

# The Goodman's Blog

## Chapter 93

October 2020

# ALIYAH IN OUR 60's FROM ARLINGTON HTS, IL TO CAESEREA, ISRAEL (Part 93)

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*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 – October 2020 - Part 93

In a blatant capitulation to the BDS movement, The UN Human Rights Council has published a list of 112 Israeli businesses linked to Jewish West Bank neighborhoods in an effort to stigmatize those businesses and encourage their boycott. This highly politicized decision will not hurt Israel, as it was intended to do, but will instead undermine the livelihood of the many Palestinians who — due to the lack of sufficient employment opportunities in Palestinian-governed areas — earn their living by working for those very Israeli businesses.

The UN has thus inflicted yet another economic blow in a series of such blows suffered by the Palestinian people. The Palestinian Authority (PA) declined an invitation to participate in the US-led economic conference in Bahrain in June 2019 and rejected the economic incentives offered in President Trump's "Deal of a Century" without even hearing them. The UN only adds to the Palestinians' suffering by causing harm to one of their sources of income.

The PA's wholesale violation of the Oslo Accords of the 1990s only worsened the economic position of the Palestinians living in today's areas A and B. Many of them still reminisce about the more prosperous days when Israelis would come to their villages as well to Gaza to buy Palestinian products. All that changed with the stroke of a pen when the Accords birthed the PA and granted it authority over economic and social policy in areas A and B.

The establishment of Palestinian economic autonomy was intended to improve the prospects for prosperity and significantly improve the Palestinians' quality of life. Despite good intentions, exactly the opposite came to pass. The PA's incompetent and corrupt governance led to the deterioration of the Palestinian quality of life and increased poverty while allowing cronies to steal public resources and exchange political favors for personal benefit. It's no wonder that many Palestinians long for the days before Oslo.

The Israeli economy is the driving force behind Palestinian economic growth. The average salary of Palestinians working in Israel is several times the wages of Palestinians working in areas controlled by the PA, and the industrial area in the West Bank serves as a source of income for thousands of Palestinians. Palestinians work side by side with Israelis in Mishor Adumim, Shahak, Hinanit, Shaked, Ariel, Kiryat Arba, and elsewhere. Regrettably, all of this is likely to change if the UN decision has its intended impact on the Israeli companies being boycotted.

About 200,000 Palestinians earned their living last year by working in Israel and Israeli companies in the West Bank. Most are employed by the companies the UN seeks to boycott. These Palestinians look beyond ideology: they simply want to earn a decent living to support their families.

There is little doubt that if Trump's peace plan were brought before the Palestinians for a popular vote, the vast majority would be in favor. This is because the average Palestinian simply wants to live with dignity and make a decent living. Many of the Palestinian "refugees" in the neighboring Arab states don't have a passport, let alone money. The Palestinian leadership, on the other hand, enjoys the benefits of both national and diplomatic passports.

The Palestinians who oppose the US-led proposal are senior PA officials who would like to maintain their access to the internationally donated wealth intended for their people. The UN is doing its best to assist them.

Our prediction that there wouldn't be another election came very close to being incorrect. The Knesset passed a bill extending the cut off for a new budget to November. That may not avoid an election after that due date. The Knesset also voted not to prevent an elected official indicted to remain a prime minister. So, we will not have an election at the same time as the US election, and Netanyahu can remain Prime Minister until perhaps next September, depending on his trial.

An Israeli television 13 Poll dated September 7 that included evenly distributed Israeli Arabs and Israeli Jews stated that Netanyahu of Likud would be the best prime minister with 32% of the polled group and Bennett (Yamina Party) with 18% and 27% did not know who they preferred. If there were an election now, Likud would receive 32 seats, Yamina 21 seats, and Yesh Atid 18. Joint Distribution (primarily the Arab Parties) would obtain 13 seats, followed by Blue and White (Gantz's Party) with 11, Shas and UTJ with 7 seats, and Yisrael Beytenu (Lieberman's party) and Meretz with 6 seats each. The right-wing would hold 66 seats with Yamina and the left-wing bloc would hold 48 seats with Joint List and Yisrael Beytenu.

Sixty-five percent of those same polled people objected to Netanyahu's handling of the pandemic. Sixty-eight percent felt he caved in to Ultra-Orthodox demands regarding not closing their cities but establishing a curfew.

The Israeli people seem, in polls, to be more pessimistic about the democracy of Israel. Over 68% polled think the current government's days are numbered and a new election could occur sooner than later. Only 14% believe both sides made an equal amount of concessions to retain the current government. Right-wing Israelis think Netanyahu made more concessions while the left-wing believe Gantz made the most concessions.

