner of God's control over the rest of the world:]

תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – Now outside the Land of Israel, תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – even though everything is ultimately under the dominion of the Glorious Name (God), purity there is not complete²⁸² – because of the heavenly ministers who rule over it, תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – and the peoples of the earth stray after their celestial ministers, worshipping them as well as God.²⁸³ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And that is why Scripture states concerning Messianic times, *He will be called "God of all the world"* (*Isaiah 54:5*), תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – because He is the God of the powers Who rules over all,²⁸⁴ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – and in the end, in Messianic times, He will "punish the hosts of heaven in heaven,"²⁸⁵ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – removing the dominion of the higher powers and destroying the arrangement of the ministers,²⁸⁶ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – and afterward, i.e., as a result of what He has done in the upper realms. He will punish "the kings of the earth on earth."²⁸⁷ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And this is the idea that [the verse] states, *The matter is by decree of the angels [לְאֵלָיו], and the word of the holy ones, through asking* (*Daniel 4:14*).²⁸⁸ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – [Scripture] is saying that that matter, revealed in the dream, which had been decreed regarding Nebuchadnezzar, was a decree of the angels,²⁸⁹ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – who decreed that the forces emanating from them²⁹⁰ should do so, i.e., should execute the decree. תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And [these angels] are called תְּהִלָּה (lit., "awakers") here because it is through their emanations that the forces producing all the actions of the world are awakened, i.e., activated, "בְּנֵי הַלְּוָלָה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – as [Scripture] states: and behold, a holy angel [תְּהִלָּה] came down from heaven. He cried out loudly, and said thus, 'Chop down the tree, etc.'"²⁹¹ (ibid., vv. 10-11).²⁹⁰ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – The verse then continues, *and the word of the holy ones, through asking*, meaning to say that the angels first asked of the Most High regarding the Divine will about [Nebuchadnezzar], and only afterward they decreed that such a thing should be done. תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And this is the meaning of what Daniel said to [Nebuchadnezzar], *It is the decree of the Most High* (ibid., v. 21),²⁹¹ for everything is ultimately from Him.

[Ramban cites several other passages alluding to God's special connection with the Land of Israel:]

תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And so, the Glorious Name (God) is the God of the powers outside the Land, but He is the direct God of the Land of Israel, which is the heritage of Hashem.²⁹² תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And this is the meaning of the verse, *but this people ... will stray after the gods [לְאֵלָיו]* foreign to the Land (*Deuteronomy 31:16*); that the other powers (גָּדוֹלָה), i.e., the celestial ministers, stars and constellations, are foreign in the Land of God and in His portion.²⁹³ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And this is the connotation of that which is stated: *[The nations] that you have exiled and settled in the cities of Samaria do not know the law of the God of the Land; He has incited lions against them, and they are now killing them* (*II Kings 17:26*).²⁹⁴ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – Now the Cutheans had not been punished in their own land when they served their heathen gods, having lions incited against them, תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – but when they came to the Land of God and acted there in conformity with their previous actions, [God] then incited against them the lions that were killing them.²⁹⁵

[Ramban explains other teachings of the Sages in light of the principles he has established above:]

תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And this is the meaning of [the Sages] statement: תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – Anyone who dwells outside the Land, it is as if he has no God, תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – for it is stated, *I am Hashem, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the Land of Canaan, to be God unto you* (below, 25:38).²⁹⁶ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And [Scripture] states further (*I Samuel 26:19*), *for they have driven me away this day from attaching myself to the heritage of Hashem*,²⁹⁷ as if to say, "Go worship other gods" (*Kesubos* 11b).²⁹⁸

תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And [the Sages] stated further in *Tosefta of Tractate Avodah Zarah*: תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – Now, [Scripture] states, *and I return in peace to my father's house – then Hashem will be a God to me* (*Genesis 28:21*).²⁹⁹ תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And it states also that God said, *to give you the Land of Canaan, to be God unto you* (below, 25:38).³⁰⁰

תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – And based on this concept, [the Sages] stated in *Sifrei*:

תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – *And you will be swiftly banished from the goodly Land. You shall place these words of Mine upon your heart and upon your soul; you shall bind them for a sign upon your arm and let them be an ornament between your eyes ... and you shall write them on the doorposts of your house...* (*Deuteronomy 11:17-18*, 20) – even when I exile you out of the Land of Israel to foreign lands, תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – make yourselves "distinguished" through the commandments so that when you return to the Land they will not be new to you. תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – This may be illustrated by a parable. It is comparable to a king who became angry at his wife and banished her to her father's home. תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – He said to her, "Adorn yourself with your adornments while you are there so that when you return they should not be new and unfamiliar to you." תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה תְּהִלָּה – Similarly, Jeremiah said to the Israelites going into exile (*Jeremiah 31:20*): *Make road markers [מַרְאֵבָה] for yourself* – these are the commandments with which Israel is distinguished (*בְּצִדְקָה*)³⁰¹ (*Sifrei, Deuteronomy 43*).³¹¹

The Loneliness of Charismatic Man

The closeness of man and God is confined to a specific environment in spite of both divine universality and ubiquity and the effort of man to transcend his limitedness and finitude. The encounter of God and man is conditioned by certain external factors. The first appearance of God to Abraham, as recorded in the Bible, was associated with the command of *lekh lekha*, “go forth from your land” (Gen. 12:1), of emigrating from his father’s home to the Land of Israel. Abraham, acting under God’s orders, arrived in Canaan. God’s promise to and agreement with Abraham were subject to the fulfillment of the above-mentioned command.

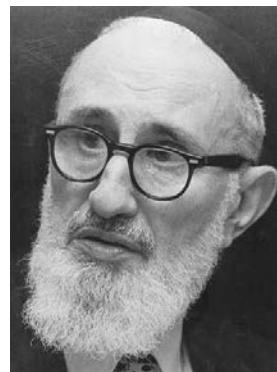
Why God could not enter into an intimate relationship with Abraham in Mesopotamia and had to guide him into a new land is an old problem. Judah Halevi, in his *Kuzari*, explains it with the uniqueness of the Land of Israel as an ideal land for the meeting of God by man.¹ He attributes metaphysical qualities to the land and endows it with a spiritual climate: *hayyei neshamot avir artzeh* (“the air of your land is the breath of life for our souls” – Judah Halevi, *Tziyon, ha-lo tish’ali, Tish’ah Be-Av kinot*). Of course, the old myth of the temperate climate which is ideal for the development of man was exploited by Halevi. Nahmanides, in his commentary to Lev. 18:25, followed in Halevi’s footsteps, as did the mystics. For them, the attribute of *kedushah*, holiness, ascribed to the Land of Israel is an objective metaphysical quality inherent in the land.

