

**The Yizraelite – No 2247    Date: 6.3.26**

**Kibbutz Yizrael - Cyber Edition**



**We are sad to announce the passing of**

**Rosalind Kotler, of blessed memory**

**Rosalind was laid to rest in the cemetery on Yizrael – Thurs. 26.2.26**

**Our condolences go out to the family in the U.S.**

**Beit Yizrael**



## Kibbutz Eulogy – Inbal Adler



Today we part from Rosalind Kotler, an independent and quiet woman, self-reliant and gentle in spirit, a good friend to many.

Rosalind came to Yizrael after volunteering with the **Sar-El** project. Here she met Rabbi Kotler and they were married. Since 1995 Rosalind lived among us as a widow, guarding her privacy and her independence, yet always present on the paths and pavements of our shared life.

Rosalind grew up in an American suburb, enjoying a good childhood alongside her older sister, Laura. Despite the physical distance and the many years since they last met in person, the bond between them remained alive and strong. Each evening Rosalind would sit at her computer and speak with her sister, maintaining a close and loving connection.

Her great love for the wide world probably began during her early years working in a travel agency. In the early 1960s she first arrived in Israel as a traveller, and from then on, she never stopped wandering. She was truly a citizen of the world, crossing Europe and reaching India, Japan and Thailand. Those journeys, which ended when she married and settled in Israel, were an inseparable part of who she was, a woman with wide horizons and an undimmed curiosity.

At the heart of Rosalind's character was an endless love for animals. She raised her dog with devotion as if it were her daughter. Many of us remember the two of them walking together each day, pausing for a brief conversation about dogs before continuing on their way. When her dog died about a year ago, she made a courageous decision of acceptance with age, not to raise another dog. Yet her heart remained wide and compassionate. Each evening, she cared for three cats that came to her veranda, and regularly donated to organisations for the protection of animals.

In the Parents' Housing, her warm and sociable side blossomed. Her close friendship with Yaffa was a central pillar of their lives: shared walks, birthday celebrations, and quiet evenings in front of the television. Rosalind, in her gentle way, never wished to trouble anyone. She preferred the fresh air on Yaffa's balcony, enjoying pasta and the vegan meals that Zenda lovingly prepared for her.

Rosalind was fortunate not only in friendships with women of her own age, but also in forming close ties with two young families, the Keret family and the Sassi family, who

built with her a bond of affection, support and genuine care. She was for them, and they for her, a source of human warmth.

In recent years, when conversations turned to “preparing for old age”, Rosalind expressed her wish to remain independent and not to become a burden. And indeed, she left this world exactly as she had wished: quickly, privately, and without dependence on others.

Rosalind loved the kibbutz and its people. She knew how to appreciate the beauty of a chance meeting on the pavement, the green gardens, the sense of safety she felt here, and an evening meal with friends.

May her memory be a blessing.

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## Eulogy by Shoshana Mittelberg

My father, Rabbi Kotler of blessed memory, was widowed and came to Israel in 1988, moving to Kibbutz Yizrael to be with us, his family.

He was happy to be with his family, but even happier when he met Rosalind. Rosalind came to Israel with a group of women who volunteered for the IDF through the **Sar-El** programme,  
SAR-EL – The National Project for Volunteers for Israel.



In that group was also Rosa’s sister, Pauline. Rosalind came with Pauline to visit, and Rosalind quickly grew very fond of the kibbutz, where she met my father.

They decided to marry. It was a joyful wedding in the moadon.

After some years, my father lost both his legs, and it became very difficult to care for him and assist him in daily life. Rosalind, together with the family and with outside help, cared for my father with love and devotion.

My father passed away on 07.01.95, and from then until today Rosalind remained an active resident of the Yizrael community.

I thank Rosalind with all my heart for the way she cared for my father. She truly loved the kibbutz and loved living in Israel.

I was very happy that she was able to take part our grandson Liam's bar mitzvah here on Kibbutz Yizrael during Hanukkah.

I also wish to thank the families on Kibbutz Yizrael who, over the years, embraced Rosalind and welcomed her into their hearts, enriching her social life within our community.

Rest in peace.

Shoshana and the Mittelberg family

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### **Eulogy by the Keret Family**

"A person lives within himself.  
Sometimes he is sad and bitter,  
sometimes he sings,  
sometimes he opens the door to welcome an acquaintance,  
but most of the time,  
a person closes himself within."  
(Shalom Hanoach)

Dear and beloved Rosalind,

Thank you for opening your door to us and allowing us, even if only a little, into your world.

We came to know you slowly, your quietness, your modesty, your simplicity and your kindness. You always knew what you wanted and what would make you feel good. You shared with us, stories about the world and about your early years in Israel.

You loved nature deeply. When we went on walks together your heart would swell with happiness at the sight of the landscapes, the Kinneret, and the spring blossoms. Even from the little that you had, you still found it in your heart to donate to organisations that rescue animals around the world.



You were so deeply attached to Keshet, your beloved dog, and her passing broke your heart.

The past two years were difficult for you. You felt deeply the pain of the hostages and the many victims of the war.

You lived through a life that was not always easy, yet you always saw the good side of things. You loved this country and the kibbutz, and you were grateful for the life you had here, every single day.

Dear Rosalind, today is your birthday, and we will not be able

to go for a trip together.

We did not have the chance to say goodbye. Thank you for who you were, and for everything you were to us and to our children.

Thank you for the privilege of giving. You will always have a place in our hearts.

Go in peace. Rest in the soil that became your home.



**“Country Roads” the John Denver song, was beloved by Rosalind, was played at the funeral.**

**Almost heaven, West Virginia**

**Blue ridge mountains, Shenandoah river**

**Life is old there, older than the trees**

**Younger than the mountains, blowing like a breeze**

**Country roads, take me home**

**To the place I belong**

**West Virginia**

**Mountain mamma, take me home. Country roads**

**All my memories, gather round her**

**Modest lady, stranger to blue water  
Dark and dusty, painted on the sky  
Misty taste of moonshine, teardrop in my eye**

**Country roads, take me home  
To the place I belong  
West Virginia  
Mountain mamma, take me home  
Country roads**

**I hear her voice in the morning hour she calls me  
Radio reminds me of my home far away  
Driving down the road I get a feeling  
That I should have been home yesterday, yesterday**

**Country roads, take me home  
To the place I belong  
West Virginia  
Mountain mamma, take me home  
Country roads**

**Country roads, take me home  
To the place I belong  
West Virginia  
Mountain mamma, take me home  
Country roads**

**Take me home, down country roads  
Take me home, down country roads**

## Eulogy by the Sassi Family – Tsach Sassi

Dear Rosalind,



Looking around at the crowd of people who have come here to bid you farewell, I find the best answer to why we live here on the kibbutz that you so loved. It is the victory of the values on which this country was founded: mutual responsibility, community, and the ability to truly see one another.

