

NFTY-NEL,

A major difference between the position of President and the rest of the positions on board is that Presidential goals tend to be more ideological, and therefore harder to measure, harder to notice, harder to accomplish. Throughout the year I have been trying to find a way to combine my goals for the region and the goals, which you have brought to me and make them something that we can accomplish together. I would like to share with you a way in which I believe I have done exactly that.

Having had various conversations with people in NEL, I have noticed that a primary concern of many TYGs is the constant struggle between providing engaging and educational programming and getting the amount of people they want to each event. Regionally, we have been very successful in both of these aspects, and one of my goals as President was to transfer some of this success to the TYG level.

Something I personally feel very strongly about is my connection to Israel. As a Jewish organization, I feel it is our responsibility to educate ourselves on a variety of issues relating to modern Judaism, and have noticed that many people struggle with creating quality Israel programming. Combining this goal of mine and your need of programming, I am excited to present to you something I have been working on for a few months now, an Israel Initiative.

This initiative consists of two main parts, one locally through the TYGs, and one run on a regional level. Included in this package are two programs from which you may choose one or both to lead in your TYGs. The first one takes a look at three pillars of Judaism - *Am*, the people, *Torah*, the laws, and *Eretz*, the land. It is a program based on different issues that face modern Israeli society, which we don't normally look at, and is designed to serve as an educational tool. The second program piece is a *Havdallah* service tracing the Jewish people throughout time, focusing on different spices commonly used at a *Havdallah* service. By running one of these two programs, your TYG will be ready to participate in the second part of the initiative - a culminating regional activity. This activity will be a creation of a physical object displaying our love for Israel, and will serve as a reminder of this love at different NFTY-NEL events.

This Israel Initiative is one I have worked hard on recently, and am now placing it in your hands for completion. Your cooperation is necessary in order to make this successful, but I am confident that we will be able to work together and pull it off. I know many of you are passionate about Israel, and I hope these programs will provide you with a comfortable environment to express your passion. Thank you in advance for your cooperation, and if you have any questions, feel free to contact me. I look forward to this journey together.

B,shalom,

Laura Herman

## **Israel: Am, Torah v'Eretz**

### **NFTY-NEL Israel Initiative 2004**

#### Goals:

To educate PPs on different aspects of Jewish history connected to the development of the people, land and laws of Israel, to provide PPs with an in-depth understanding of specific events that contribute to these three parts.

#### Objectives:

PPs will participate in activities showing the importance and meaning behind events that contribute to the culture of Judaism and the land of Israel, they will find out what makes these events historically significant and discuss how they relate to their lives.

#### Procedure:

PPs will need to be in groups of no more than 10

PPs will go to 3 different stations set up either around one large room or in 3 separate areas - the location should be comfortable, each group will be reading an essay on which to base the discussion.

#### Timeline:

30 minutes each for three different stations

15-30 minutes for wrap-up activity

#### Full-Group Wrap-up Activity (after three rotations)

Bring all participants together. Have three signs posted on three separate walls of the room, one each for Am: People, Torah: Laws, Eretz: Land.

Leader: We identified three aspects of cultural life in Israel - the people, the religion and the land. Based on the following questions below, please move to the sign that you identify closest with. (Once pps have moved to a specific sign, ask a representative from each group to share why they chose that category)

- Which aspect of Israel do you feel most comfortable with?
- Which aspect of Israel has the greatest impact on the survival of the Jewish people?
- Which aspect of Israel do you feel like you learned the most about during this program?
- Where can you see yourself making the greatest contribution in your lifetime in terms of the future of Israel?

## Station 1 - Am Yisrael: The People of Israel

Read the following information to PPs:

Eliezer Ben Yehuda was the founder of modern Hebrew. He realized that language was the connection all of the Jews had together, and used that as his foundation for his Zionist views. Ben Yehuda was the first person to have an entirely Hebrew speaking home, and his family became fluent in Hebrew because he refused to speak any other language. He taught at the first school in Israel to conduct classes only in Hebrew and it's still around today.

PPs will read the following article about the evolution of Zionism, and will have a discussion based on the questions that follow.

