

# The Goodman's Blog

## Chapter 100

### May 2021

# **ALIYAH IN OUR 60's**

## **FROM ARLINGTON HTS, IL**

## **TO CAESAREA, ISRAEL**

### **(Part 100)**

SUZANNE & HOWIE GOODMAN



*Howie and Suzanne Goodman were valued members at Beth Judea until they decided to make aliyah in 2009. The Goodmans have agreed to provide us with a blog on their experiences as new olim in Israel. Though we continue to miss the Goodmans, we can all look forward to reading about their adventures in Israel through their blog.*

#### **Aliyah in Our 60's – May 2021 - Part 100**

The number of serious cases and new cases of corona in Israel is dropping to 2020 levels and there is steady improvement in recovery from the virus. The restrictions are being lowered and life is starting to return to normal. Approximately two-thirds of the population has been vaccinated, and the ministry is getting ready to vaccinate 900,000 children age 12-15 as soon as the US Food and Drug Administration grants authorization. There is enough vaccine to inoculate the one million adults who still need to be vaccinated, however there aren't enough vaccines to inoculate the children as well.

Every Yom HaShoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, we have a special program at Bet Israel Synagogue in Netanya. Ceremonies are held in most communities. Our rabbi emeritus, Rabbi Irving Birnbaum, 92, writes a ceremony every year which describes the atrocities that were performed during the Holocaust. Our rabbi's grandparents perished in Sobibor and he also lost uncles, aunts and cousins in the Holocaust.. However, Rabbi Birnbaum, his parents, and his brother were able to survive. He and his wife, whom he met in the States, immigrated to Israel in the 70's. They have 3 sons. 10 grandchildren, and 1 great grandchild who are Israelis. They have made several family trips to visit Austria and the death camps with their father and grandfather. Rabbi Birnbaum was also one of the young passengers of the ship *Exodus*. He has shared this experience with us.

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Suzanne attended the Yom Hashoah service, and it was the first time she has been in the synagogue since the start of the pandemic. For medical reasons, Howie postponed the exposure. There were over a hundred in attendance wearing masks and the seats were divided. It is customary to leave this service in silence and not socialize. However, after not seeing many fellow congregants for a year, this rule was broken. We are now allowed to have 100 for indoor meetings.

Yom HaShoah is marked in Israel by the sounding of sirens at 8:00 PM on the eve and 10:00 in the morning of the Day of Remembrance. Everyone stands for two minutes while the siren sounds. Traffic stops everywhere as passengers stand next to their vehicles. It is very haunting and solemn as we stand together and remember. We do a book club on Zoom and we planned our meeting to start right before the siren.

Israel is home for 5.1 million Jews, and 140,000 of them are Holocaust survivors. Thirty one thousand are over 90 years old, and the average age is over eighty. Nine hundred Holocaust survivors died from the corona virus. It is very sad that some had to die without loved ones by their sides because of corona restrictions. On average, 14,200 Holocaust survivors in Israel die every year or 40 per day. Some 45,000 have an income of less than 3,000 shekels or approximately \$1000. per month, putting them below the poverty level.

As we stated last month, the election in Israel has been completed and the results have not recognized a clear coalition as of this date.

Here are the results:

Likud.	30 seats
Yesh Atid	17 seats
Shas.	9 seats
Blue and White	8 seats
Yamina.	7 seats
United Torah Judaism	7 seats
Israel Betenu.	7 seats
Labor	7 seats
Religious Zionists	6 seats
New Hope	6 seats
Meretz	6 seats
Joint List.	6 seats
Ra'am	4 seats
Total	120 seats

This is the fourth election in 2 years. A fifth election is not an impossibility and maybe the more possible conclusion. Some of the more reasonable conclusions would require the breaking of election promises. However, like politics anywhere, that would not be the first time.

## **ALIYAH IN OUR 60's** (continued from previous page)

New Hope has vowed not to sit with a Likud run government. Yamina also pledged not to form a government with Yesh Atid.

A former member of Lieberman's Israel Betenu party, Robert Illatov, is considering forming a party of former Soviet Union immigrants. He argues that there has to be a different makeup of the Knesset because any coalitions that would result after this last election would not last long. Some parties' only goal is to send Netanyahu to the opposition.

Many feel each election has made it more difficult to form a government. However, some feel that the smaller political parties that made the 3.25% threshold this time might not make it if there is a fifth election. This would be due to the fact that this time there was a moment of pity and anger that caused many to vote for the smaller parties. Eleven parties have less than ten seats. Also, now can you think of a prime minister from a party with seven seats? This is what Lapid is discussing with Bennet.

President Rivlin in early April has given Prime Minister Netanyahu the task of forming a new government. He has twenty eight days to form a new government, although he can request a two week extension after that. If he fails, the task will be given to someone else. He commented that he doubted anyone could form a coalition to have at least 61 seats.

Gil Hoffman, a political writer for The Jerusalem Post, had some interesting thoughts. He referred to an article by Thomas Friedman in the New York Times comparing the political crisis facing Israel and the United States.

He feels both countries are equally polarized, and it threatens both to thrive in the century ahead. Friedman feels there has been lost in both countries a "shared national narrative that brings the countries together." Families have been torn apart and politics have been made a political taboo in public discourse according to Friedman.

In Israel a recent poll found that more than 80% of Israelis believe a fifth election is on the way.