With all my respect for the *Rishonim*, I must disagree with such an opinion. I do not believe that it is halakhically cogent. *Kedushah*, under a halakhic aspect, is man-made; more accurately, it is a historical category. A soil is sanctified by historical deeds performed by a sacred people, never by any primordial superiority. The halakhic term *kedushat ha-aretz*, the sanctity of the land, denotes the consequence of a human act, either conquest (heroic deeds) or the mere presence of the people in that land (intimacy of man and nature). *Kedushah* is identical with man’s association with Mother Earth. Nothing should be attributed a priori to dead matter. Objective *kedushah* smacks of fetishism.

I believe, rather, that the divine commandment to Abraham to leave his parents’ land and go to the Land of Canaan should be understood under a different aspect entirely. The charismatic personality must disassociate himself from his national connections and completely free himself from the environment he was born and reared in. The chosen person severs his affiliation with his clan and friends; he deserts everybody in order to give himself up to his new friend, God. The first prerequisite for prophecy is loneliness. A lonely man finds the Lonely God, and this very loneliness creates the charismatic bond between them. The charismatic person must lose his country and home, he becomes a miserable stranger and straying wanderer: *arami oved avi* – “a

4. The Emergence of Ethical Man

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik
Edited by Michael Berger



5. Kaftor V'Ferach (Chpt 10)
R' Issheri Haparchi
(1280-1355)

6. *Tashbetz* (3:200)
R' Shimon ben Tzemah Duran
(1361-1444)

עד אמרו זל' (סנהדרין לה, ב) אמר הרושן ורשו מאירין ישראל, וכמו שזכרנו⁷⁹⁹. כתוב
הרמב"ס זל' הלכות בית הבחירה פרק ב' (ולכה ב) ומוסרת ביד הכל שהמקום שבנה דוד
ושלמה את המבנה בנזון ארונית הוא והמקום שבנה בו אבשלום אבינו את הミוכת עקר
עליו צדקה, והוא המקום שבנה נזון בשדייא מן התבהה, והוא המבנה שהקיף עליל קין
ותבל, ובו הקיריב אדרש האשכנז שנברא קרבן ומושם נברא. אמרו רבנים אדרש מקומות
כפחו נברא. ברוך אל עליון שהבא רידוי מאין מולדתו שורה עשרה שם נשות כרי
להבייא אל האשכנז שברח בה לחזרתו בו תעללה ובורען. ובית המקדש שהוא באין ישראל
נברא קומם שנברא העולם (פסחים גז, א) וכמו שזכרנו⁸⁰⁰. וכן המובל לא ירד לאין ישראל
(ובחtn קין, א). פרק התזיא לו את הפק (יונה, ב) עולם מזמן נברא. והאל יראנו נפלאות
מן תורנו, ופתחת לנו בתפקיד שעריך בינה⁸⁰¹, ובונתי בה כבוד האל ית' וbatis האבות
בלגושים ע"ב.

כבר הבהיר ת'ל ארץ ישראל מאמיתן קריינה אותה הארץ קיושה⁶⁰², ומוהו לשון קרושה שהוטלה עליה, כמו אגדת הקיש ופוצזא בה, אין ספק שיש בה קיושה וטוהר גועלה ולזה גם כן נקראה הארץ לולחה הארץ ממאית אל כל אמר לו להלעש (השע. י) כי המקום אשר אותה עמידה עליו קרש הוא מבן אחר. והבהיר דמי יובב מולות הארץ גאנזאתי בשמי בקדושים. ונזכר ביג'ת גובל גובל רארם על ים קווקז ביד השם הרובתו עלין.

מהה שאמור זו ול' במקצת סותה פק' אלו נאמרין בכל לשון (א), וזהו שישם שעברו את הדרין שבו בום בא רר נוראים. בא ואוהה כמה נסדים גועש לישראלי באחדו הום, עבורי את הדרין וכואל אל הר נוראים והר עיבל שבמושמרן וחכגד שכם ושבאצל אלוי מורה⁶⁰⁵ שנאמר (ברם, ז) הלא מהה עבר הדרין גו, יותר מששים מלך, ולא עמד אש בפניהם וכל שעמד לפניהם מד נוראות, שנאמר (שמות, כ) את אימתי אשלה לפניך, ואומר (שם, ט) חפל עליהם אמתה פורה. עד עבור עפק יי' וביאה ראשונה, עם קנית זה ביאת שניה. ובהזה הוא שרי תחוב (ודעת, ה, ט) והעם עלו מן הדרין בעשר לחודש והראשון נהנו בגלגל בקוציה ריזות, ושם מלך ושם עשו את הפסח שנאמר (שם, י) יהוח בני ישראל בגלגל ויעש אות הפסח באשון בארבעה עשר ים לחודש בעבותה ריזות, וכבשו ריזות ובבשו עי, ואחר כן תחוב (שם, ח) או יבנה יהושע מוכב לוי אלוי ישראל בדור עיבל, ומיתו רישי' זל' הכא בפי ספר יהושע והוא ולן בגלגל לזכריה⁶⁰⁶. עד תבז' זל או יבנה יהושע פרשה זו אין מוקדם מואהדר שם שעברו את תרבותינו עכ'.

The Concept of Singularity

The word "singular" means "being only one," "exceptional," "extraordinary" and "separate." The word *segulah* in Hebrew similarly connotes singularity. In Exodus (19:5), the Torah enunciates the doctrine of the election of Israel as a cardinal tenet of our faith.⁹ "And you shall be to Me *segulah* from all other other peoples." The word *segulah* is interpreted by Rashi as referring to "a cherished treasure, comparable to costly vessels and precious stones for which a king has a special regard."

Segulah may also describe relationships between people. For example, Jacob loved Rachel but he did not hate Leah, despite the verse, "And the Eternal saw that Leah was unloved" (*senu'ah*) (Gen. 29:31). His bond to her merely suffered by comparison with Rachel, as in the verse, "And he [Jacob] loved Rachel more than Leah" (*ibid.* v. 30). He had no reason to feel any animosity toward her. But his relationship with Rachel was singular. Similarly, Jacob loved Joseph and Benjamin, Rachel's children, differently than he loved his other sons. Judah described this succinctly:

7. Reflections of the Rav v. 1

R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik

Edited by R' Abraham Besdin



"his [Jacob's] soul is bound up with the lad's soul" (*ibid.* 44:30). There was a *segulah* dimension in these special loves. It involved an intertwining of souls, a union beyond verbal description. It was more than emotional love; it was a oneness achieved, which is the highest rung of identification. A *segulah* love is an ontological merger.

Similarly, the people of Israel are a *segulah* people, singularly valued by God; this involves no denigration of other nations. It is a specialness—a nation, one of its kind, which God has designated to preserve and disseminate His Divine teachings. This is singularity.

The Singular Land of Israel

A *segolah* people inhabits a *segolah* land. It is "a land which the Eternal your God looks after; on which the Lord your God always keeps His eye, from year's beginning to year's end" (Deut. 11:12).¹⁰ Rashi adds that, although God cares for other lands too, His relationship with Eretz Yisrael is special. The Midrash elaborates: "R. Shimon ben Yoḥai expounded the verse in Hab. (3:6): 'He rose and measured the land,' as meaning: God measured (assessed) all lands but found none suitable for Israel except Eretz Yisrael" (Lev. R. 13).¹¹

Jewish destiny is linked with this land; we have no other. Only in this land, our Sages say, does the *Shekhinah* dwell and only therein does prophecy flourish.¹² This *segulah* attribute of the land is no more rationally explicable than the *segulah* of the people. These are qualities certified by our faith, and history has corroborated the singularity of both people and land.