Our connection began as neighbours, a young generation family beside a veteran resident. Thanks to two cocker spaniel dogs, your Keshet and our Judy, a special bond was formed, bridging the years between us and creating a real closeness.

Despite the complexity of your life story, you always made sure to radiate warmth and pleasantness. More than anything, your independence stood out. Even when we tried to offer help, you would always turn things around and make sure that you would be there for us if we ever needed anything.

When your dog, Keshet, died about a year ago, we felt how much she had meant to you. We tried to persuade you to take another dog to fill the void, but you did not want that.

Rosalind, you were a proud Zionist with lofty values. Your deep love for every living creature, led you to vegetarianism. You maintained a close bond with your sister and family in the United States, always placing family above any disagreement.



We promise to continue upholding these values that characterised you and the remarkable home, Kibbutz Yizrael, we shared.

Today we part from you with a smile, just as you always welcomed us, and we take comfort in the thought that somewhere above, you are once again holding the leash and setting out on a long walk with your Keshet.

Rest in peace, Rosalind. Read by: Tzach Sassi

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## **Eulogy by Reut Shaliv**

The Rosalind I knew was a Zionist New Yorker. She loved Israel and New York with all her heart. She loved animals very much. She loved books, and travelling around the world.

I am usually at the library on Sunday afternoons, so I had the chance to meet Rosalind almost every Sunday, when she came to open the library at four o'clock. She would read the English book reviews that Stella brings me, and she would mark the books that looked interesting to her. She wore shoes printed with the paw marks of cats or dogs, and if I understood correctly, part of the price of the shoes was donated to animal welfare.

Rosalind once asked me to order a series of books for her from Steimatzky book store, and said, "After I read them, I'll pass the books on to the library." The pink tulips I brought today and placed here are a tribute to that series.

From our discussions, I understood that she truly loved Yizrael and felt grateful to be here.

In April last year we travelled together to the National Library in Jerusalem. Rosalind enjoyed it very much and later wrote to me that it had been interesting and enjoyable, and that the whole experience was wonderful. I was very happy that she came and enjoyed it.

In recent years Rosalind did not travel abroad as she used to love to do, because she did not want to leave her beloved dog, Keshet, who had grown old.

She said that only after Keshet passed away would she think about travelling again.

When I flew to New York at the end of December, she was very excited for me. She said that New York is at its most beautiful at Christmas and even consulted her



nephew to help me plan the trip. She sent me information about transportation and the weather and urged me to take enough warm clothes. She was relieved to hear that we had found a place to stay in a good area, after I had initially worried her with plans to stay in Chinatown.

When I said to her, “Maybe you’ll go next year at Christmas as well?” she replied that because of the cold she would not travel in winter, and that if she did go, it would be when the weather was warmer.

When I heard that Rosalind had passed away, I was very surprised. She had been seriously ill with the flu at the beginning of January, but had returned to work in the library as usual just a few weeks ago. The first thought that came to my mind was that it was fortunate that her dog Keshet had passed away before her, so that Rosalind could rest in peace without worrying about her beloved dog.

Rosalind helped everyone who came to the library with kindness and warmth. She will be greatly missed.

Reut Shaliv

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### **Message from Rosalind’s Sister Laura – Read by David Mittelberg**

I will miss our daily email chats and am sorry we haven't seen each other for so many years.

We all are heartbroken and we love you and will miss you.

Read by David Mittelberg



Rosalind's sister **Laura**, and her sons are **Billy**, and **Michael** and his wife **Eva**.



**Edi-torial:** On Tuesday 24.2.26, **Rosalind Kotler** passed away. Rosalind was one of our most avid readers. She never missed an opportunity to thank me for “The Yizraelite”. She said that it kept her in touch with what was going on in the kibbutz. Rosalind was buried in a very touching ceremony last Thursday, 28.2.26. I will miss Rosalind. This week we feature the moving obituaries. I would like to send my condolences to Rosalind's sister, Laura and all the family in the U.S. Know that Rosalind was loved and respected. She received a very moving funeral. Although Rosalind was not a member of the kibbutz, she was very much part of our community and she will be missed.

To the members of Kibbutz Yizrael, know that we can be proud that we gave Rosalind a home here on the kibbutz. I know that Rosalind was very grateful. This week's newsletter is dedicated to Rosalind.

As I write these words, events of biblical proportions are unfolding. I only wish I could be around in one hundred years, to see what history has to say about the results of the events that began on October 7 2024

The events of Purim had to be cancelled. The children are disappointed. Our routine has been turned upside down. Our soldiers are in harm's way and so are we all. The future is at stake. Let us hope it will all soon be over.

Let it be that the massacred on that fateful day in October and those who died in the aftermath will not have died in vain. Let it be that future generations will live in a safer, more peaceful world. Shabbat Shalom – Edi-tor (Eddie Solow)

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 **Reut's Editorial: And once again, the “drums of war,” or more accurately, the “sirens of war.” ring out.**

The wonders of technology have brought us to a point where there are not only sirens to warn of oncoming missiles, but also an app that gives us few minutes “prealert” (enabling us to get close to a protected area).” On the one hand, the pre-alert allows us to take a deep breath and feel that there is time to walk calmly to the shelter, instead of panicking and running and perhaps falling. On the other hand, the pre-alert leaves us suspended in a liminal state of expectation of a missile attack that does not always eventuate? Do we get up in the middle of the night, bleary-eyed, and go to the shelter, or perhaps the siren will not sound at all?

Meanwhile, under the cover of this situation, “illegal settlements” established in the West Bank are moving closer to receiving the status of recognised settlements. Their names already appear in the list of siren locations. Their residents are expanding the range of their disturbances in the territories, and the day when such disturbances will occur not only beyond the Green Line but also within it seems to be drawing closer. After all, why harass only Palestinians in the territories, when Israeli citizens, Arabs or left-wingers, can also serve as convenient targets?

