

# AL HAARETZ — Perspectives on Eretz Yisroel

Living in, Settling, and Building Up the Land  
 Issue 4 • 7 Shevat (Beshalach—Yisro) 5780

## Toras Eretz Yisroel

Excerpts from Contemporary Seforim on Torah & Mitzvos,  
 Halachos & Minhagim of Eretz Yisroel

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### Yom Tov Sheni in Eretz Yisrael [part 1 of 2]

*Preserve the traditions of your fathers (Beitzah 4)*

One of the most disconcerting moments for a visitor to Eretz Yisrael is celebrating the second day of *Yom Tov* there. While the visitor is busy reciting *Kiddush* and refraining from prohibited work activity, the residents of Eretz Yisrael are going about their daily activity, driving cars and listening to music! What is the logic behind this dichotomy? Does one indeed have to keep two days under all circumstances? What of the visitor who frequents Eretz Yisrael on every Festival? What is the obligation of those who reside half the year in Eretz Yisrael? May a visitor ask a resident of Eretz Yisrael to be his "*Yom Tov goy*" by requesting him to do a *melachah* on his behalf? What of the discrepancy that develops when the second day of *Yom Tov* falls on Shabbos, where Jews outside of Israel read the *Yom Tov* Torah portion while the residents of Eretz

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## Eretz Chemdah: An Inside View

Various Perspectives and Experiences  
 of English Speakers Living in Eretz Yisroel

### THIS WEEK'S STORY:

#### It's a Package Deal

Shira Yael Klein, Beitar Illit

While I was a seminary student here in Eretz Yisroel, it became increasingly clear to me that I wanted to live here, so I kept my eyes wide open to see how life here really played out and if and how it could work for me. In retrospect, I must say that after eight years and four kids, I haven't had a major surprise yet.

I just want people to know that life in many places here in Eretz Yisroel—the lifestyle, values, and education system—is very different than that in America. I love this life, but it is different, and it does have its challenges. People shouldn't come here thinking they can continue living just like they did in America, only with the perks of living in Eretz Yisroel. Sometimes the challenges actually "are" the

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## Eretz Rechavah:

### A Tour Guide's Focus In the Expanse



Next to the neighborhood of Armon Hanetziv near eastern Talpiot in Yerushalayim is a beautiful park known as the **Tayelet—Haas Promenade**. The park has one of the most spectacular views of Yerushalayim and *Har HaBayis* from the south. The site offers a view of *Har HaZeisim*, *Nachal Kidron*, the Old City, as well as many of the new neighborhoods of Yerushalayim. During *Bayis Sheni* an aqueduct came through this area via Beis Lechem to bring water to *Har HaBayis* and the *Beis HaMikdash*. It is still possible to visit and walk through sections of the 2000-year-old tunnel. As Avraham Avinu came to the *akeida* from the south—from either Chevron or Be'er Sheva—it's considered to be the site mentioned at the end of *Parshas Vayera* in the *pasuk* of "*Vayar es hamakom merachok.*"

•by Tour Guide **Shlomo Meir Eisenman**

## Eretz Tovah:

### Quotes from Our Torah Personalities



"... the substantial efforts for our Holy Land, in which we are all obligated. Besides the fact that all applied work will be a salvation and redemption for our holy Land, in which every small act is a great mitzvah ..."

*(translated from Nachlas HaShem #1)*

**Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer** (1870-1953), Rosh Yeshiva of Etz Chaim from 1925, was involved— together with his brother-in-law Rav Moshe Mordechai Epstein—in the purchase of the land upon which the city of Chadera was established.

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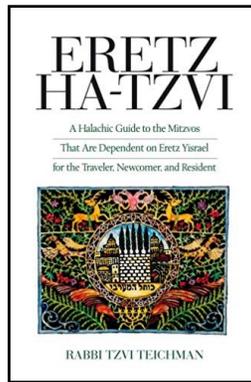
Yisrael return to the regular cycle of Torah reading? Can one catch up on the missed reading? Is there a method to determine in what years this discrepancy will develop, thus enabling those who are planning to celebrate a bar mitzvah in Eretz Yisrael to know what portion will be read? These are just a few of the myriad of questions that result from this unusual situation. One thing is certain, however: for those who must observe a second day of *Yom Tov* while in Eretz Yisrael, it must be kept with the same stringency as in *chutz la-Aretz*. Until the days when *Mashiach* will arrive, may it be speedily in our time, this issue will remain quite relevant and a matter that it is vital to be familiar with.