Becoming Acquainted with the Bride

The union of the people of Israel with the land of Israel is comparable to a marriage. The crossing of the Jordan River

involved more than geographic movement; it represented 'a marriage between the people and the land, a union of rocky hills and sandy trails with a people whose future destiny is to this day bound up with the state and welfare of the land. Destinies were united, a joint sharing of honors and shame, victory and defeat; for all that transpires there affects the mood and status of Jews everywhere. In a human marriage, divorce or death can sever the relationship. The bond between the land and people, however, is for all time, as Maimonides ruled: its sanctification is for all time (*Hil. Bet Haberirah* 6:16).¹³

There is a *halakhah* that a man may not marry or even betroth a woman before he knows her, no matter how highly she was recommended to him.¹⁴ This we see illustrated in the story of Isaac and Rebecca.

Eliezer, the trusted servant of Abraham, informed Isaac of the wondrous character of Rebecca, her manners, piety, and wealth.¹⁵ Nevertheless, the Torah tells us that, before Isaac married her, he allowed some time to elapse for them to become better acquainted with each other. The Bible says: "Isaac then brought her into the tent of his mother Sarah, and he took Rebecca as his wife. Isaac loved her, and thus found comfort after his mother's death" (Gen. 24:67).¹⁶ Rashi adds: "He brought her into the tent and she closely resembled his mother Sarah; she became Sarah his mother [since the construct "of" in "tent of his mother" does not appear in the Biblical text]. While Sarah was living, a light burned in the tent from one Sabbath eve to the next, there was always a blessing in the [*hallah*] dough, and a cloud was always hovering over the tent [as a Divine protection], but after her death all these had ceased. When Rebecca came, they reappeared."

Isaac believed Eliezer's testimony but he had to learn to value Rebecca himself. Why? Marriage is not a utilitarian transaction, a partnership agreement, a casual relationship. It is an existential commitment, a uniting of two lonely, incomplete

souls to share a common destiny with its joys and sorrows. It is not an association but an integration. Such a commitment cannot be based on transmitted data; what is involved concerns one's body and soul, the inner personality finding itself attuned to another. It is a metaphysical fusion. Such a commitment, if it is to be wholehearted, without reservations, and for all time, can only be derived from first-hand knowledge. That explains the prohibition of marrying someone without prior acquaintance and affection.

This, we suggest, was the reason Moses was told to send scouts into the land—not to gather intelligence, but to have the distinguished heads of each tribe explore the land and bring back reports of its singular character. The instructions Moses gave them defined their mission, viz. to make the acquaintance of the land. By entering the land, the people were being wedded to it and, despite Divine assurances of its quality, they had to experience it through their princes before the commitment could be deeply rooted and irrevocably assumed. A commitment granted through proxy information is inevitably limited and qualified.

שהיה הקב"ה חוץ להנכים לאין מיד (רש"י, במדבר, י, לג). נסעים אונגו אל המקום אשר אמר ה', אותו און לכם. אלה אונגו והטבנו לה, כי י' דרר טוב על ישאל (במדבר, י, ככ). ודבר ר' את משה אמרו: שלח לך אגשים ויתרו את ארץ כנען אשר אני גונן לבי ישאל (שם י, א, ב'). וואר אלוף: ברולמים תbam, ליאתות תח העות הארץ באחיך (בראשית מ, ט). ומה האור אשר הוא תאב... והבחנונים אם במאכרים (במדבר י, ט). וואיתים תא אושר תאב הא... ואית השם שיבש אט (במדבר י, ט). אם רב (שם י, ח). ר' רש"י — יש ארץ מוגלה גבורים, יש ארץ מגдал

ומה הארץ אשר הוא יושב בה ? הפטורה היא אם רעה ... ומה הארץ, השפונה הוא, אם רוח, היש בה עץ אם אין, והחיקותם ולקחתם מפניהם הארץ והלטמים ימי

בכוור ענבים (שם, יג, יט, כ). "שלוח לך אנשים". רשי' — למה נסכמה פרשת מרגלים לפרש מרים ? לפי שלקחה על עצקי דבה שדברה באחיה, וושעניהם היללו ראו ולא לkomו מוסר (שם).

9 ייחו הרים לי גלה מכל העמים" (שםות יט, ה). רושי — אוצר חביב... כל' י' קיר ואבני מובת שלכים גוניותיהם, אך לא לי גלה משאר אמות.

10 ארץ אשר ה' אלהיך ורוש אתה חמד פניו ה' אלהיך בה מರשות השנה ו/or אחרית שנה (דברים יא, יב). רשי' — והאל כל הארץ דורש... אלא בכיבור

12. "וְיָקֵם הַבָּרוּת תְּרִשְׁוֹתָה מִלְפָנֵי ה'" (יונה א, ג). וכי מילפנו ח' הוּא בורח ?
 מהלך קרבן ונתיר עלה אמצעות מוגבלות (תפלת נזקן ארכובה) (תפלת נזקן בלא רשות).

13. הלא נזכר במקרא, כי אמר ר' יונה, לא לחתום לארץ, שאון השכינה גונלית שם (ילק' ש', יונה א).
ונתקדש בקדושת עוזרא השנינו הוא מקודש הוות (ומב' ט', בית הבחירה, ג, ט).
14. אמור לאלם שיברש מה אשנה עד שריראה (בקדושים נז').

15 ויספר העבר ליזחק את כל הדברים אשר עשה (בראשית כד, סו). רשיי — גלה
לו גסמים שנעננו לו, שצובטו לו האריך, ושונדרנו לו ברגע ובמלתנו.

16 ריבאת יצאה ימוך האלהה שורה אמר יריך ואת ברקה וחזר לו לאשתה, ואתאותה, ויריחו וואיאת השם, אבל כל ששת הימים נרדו לדורותיהם, והוא גור לדור ענבר שבת שבת, וברכה מוציה בפסח וענן קשורי להאלת מושמהון, פסחים, וכשבאתה ברקה, חורין.

8. The Lord is Righteous in All His Ways

Rabbi Soloveitchik

Edited by R' JJ Schacter

The *Kinot* end with a group of *piyutim* or *kinot*, some ten in all, beginning with the word “*Tziiyon*.” They are all concerned with one topic, the fact that Eretz Yisrael was selected as the Chosen Land. The first of them, of course, is by Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, followed by others who imitated his special literary form, some with more success and some with less. It was fashionable to imitate Rabbi Yehudah Halevi’s “*Tziiyon*.” The Maharal of Rothenburg wrote one later on. His “*Sha’ali serv-fah va-esh*” is also a “*Tziiyon*,” although his specific subject was the burning of the Talmud and the destruction of the Torah, whereas Rabbi Yehudah Halevi spoke about the destruction of the land.