Also, when looking at the parties winning seats, there is a "right wing" slant. The reason they cannot form a government is that many of them ran with the pledge not to form a government with Netanyahu as its head.

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Here are six scenarios for solving the deadlock by Hoffman:

- 1) Netanyahu/Bennet/Smotrich, Sa'ar/Haredim government -This would be a 65-MK coalition. It would require Sa'ar's New Hope Party to give up the boycott of Netanyahu.
- 2) Netanyahu/Bennet/Smotrich/Haredim/Ra'am government- There would be 59 MKS in this minority coalition backed from the outside by Abbas (different Abbas than President Abbas of Palestine) Ra'am's four seats. Smotrich Religious Zionists have stated they won't form any government with Ra'am involved since they oppose the settlements.
- 3) Barkat/Bennet/Gantz/Heredim/Sa'ar/Smotrich government-in this scenario, before May 3, that the election by the Knesset to replace Rivlin since his time as president is ending could happen and it is believed the new Knesset would vote for Netanyahu to be the new president. MK Barkat could win a snap primary in the Likud Party and would receive the next mandate from Rivlin. That could end up with a 73 MK coalition including New Hope and Blue and White.
- 4) Supreme Court Intervention- the Supreme Court ruled last May that Netanyahu could form a government despite his criminal indictment. If they changed their decision, which seems doubtful, then the number three scenario is possible with Barkat.
- 5) Bennet/Lapid/Gantz/Labor/Meretz/Ra'am government-This would have 62 MKs. This, Hoffman believes, would disprove Friedman's belief Israel is polarized as there would be eight parties. It would have to be a government of healing.
- 6) Parliamentary Intervention- if Lapid or Bennet would receive the mandate from Rivlin, they could pass a law in the Knesset that would restrict a prime minister under indictment to form a government. This would release Shas and United Torah from obligations to Netanyahu and allow them to join the coalition. This would provide a diverse, pluralistic government that would also defy Thomas Friedman's doomsday prediction.

The fact that Netanyahu is under indictment and has had his trial begin seems to be left in the background. What are the charges? Netanyahu has been charged with fraud, breach of trust, and accepting bribes in three corruption cases. One charge is that he promoted regulations for Bezeq telecom company worth millions of dollars for positive coverage on its popular Walla news site.

The man known as the "last Jew in Afghanistan" says that after decades of watching over the country's only remaining synagogue, he has had enough and will move to Israel later this year, the Jewish Telegraph Agency (JTA) reported. Abulon Simantov, 61, joins 10,000 Afghan Jews and their descendants in Israel. Most fled Afghanistan over the years of civil war. This is an example of the fact that Israel continues to be a sanctuary for Jews fleeing persecution in this world. The number of olim, people making aliyah, is continuing to increase. Nefesh B'Nefesh has continued their groups making aliyah throughout the pandemic.

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Ben Gurion Airport is reopening with a requirement of a negative corona test within 72 hours of flight. This is required even for those who have been vaccinated. Our son-in-law just flew to the Dominick Island. He and fellow researchers needed to be isolated for 5 days after arrival. He is a Doctor of Marine Science and will be there for a month working on whale research. The project has been in planning stages for over a year since they received the majority of funding. The project is being done with MIT and Harvard. They have created drones that follow whales, and they are studying whale speech. Our daughter is planning speaking engagements in the States, so her travel will also return. It has been a strange and comforting period for their two children to have their parents home together for almost a year.

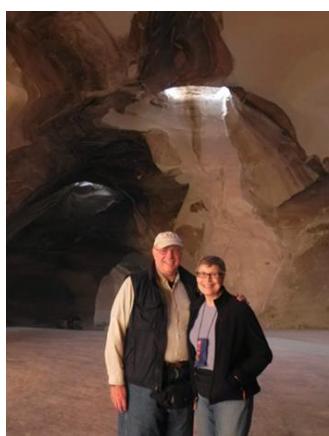
Farmers have found ways to cope with the limitations of the pandemic. Groups of co-op sharing have developed to distribute produce. Our daughter currently participates in a produce sharing group, and we have an abundance of fresh oranges and strawberries. We have developed a taste for fresh grapefruit, and the strawberries in April are like eating candy.

The water level in Lake Kinneret is the highest it has been since 2004. The current level is 209.10 meters below sea level, which is just 99.5 centimeters from its maximum level. If the lake wells up further, the Israeli administration may open up the sluice gates of the Degania Dam, which is on the Jordan, just south of the lake. The last time such an action was taken was in 1992.

Our synagogue Women's Circle has formed a relationship with a sisterhood Emanu-El in Palm Beach, Florida. They organized a pre-Yom Ha'atzmaut celebration on Zoom. Our group did an Israeli dance and our Rabbi Birnbaum's daughter-in-law, Bat-Ella performed Israeli songs.

The holidays celebrated in April keenly remind us of what a miracle it is that Israel exists. We can never take it for granted and must always fight to protect our homeland. The tour buses are slowly returning to Caesarea, and we look forward to welcoming visitors again.

### Suzanne and Howie



*-The opinions expressed are those of the authors and may not represent those Congregation Beth Judea- ed.*

*We hope you enjoy this installment from the Goodmans, who have graciously agreed to blog for our congregation their experiences as Olim in Israel. If there are specific topics that you are interested in hearing about or if you just want to stay in touch with Howie and Suzanne, you can reach them at: [HOWIEG@aol.com](mailto:HOWIEG@aol.com)*