### Yom Tov Sheni

The Jewish calendar is based on the lunar cycle. Each month begins with the appearance of the new moon, and 12 or 13 of these lunar months make up the year. A *Beis Din* must declare each new month in order to imbue that month's holidays with sanctity. Only a *Beis Din* whose members were endowed with *semichah* (ordination) were empowered to declare the beginning of the new month, *Rosh Chodesh*. Upon receiving the testimony of two witnesses who had sighted the moon, the *Beis Din* would sanctify the month. Although the *Beis Din* knew the astronomical calculations (*sod ha-ibbur*) necessary to determine the exact time of the new moon's appearance, Halachah requires the *Beis Din* to declare the new month based on the actual sighting of the moon when possible.

Because the holidays are dependent on whether the new month was sanctified on the 30th or the 31st day of the previous month, it was imperative that the *Beis Din* notify the communities in Eretz Yisrael and in the Diaspora of the date of the month's sanctification. Despite the fact that they notified the communities of the month's beginning initially through signals and eventually through messengers, inevitably there were regions where the message failed to arrive in time for them to know when the holiday should be celebrated. They therefore observed the holidays (those ordained directly by the Torah) for two days, to ensure that the proper date was indeed observed. Since a month could only have either 29 or 30 days, there were never more than two days in doubt.

Initially, the Rabbis allowed communities to observe one day if they were familiar with the necessary astronomical calculations required to determine the precise day of *Rosh Chodesh*. However, in later generations, the Rabbis decreed that any community that the messengers did not reach must observe two days in any case. The underlying motivation for this decree was the realization that as a result of increasing persecution, the *sod ha-ibbur* was in danger of being forgotten. The Rabbis were deeply concerned that if they allowed communities to continue to



rely on the astronomical calculations, they would continue to keep only one day of *Yom Tov* out of habit, even if at some point they forgot the necessary astronomical knowledge.

Hillel *Ha-Nasi*, a grandson of R. Yehudah *Ha-Nasi* (the redactor of the Mishnah), realized that the system of declaring each month's *Rosh Chodesh* by the *Beis Din* was in danger of becoming obsolete. *Semichah*, a necessary prerequisite for the members of *Beis Din* to declare the new month, could be endowed

only by one who already possessed it. This chain of ordination dated back to the very first *semichah* conferred by Moshe *Rabbenu*. With the dispersion of the Jews and the disbanding of the Sanhedrin, the fear arose that the time when *semichah* could no longer be conferred was soon approaching. In the absence of scholars endowed with *semichah*, the months could not be sanctified, and hence there would be no possibility of maintaining the holidays. Hillel *Ha-Nasi* and his *Beis Din* who had received *semichah* and were empowered to declare the new month, took the initiative to sanctify all future months based on the calculations of *sod ha-ibbur*. It is this system that we follow today.

Accordingly, since there no longer existed an uncertainty as to the actual date of *Yom Tov*, it should have followed that Jewish communities would have universally observed only one day. However, the Talmud explains that in accordance with the principle of "Preserve the traditions of our fathers," the communities in *chutz la-Aretz* which had observed two days continued to do so. In addition, even those communities in *chutz la-Aretz* that were reached by the messengers of the *Beis Din* were required to observe two days in order to ensure uniformity with the majority of communities which observed two days. Throughout all of Eretz Yisrael, only one day of *Yom Tov* is observed, since the majority of communities were notified by the messengers in ancient times. Thus, those residing outside of Eretz Yisrael keep two days, whereas those living in Eretz Yisrael keep only one. (Rosh Hashanah is observed for two days everywhere, however, by Rabbinic decree, even though the Torah prescribes its observance for only one day.) Virtually all of present-day Eretz Yisrael is Halachically defined as Eretz Yisrael; the only possible exception may be Eilat. One who will be spending *Yom Tov* there should seek the guidance of a competent Halachic authority.

### The Traveler to Eretz Yisrael

Arising out of this halachic dichotomy is the very prevalent question, "What is the obligation of a traveler from outside of Eretz Yisrael spending *Yom Tov* in Eretz Yisrael?" Is he obligated to observe two days of *Yom Tov*, based on his regular place of residence, or does the fact that he is physically celebrating the *Yom Tov* in Eretz Yisrael allow him to keep only one day?