The meaning of the word *tziiyon* is somewhat uncertain; we do not know exactly to what it refers. It may refer to the Land of Israel, it may refer to Jerusalem, it may refer to the *Beit ha-Mikdash* itself, to the Holy of Holies. And these interpretations do not exclude one another. What does *tziiyon* actually mean? It is a sign on the road, as in “Set up signposts (*tziiyunim*)” (Jer. 31:20). If you want to guide strangers to a city, you erect signs on the road.

Tziiyon also means something else. Do not forget that David conquered *Tziiyon*, the land of the Yevusi, after the whole of Eretz Yisrael was conquered; he postponed his conquering of the Yevusi for a long time. Yevusi was a difficult city to conquer.

So what does *tziiyon* mean? A very powerful rock, a very tall mountain, very difficult to vanquish. *Tziiyon* means unconquerable. Zion was called *Tziiyon* even before David because no one could conquer it; it was a very well fortified place. When Isaiah spoke about Zion and Jerusalem, or when the author of *Tehillim* spoke about Zion and Jerusalem, or when so many prophets spoke about Zion and Jerusalem, what did they mean? That Zion was remarkable in one respect, namely, that it was

strategically well fortified and therefore very difficult to conquer. The word *tziiyon* was adopted by the prophets for a single purpose, to tell their enemies all over the world that Zion is strange, unique, and difficult to overcome.

In addition, in the prophetic books, Zion also began to refer to some spiritual, transcendental beauty or to something unusual. Isaiah and other prophets speak about Zion not only in terms of a very strong city, but in terms of uniqueness, of being unusual, of not being average.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi led a very comfortable life; he was a minister of finance, an excellent executive for the caliphate in Spain, which then was Arab. He was *karov le-malkhut*, close to the ruling authority, honored and respected by everyone. But he had an urge to go to Eretz Yisrael. In this “*Tziiyon*” that he composed while still in Spain he wrote, “Who will fashion wings for me (*mi ya’aseh li khenaftayim*)? How am I going to get there? Who will give me wings that will enable me to soar very far and cover the distance by flight? And, in fact, he left for Eretz Yisrael. Traveling to Eretz Yisrael then was not like going there now. It was quite a dangerous undertaking; it was an adventure. *Tosafot* (*Ketubot* 110b, s.v. *hu omer*) writes about how difficult it was to go to Eretz Yisrael because of the dangers of the journey. But Rabbi Yehudah Halevi left everything and went. While we know that he left for Eretz Yisrael, we know nothing about him from the date of his departure from Egypt. But a story is told—I do not know if it is true—that when he arrived in Eretz Yisrael, he fell on the soil and prostrated himself. And, at that very moment, an Arab, a Bedouin, on a horse rode over him and killed him. Now they say there is documentary evidence that he died in Egypt on his way to Eretz Yisrael. I do not know about it.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi’s complaint in “*Tziiyon*” pertains to distance. He is driven by the desire to visit the Holy Land because *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* revealed Himself there to His

prophets, but he wonders how he can overcome the problem of distance. Today we do not have this problem. Distance is perhaps the only problem that modern society has solved. It is amazing how the distance problem can now be solved in just a few hours. But for Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, distance was a very difficult problem. The problem, in all the romantic literature of antiquity, was how to overcome distance. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi was driven by this desire, but he wondered how he would be able to fulfill it. He was, apparently, quite pessimistic and skeptical about whether he would ever reach Eretz Yisrael because it was so far away.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi adored everything about Eretz Yisrael; he was madly in love with Eretz Yisrael. I have never known of anyone so in love with Eretz Yisrael as Rabbi Yehudah Halevi. There were many others who went to Eretz Yisrael, but they did not confess their love for the land in such terms as he did. The Ramban also loved Eretz Yisrael. He was more sophisticated and explained his love in halakhic terms, and this approach is more familiar to us, because we know the language of Halakhah. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi expresses his love for Eretz Yisrael somewhat differently than the Ramban.

Yehudah Halevi was born and raised in the so-called Arab caliphate in Spain. For many years, Spain consisted of little kingdoms. He was born in one of those kingdoms and probably studied under the supervision and guidance of the rabbinic scholars in North Africa, where there was great scholarship. Rav Alfasi, for example, was there. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi wrote poetry beautifully. *Er iz given a yid vos hot lib getat Yehadus.* He was a Jew who loved Judaism.

Legend has it that Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra was the son-in-law of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi. When I was a little boy, I was told that Rabbi Yehudah Halevi was writing a poem, a *piyut*, and did not have time to finish it, so he left it on his table. In the meantime, he left the house, and Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra came in,

looked at it, took a pencil out of his pocket, and added something to it. When Rabbi Yehudah Halevi came back and saw the addition, he became determined to find out who had written it. He finally concluded that Abraham ibn Ezra was only person in the world who could have done it. So Abraham ibn Ezra married Yehudah Halevi's daughter. In one place in his commentary on *Humash* (Ex. 20:1), Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra says, "Yehudah Halevi, may he rest in peace, asked me . . ." so he obviously knew him very well.

Why were the *piyutim* beginning with "Tzifyon" introduced here, at the end of the *Kinot*? Because on the day of Tish'ah be-be-hurban, Zion in its destruction, and we remember *Tzifyon be-vinyanah*, while it was still fully intact. Until now, the *Kinot* have portrayed the terrible scenes of destruction during the *hurban Beit ha-Mikdash*. Rabbi El'azar ha-Kalir's *kinot*, with which we began, describe the persecution, the horrors, the cruelty of the *hurban*. They describe how the beautiful cities of yesterday were devastated and destroyed. We mourn for the *hurban Beit ha-Mikdash* and *hurban ha-ir*, for the *hillul Hashem* and for the desecration of the Divine Name. We remember what happened to Jerusalem on the day of the *hurban*—the bloodshed and destruction, the ridicule and homelessness, the exile and persecution. The Book of *Eikhah* is devoted to that purpose, to the suffering of Jerusalem on the day it was destroyed. This duty we have already fulfilled.

And now we are going to fulfill a second duty, to describe and portray the beauty of the Land of Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem before the *hurban*, what it was like when it was at peace. The *piyutim* of "Tzifyon" do not speak about suffering or murder. They do not proclaim the martyrdom of the Ten Martyrs. There is nothing there about the *hurban*. On the contrary, it is *sheva-ho shel Yerushalayim*, a description of how beautiful Zion and Jerusalem were before the *hurban*. The verse in *Eikhah* (1:7)

says, “Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and her miseries all her treasures that she had in the days of old.” In times of *hurban*, Jerusalem should remember the beauty and glory of her olden days, before she was destroyed. In the *piyutim* beginning with “*Tzifyon*,” Rabbi Yehudah Halevi and the *patanim* who followed him changed the motif from destruction to the beauty *before* the destruction. It changes from *pahad ha-avar*, fear of the past, to *yofi shel ha-avar*, beauty of the past. Their *piyutim* tell us in glorious colors how beautiful Jerusalem was, the magnificence of Jerusalem, the wisdom of her people, the inner qualities of Zion and the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, and the spiritual holiness that prevailed there *before the hurban*, *before* it was destroyed. I would say that these are no longer to be considered *kinot* but are to be seen as odes to Zion, as hymns to Zion.