### **ZIONISM-THEN AND NOW**

**by Dr. Robert Rockaway**

*Zionism is a movement of the Jewish people whose goal was to rebuild a home for the Jews in the Land of Israel. This rebuilding was to bring about a national and spiritual revival of the Jews, as individuals and as a people. To equate this movement with racism is a monstrous lie. In order to better combat this malicious slander, one must know exactly what Zionism was historically, and what it stands for today.*

**A. ORIGINS** -- *The root of the term "Zionism" is the word "Zion" (Tziyon), which originally was the name of a Jebusite stronghold in the Jerusalem area in the 10th century B.C.E. After the conquest of Jerusalem by David, "Zion" became a synonym for Jerusalem and was used by the Hebrew prophets when referring to the city as a spiritual symbol: "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (1 Isa. 2:3).*

*With the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.E., the name Zion took on a special significance -- it expressed the yearning of the Jewish people for a return to their homeland.*

*The longing for return and a restoration of Zion became a cardinal principle and all-pervasive element in Judaism after the fall of the independent Jewish state in 70 C.E. Prayers for the rebuilding of Jerusalem were interwoven in the liturgy and became a familiar refrain throughout the year -- in the three daily services, on the sabbath, festivals and fast days, marriage ceremony, and when people were in mourning. For the Orthodox Jew, the return to Zion became an indissoluble part of his faith; and in Jewish culture and tradition, the Jewish people and the land of Israel were inseparable.*

*Despite the destruction of the Jewish state, and the occupation of the land by a host of invaders -- Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, Crusaders, Mamelukes and Turks -- there has been an unbroken chain of Jewish presence in Palestine. And for no people but the Jews, has Jerusalem been a national capital, a center and symbol of cult, spirit and religion.*

**B. POLITICAL ZIONISM** -- *As a symbol of the Jewish homeland, the name Zion was a central concept in the religious life of the Jews in the Diaspora. In the late 19th century, it served as the basis for the terms "Zionism" and "Zionist", coined by Nathan Birnbaum to express a political rather than philanthropic orientation to the land of Israel. The political meaning of "Zionism" gained acceptance, however, only with the appearance of Theodor Herzl.*

*Herzl's ideas were spelled out in his book *Der Judenstaat* (1896; "The Jew State"), which examined the status of the Jewish people in the constitute their national life in a territory of their own. He believed the idea of the Jewish state had power to motivate Jewry; it was a matter of showing how the dream could be transformed into reality.*

*Herzl's book struck a responsive cord, for in addition to their millennia-old attachment to the Holy land, conditions and events made many secular Jews receptive to the idea of a Jewish state. There was the disillusionment with emancipation, which seemed unable to alleviate effectively the position of the large Jewish masses; there was the pressure of persecution and programs in Eastern Europe, especially after 1881; there was the Dreyfus affair in France in 1894, which triggered an outburst of anti-Semitism in that country; and there was the rise of racial anti-Semitism in Germany in*

the 1870's and Austria in the 1890's. In addition, the rise of nationalism in Europe created Jewish national sentiment among members of the Jewish intelligentsia. Herzl's plan took root because it was, in a sense, an idea whose time had come.

Convinced that the Jewish problem was political in character and only through political channels would it be possible for the Jews to regain their ancient homeland, Herzl established a representative political body, the World Zionist Organization (WZO), which held its first congress in Basel, Switzerland in 1897. There, it formulated the aims of Zionism in a resolution whose principle clause stated that "Zionism seeks to secure for the Jewish people a publicly recognized, legally secured home in Palestine". Thus, ushering in a new era by the injecting into Jewish consciousness the notion that the Jewish people must have a state of their own to be created under international auspices.

From the outset, however, Zionism was not merely a movement for the establishment of a national home in Palestine for persecuted Jews whose position had become untenable in the Diaspora. It was also a movement of national liberation that raised Jewish self-esteem, gave the impetus to organized Jewish self-defense, upheld Jewish cultural values, fostered the study of the Hebrew language, and produced a renaissance of Hebrew literature.

Zionism has never been a monolithic movement. From the first Zionist Congress to the present day, it has harbored within it a wide spectrum of ideas and ideals. These ranged from the political right to the political left, and included socialist and capitalist, religious and secular trends, but the major goal of Zionism never changed - - the creation in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people.