Let us hope that quieter days will soon arrive, for us and for the entire region in which we live, and that all our soldiers will return home safely.



## Message from the Security Committee



Dear Chaverim, in these complex times, as the security situation presents us with significant challenges, we would like to give you a clear and transparent update regarding changes in the operation of services on the kibbutz.

Since Saturday, the dining hall and the grocery store have been operating in a reduced format, the laundry has been suspended, and the educational frameworks are closed. The social interaction, which is so important to many of us, has been greatly reduced.

We are aware of the difficulty and inconvenience this creates, and at times even the sense of frustration.

These decisions were made out of full commitment to the Home Front Command guidelines and out of responsibility for the safety and well-being of the workers, volunteers, and all residents.

In an emergency situation, it is necessary to comply with protection standards, ensure the availability of protected spaces, and prepare for operating with limited manpower. When we cannot guarantee a safe working and gathering environment, we choose to reduce or suspend activity. This is a responsible decision intended to protect us all.

The decisions are made with careful consideration, with the aim of maintaining as much routine as possible without putting anyone at risk.

We review the situation daily, remain attentive to updated guidelines, and work to expand activity wherever it can be done safely. We would welcome suggestions and ideas that comply with the guidelines and help maintain the safety of the community.

Anyone who wishes to offer assistance or a community initiative is welcome to contact us. Together we can support families, our veteran members, and anyone who especially needs help at this time.

We ask for your patience and understanding. It is precisely in times like these that the strength of a community becomes clear, through mutual responsibility, trust, and respectful discussion.

Together, through mutual support, we will also overcome this period.

Lilach Ron Harpaz, Erez Peleg, Limor Griman



To the Emergency Response Team, the Dining Hall staff, the Grocery staff, the Clinic staff, and the Third Age team,

Thank you for providing essential services during these challenging times! 🙏



## From the Costume Wardrobe



Thank You Tze'ela – Noga Shapira



A few months ago, the costume room underwent a true transformation under the wonderful hands of **Tze'ela Baran-Shkolnik**.

Tze'ela stood on a ladder and looked out over the room, filled with costumes and accessories from the floor to the highest shelves, surveying how she would approach the challenge I had been dreaming about.

Tze'ela began working with focused professionalism and purpose, bringing an approach that was aesthetic, accessible, inviting and impeccably organised.

She sorted, folded and hung hundreds of costumes, arranging accessories by theme. Hats and masks were hung

throughout the room, scarves arranged by type and shape, bags, cloaks and more, each item placed on a hanger suited especially for it.

She prepared an index with precise and perfect detail.

She numbered and labelled every cupboard, shelf, drawer, box and rack, clearly indicating which costumes exist and exactly where they are located, so that everything is convenient and accessible for anyone who needs it.

Tze'ela worked with dedication, responsibility, intelligence and precision, ensuring that the system she created could be maintained over time. She introduced working procedures for me and for those who will come after, continually improving the system while beautifully designing the room. The costume wardrobe has regained the respect it deserves, and the costumes are now accessible and readily available. It is a pleasure to enter and to make the most of what it offers.

It was wonderful working with you and learning from you.

A huge thank you, Tze'ela ❤️ ❤️ ❤️



### **Please Return Borrowed**

**Costumes:** The costume wardrobe serves our community throughout the year for many occasions, including holidays, class parties, Bar Mitzvah performances, private Bar Mitzvah celebrations, weddings, short film shoots, Chag Hameshek, birthdays, end-of-year parties, and various events organised by the factories, and much more.

In order to maintain the order, access to the room is by prior arrangement with me (Noga) only.

After use, costumes should be returned clean to the designated place outside the room, on the shelves provided, inside a bag or box.

Many thanks,  
Noga Ken-Dror Shapira  
Costume Room Coordinator



## On the Meeting with Zohar Mazor - Tamar Oosterhoff

Zohar Mazor, a classmate and good friend of mine from the moshav Moledet, spoke about his experience of living with bipolar disorder since the age of 19.

Zohar has been holding these meetings for several years. Through his personal story he seeks to create a human, intimate and direct encounter around this sensitive subject, and to try to break the taboo that still surrounds people coping with mental health challenges.

His aim is to normalise the discussion and to remove the fear of speaking about issues such as being a sensitive person in society, and specifically being a sensitive man within a militant culture that promotes a very particular model of masculinity. He spoke about fears, depression, questions of self-realisation, feelings of belonging and alienation

within a homogeneous society, relationships with family during times of crisis, self-confidence, judgement, social channelling, and the challenge of finding one's own unique path within existing social structures.

Although Zohar spoke from his own life experience, under the heading of bipolar disorder, the themes he touched upon are relevant to all of us, and to the complex and challenging experience of being human in the world. Through his personal story he enabled members of the audience to encounter themselves as well, each within their own life and with their own story.

In my view there is deep importance in meetings like these. They allow us to look at ourselves and at others in a different way, they create human solidarity, and they remind us how much strength there is in honesty and in sharing the most vulnerable parts of our lives.

I am only here for a very brief visit, but I hope there will be many more human encounters of this kind. There is real power in connecting with others, especially with those who at first seem the most different from us.

Many thanks to Talia Arad, and to everyone who came, for the openness and sensitivity.

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## Memories from Shelter 9 - Hadas Matalon-Federman



“Somewhere deep within us lie voices and memories, many sights we have already forgotten...” (Ehud Manor and Matti Caspi)

While clearing out my mother's house on the kibbutz, after she passed away a month and a half ago, we came across many traces of earlier lives. My mother, Shimona, kept everything. Among the papers were bundles of letters written to and from England in what now feels like a prehistoric

era, even before the establishment of the State.

There were letters of recommendation for my grandmother, who was searching for a house to rent in Jerusalem in June 1949. We found matriculation certificates, poems written in the third grade, fifth-grade completion certificates, and certificates from the Mount Tabor walk and the Gilboa march. There were telegrams, carefully preserved hiking routes, and of course many photographs.

My brother Yiftach and I sorted through it all while sitting in the kibbutz bomb shelter. Around us gathered an eclectic collection of people. Arnon's grandchildren came down with markers and colouring pens. A group of teenage girls busied themselves with their hair and their phones. Several dear kibbutz members joined us, some of them the parents of my classmates. (Oren and Einav, don't worry, Dad is perfectly fine.)

Someone had just prepared a jug of fruit drink. Cleaning materials stood to one side. Mattresses were spread everywhere.