This is necessary because, in order to appreciate the extent of the catastrophe and the disaster, we have to emphasize and have some knowledge of the great beauty of Jerusalem, of the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, *before* the disaster occurred. By remembering what Jerusalem was like in normal times, before the *hurban*, one is in a better position to appreciate the magnitude of the *hurban*, the magnitude of what was lost, and to cry for it. If one has no standard of comparison, if one does not describe Jerusalem *before the hurban* as “the joy of the whole earth” (Ps. 48:3), then the question of “How lonely sits the city that was full of people” (Lam. 1:1) poses no problem. Perhaps it has *always* been isolated, lonely, bleak, and dreary?

Yes, people know that it was very bad, but they cannot appreciate *how* bad, the full magnitude of the *hurban* and the extent of the destruction, disaster, and catastrophe, because they never saw the cities while they were standing. So, these poets say, let us tell them how beautiful, how wonderful, and how precious the cities were, particularly Jerusalem, so they will understand much better why they should mourn for and share in the great terrible loss that was suffered when they and the *Beit ha-Mikdash* were destroyed.

If Jerusalem had been merely a village, we would not have mourned over its destruction for so long. A village is not impressive. But Jerusalem was beautiful. The Gemara (*Bava Kamma* 82b) says, “Ten things were said about Jerusalem.” It describes how beautiful Jerusalem was, how different Jerusalem was. Jerusalem is described as “perfect in beauty” (Lam. 2:15). And so, if Jerusalem was the most beautiful of all cities, if it was the incarnation of sanctity, then it is appropriate to mourn and create an atmosphere of *avelut* for *hurban Yerushalayim*.

This concept has its foundations in halakhic practice. When Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai said, after the *Beit ha-Mikdash* was destroyed, that the *lulav* should now be “taken” for the full seven days of the Sukkot holiday “*zekher le-Mikdash*,” in remembrance of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* (*Sukkah* 41a), the emotion he wanted to arouse or cultivate was *simhah*, joy, to remember the beauty of the *Beit ha-Mikdash*. He wanted it to be *zekher le-Mikdash*, not *zekher le-hurban*. Certain types of commemoration of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* arouse not *avelut*, but *simhah*. And that is the purpose of this set of *kinot*, to arouse the joy so as thereafter to be in a better position to experience the sadness.

But why was Rabbi Yehudah Halevi so committed to Zion? After all, it has the same stones, the same sand, the same water, as any other place. What is so different about it? What is so unique about it?

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi presents here the idea that he developed and elaborated upon more fully in his *Kuzari*. For him, prophecy is a natural phenomenon or condition in Eretz Yisrael. Prophecies descend in Eretz Yisrael the way rain and dew descend. In Eretz Yisrael, when you breathe, you breathe not only oxygen and air, but also something spiritually important, something with spiritual potency and vigor. The air in Eretz Yisrael, the plain physical air, the atmosphere, is different. The condition or quality of the atmosphere—or of the air—in Eretz

Yisrael is saturated with prophecy, with *ruah ha-kodesh*, with divine inspiration. For Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, the uniqueness of Zion is not only in its transcendental or metaphysical significance, but in its natural, climatic, and geographic significance. The rain is different, the dew is different, the soil is different, the stones are different, physically different. The light in Eretz Yisrael is different; it is brighter. In Eretz Yisrael there is not only the light that flows from the sun, from natural sources, but a divine light intermingled with the natural light. The air is clearer and thinner; it is charged with *ruah ha-kodesh*. Nature is by far more magnificent, more beautiful, in Zion than outside of Zion. When the Torah says, "A land that flows with milk and honey" (Deut. 26:9), it means that there is something unique in the nature of the land, in the soil, the climate, the wind, the air.

It is not important whether Eretz Yisrael is a physically beautiful or attractive country, economically sound. What is important is that you need not go far in order to see *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* there. Just open the window and take a look. He refers to Eretz Yisrael as "*Makom asher ruah Elokim shefukhah al behirayikh*." "*Shefukhah*" means that it pours out, as rain pours into a dell, even if you do not want to receive it or even if there is no one to receive it. Prophecy is like a downpour of rain. This is Rabbi Yehudah Halevi's philosophy.

Here he emphasizes the principle that the designated dwelling place of the *Shekhinah* is Eretz Yisrael (*Kuzari* 2:14), that there is no prophecy outside of Israel (see *Tanhuma Bo* 5). It is always "*she'rayikh, Your gates*" No other country has such a gate.

Hashra'at ha-Shekhinah, the reality of the Divine Presence, is a continuous process in Eretz Yisrael; it is part of the climate. Just as there are different kinds of climates, cold climates and warm climates, similarly there are climates completely devoid of the Divine Presence and climates very conducive to it. Just as it is natural to get up in the morning and see the sun shining or

hear the rain falling, so it is natural in Eretz Yisrael to get up in the morning and find the *Shekhinah*. Just as one who walks out in the rain must get wet, and one who walks out in the sun-shine must feel warm, so too one who lives in Eretz Yisrael must feel and absorb the *ruah ha-kodesh*, must simply be saturated with *kevod Elokin*. Certain places where the prophets thousands of years ago had conversations with *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* are still endowed with the potential of *hashra'at ha-Shekhinah* for everyone.

Those who want to can receive it, even today. Anyone who is in Eretz Yisrael and kisses the stones the prophets walked on merits to share in the Divine Presence regardless of whether he is a great rabbinic scholar or not. The gates of Heaven are open to Zion. Anything that emerges or comes down from the gates of Heaven comes down to Zion. There are special windows in Heaven that are open only to Zion. "The eyes of the Lord, your God, are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year" (Deut. 11:12). Elijah the prophet walked on the pathways of Eretz Yisrael, and anyone who is in the same place physically or geographically as he was, or Elisha, or Joshua, is worthy of the Divine Presence resting upon him. For Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, the fact that *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* spoke with Elisha or Elijah in a certain spot means that the spot absorbed holiness, or achieved a certain metaphysical quality. No other land in the world can imitate this quality. All one need do is open oneself up to the divine flow, which is like dew or a stream coming down upon the land from Heaven.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi describes the following picture: Wherever you are, if you look out the window on a bright day, you will see a beautiful sun. But you do not become excited about it because it is a natural phenomenon. But in Eretz Yisrael, whenever you open the astronomical gates, the moon or the sun, you are opening up the metaphysical, perfected gates of Heaven. One who opens up the astronomical gates, who opens

his eyes and sees the sun, simultaneously opens the gates of the *Shekhinah*. In the morning, when one gets up and blesses God Who “forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates all,” there are two sets of gates—the astronomical, or natural, gates and the metaphysical, or prophetic, gates—through which *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* speaks to the Jew if he is willing to have a conversation with Him.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi’s appraisal of Eretz Yisrael emphasizes the natural meeting between man and God rather than a supernatural vision. There is no need to perform miracles in order to meet with the *Ribono shel Olam* and have contact with Him. A simple dialogue with the *Ribono shel Olam* is enough. For Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, it is very easy to achieve continued contact between the Jew and God in Eretz Yisrael. This is, of course, assuming that one wants to open the window and look out. Obviously, if one does not want to look, it is nothing.