**C. ZIONISM TODAY** - On May 14, 1948, David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of a sovereign Jewish State, to be known as Israel. The major objective of Zionism was thus achieved, but the tasks of the Zionist movement are far from accomplished.

Zionism remains the national liberation movement of the Jewish people because there are yet Jews to be liberated. For the Jews of Russia, Syria and Iraq, Zionism promises religious, cultural, social, political and economic freedom in a Jewish state, free from persecution. For Jews in the free world, Zionism, through the establishment of the State of Israel, has created a new form of Jewish identity. The feeling that the Jewish state's survival is crucial to their own understanding of their Jewish being. Thus, their fate as Jews and the fate of Israel are inextricably bound together.

Zionism stresses that Jewish destiny can only be realized in the State of Israel, for only in Israel are Jews the subjects rather than the objects of their own history. The Zionist movement is, therefore, continually engaged in fostering Aliyah - (immigration) consciousness among Jews in the Diaspora. In addition, Zionism seeks to raise Jewish self-esteem and combat assimilatory trends in the Diaspora by fostering Jewish education firmly founded on Jewish culture and tradition and the spiritual values of Judaism.

In June 1968, the Zionist Congress, held in Jerusalem, redefined the aims of Zionism in the "Jerusalem Program", which states:

1. Unity of the Jewish People and the Centrality of Israel in Jewish life;
2. The ingathering of the Jewish people in its historic homeland Eretz Yisrael through Aliyah from all countries.
3. The strengthening of the State of Israel, which is based on the prophetic vision of Justice and peace;
4. The preservation of the identity of the Jewish people through the fostering of Jewish, Zionist and Hebrew education and of Jewish spiritual and cultural values;
5. The protection of Jewish rights everywhere.

The founding - - and now the support - - of a national homeland for the Jews; adherence to the "Jerusalem Program"; acceptance of the idea that the Jews are a people, not merely a religious community, whose fate and the fate of Israel are inextricably bound - this is Zionism today.

~What do you think Zionism is?

~How has determination contributed to the Zionist cause?

~There is now a Jewish homeland but why is Zionism still around?

~How did the Zionism 50 years ago shape the way we think of Zionism today?

~Eliezer Ben Yehuda saw language as a connecting factor of Zionism, what is the connecting factor today?

## **Station 2 - Torah Yisrael: The Laws of Israel**

Read the following information to PPs:

The Sanhedrin became the supreme court of the Jewish world in Palestine after the destruction of the Second Temple. It passed on the Oral Law of Judaism, interpreted what things meant, and served as a form of government during the Roman rule. The Sanhedrin had 70 members, plus the President who was the tiebreaker in all votes. It flourished by codifying the Mishna, all of oral law, under the leadership of Yehuda haNasi in 200 CE and publishing the Jerusalem Talmud in 400 CE. The Church disbanded it in 429 CE.

PPs will read an article from the *Israel Religious Action Center* outlining the conflicts between sects of Judaism in Israel. They will then use the discussion questions following as a guide:

### ***RELIGION AND STATE IN ISRAEL - Background Article***

*The strife between the secular and religious is widely recognized as the most acute, compelling conflict dividing Israeli society today, far superceding any other domestic conflict. Recent polls show that over 80% of Israelis fear civil violence erupting as a result of this tension. The tension between religious and secular has its roots in the very beginning of the Zionist Movement and the influence of the Enlightenment in drawing Jews out of their enclosed, traditional communities. It has continued as a result of the intertwining of religion and state. The result, ironically, is that Jews in Israel have far less religious freedom than they have elsewhere in the world.*

*The reality of religious freedom in Israel is unfortunately different from the principles guaranteed in Israel's Declaration of Independence: "The State of Israel...will be based on the precepts of liberty, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants regardless of religion, race or gender; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture."*

*Furthermore, Israel is a signatory to the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which protects these universally held principles. Article 18 of this Covenant states: "1. Everyone shall have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. This right shall include freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice, and freedom, either individually or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. 2. No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice." Further, Article 18 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights declares: "Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance."*