For me, the memories came flooding back from the days that now feel "black and white." I remembered the shelter during the Yom Kippur War near our house. I remembered the first television installed in the shelter, which must truly have been black and white. Today, of course, they make sure there is Wi-Fi.



There were piles of mattresses. Breakfasts of rolls with chocolate milk and a hard-boiled egg. Smells remain vivid in the memory. Where were the parents? Where was the world that seemed to disappear during those long hours in the shelter?

And above everything, one thing has never been forgotten. The sound of explosions. From all the wars.





## My Second Nature – Rotem Agmon

### The Cave Swallow

Toward the end of February, a bird called the **Cave Swallow** (*Red-rumped Swallow*) arrives here and joins another swallow that is present year-round, the resident **Barn Swallow (R)**.



Swallows build their nests from mud. Watching them gather material for nest-building is fascinating and can keep an observer captivated for quite some time. The Cave Swallow can be seen here (below left) from the end of February until October.

On Kibbutz Yizrael, several Cave Swallow nests can already be seen. Anyone who visits the library, can look up and notice a nest attached to the light cover on the ceiling of the veranda. The nest has recently been renovated in preparation for the coming nesting season. Swallows tend to return to the nest they built in the previous year. The nest shown in the photo (above left) was taken in the first row of the Young Generation neighbourhood, in the passage beneath the building. Swallows build their nests upside down, attached to the ceiling, a method that prevents snakes from reaching them.



Additional places where nests can be observed are beneath the house of Ron Granot and under the laundry. One hopes that before long we will once again be able to throw in laundry. Bend down and look beneath the structure. You will be able to see the nest that has been there for many years.



## Recommendation for an Activity on the Theme of Wildlife

Alit Haviv Gilad

This week, alongside Purim and the war, **World Wildlife Day** was also marked.

In recent years I have been involved in an organisation called the “Coalition for Wildlife,” through which we have gathered and organised educational materials and content that were originally intended for educators. They are now open to the general public as well, parents and children alike, on a website that offers a rich collection of materials about wildlife and local nature.

Between sirens and brief respites, this is an opportunity to dive into the fascinating world of animals and take a moment to breathe, to become curious, and to deepen our interest, perhaps even to turn our attention, if only briefly, away from the tumult of war. On the Coalition for Wildlife website, you will find materials in Hebrew and Arabic: activities and lesson plans, videos and podcast episodes for children of different ages (and also for adults), as well as recordings of short lectures for children.

Link to the Coalition for Wildlife website:

<https://www.wildlife-il.com>

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### Jezebel Runs - Tzofnat Mor



Long months of demanding, and at times discouraging, training came to a climax on Friday. The big day of the Tel Aviv Half Marathon had arrived. I participated together with another 50,000 runners, a record for the Tel Aviv Marathon (including 12,000 participants in the half marathon race alone).

On a cool morning, with the promise of warmer weather on the horizon and some annoying the last-minute pre-race hysteria finally subsided and we reached the starting line. The drizzle fortunately eased off before the start,

Then we were off.

I will spare you the more or less technical details. I will only say that I surprised myself greatly. I had prepared to suffer, to slow down, and if necessary to switch to walking or even stop running for a while. But as the kilometres passed, I actually felt stronger and stronger.

Apart from an unpleasant headwind during some equally unpleasant climbs, the weather was generally mild and comfortable. The sun accompanied us throughout the entire 21.1 kilometres, and many people stood along the route to cheer the runners on, which was very encouraging.

Under the shadow of threats of war with Iran, it was considerate of all sides involved to wait patiently until Saturday morning before attacking, since I really did not want sirens and missiles catching me in the middle of Tel Aviv.

I crossed the finish line excited and smiling, giving myself a virtual pat on back for achieving my goal and completing my first half marathon.

After a short rest, I returned home and collapsed onto the sofa, recovering and preparing for the next goal.

Until that next challenge, I wish us all quiet and safe days, without hostile missiles.

**“You run in the park  
And the trees remain in place  
You run, you run in the park  
The towers remain in place  
You run along the river  
Without thinking about anything at all”**  
(Meir Waldberg)

**Jezebel (Tzofnat Mor)**



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## The (almost) Back Page (*Recommended reading – Edi-tor*)

### Exile and Kingship in the Book of Esther

*Dr Yiftach Goldman*

The **Book of Esther** is perhaps the strangest text in the Bible. What kind of story is it? A folk tale? A tragedy or a comedy, perhaps even a farce? In this article I try to show that the Megillah speaks to us in a language different from the rest of the books of the Bible, and that it may in fact be the biblical text closest to us, the most relevant for modern people.

The Book of Esther is perhaps the strangest text in the Bible. What sort of story is it? A folk tale? A tragedy or a comedy, perhaps even a farce? And who is the hero? The court Jew who effectively brokers his beautiful niece in the king's harem? Or perhaps the niece herself, actually his cousin as the text says, "He was bringing up Hadassah, that is Esther, the daughter of his uncle" (Esther 2:7), who executes a carefully calculated plan of seduction, manipulation and elimination?

And what shall we say about the plot? A strange heap of half-arbitrary coincidences that carry an absurd tale beginning with a banquet and ending with a banquet, with a beauty contest in between, intrigues in the royal court, a plan of extermination and its reversal, and a massacre for dessert.

The most difficult question of all is, of course: how and why did this text find its way into the Bible? I will not answer that question here. I do not know who wrote the Megillah, who decided to sanctify it, or for what reasons. But I will try to say something about the importance of this story. I will try to show that the Megillah speaks to us in a language different from the rest of the Bible, and that it may be the text closest to us, the most relevant for us as modern people.

#### **They Have No God**

It is well known that already in antiquity people noticed that the name of God does not appear even once in the Book of Esther. For that reason, our sages called it *Megillat Hester Panim*, the Scroll of the Hidden Face. Yet the claim that God hides His face does not fully capture the depth of the absence. Not only is God hidden in the Megillah. It seems that human beings are not even looking for Him.

Unlike the stories of the Torah and the Prophets, the author of the Book of Esther does not attribute the events of the story to God. Nowhere are we told that "God did such-and-such." The heroes of the Megillah, Jews and non-Jews alike, never mention God even once in their speech.

Even stranger: not only do they not speak about God, they do not speak to Him. Nowhere, even at the height of the crisis, do they pray for salvation. Nowhere, even at the height of the celebrations of deliverance, do they offer a prayer of thanksgiving.