About a tenth of those interviewed stated they participated in one or more of the protests. It also displayed a similar rate amongst Jews and Arabs. However, the disparity appears when political affiliation is asked. Thirty percent are from the left while 11% are from the right. Pictures in the Jerusalem Post show protesters against the handling of the Coronavirus crisis in very close proximity to each other with many maskless. The age groups of protesters are predominately the younger and the older people.

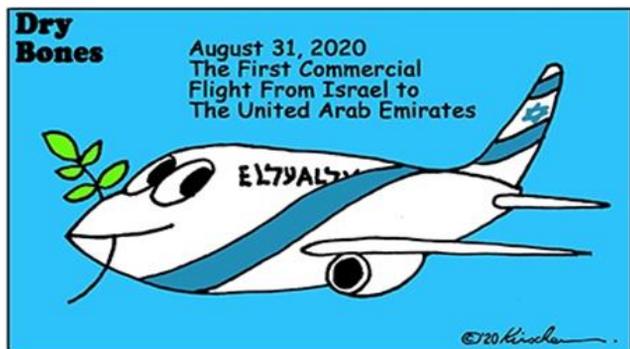
## ALIYAH IN OUR 60's (continued from previous page)

What one would believe to be the most incredible news besides the Pandemic has taken somewhat of a backseat. Of course, that is the Israel-UAE deal. The signing of the Abraham Accord will take place in Washington DC on September 15th. Prime Minister Netanyahu has been invited by President Trump to participate in the historic ceremony at the White House. Someone sent us a "WhatsApp" of Netanyahu talking with Khalifa, UAE representative, on their cell phones. Their conversation was in Hebrew and Khalifa did very well. When asked how he spoke Hebrew so well, he said he studied on Zoom! This Israel-UAE deal is so major in bringing out a normalization of relationships with Arab countries. Fox News just reported that US President Donald Trump was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in reaching the agreement.

In early September, a delegation that included special advisors Jared Kushner and Avi Berkowitz of the United States arrived in the first ever flight by an Israeli airline from Israel to the UAE, bearing an Israeli flag. It was also the first ever Israeli flight over Saudi Arabia. The nose of the plane had Shalom (peace) written in Hebrew and Arabic as well as English. The flight number of the airline was the area code of the UAE.



*El Al plane getting ready to depart Ben Gurion. Photo taken from TV feed*



How has President Abbas reacted to this? At first, it was stated that any Arab country normalizing



*First Israel model photo shoot in UAE with Israeli and UAE models.*

relationships with Israel would no longer be welcomed by the Palestinians. The reason this is so important is that it may show the creation of the Palestinian state may not be the requirement to have a stabilization of relationships between Israel and other Arab countries.

As of September 9th, when an Arab League meeting was held in Cairo, the Palestinians were supposed to be watering down a resolution. It does not include a call to condemn or act against the Emirates. This has been reported by Reuters. President Abbas has also instructed his participants not to make offensive statements or actions against other Arab countries, including UAE rulers. The Arab League met and did not condemn the UAE for normalizing relations with Israel. The UAE has directed its hotels in Abu Dhabi to have Kosher meals for Israeli tourists. Israel also has been told Saudi Arabia will allow Israel to fly over Saudi controlled airspace. This and Bahrain are very important to Israel as it indicates agreements can be made with Arab states without an agreement with the Palestinians first. It also appears that part of the UAE/Israel agreement there will be no annexation of West Bank area by Israel before 2024. Due to the announced lockdown of Israel Friday at 14:00 hours for three weeks because of Covid 19, Israelis aren't that excited about the agreements that will be signed in Washington today.

Since the August 13th announcement of this initiative, it has been noted that this is the first such accommodation since the 1994 peace agreement with Jordan. Also, since the agreement between Israel and the UAE it appears other Arab states may create diplomatic arrangements with Israel. [Since this submission, Bahrain has also normalized relations with Israel- ed]

News changes quickly here. On September 9th, Serbia announced it won't move its embassy to Jerusalem if Israel recognizes Kosovo. Chad is considering moving their embassy to Jerusalem. The BDS movement appears to perhaps have a diminished future.