### ***Israelis' Perspective on Religious Freedom and Pluralism***

*80.2% of Israel's population is Jewish, 14.9% is Muslim, 3.2% is Christian and 1.7% is Druze and other faiths. Of the 80% Jewish population, public opinion polls usually provide three categories for people to self-identify in terms of affiliation: religious, traditional and secular. Approximately 17-20 % identify religious (with the majority modern Zionist orthodox and the minority ultra-Orthodox non-Zionist), 32-35% traditional and 45-49% secular.*

*That Israelis talk about being Jewish in black and white terms -- either one is religious, meaning Orthodox, or secular -- is often difficult for outsiders to understand. It is even difficult for non-Israeli Jews, no matter whether they identify primarily with the religious or the national/ethnic side of being Jewish. In the United States, where a higher percentage of the population is religious than in any other Western country, people understand religiosity outside of a halachic context. Only recently has the secular Israeli population begun to understand and embrace the idea that they do not need to reject the whole, that their Israeli identity can include more traditional, religious aspects without*

having to adopt an Orthodox lifestyle.

There is a growing acceptance among Israelis of Progressive Judaism. In a recent poll, 67.9% of the Israeli public stated that it believes that the religious political sector exercises greater influence than desirable. Another poll showed that 63% of the public favored giving the Reform and Conservative streams of Judaism equal legal status to that of the currently recognized Orthodox stream; that 63% favored making Reform and Conservative Jewish marriages available in Israel, in addition to Orthodox marriage; and that 64% supported operating public transportation on Shabbat. Another poll, conducted by the Orthodox Union, demonstrated that 45% of the population either prefers or is open to receiving religious life-cycle services from Reform and Conservative authorities. This is a tremendous amount of support, given that the Reform and Conservative Movements are relative newcomers and their dues paying members number only a few tens of thousands.

### **The Crucial Issues from an Israeli Perspective**

Current issues of concern to Israelis include marriage, drafting yeshiva students, burial, equal funding for secular schools and programs, allowing public transportation on Shabbat (impacting on poorer sectors of the population who do not own cars) and the ability to operate food and entertainment establishments on Shabbat (in a recent poll 78% supported opening shopping malls outside city centers on Shabbat). Resolving the various conflicts is difficult given the political situation in Israel. Neither of the major political parties has ever been able to form a government without the support of the religious parties who, consequently, wield greater power than their share of the population. One needs to understand the anomaly of ultra-religious parties that theologically reject both democracy and Zionism while exerting control in the above areas using the mechanisms of the State. Former Chief Rabbi of Israel Avraham Shapiro expressed this quite clearly when he said, "There is no conflict between democracy and halacha. The only limit, in terms of the Jewish Law, to the authority of the elected members of the Knesset, is that they may not make any decision in contravention to the halacha."

### **Crucial Issues from a Broad Perspective**

Other issues are equally important although they do not have such immediate impact upon the daily lives of secular Israelis. The controversy over appointment of Reform and Conservative Movement representatives to local religious councils has struck at the heart of the Orthodox establishment's control of the purse strings of State support of religious institutions. We believe that so long as there is State funding for religious facilities such as synagogues, Reform and Conservative congregations are entitled to their fair share of the money. Without appropriate facilities, Israelis are denied the opportunity to find their Jewish home in a liberal tradition more suited to their modern perspectives. Similarly issues relating to egalitarian prayer at the Kotel (Western Wall) present challenges to freedom of worship in Israel. Finally the issue of "Who is a Jew" as it impacts the conversion controversy has implications in the lives of hundreds of thousand of citizens of Israel, especially new immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

- ~Do you see the Israeli government serving as a kind of modern Sanhedrin?
- ~In what ways does this article relate to the further development of Jewish law?
- ~How can a wider view of Jewish law be seen in Israeli society?
- ~How can Reform Judaism appeal to more secular people living within Israel?
- ~How can Israel remain a state run by Jewish law and promote religious pluralism at the same time?
- ~What steps does Israeli society need to take in order to instill tolerance and acceptance between the different sects of Judaism?
- ~What can we do as Reform Jews living in North America to help ease the difficulties of the Reform Jews living in Israel? Is it even our duty to help them?

### **Station 3 - Eretz Yisrael: The Land of Israel**

Read the following information to PPs:

Joshua took over from Moses after Moses was not allowed in to the Land of Israel at Mount Nebo. 12 spies went into Canaan to see what the land was like. They came back and reported that the people were huge and it was almost impossible for them the Israelites to win a war against them. Before the Israelites went into Canaan and conquered Jericho, they performed a circumcision on the next generation of Jews and renewed their covenant with God.