Two further details complete the picture. The historical period in which the story of the Megillah supposedly takes place is the Persian period, more than a generation after the declaration of Cyrus. (Ahasuerus is usually identified with the Persian king Xerxes, son of the daughter of Cyrus.) At that time the Second Temple in Jerusalem had already been built by the returning exiles. The Temple, the central place through which the relationship between the people of Israel and their God is maintained, is not mentioned in the Megillah at all.

And what is the precise date when the decree of annihilation against the Jews was issued? The story is very precise about dates. The destruction of the Jews is scheduled for the thirteenth day of the month of Adar. Yet the decree itself was sent almost a year earlier, on the thirteenth day of Nisan (Esther 3:7–14). The thirteenth of Nisan, one day before Passover, the festival on which Jews commemorate the great story of redemption, the Exodus from Egypt.

We do not know how the Jews of Shushan observed Passover, but from the text of the Megillah it seems that they did nothing at all. One even begins to suspect that they did not know these were festival days.

Such a thorough and consistent silence regarding every aspect of the relationship between Israel and its God cannot be accidental. It gives the impression that someone went through the text systematically and removed every direct or indirect reference to God. (Incidentally, in Greek versions of the story God is mentioned and the heroes do address Him.)

I do not know what the author or editor intended by this act of deletion. But the result is remarkable: the Book of Esther is the most modern book in the Bible, the only one whose heroes a modern person can truly identify with.

## **Modern Times**

I said “modern person.” I did not say “secular person.” The question of belief or unbelief is not really the point here. Even the most devout believer does not hold conversations with God and hear His instructions directly. Even the greatest rabbi does not justify his rulings by claiming that “God told me so.”

In the view of all of us, religious and secular alike, a person who conducts direct conversations with God belongs in a therapeutic institution.

All of us, religious and secular alike, live in a human world in which God is not directly present. Within that world we must determine our own actions. That is why the heroes

of the Megillah feel so close to us. Mordechai the Jew resembles us more than Abraham, Moses, David or Samuel. Of all the biblical heroes he is the only one who cannot justify his actions with the decisive argument: “God told me.”

Our identification with the heroes of the Megillah does not necessarily mean that we like them or agree with their actions. It is not easy to love Mordechai, and in many parts of the story it is not easy to love Esther either. We get angry with them, are troubled by their actions, question their motives and argue with them.

But we can do this precisely because they are so much like us.

### **Existentialism in Shushan**

The Book of Esther is a text of exile. Its heroes are immersed in exile, and we now understand that this exile is not merely geographical or territorial. They are not only exiled from their land. They are expelled from the paradise of an intimate relationship with an all-powerful, all-knowing God. They are living in a foreign and indifferent world, and within that world they must defend both their existence and the meaning of their existence.

The core of the Megillah, in my view, lies in the dialogue between Mordechai and Esther near the middle of the story. Mordechai sends Esther to the king to plead for the cancellation of Haman’s decree. Esther replies that anyone who approaches the king uninvited risks death.

Mordechai answers her with these puzzling words:

“Do not imagine that you alone of all the Jews will escape in the king’s palace. For if you remain silent at this time, relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place, but you and your father’s house will perish. And who knows whether you have come to royal position for such a time as this?” (Esther 4:13–14).

The beginning is clear. Mordechai warns Esther not to imagine that she will be able to hide in the palace from Haman’s decree. But we expect him to say: “If you remain silent, the decree will destroy the Jews and eventually reach you as well.” Instead, he says something completely different: “Relief and deliverance will arise for the Jews from another place.”

Does Mordechai have an alternative plan? If so, why should Esther risk her life?

Then comes another puzzle: “but you and your father’s house will perish.” If the Jews will ultimately be saved, why should Esther and her family perish?

The answer seems to be that Mordechai is not speaking about physical destruction at all. If the Jews are saved, Esther will obviously survive as well. The loss he speaks about is moral or spiritual, a loss of identity.

Identity is belonging. A person's identity is determined by the things to which he or she belongs. There comes a moment, Mordechai tells Esther, when a person must decide who they are. This decision is made through actions, not words.

If you do not act to save your people, nothing physical may happen to you, but you will cease to belong to us. You must risk yourself not because the Jewish people cannot be saved without you, but because if you ignore our fate you will cease to be one of us.

Suddenly Haman's decree moves into the background. It will be cancelled somehow. What is really at stake here is Esther's identity.

At that moment the Book of Esther becomes an existential educational story. The world does not revolve around you, Mordechai tells Esther. The only thing that truly depends on your decision is your own identity.

Jean-Paul Sartre and Albert Camus could hardly have said it better.

Esther understands perfectly. She replies:

“Go, gather all the Jews in Shushan and fast for me. Do not eat or drink for three days, night or day. I and my attendants will fast likewise. Then I will go to the king, though it is against the law. And if I perish, I perish.” (Esther 4:16)

Belonging requires reciprocity, Esther tells Mordechai. If I must risk myself for my people, my people must show, even symbolically, that they stand with me. The fast is an act of solidarity directed toward human beings, not toward heaven.

“And Mordechai went and did everything that Esther commanded him” (Esther 4:17).

At this moment Esther transforms from an obedient girl into a commanding personality. From here until the end of the Megillah she becomes the central figure directing the course of events.

She has found herself, or in existentialist terms, she has created herself, as a woman who belongs to the Jewish people and as a responsible, active moral human being.

**The article is a shortened version from a longer essay by Dr Yiftach Goldman.**

link:

[https://ygoldman.org/?page\\_id=14](https://ygoldman.org/?page_id=14)



**Zoom Lecture: Iranian Women – Between Protest and Revolution**

Please register using the link below, or visit the website of the **Museum for Islamic Art** and register there.