The bulk of responsa revolves around three major opinions:

- The **Beis Yosef** states that a person residing outside of Eretz Yisrael is obligated to preserve the traditions of *chutz la-Aretz* while visiting Eretz Yisrael and must therefore observe two days of *Yom Tov*.

- The **Chacham Tzvi** differs and asserts that the visitor to Eretz Yisrael should keep only one day while he is there. Other authorities add, in support of this position, that this is consistent with the spirit of preserving the traditions of our fathers insofar as in ancient times visitors from *chutz la-Aretz* spending *Yom Tov* in Eretz Yisrael would surely have had to keep only one day. Thus, following their tradition, we too should observe one day.

- **Ha-Rav Shemuel Salant** personally tended to concur with the Chacham Tzvi's opinion. Nevertheless, he hesitated to fully implement it since his teachers opposed it. He therefore suggested the following Halachic compromise which combines the stringencies of both opinions regarding the second day of *Yom Tov* for a visitor to Eretz Yisrael.

One should: refrain from *melachah* (work activity) normally prohibited on *Yom Tov*; refrain from eating *chametz* until after the eighth day of *Pesach*; don tefillin; pray the weekday *tefillos*; recite the verses in *Musaf* prayers describing the sacrifices according to the version in Eretz Yisrael; hear *Havdalah* from a resident of Eretz Yisrael on the night following the first day of *Yom Tov* and not recite *Kiddush* on the second day; not sit in the *sukkah* on *Shemini Atzeres*; perform the mitzvos on the night of the second Seder without a blessing, omit the second and third blessings over the four cups, and recite the Haggadah, leaving out its concluding blessings; set aside an *eruv tavshilin* without a blessing when the second day falls on *erev Shabbos*.

Although the general custom is to observe fully two days of *Yom Tov* when visiting Eretz Yisrael, there are many variables which affect the halachic status of visitors to Eretz Yisrael. Additionally, there are different approaches among the *poskim*. Ashkenazic authorities generally tend toward the opinion of the *Beis Yosef*, while many Sephardic authorities in numerous situations are inclined toward the decision of the *Chacham Tzvi*. Furthermore, there are times when a rabbi may opt to follow the third opinion of keeping the stringencies of both places due to the specific circumstances. It is therefore imperative to inquire of competent halachic counsel when in doubt. Because of the variance of opinions and complexities involved, it is impossible to present precise rules for specific practice. The following guidelines are rather presented with the intention of making the reader more aware of the factors that the *posek* will take into consideration when giving his decision.

[to be continued]

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**Eretz Ha-Tzvi** - A Halachic Guide to the Mitzvos That Are Dependent on Eretz Yisrael - For the Traveler, Newcomer, and Resident, by Rabbi Tzvi Teichman, Feldheim 2007

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positives. That's because life here is just "different."

Many communities in Eretz Yisroel are more polarized, and the penalties for non-conformity are higher. Adults who hate labels and stereotypes and see themselves as a unique mix of the best of multiple worlds will have a hard time in those communities. Take a city like Beitar for example where I live—even if they befriend like-minded people, no *chinuch* system here supports that attitude. Children need clarity, harmony between home and school, and a peer group to which they feel they belong. From my observation, the children of adults who try to raise their kids in the almost non-existent middle ground (i.e. between Chareidi and Modern Orthodox), usually wind up going up or down spiritually—and unfortunately, down is much easier than up. When I was in seminary, somebody advised me that if I wanted to live here, I should pick the group that I wanted to be part of and conform to their standards. It was good advice, and I took it.

It's harder to acquire *gashmiyus* but easier to acquire *ruchniyus*. It's harder to make money, but easier to get the things that money can't buy.



People here live in more crowded conditions and smaller apartments. This fosters more interaction with neighbors. As a general rule, Americans value self-sufficiency, while Israelis value *chessed*. Borrowing, lending, and helping neighbors is a way of life, including passing along things that you don't need, from leftovers to clothing and from furniture to appliances. My older children spend a lot of time outside, riding bikes, building forts, and otherwise keeping themselves busy with their friends. They are certainly not plugged into screens. This lifestyle also fosters independence. Children in Eretz Yisroel are more independent than their American counterparts. Our six and seven-year-old boys are able to travel to their local schools by themselves on public buses.