In the view of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, there are no prophets nowadays only because there are no appropriate recipients of the Divine Presence. We are thirsty, we want the rain, but we do not have the vessel with which to collect the water. As a result, we remain thirsty. But a person who comes with the appropriate vessels will immediately fill them with *ruah hakodesh*.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi introduces another idea here that is mentioned in Nehemiah: that the sanctity of the Land of Israel is also due to the fact that the graves of our ancestors are there. The Land of Israel and Jerusalem were desolate and in shambles, and Nehemiah came before the king and asked permission to go there. He said, “How can I not look bad if the town where the graves of all my ancestors are is desolate?” (Neh. 2:3). “The graves of my ancestors” played a role for Nehemiah. They added to the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael. Halevi writes that he will be completely confused by Hebron (“*ve-ashtronem be-Hevron*”). But why would this be so? After all, he knew what Hebron con-

tained. It means that he will be confused by the magnetic attraction he feels for Hebron.

There is not a spot in Eretz Yisrael where the Jewish people are not rooted, where we have no memories. When he arrives, says Halevi, he will scout out every place. For the Jew, history is more than history. It is a living experience. And, finally, this has not only happened in the past; it will happen in the future too, as Isaiah says (60:19), “The sun shall be no more your light by day . . . but the Lord shall be to you an everlasting light.”

The Rambam had a different approach. For the Rambam, someone who wants to achieve the stage of *hashrat ha-Shekhinah* has to do more than just open a window. For the Rambam, it is very difficult to be worthy of achieving that level. Not everyone can say, “I am close to *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu*.” One has to rise to great heights in order to merit to deserve *hashrat ha-Shekhinah*. It is a question of intellectual achievement or intellectual greatness (*Guide* 2:36). The Rambam was very aristocratic.

It is certain that for Rabbi Yehudah Halevi the *kedushah* of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* was not cancelled or terminated by the *hurban*. According to the worldview that Rabbi Yehudah Halevi presents in his “*Tzeyyon*,” there is no doubt that in his opinion “*kiddeshah le-sha’atah ve-kiddeshah le-ataid la-vo*”—the sanctity of the *Mikdash* remains for all time. As a matter of fact, with regard to the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, most Rishonim agree with this position, although with regard to Eretz Yisrael it is a different story. We have already had occasion to point out that the Rambam (*Hilkhot Beit ha-Behirah* 6:16–17) says that the original sanctity established in the days of Joshua was nullified, rescinded, terminated, and annulled when Nebuchadnezzar conquered the land. The reason is that the sanctity of the land was based upon conquest and was terminated by Nebuchadnezzar’s superior forces. But the sanctity bestowed upon the *Mikdash* by King Solomon is still in effect, says the

Rambam, because the sanctity of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* was completely independent of conquest. It stems from the *Shekhinah*, and “*Shekhinah einah betelah*, the *Shekhinah* is never nullified.” Even when the land was under the control of Nebuchadnezzar, it did not matter. Nebuchadnezzar can drive out any human being, but not the *Shekhinah*.

It would appear from the Rambam that the sanctity of the Land of Israel is not the sanctity of the *Shekhinah*. In his view, *giluy Shekhinah* is the *kedushat ha-Mikdash*, not the *kedushat ha-aretz*; the *Shekhinah* sanctified the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, not the entire land. When Rabbi Yehudah Halevi says in his *piyut* that “*Sham ha-Shekhinah shekhunah lakh*,” he may be referring only to the *Beit ha-Mikdash* or he may mean that Eretz Yisrael itself is endowed with *kedushat Shekhinah*. I do not know. If he means that Eretz Yisrael itself is endowed with *kedushat Shekhinah*, then there is a slight contradiction or conflict between him and the Rambam.

9. Yirmiyahu 30:17

לֹא־כְּלַיְלָה יִאֱכֵל וְכָל־צְרִיוֹן בָּלָם בְּשֶׁבֶי יַלְכֵד וְתִוְיָה שָׂאָסִיר
לְמִשְׁלָה וּכְלַבְזִיר אָפָטו לְבָבָי אֲעַלָה אַרְכָה לְךָ וּמִפְכָתִיךָ אַרְפָּאָר
נָאָמָר יְהוָה בְּיַדְךָ קָרָאו לְךָ צִוְנָה הִיא וְדַרְשָׁן לְךָ כְּהֵן

*these upon you!*¹⁶ Nevertheless, all who devoured you shall themselves be devoured; all who oppressed you will all go into captivity; who trampled you will be trampled; and all who despoiled you, I shall deliver to become spoils.

¹⁷ For I will make a cure for you, and I will heal you from your wounds — the word of HASHEM; for they called you ‘Discarded!’ [saying,] ‘She is Zion — no one cares about her!’

10. Radak R' Dovid Kimchi

המשך במלת בצתתו וגבאיו כי שורשו בצד: (ו) ארובתה.
רפואה: קראו לך. אמות העולם ואמרו כי ציון היא עיר
שאין לה דושג להשבה לישראל:

מַגָּא לֹא דַעֲבָדִין זֶבֶר לְמִקְרָשׁ – From where in Scripture is it known to us that we are bidden to make a remembrance of the Temple? – אמר ר' יוחנן – R' Yochanan said: – לא אמר קרא – For the verse states:^[231] – בְּאַעֲלָה אַרְכָה לְךָ – For I will make a cure for you – וּמִפְכָתִיךָ אַרְפָּאָר נָאָמָר – and from your wounds will I heal you – the word of Hashem; – בְּיַדְךָ קָרָאו לְךָ – for they [i.e. the nations of the world] called you “Discarded One,” – צִוְנָה הִיא דַרְשָׁן לְךָ” – [saying], “She is Zion, there is none who seeks her.” – From the words *there is none who seeks her*, – מִפְלָל דְבָשָׂעָא דְרִישָׁה – it is implied that she requires seeking.^[241] And R' Yochanan ben Zakkai determined that a way to commemorate Zion is by performing the mitzvah of *lulav* in the Temple manner.

11. Sukkah 41a

ב. זכר לחורבן ואבלות דימי הספרה

12. *Mi'Peninei Ha'Rav*
R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik
 Edited by R' Herschel Schachter

* אמימר מני יומי ולא מני שבועי אמר זכר למקדש. ובפנותו הוא תמותה, וכי כל כך טרחה גודלה היא למנות גם את השבועות, ומה בכאן שבזמן זהה חותבת הספרה היא אך מדרבן, מדוע לא נ|徑
| |
 מדרבן לשות זכר שלם למצות הספרה כמו שהיתה נהוגת בזמן הבית - במנין הימים עם השבועות גם יחד.