<https://did.li/iranian-women>

*(The lecture will be held in English.)*

## ENGLISH IS FUN with Rahel

### OXYMORON

An oxymoron is a figure of speech in which two terms appear to contradict each other.

|                   |               |                  |
|-------------------|---------------|------------------|
| deafening silence | doing nothing | day dreams       |
| random pattern    | act naturally | small crowd      |
| dress shirt       | new classic   | almost limitless |
| pretty bad        | going nowhere | feeling numb     |
| genuine imitation | all alone     | fresh frozen     |
| climb down        | minor miracle | crash landing    |
| new used car      | awfully nice  | inside out       |

### OUR STRANGE LINGO - T. S. Watt

When the English tongue we speak,  
Why is “break” not rhymed with “freak”?  
Will you tell me why it’s true  
We say “sew” but likewise “few”  
And the maker of a verse  
Cannot rhyme his “horse” with “worse”?  
“Beard” sounds not the same as “heard”,  
“Cord” is different from “word”,  
Cow is “cow”, but low is “low”.  
“Shoe” is never rhymed with “foe”,  
Think of ‘hose’ and “dose” and “lose”  
And think of “goose” and yet of “choose”.  
Think of “comb” and “lamb” and “bomb”  
“Doll” and “roll” and “home” and “some”,  
And since “pay” is rhymed with “say”  
Why not “paid” with “said”, I pray?  
We have “blood” and “food” and “good”;  
“Mould” is not pronounced like “could”,  
Wherefore “done” but “gone” and “lone”?  
Is there any reason known?  
And in short it seems to me  
Sounds and letters disagree!

## SILENT LETTER ALPHABET

A as in BREAD

C as in INDICTMENT

E as in GIVE

G as in GNAW

I as in FRIEND

K as in KNOW

M as the first M

N as in AUTUMN

P as in PSALM

R as in FORECASTLE

T as in CASTLE

V as in MILNGAVIE (a Scottish place name)

X as in SIOUX

Z as in RENDEZVOUS

B as in DEBT

D as in HANDECHIEF

F as in HALFPENNY

H as in HOUR

J as in MARIJUANA

L as in CALM

MNEMONIC

O as in PEOPLE

Q as in COLQUHOUN (a Scottish surname)

S as in ISLAND

U as in GUARD

W as in WRONG

Y as in PEPYS

.....more next week



## Cows Don't Like Reforms. Neither Do Dairy Farmers

An Interview in the "Davar" magazine (26.2.26), with Uri Horowitz,  
Manager of our dairy

Israeli dairy farmers, usually calm people, are furious about the reform being



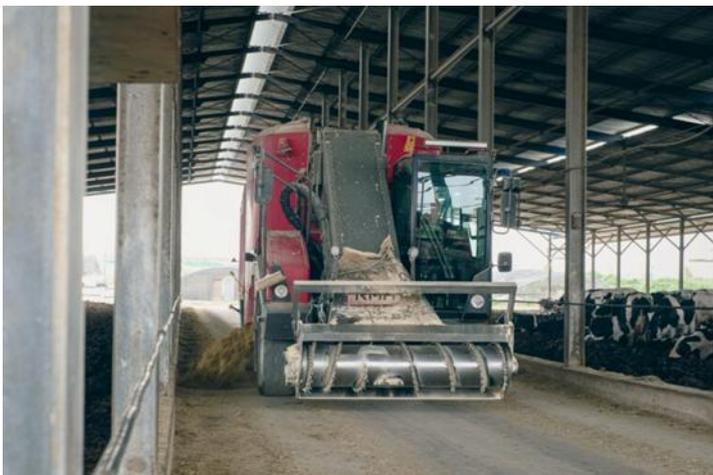
advanced by the Minister of Finance and fear it may take away their livelihood. During a visit to the dairy farm on Kibbutz Yizrael, dairy manager Uri Horowitz explains why central planning must not be abolished, and finds a similarity between cows and humans: "They don't like change. They need routine."

Maya Ronen

02:00 in the morning. Ali and Hamudi from the village of Na'ura are already preparing the milking parlour for the morning milking. It is still dark outside, but they do not need an alarm clock. Their bodies already know the time. Summer, winter, pouring rain or heatwave, war, or blessed routine.



02:30. The first cows are already lining up in their fixed order on the way to the milking stations. Each knows her place.



03:00. “The *Self*” — the tractor that distributes the feed — heads out on its first round between the cow sheds. No delays. No “let’s talk tomorrow.” There are 600 cows that need to eat, be milked, give birth, and rest in peace. Every now and then there will also be a nighttime calving, and with first light a new calf will appear in the world.

At the Yizrael dairy farm about **8.2 million litres of milk are produced each year**. It is a large farm, among the most efficient in the region, with **600 milking cows and about 450 calves and heifers** in various stages of growth. The branch brings the kibbutz about **two million shekels annually** and is considered one of the most stable branches of the kibbutz’s economy. Yet even the new sheds and the computerized milking parlour are now threatened by the reform being promoted by Finance Minister **Bezalel Smotrich**.

“We feel the tension and the danger to our existence just like everyone else in the industry. Uncertainty is a terrible feeling, and even a large and efficient dairy like ours is not immune,” says dairy manager **Uri Horowitz**. “Everyone in the sector feels the axe hanging over our necks. This is a fight for life or death. I think the public still does not understand that this is a tectonic event for them as well.”

## “I’m a Dairy Kid”



Horowitz, 47, has managed the dairy for fifteen years. He was born and raised on the dairy farm at **Kibbutz Givat Haim Ihud**.

“I’m a dairy kid,” he says with a smile.

His father was both a dairy farmer and kibbutz secretary, and his childhood passed among cowsheds, calves and bedding areas. He did his first milking in

primary school. Since then, he has helped thousands of cows give birth, bottle-fed countless calves, and removed tons of manure from the bedding areas.

He is married and the father of three sons: one doing a service year at the **Ayanot Youth Village**, another on his way to a service year at **Ben Shemen Youth Village**, and the third is fifteen years old.

“I’m starting to recruit them now,” he says, his voice briefly tightening. “They grew up on a kibbutz, so it’s obvious to them they’ll go into combat units. I’m not naïve. I was a combat soldier too. But in recent years, how shall I say it, every two weeks we get hit from another direction. I don’t think my parents were as worried about me as I worry about them. I want to believe they could also be farmers one day, but that seems risky now too.”

## Life by the Agricultural Calendar

The routine on the dairy farm does not change according to the news or debates in the Knesset. The daily schedule is determined by the lives of the cows and the agricultural calendar.

“We work very closely according to the Hebrew calendar. It’s an agricultural calendar. It resets you according to the seasons. People have lived like this here for thousands of years.”

In summer the work intensifies. Cows are sensitive to heat; if they are too hot, milk production drops. That is why fans are installed in all the cowsheds, and a special cooling yard was built with spraying and ventilation systems to lower the cows’ body temperature.

