



Fulfilling The Promise

By Rosally Saltsman

Living in the Land – Firsthand accounts from Bnei Torah and their families

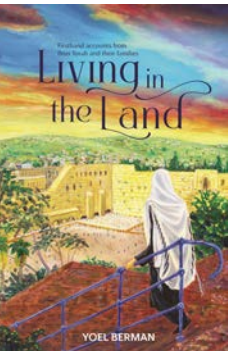
Yoel Berman

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Yoel Berman's love for Eretz Yisrael is palpable. And he wants to share that love with everyone and encourage them to come here.

In *Living in the Land*, Fifty *frum olim* describe the joys, challenges, and opportunities of making the move to Eretz Yisrael, as well as the resources and strategies that made for their success.



Living in the Land of Israel is the ultimate mitzvah, the reason the Torah was given. Every four cubits you walk in the land of Israel is a mitzvah. Over the millennia, it has been the dream of many. In this millennium, it is the possibility for all; for every Jew to come Home. This book offers, inspiration, practical advice and role models for people facing the decision and making the leap.

Yoel Berman was born and raised in the yeshiva community in Los Angeles, California, and has been living in Eretz Yisrael since coming as a *bachur* to learn in the Mirrer Yeshiva of Yerushalayim. He is involved in various initiatives to educate his fellow Chareidim about the centrality of Eretz Yisrael for a Torah Jew, as well as about the growing opportunities for those from English-speaking countries, who wish to settle the Land. He is also the driving force behind a network of Chareidi activists for Eretz Yisrael.

Living in the Land not only clarifies the mitzvah of living in the Land of Israel, it gives you a guide, both practical and spiritual, of how to do so, from people who have made the move.

It has many *haskamot* from noted Torah leaders, who understand the importance of the mitzvah of *aliyah* – today more than ever.

Rav Zev Leff writes: "...this is a mitzvah that is 'equal to all the rest,' it is fulfilled every moment with every part of one's body, and it carries with it a host of other *mitzvos* that one can fulfill only by residing in Eretz Yisrael. Clearly, there is something more encompassing at issue than any single mitzvah."

This book is meant to encourage *aliyah* (an oft

neglected mitzvah by the Diaspora *frum* community) by sharing stories of people who have been there and done that. It addresses the unique concerns and needs of the *frum* community. Addressing both the spiritual wealth of living in Israel and the journey one must take to assess it (figuratively and literally).

Yediyah B. writes, "There is great opportunity here, and it's you, your children, and your family who are missing out by not being here. It's your choice to jump on the train and be a part of history in the making, or just to watch it as an outsider."

The stories all stress the positive effects both emotionally and spiritually of living at Home in Israel. It's after all a *zechut* to be here and although the stories are written from the point of view of a particular segment of Israeli society (Chareidi and mostly male), the lessons are universal for every Jew contemplating *aliyah*.

The book underscores how it's easier than ever to make *aliyah*. Israel is very accommodating to Anglos with whole neighborhoods in various cities being English speaking and with English speaking services to assist them.

It's important to note that this book is very focused on one demographic – Anglo (predominantly American) Chareidim. It tells Chareidim who move to Israel, particularly to Chareidi enclaves within Israel, what to expect when they get here.

But if you do read this book, and you are not Chareidi, I recommend that you take some of its

"dire warnings" with a grain of salt. Israel has a tremendously broad range of religious diversity not seen anywhere else in the Jewish world – Dati Leumi, Dati Leumi Torani, and Chardali among others. While this book might have insights for you, it can also be misleading about what to expect of religious life in Israel, which is different for each community – both spiritually and physically.

An impression I had from reading the book, both from those contemplating *aliyah* and those who spoke to people who weren't, was that many Americans consider moving to Israel akin to moving to Mars. It might be a nice place to visit but...

Aside from the fact that it should be every Jew's greatest dream to move to Israel, reality check: half the world's Jews already live here, including a couple of hundred thousand Americans – so yup, it is doable and not that great a stretch of the imagination. You will not be a pioneer!

But, admittedly doing your research is important, and I recommend this book as part of your information-gathering.

"To make *aliyah* is to take ownership of our destiny as a people, to take part in the revitalization of our language, culture, and spiritual heritage. It is to make a tangible contribution to the future of our people, and to ensure that our Jewish identity and traditions remain strong for generations to come. Together, let us make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael and ensure that the dream of our forefathers is fulfilled."

Living in the Land is sure to open your eyes, broaden your horizons, and bring you to a renewed appreciation of living in the Land.

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For further info... IsraelTorah.org or ItsTimeToLeave.com

Rosally Saltsman, originally from Montreal is a freelance writer living in Israel. Her new book "100 Life Lessons I've Learned So You Don't Have To" is available for purchase on Amazon.com as well as her other books.

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- Rabbi Eytan Feiner, Cong. Kneseth Israel / The White Shul, Far Rockaway, NY