Thousands of couples have not been able to be married due to restrictions on travel during the Coronavirus. In Israel, one can only be married by an approved Orthodox Rabbi. Secular or non-Orthodox Israeli Jews go to other countries for civil marriages that are valid when they return to Israel. They usually travel to Cyprus or some other friendly countries close to Israel. There is a loud secular group of Israelis who want the law changed. One law would allow individuals to be married at foreign embassies within Israel. The other is to expand a 2010 law that allowed individuals with no religious affiliation to marry one another in a civil ceremony. Keeping records of marriages is necessary because of the need for a Jewish divorce if you claim Judaism as your religion.

In an editorial, the Jerusalem Post is asking for the 2010 Civil Law to be expanded and to include marriages of the same gender.

Immigration continues to happen even in Corona times. Israel's Minister of Aliyah and Absorption Knesset member Penina Tamanu-Shata announced this month that, in cooperation with the Interior Ministry, she is moving ahead with plans for the aliyah of 722 members of the B'nei Menashe community of northeastern India. The first group is anticipated to arrive in Israel after the Jewish High Holidays. The B'nei Menashe have continued to practice Judaism just as their ancestors did, including observing the Sabbath, keeping kosher, celebrating the festivals, and following the laws of family purity.

Israel slipped from being a super star country in the Coronavirus fight to being one of the worst countries based on per capita infection. The number of deaths from the virus went to over a thousand, and infections have gone from 100 a day to over 3500. The total cases have been 139,000 and 108,000 have recovered. There are 40 "hot spots" of higher infection which are being forced to have curfews and restrictions. The IDF is being called on for help in regulation. Plans for controlling the virus and rebuilding the economy are causing conflict in an already split government. Rates of infection have been higher in the Arab areas and the orthodox population. Reasons for this may be large social gatherings and smaller living arrangements. Generally, people seem to be respecting the mask and distancing requirements.

Israel appointed a COVID-19 Czar but has not allowed him to make independent decisions. The Israeli government noted that fines are not being paid by the individuals ticketed for Corona violations. It was noted that normally about 75% of ticketed offenders for non-COVID-19 violations pay the fines within the 90-day allowed period of time. After that period of time, the fine doubles.

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

Between 25 of March and the end of July, the Israeli government issued 137,300 fines totaling the equivalent of 16.9 million dollars. The fines included not wearing of masks, being greater distances from their residences than allowed, having weddings or other gatherings larger than the allowed number of individuals, and businesses that remained open that should have been closed,

Our synagogue has decided to do a Zoom High Holiday presentation instead of trying to meet worship guidelines. Most of our synagogue's social interaction have been through Zoom. We have had Kabbalat Zoom services and will have had a Zoom Selichot Service September 12th motzei Shabbat. There is talk that the government may lock Israel down for a month before the High Holidays.

Breslow organizers are trying to put together a plan for allowing thousands of Israelis access to Uman, Ukraine for their annual trip to the tomb of Breslov founder Rabbi Nachman of Breslov. While Israelis were debating allowing this annual pilgrimage, the Ukrainian government closed its borders to foreign travelers. This may be changing with requiring a negative Covid-19 test within 72 hours of flights. Breslov Hassidim will be given preference in the allocation of flights and space in Uman ahead of the large number of people not directly associated with the Breslov community. Specific areas close to the site will be designated for each Breslov community from around Israel participating in the pilgrimage and will all be separated from each other. This annual event is attended by some secular groups.

One of the principal Hassidic leaders that has been lobbying for the adoption of the plan has been Rabbi Shalom Arush. As many orthodox leaders, he has made remarks regarding the danger of the COVID-19 pandemic, making unsubstantiated comments such as that the disease does not affect Jews. "Smile speak with God in your own language, and you have nothing to worry about," said the rabbi in a video made available on his social media channels.



*Erez (11) and Alon (7) one year ago*

This is first day of school picture of our grandkids here. We noticed the size differences and, of course, the mask.



*Alon(8), and Erez(12) September 2020*

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

Some members of Beth Judea, Kitty and Bruce Hoffman and Sherry and Dan Weinberger were with us for a Zoom trip tour to the Itzik Rabin Museum on September 7. The time was 5 PM in Israel and 9 AM CDT. Our brother, Steve, in San Francisco watched the tour at 7 AM. He wants very much to visit Israel and enjoyed this very well-presented tour of the museum. We plan to have more Zoom tours of sights in Israel that you might want to visit virtually. It isn't a perfect scenario of visiting Israel, but until things improve - maybe you would like to join us. Send us an e mail if interested. There is a small donation required which goes to Congregation Bet Israel in Netanya.

### *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 of if you just want to stay in touch with Howie and Suzanne, you can reach them at: [HOWIEG@aol.com](mailto:HOWIEG@aol.com)*