“A cow needs a certain temperature to produce milk. If she’s hot, she won’t eat properly, won’t chew her cud properly, and won’t feel comfortable.”

Winter is different.

“This winter was very hard. People don’t understand what it means to work in a storm, in rain, when there’s a calving and suddenly a cow slips and falls. This isn’t an office. It’s mud, wind, and animals that weigh 700 kilograms.”

The dairy operates **almost 22 hours a day**. Only two hours, between midnight and 02:00, is there no one physically on site, though someone is always on call.

At **06:00** the morning team joins: assistant manager **Maayan from Pardess Hanna** and **Saar**, a kibbutz member who has worked in the dairy for 13 years since his army discharge. They deal with inseminations, veterinary visits and testing.



At **08:30**, while cafés in the city have barely begun serving the morning cappuccino, half a day’s work has already passed at the dairy. Everyone goes down to breakfast in the dining hall. Yizrael is a cooperative kibbutz, and the dining hall fills with members working in agricultural branches and with the kibbutz veterans.

Immediately after eating they return to maintenance: cleaning and repairing troughs, removing manure, fixing pipes, arranging feed.

“There’s not a free moment,” says Horowitz. “After breakfast I set aside a little time for meetings, suppliers, bureaucracy. But my mind is always on the dairy. There isn’t a dairy farmer who doesn’t think about the cows even when he’s at home.”

On Passover eve, he says, he arrives at **04:00**, joins the milking, goes home for the Seder, and then returns again to the dairy.

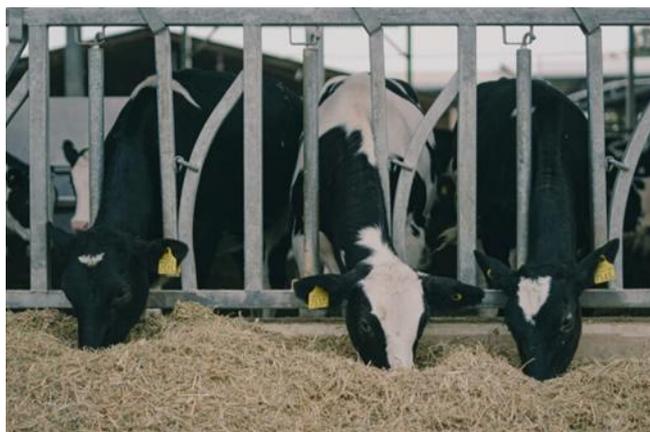
“After Friday dinner it often happens that I pop over to the dairy. Sometimes on Shabbat as well. It’s almost impossible to plan a real trip or holiday. Something can always happen.”

**The Cow Named Ofer:** Two years ago, Yizrael began a process of merging with the dairy of **Kibbutz Maoz Haim**. The transfer of the cows was done gradually, “for the sake of the cows,” Horowitz stresses.

“In every case where a cow in Maoz Haim finished her productive period, we brought a new one into Yizrael. Cows don’t like moving house and it’s hard for them to adapt to a new place.”

In the past three years nearly **9 million shekels** have been invested in new cowsheds and the milking parlour. Each shed cost about **2 million shekels to build**.

“We expected that in the long term there would be an advantage to scale. According to the Milk Planning Law we are required to show **2% efficiency improvement every year**. That forces you constantly to develop.”



Among the herd there are also favourites. Horowitz’s favourite is “**Ofer**”, number **2490**, a red cow with an unusual appearance, curious and less timid than the others.

“Children from the kindergartens come here on their daily walk around the farm. All the children love her, and she returns the affection.”

Each heifer receives a number and identity registration in the Ministry of Agriculture, and every cow wears a monitoring collar transmitting physiological data in real time. The feed tractor receives precise instructions for distribution, measured by kilograms.

“This is not farming like it used to be. Everything is computerized. Everything is monitored. But at the end of the day these are still 600 living creatures that you are responsible for.”

Horowitz sees a strong resemblance between cows and humans.

“They like living in a group. They move from stage to stage together. They have very social lives. You cannot uproot a cow from the place she is used to and expect there to be no consequences. They don’t like change. They need routine. Socially as well. When the cows lie down and chew their cud, we know everything is working. That they are calm. That is what a dairy farmer looks for with his eyes.”



Horowitz and the team (photo: David Tversky): Po, Jo, Ken Phillips, Saar Matalon, Maayan Malmag.  
Seated: Ido Sharoni and Uri Horowitz.

### **“A Cow Is Not a Falafel Stand”**

Over this routine now hangs the cloud of the reform that may change everything.

According to Horowitz, the reform breaks not only the principle of planning but the logic of dairy farming itself. Today milk quotas are centrally allocated, ensuring stable annual supply.

“It gives us the ability to plan inseminations, calvings, investments and budgets. In summer you get paid a little more for surplus milk because production drops. Planning takes seasonal differences into account so that there will not be shortages.”

If planning is cancelled, he says, each farm will stand alone against the dairy companies.

“In children’s language, you’d call it ‘not a fair fight.’”

The dairy on Yizrael, for example, has an agreement with **Tnuva**, and the milk is collected every morning for the dairy plant at **Tel Yosef**.

“Of course, the dairies will prefer large farms that are nearby. Why would they go collect milk from a distant kibbutz or from several small farms in a moshav when they can fill the tanker in one short trip?”

“A cow is not a falafel stand. You can’t decide today to produce more, tomorrow less, and the day after take a day off. These are enormous capital investments, and it takes two years before a cow begins producing milk. Who will take a loan of millions without knowing what tomorrow brings?”

### “This Is the 7 October of Agriculture”

From the Yizrael dairy you can see the hills of **Jenin** and the villages of the Ta’anakh region. Since **07.10**, Horowitz says, the number of guns in kibbutzim has increased.

“After that terrible Saturday, dairy farmers from all over the country went to help milk the cows in the Gaza border communities,” he says. “Dairies that were destroyed were rebuilt. In Nir Yitzhak they invested ten million shekels. In Kissufim they rebuilt the milking parlour where Reuven Heinik was murdered. The authorities even increased their quota to help them get back on their feet. And now they come and say there will be no planning?” For him, it is a slap in the face.



“Anyone who thinks we will always be able to import meat, does not understand where we live.”  
(Photo: David Tversky)

“What they are doing now is the **7 October of agriculture**. It will not only topple dairy farmers but also the field crop farmers who grow the feed. We are shooting ourselves in the foot. Food security is not a slogan.”