PPs will read an article from *Israel 21C A Focus Beyond the Conflict* in order to understand one issue facing the land of Israel today ^ the distribution of water. They will then use the questions following as a guide for discussion.

#### ***The politics of water***

By Sara Clemens January 11, 2004

*I recently visited Israel as a representative to the GA - the 72nd General Assembly of the United Jewish Communities. Each American representative at the GA was assigned a study day-trip, the purpose of which was to enable each of us to learn in great depth and detail about an aspect of life in Israel; be it cultural, political, economic, or social. It meant that one would learn of Israel's successes, and achievements, but also of the struggles and problems faced. We were to visit a specific institution or institutions which are part of the tapestry of Israel.*

*I was assigned to a day of exploring the subject titled 'The Politics of Water'. I could only yawn. How boring, I thought, how unsexy a subject! Everyone knows that Israel has water problems; it is in short supply and the rainfall is inadequate. The aquifers need to be monitored so as not to deplete them and invite salt water to seep into them. Sure, Israel also has to share its scarce water supplies with Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Palestinian authority. Yet, Israel has successfully used desalination to provide Eilat with water and has considered importing water from Turkey to supplement its growing needs. Still, last winter's heavy rains have brought a measure of relief. Israel also encourages conservation. So what else was I going to learn by exploring the politics of water?*

*Well, like everything else at the GA this was an amazing program. It dealt with the evolving work of Keren Kayemet -the Jewish National Fund, and its tangible influence on the development of the state of Israel. JNF which is now 102 years old, began by purchasing land, redeeming it and holding it in trust for the Jewish people. It proceeded to drain the swamps and to eradicate malaria from the land. JNF followed this by planting trees to reclaim the land that had been ravaged by time, neglect and abuse. It created parklands and worked on behalf of the ecology.*

*Now, once more, JNF's work has evolved and has become broader. It still plants trees and works on the environment. But now, it is especially involved in protecting, reclaiming and restoring this priceless resource called water. As well as I knew the subject matter, I soon realized that there was more to this than I understood. I had missed some very salient points. This was made clear to me as we proceeded on our trip.*

*Our bus took us to Emek Hefer, a valley which stretches from near the coastal city of Netanya eastward. Here we visited a JNF water purification plant, and saw the large pools used in the process. Here, too, we had a very interesting and thought-provoking session with Dr. Meir Ben Zvi who is professor of Physics and Hydrology at Hebrew University.*

*Some of the information was a revelation. What city gets more rainfall in the course of a year - London or Jerusalem? The answer given would probably be London. But in fact London and Jerusalem both have about the same amount of rainfall in the course of the year. The difference lies in its distribution. The fact is that London's rainfall is continuous. But Jerusalem gets all her rain during three months. As a result there is much runoff and evaporation and here lies the difference. Israel's Mediterranean climate in which it never rains during the summer is an important factor.*

*Another problem of water distribution arises from the fact that Israel is very diverse geologically. The northern area of the country called the Galilee has the greatest amount of water.*

*But its population is sparse, and because of the terrain of the land, agriculture is difficult. In contrast, the center of Israel is one of the most densely populated areas in the world. There the water resources are meager, but the demand is great.*

*Even more so, the Negev - the largest land area in Israel with the greatest potential for population expansion, and agricultural and industrial development is also Israel's driest. If there was water in the Negev, it would be a boon to Israel.*

*JNF is working to provide a better distribution of water. It is working to provide for the needs of the population and also the agrarian technological and tourism industries. JNF is working to reclaim and protect Israel's water resources and their sources.*

*Our next stop was a lovely grove and park along the Alexander River. This is only a nice slow meandering stream. But in dry Israel, any moving body of water is called a river. It brought to my mind the disappointment I felt upon seeing the mighty Jordan River for the first time. It too is quite small and narrow. I guess everything is relative.*

*The ecological engineer who briefed us explained the problems Israel faces because of polluted bodies of water. The Alexander River was one such problem. But, with the help and guidance of the JNF this river has been purified and reclaimed. Its flowing waters seemed pure and inviting. Its surrounding park area now provides a serene environment for Israeli families on weekends away from the turmoil of their daily lives. The project won an international prize given in Australia for the best reclamation project.*