והיה נראה לפреш על פי דברי הרוז"ה (סוף פסחים) שכטב, ובטאפרת העומר יש ששאליהם מה טעם אין אנו אומרים בו זמן. וכטב ליישב, שבטאפרת העומר אין בו זכר לשום הנאה אלא לעגמת נשנו ולחרבן בבית מאויינו. והנראה לומר בכוונתו, דלפעמים תקנו ר' זיל' מצות בתרומות זכר למקדש, ולפעמים - זכר לחרבן. ובגמי' למדו עניינים אלו משני פסוקים נפרדים, דלולב ניטל כל שבעה זכר למקדש, ומבוואר בגמי' סוכה (מא). אך מתניתין מلنן דעבידין זכר למקדש, א"ר יוחנן אמר קרא ... ציון היא דורש אין לה (ירמיה ל), דורש אין לה - מכלל דבעיא דרישת. זכר המקור לעשיית תקנות בתורת זכר למקדש. [זכן הוא עניין הכרוך, זכר למקדש כהלו], ואילו בגמי' ב"ב סוף פרק חזקת הבתים (ס): הובא הפסוק (זהילים קל"ז) אם אשכח ירושלים תשכח ימיינו וכו' מכור לכל התקנות של זכר לחרבן, וכדייאתא תחם, סד אס את ביתו בסיד ומשיר בו דבר מועט ... עשה אדם כל צרכי סעודת ומשיר דבר מועט, וכן עניין אף מקלה, וכן מי אשא כל תשכתייה ומשירת דבר מועט, וכן עניין אף מקלה, וכן מי

ספרות העומר בזמן הזה, דהיה נראה לומר שלא רק שזה היה מה שעניים לחז"ל לחתקין תקנה זו, אלא שזה אף עצמה וגופה של התקנה לשעות זכר למקדש. - ואולי לזה מתכוונו התוס' במשיכ' של אחר ספרה העומר בזמן הזה אמרים הי' רצון שיבנה כי', שכל עניינה וקיומה של הספרה הא' לשעות זכר למקדש, בגיןו ללוב, שקיומו הוא קיום של מצות נטילת לולב.

איין יש לפреш, דזוקא בספרה העומר, שהוא זכר לחרבן הבית, וכדמ"ע מדברי הרוז"ה שהזכירנו, הנהיגו לומר תחינת הרחמן היל', והרגשת החרבן והאבלות עליו מחייבת בתפילה מצדו על בנין הבית. אך בנטילת לולב כל שבעה, שאינה זכר לחרבן, אלא אדרבה - זכר למקדש בגיןו, בזה לא. הנהיגו לומר תפילה הרחמן.

דאיתה בא"ק דגיטין, בשיר דלא ישתו יין וכו', וכן איסור עטרות חתנים נזכר הדפס הרוב זאב גוטהולד עניין זה בשם רבנו זיל' במאמרו "לשנה הבאה בירושלים", ירושלים, תש"מ, בעמ' רנ'יא".

הרוב אהרן שוויקה, ירושלים, תש"מ, בעמ' רנ'יא" ועיין ابن עזרא לאיכה על הפסוק (אי'ז) זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה ומרודיה כל מחמדיה, שביאר כוונת הפסוק כאילו היה כתוב - "ביבמי" [כמו כי ששת ימים עשה ד', שכונתו בששות ימים] שבזמן הגלות לאחר החורבן זכרה כמה טובים ויפים היו הענינים בזמן הבית. ובאמת על פי הדברים שאמרו היה טפי ונאה לפרש אחרת, וכפושטו, ש תמיד יש לעין לזכור גם את עניין החרבן ולהתאבל עליו תמיד, [לזכור ימי עניה ומרודיה], וגם לשעות זכר למקדש בגיןו ולהיות תמיד במצב של שמחה, [ולזכור גם את כל מחמדיה]. ואף על פי פושטו לכארה יש בזה משום תורתי-DISTRICTI, דמצד אחד יש לעילו לזכור תמיד אבלות החרבן, ומצד שני, לזכור תמיד את שמחות בית המקדש, מכל מקום, לא איכפת כלל בזאת.

ומעתה היה נראה לפреш דה"ט דאמימר, דס"ל בדברי הרוז"ה, שתקנת ספרת העומר בזמן הזה הייתה היתה בתורת זכר לחרבן, ועל כן יש לדקדק בזוקא שלא לספרו גם את השבועות, כדי להראות שיש חסרון במצוות זו בזמן הזה, ולא שאמימר ר'יל דסאי במנין הימים.

ועל פי דברי הרוז"ה אנו מבינים את עניין ניוג האבלות שנחגו ביום הספרה, שנוהגים עכשו אבלות על החרבן, וכך בטיב. וזה שלא כדברי הזוהר, שענין ניוג האבלות ביום הספרה היה שיק' אפיקו בזמן המקדש, איינו עניין לחרבן הבית, אלא גדרו - שכמו שלפעמים לאדם טמא בעין שבעה ימים. נקיים, לאומה טמאה בעין שבעה שבועות נקיים, ובוטמאה יש מקצת ענייני אבלות - כמו בנסיבות. (ועיין משיכ' בספר נפש הרוב עמי רציה). ועיין בספר שער הכלול פרק מ"ט). ולפי טעמים אלו ניוג האבלות הוא ממש כל ימי הספרה, ואיינו מצומצם רק ליל' ימים, איינו קשור כלל עם מיתות תלמידי ר' עקיבא.

وعיין Tos' מגילה (כ): ד"ה כל הלילה, לאחר שבירך על הספרה אומר יהיו רצון שיבנה וכו', מה שאינו כן... בלוב, (כלומר, אף דשתי תקנות אלו הן זכר למקדש), והיינו טעמא, לפי שאין אלא הזקרה עתה לבני בית המקדש, אבל... לולב יש עשייה. ואולי יש לפреш בכוונותם, דעתם התקנה של לולב ייטל כל שבעה, ומה שהניעו לוי יוחנן בן זכאי לחדרה, היה הצורך לעשות זכר למקדש, אבל עצם גוף התקנה היה - להנrig מוצאות נטילת לולב כל שבעה ואילו מוחוץ למקדש. משא"כ



13. Eim Ha'Banim Semeicha R' Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal

1885-1945

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅԱՆ ԿԱռավարության հրաման

הנִזְקָנָה בְּבֵית־יְהוָה

הענין הוא הא פטיזורו של תרגול. כי אפיקלו היה מוכח בתקופה שוואצ'נאלטם אמרץ, וואלכלט אל גולדן זאטלטן (הנילטן גולדן זאטלטן) בדורותיו הראשונות. כי אפיקלו היה מוכח בתקופה שוואצ'נאלטם אמרץ, וואלכלט אל גולדן זאטלטן (הנילטן גולדן זאטלטן) בדורותיו הראשונות.