“If there is no milk on the shelf in summer, it won’t be a question of Parmesan. It will be a question of whether there are ice creams for the children or milk for coffee.”

02:00 at night again. The country sleeps. Ali and Hamudi report once more for duty, faithful to the hard and Sisyphean work and to the team they have worked with for years. The cows line up in their familiar order.

And the reform, measured in fractions of a shekel, continues to hover over the cowsheds and the milking parlour built with years of labour and millions of shekels, and over an industry that has lived and produced here for **a hundred years**.

## The Yizraelite Spring Supplement



**This week - Featuring the photography of  
Iris Shapira**







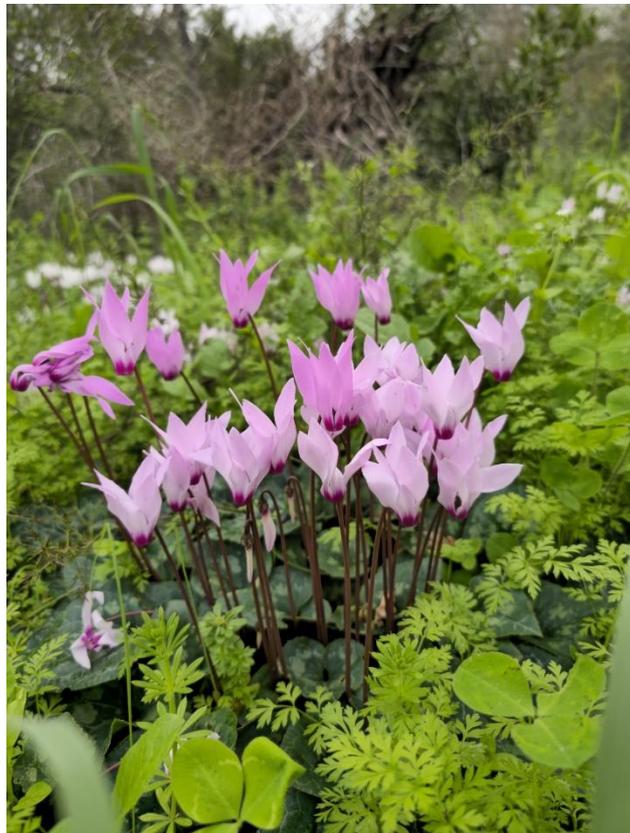


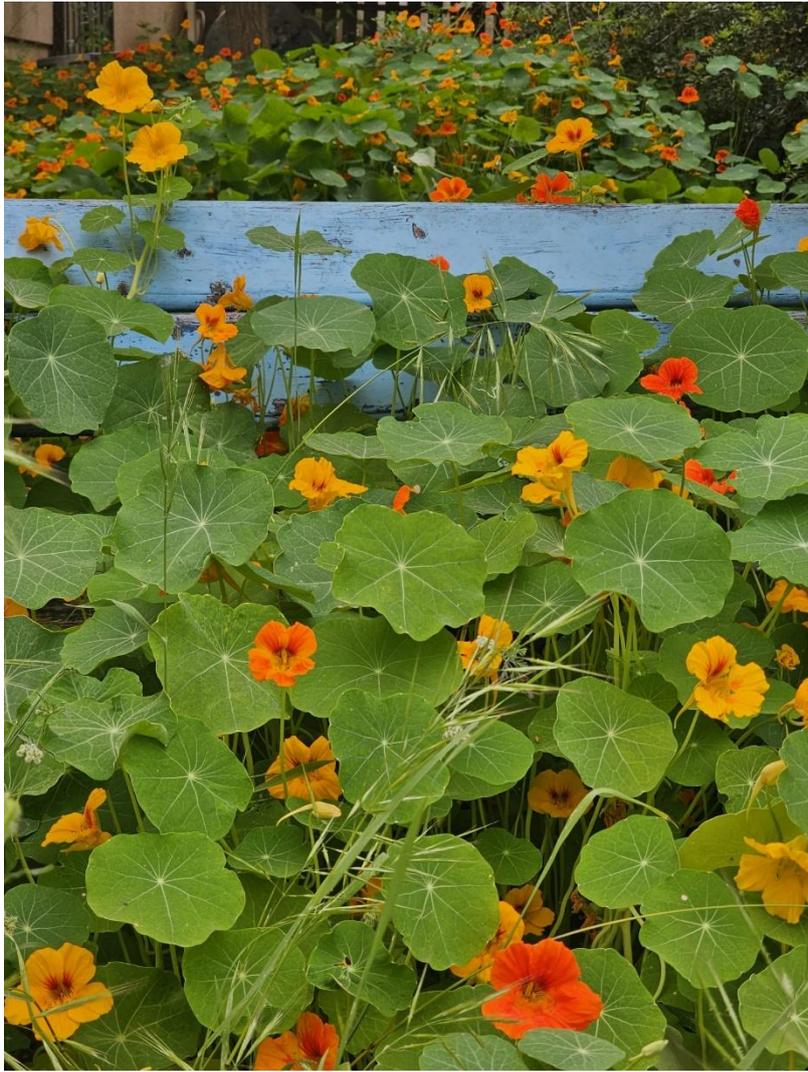












## **Credits and More:**

**Editor of Hebrew Newsletter:** Reut Shaliv

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**Proofreader:** Chazz Broadhurst

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**Disclaimer:** The Edi-tor and translator does his best to provide an accurate reflection of the Hebrew Alon. Please be warned that it is not a direct translation. The original Hebrew text is the official version. This is of particular importance when it comes to decisions and procedures!

Not all the material published in the Hebrew newsletter appears in “The Yizraelite”. Considerations of length, readers’ interest and the Edi-tor’s ability to grapple with the subject matter, determine what is included.

**Two editions of the Yizraelite.** We publish two editions. **The cyber edition** includes more colour photos and occasionally additional long articles. The hard copy is printed in black and white, and therefore there is no point in printing colour photos. We are also limited in length because of printing costs. The hard copy is distributed at the beginning of the following week; therefore, adverts for events that have already taken place over the previous weekend do not appear in the hard copy. Even if you prefer reading the hard copy, we encourage you to scroll through the internet version over the weekend.

Please take into account that we use AI when translating. We proofread, fact-check, and correct the text, but errors may still be overlooked. Be warned.

**Note:** readers are encouraged to submit letters to the editor, photos, and material for inclusion that does not appear in Hebrew Alon.