*Our last, and most politically revealing and sensitive stop was at the JNF emergency plant at Yad Hannah Reservoir. This area is very close to the security fence, with the third largest Palestinian city - Tulkarm - just on the other side of the fence. The city lacks a sewage system. Therefore, because of the terrain of the land, this city's waste, sewage, and during the olive processing season waste from this industry flows to the Israeli side. Aside from being a health hazard and a pollutant this area lies above Israel's most important and largest aquifer. Should this aquifer become polluted by the sewage flow than Israel's water situation would become truly grave.*

*JNF has been working to capture this polluted runoff from the Palestinian areas. It has built large water gathering pools and very large processing equipment. This equipment is shielded by a very tall and thick wall to protect it from shelling which could reach the plant from a minaret on top of a mosque seen in the distance. The water engineer told us that for some time there was cooperation between the JNF and the mayor Tulkarm. They were on the verge of building a joint water reclamation system. The deal recently collapsed when the PA's prime minister resigned and the German backers withdrew for fear of conflict.*

*JNF, nevertheless has continued its work unhampered by the other side. It is an impressive and heroic task that JNF is doing in the area. After seeing and understanding what takes place here one can understand the name "emergency plant."*

*We concluded this wonderfully informative, sometimes jarring yet, delightful day by doing one last thing. We had the mitzvah of planting a tree in the land of Israel. As the soon was setting and as I covered my eucalyptus sapling with soil I could only pray that these trees grow and flourish and provide a peaceful and serene place where the beautiful children of Israel can grow and flourish by their side.*

~Does this article surprise you? In what ways?

~How does the issue of lack of water contribute to the other problems in Israeli society?

~Is there anything we can do to alleviate those problems?

~Water is an essential part of everyday life, and is a big issue when negotiating a peace deal, in what ways is the Israeli government responsible to ensure equal distribution? And in what ways is the Palestinian Authority responsible?

~In what way does this responsibility relate to Joshua and the spies?

~How can we promote the equal distribution and ensure this right is applied to everyone?

## **Israel initiative Havdallah** **“Parsley, Sage, Rosemary and Time”**

Opening Reading:

"And I will make of thee a great nation; and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shall be a blessing; and I will bless them that bless thee and curse him that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed"  
(Genesis 12:2-3)

### **Blessing over the Wine**

***Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam bo-rei p'ri ha-ga-fen***

### **Parsley: The Exodus**

" And I am come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land unto a good land and a large, Unto a land flowing with milk and honey; unto the place of the Canaanites; and the Hittites; and the Amorites; and the Perizzites; and the Hivites; and the Jebusites" (Exodus 3:8).

The time has come, O' Israel,  
For the "Mighty Exodus",  
As all nations open up their doors  
From the North, South, East and West.  
Speak to the North, "Give up!"  
And to the South, "Keep not back!"  
Shout to the very ends of the earth,  
"Arise, it's time to pack!"  
Beautiful "coat of many colors",  
Uniquely and wonderfully made,  
Heed the voice of your Heavenly Father,  
And make Aliyah today.

Each Spring, we gather around seder plates and take note of our first ritual step that involves eating - dipping parsley into salt water. On the seder plate, the parsley suggests the first green of spring. But, it is also said to represent a first course in the meal, which in ancient times only those who were free could enjoy. As we pilgrimage through our week, through shabbat, and through the separation between, we remember that even though the most difficult of times, there is a true sense of renewal upon completion of our goals. Thus, let our personal exodus begin.

### **Blessing over the Spices**

***Ba-ruch A-tah A-donai E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam bo-ri mi-nei v'sa-mim***

Sage: Our Teachers, the great Sages of Zion

"All the land which you see I give to you and your descendants for ever. And I will make your descendants as the dust of the earth."

Genesis 13:15-16 to Abraham

Genesis 26:4 to Isaac

Genesis 28:13-14 to Jacob

Let me go over and see the land;  
Open my eyes that I might see.  
Impart sacred visions, God,  
Impart them to me.  
Consume me with Your Holy Fire,  
Lift up my soul ever higher.  
Far above earth's sinking sand,  
Let me go over and see the land.  
Lift up my soul, God, lift it higher.  
Let me ascend Your Holy Hill.  
Let me go over and see the land  
That my great longing for You be fulfilled.