ՀԱՅ ԱՆ ԿՐԵՎ ԱՊՐԻԼ ՀԱՅ

By David, as a remembrance: This is an expression of prayer... *Midrash Tehillim* (*ibid.*) compares this to a king who became angry with his flock. He, [therefore], destroyed its pen and banished the sheep and the shepherd. After a while, he retrieved the sheep and rebuilt the pen, but did not remember the shepherd. The shepherd said, "The sheep have returned; the pen is rebuilt; but I have been forgotten!" So too here. Above, it states, *For God will save Zion..., and those who love His name will dwell in it.* The pen is built, the sheep are gathered in, but the shepherd has been forgotten. Therefore, it says, *By David, as a remembrance.*

That is to say, David prayed that he, too, would return with Israel to his place. It is clear from this Rashi that Israel will return to *Eretz Yisrael* and build the Land before the Son of David arrives. Then, David will ask HaShem to allow him to return to the people of Israel, since they have already returned. This is a wondrous proof for the words of the Rambam cited above.

It seems to me that the reason for this [order of events] is based on a comment of the Chatam Sofer himself.³² He writes that the height of our evil lot is dispersion and exile. For even though the *Bet HaMikdash* was destroyed, had we remained in *Eretz Yisrael* matters would not have been so bad. Similarly, the Rambam writes, "The murder of Gedalyah ben Achikam caused the flame of Israel to be extinguished and the Jews to be dispersed among the exiles, due to our numerous sins."³³

Now, I already mentioned that our Sages in the *Zohar*, *Midrash*, and *Yerushalmi* assert that the redemption will progress gradually, not all at once. Therefore, the ingathering of the Jews to *Eretz Yisrael* must precede the true redemption. First, they must leave the state of absolute evil, which is dispersion and exile, and proceed to the middle level of evil, which is when the people of Israel are in their Land but the Temple is in ruins. After this, peace will prevail among the Jews and there will be hope for the future, as the Chatam Sofer writes (*ibid.*). By virtue of this peace, the sons will return to their borders,³⁴ the *Bet HaMikdash* will be rebuilt, and there will be no

| After I have explained, with God's help, that the redemption, for which we so fervently yearn, will occur gradually, step by step, we can understand a comment found in the *Derashot* of the Chataim Sofer. He infers from the Rambam²⁷ that Israel will gather together in *Eretz Yisrael* before the advent of *Mashiach*, even though the *Bet HaMikdash* is not yet rebuilt.²⁸

I discovered something similar in *Sh'vilei Emunah*, by the grandson of our mentor, the Rosh. He cites a *Midrash*²⁹ which says that many Jews from the four corners of the earth will volunteer to live and settle in *Eretz Yisrael* before the final redemption. When many people dwell there and pray frequently on the Holy Mountain, the Creator will listen [to their prayers] and hasten the final redemption.³⁰ The righteous gaon, R. Hillel of Kalamoya, cites this in his responsa, *Bet Hillel*.³¹ Consequently, he wrote a very enthusiastic letter to the brilliant R. Zalman Spitzer of Vienna urging him to convince Baron Rothschild to become involved in this matter and finance it with his own capital. He reasoned that matters like this require the assistance of the wealthy Jews.* R. Hillel writes there, "Who among Israel, HaShem's nation, would not desire to take part in this *mitzvah*?" A certain great rabbi enlightened me to Rashi's comments on the verses: *For God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah, and they will dwell there and possess it. And the offspring of His servants will inherit it, and those who love His name will dwell in it. For the conductor, by David, as a remembrance* (*Tehillim* 69:36 – 70:1). Rashi writes:

* The *Midrash* relates that in the days of R. Yehoshua ben Chananyah, the king gave the Jews permission to ascend to *Eretz Yisrael* and build the *Bet HaMikdash*. R. Yehoshua ben Chananyah delegated two extremely wealthy Jews to finance the endeavor (*BeReishit Rabbah* 64:10).

hatred among the Jews, like there was at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.

I would like to add to the Chatam Sofer's holy words and explain how the ingathering to *Eretz Yisrael* will diminish the dispersion of the exiles even though it will occur before the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. At the very beginning, it will be impossible for the entire nation to assemble in *Eretz Yisrael*, for the Land will have to first expand her "skin" to make room for all of her sons.³⁵ Therefore, some Jews will remain in the Diaspora until HaShem fulfills His promise to gather all of Israel into the Land. This coincides with the Ramban's comments on the verse *The Lord, God, Who gathers the dispersed of Israel says, "I will gather others to him, besides those already gathered to him"* (*Yeshayah* 56:8). He explains that God will gather many, but not all, of the dispersed Jews at the outset [of redemption]. Then, after the wars of Gog and Magog, there will be a second ingathering, as it says, *I will gather others to him, besides those already gathered to him*.³⁶

Now, [even though all of Israel will not return right away], it seems to me that the Land will become a universal center for the entire Jewish nation, by the very fact that there will be an assembly of Jews in Jerusalem and *Eretz Yisrael*. Even those who remain in the Diaspora will keep their eyes and hearts on the Land. They will be bound and connected with all their souls to the universal center which will be established in *Eretz Yisrael*. It will unite them even in the Diaspora, and they will not be considered dispersed at all...

Today, on the other hand, the people of Israel are like lost and scattered sheep³⁷ among the nations. No Jew associates with his fellow Jew. Wherever they live, they are like dangling limbs without any connection to the individual, and certainly not to the community as a whole. This is true and utter dispersion (may the Merciful One save us). We have all been abandoned like fish of the sea. In these recent, difficult years, despots subjugate us and do with us as they please. They degrade and murder us without limit and without any liability for their actions. These scoundrels have no one to answer to for their deeds.

However, if we establish a universal center in *Eretz Yisrael* (with God's help), our pride and glory will rise among the nations and we will be considered a dignified and important nation.³⁸ Then, even the individual who remains in exile will not be forsaken, because anyone who wants to cause him harm will know that there is someone who will demand a reckoning of his actions. He will know that he is liable for his deeds and will, therefore, refrain from doing anything improper.

Thus, the ingathering to the Land will free us from the state of absolute evil even in the Diaspora. It will also cause all of Israel, even the Diaspora Jews, to unite and live in peace. Then, we will reach the bright and hopeful future leading to the complete redemption, speedily in our days. Amen.

Despite Rockets 400 French Jews Make Aliyah Today - Inside Israel - News - Arutz Sheva

7 israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/182965

French aliyah just keeps on rising
(file)

Flash 90

Some 400 French Jews will be making aliyah to Israel Wednesday, undeterred by the ongoing rocket fire and conflict with terrorist groups in Gaza.

Most of the immigrants are from the Paris area, which has seen particularly virulent manifestations of anti-Semitism in recent years and which has spiked further still during the current conflict between Israel and Gazan terrorists. On

Sunday, a synagogue in Paris came under attack by a crowd of Muslim anti-Israel demonstrators in a shocking incident which one witness described as [reminiscent of Kristallnacht](#).