It's a simpler and more wholesome life. I feel like I'm raising my kids in a previous generation. Also, I'm raising my kids in a Chareidi bubble. While at some point our children will encounter the bigger world, the values and norms of that world will be abnormal to them.

A word about finances: Tuition, childcare, and healthcare are substantially cheaper here. Just to shock you, cheider is around 300 *shekalim* (about

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\$85) per month, while if you send your girls to the “public” Beis Yaakov schools (as opposed to private schools), there is no tuition. Over three months of paid maternity leave is no joke either. If you live in a place like Beitar, you can easily live without a car. The standard of living is also lower. Then again, income is also substantially lower. (This is especially true if the husband is learning, which is more common here than it is in *chutz la’Aretz*).

I don’t know how to describe it, but there is just more spirituality in the air. *Emuna*, *bitachon*, and *yiras shomayim* come a lot easier here. I think that this is a function of Eretz Yisroel itself, plus of the nature of the Chareidi community here.

This focus on *ruchniyus* leads to some major differences in the boys’ *chinuch* system. The American system tries to produce well-rounded students who know some *kodesh* and some *chol* and are somewhat prepared to both learn and work. In contrast, the Israeli Chareidi system in many communities is designed to produce *talmidei chachamim*. It’s a higher-risk, higher return investment. A kid who makes it will go so much further than he

would in America (at least in the Torah-studies department), but there are more kids who don’t make it, and would need extra parental input to make them happy with being well-rounded, shiur-going, working men. It is definitely true that “success” is far more narrowly defined for boys here, especially during their school years. As for adults, roughly half of the men in Beitar work. It is also true that at least in the Litvish world, learning is considered the most prestigious.

I speak as the mother of two boys with ADD/ADHD who works very hard to help them succeed within the system. One started Ritalin and is now one of the top boys in his class and loving the experience. The other is in a *kita mekademet*, a special education environment within a regular school, with smaller class sizes, more individual attention, built-in therapies, etc. I am very glad that this classroom exists within a regular cheider, with no extra costs involved. When I lived in L.A., no such option existed. There are definitely many ways to help children who are struggling, although some of these struggles would

be alleviated by a more flexible system.

It is a package deal; but I chose this package, and I’ve never regretted it.

### **Finally! An American-Style Kehillah Coming to Beitar B!**

*In America, your shul is also your social kehillah and support system, but in Eretz Yisroel’s Chareidi Litvish community, this is not so common. First of all, the Israelis usually have a lot more family support. Secondly (perhaps consequently), Israelis tend to have a shtieble mentality, where they daven each tefilla wherever it happens to be most convenient, as opposed to seeing themselves as belonging to a particular shul.*

*American immigrants, usually without nearby family, sorely lack this support. Thus, so far, Beitar addresses this need with the mere presence of other chutznikim. The Beitar N’shei has a few melave malkas each year, organizes meals in case of need (after birth, etc.), and operates a very popular email list. In Beitar A, there are two English-speaking kehillas, Rabbi Friedman’s Yeshivas Birkas Mordechai and Rabbi Stern’s shul, Ohel Torah. As for Beitar B, my husband’s friend, Rabbi Zevy Stark, is building an American-style shul/kehillah.*

## **Eternal Covenant: History Tidbits**

- **5674 (1913)** – A group of several *rabbonim*—including Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld—made a month-long tour of all of the settlements in the Upper and Lower Galilee, to promote and encourage Torah observance by the mostly unobservant settlers of those communities.
- **5694 (1934)** – The Zichron Meir neighborhood of Bnei Brak was established. It was named for Rav Meir Shapira of Lublin (the originator of the Daf HaYomi program). In 1947, his yeshiva, Yeshivas Chachmei Lublin, was reestablished here by his *talmid*, Rav Shmuel HaLevi Wosner, who was also appointed as *rav* of the neighborhood at the suggestion of the Chazon Ish.

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All issues, a list of organizations and other resources for *frum* English speakers living in (or interested in coming to live in) Eretz Yisroel, at **AviraDEretzYisroel.org**

In memory of Shlomo ben Yaakov Naftali ob”m

In memory of Sarah bat Yitzchak ob”m

In memory of Kitty Elizabeth bat Sarah ob”m

Wishing *hatzlacha* to Ari B.

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