In the final parashah of the Torah, V'zot HaBrachah, Moses asks God to let him enter the land that he led his people to, as God had commanded him. God's response is a curious, "no". The parashah goes on with the death and burial of Moses, by God, and God's eulogy of Moses. Throughout our history, we have seen many great visionaries regarding Israel. Moses, Joshua, David, Ruth, Judah HaLevi, Theodor Herzl, David ben Gurion, Gold Meir, Menachem Begin. The common thread that weaves these leaders together was one not-so-simple lesson. They each worked tirelessly to ensure a Jewish homeland, many knowing that they would never reap the benefits of their own work. Acts of selflessness for the greater good of the people is what defines our sages today.

### **Blessing over the Light of Fire**

*Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-o-lam bo-ri m'-orei ha-eish*

Rosemary: Jerusalem

And Moses went and spoke these words unto all Israel. And he said unto them: 'I am a hundred and twenty years old this day; I can no more go out and come in; and God has said unto me: Thou shalt not go over this Jordan. The Lord thy God, He will go over before thee; He will destroy these nations from before thee, and thou shalt dispossess them; and Joshua, he shall go over before thee, as the Lord hath spoken.  
Genesis 31:1-3

If I forget thee, Jerusalem,  
Then let my right be forgotten.  
Let my right be forgotten, and my left remember.

Let my left remember, and your right close  
And your mouth open near the gate.

I shall remember Jerusalem  
And forget the forest -- my love will remember,  
Will open her hair, will close my window,  
will forget my right,  
Will forget my left.

If the west wind does not come  
I'll never forgive the walls,  
Or the sea, or myself.  
Should my right forget  
My left shall forgive,  
I shall forget all water,  
I shall forget my mother.

If I forget thee, Jerusalem,  
Let my blood be forgotten.  
I shall touch your forehead,  
Forget my own,  
My voice change  
For the second and last time  
To the most terrible of voices --  
Or silence.

While standing at the Kotel, the Western Wall, one feels a new sense of humility. Perhaps it's the massive stones, the paleness of their color, the change in hue between where people stand and what rises above. And then, the palette of sand-colored enormity breaks, almost surprisingly, into patches of forest green. It's the clusters of rosemary that emerge through the cracks and crevices in the Wall. Rosemary is the spice of Jerusalem. Rosemary has firm roots, reliably strong stems, and delicate arms that reach out to budding new growth from which its sweetness is emitted. It is persistent, and resilient and tends to bloom regardless of circumstance. Like the spice, and like the city, our passion and determination will not waiver. Jerusalem is home.

### **Separation of the sacred from the profane**

*Ba-ruch A-tah A-do-nai me-lach ha-o-lam ha-mav-dil bein ko-desh l'-chol.*

Time: Our Journey Together

How can I rest serenely in a strange and foreign land,  
Knowing Eretz Yisrael is in dire need of a helping hand?  
How can I remain silent when love's flame within me burns?  
How can I turn my eyes away from the land my spirit yearns?

Am I my brother's keeper? Or do I turn away a deafened ear  
To the sound of distant drums, as storm clouds are drawing near?  
Oh what bonds in unity love can never break,  
Where heart and soul unite as one just for Israel's sake!

Time. It's our greatest commodity. We find time for the things we want to do, and make time for the things we have to do. But in a more quantifiable sense, how can we gauge the value of our time in terms of history? Zionism is alive because of the time and commitment and passion of people who have been lovers of Judaism and Israel for centuries. How do we begin to identify our role, and our responsibility, in ensuring her survival?

Israel changes people. Learning about the land and knowing the land are a chasm apart. But we can begin to know the land before we even step foot on her soil. We can study, we can appreciate culture, we can reach out to the people of the land in a personal way. Each one of us holds in our hands and in our hearts the ability to ensure the survival of the Jewish people, and our homeland, Eretz Yisrael. As we separate the shabbat from the week anew, now is the time to reaffirm our commitment to Israel, our quest of knowledge and our passion for Zionism. Shavua tov.

**Eliahu Hanavi, Shavua Tov**