



אעללה בתמזר

תרת"ב-תשס"ד

122 years of Yemenite Jewish settlement in Israel

Общая



Shiloach

Upon your arrival at the village of Shiloach, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives, you shall see the ruined homes and stones covered with weed and withered flowers, and beside them you will see homes that still bear the Mezuzah niches on their doorways – but are inhabited by squatters.

Send your eyes across to the City of David, the Kidron valley and the pool of Shiloach and you will know that the land you are standing upon is yours, Holy land, promised to you by words G-d, creator and foreseer of generations and turner of the wheels of history. His every word shall not be left unfulfilled.

Send your gaze to the north and you will see the walls of the Temple Mount. The Temple itself you will not see, as it is still destroyed by an evil hand raised upon it. "How awesome is this place. This is no other than the house of G-d, and this is the gate of Heaven!"

And if you send your gaze to the east, your eyes will take in the Mount of Olives rising in front of you, the whiteness of its stones rising up to its heights, and you will stand still and look silently at those generations upon generations, feeling within you the great ones of the nation, the prophets and sages and the great tens of thousands of the House of Israel who are buried on this mountain.

And if your heart takes you to look to the west, the courses of stones of Jerusalem, the City that is joined together, will present

themselves in front of you, arranged as on the stairs of the altar, old and new together, among them holy places of the nation and the government institutions, small houses tottering over, standing next to towering vast mansions.

Do not forget the south, towards the Negev and further towards Yemen, for you shall see the valleys and mountains, amongst which the heights of the new neighborhoods stand out.

And if your heart desires to sense the spirit, even through eyes of flesh, and sail across the good land, then you shall feel around you the mountains of Jerusalem surrounding the City, watching over the City; on the way heading eastward to the Judean desert and the Dead Sea and on the path climbing up to Bethlehem and the hills of Hebron.

Now, close your eyes and you shall see them coming from Yemen, walking and tumbling, rising up and dragging themselves through the Arabian deserts, in shabby rags, hungry and sick. The elderly carry infants on their backs, wives hold their husbands' hands, they are not afraid of the desert, closing up on them by the rage of its sun. They have no fear of robbers. They bury their dead along the way in the desert and despite all this – they do not turn back in their tracks, and nor do they look back, but rather continue to find their way to the port on the Red Sea, to sail the ships, paid for with the last of their money, and reach the beach of Jaffa, on the way to Jerusalem and the village of Shiloach....

He Shall Spread His Wings to Yemen

The Story of the Yemenaite Diaspora

Jews have dwelled in Yemen for many generations. There are those who claim that the Jews are the descendants of the envoys sent by King Solomon to rule over Yemen. Others say that the first Jews arrived wandering towards Yemen following the destruction of the first Temple. An ancient tradition they hold, tells of their sin of refusing the call of Ezra the Scribe to join the return to Zion from Babylon, where the exiled Jews started to return to the land of their forefathers. Therefore, every generation, the Jews of Yemen, seeking forgiveness for their sin, were amongst the first to comply every time there was an awakening of redemption. For more than 1,000 years the Jews existed miraculously, detached from other communities of their people, but adherent, with endless dedication and fierce loyalty, to their religion. Only in the last thousand years (in the 10th century) did they manage to establish a connection with the great Torah learning centers in Babylon, at the end of the period of the Geonim. Afterwards they had connections with the Rambam, who encouraged them and strengthened their spirits, and eventually became their spiritual leader. Yemen was always a bitter Diaspora for the Jews. Misfortune followed them and horrible decrees were declared upon them, among which was the decree that that orphan children had to be turned over to the authorities, converted into Moslems and taken into the service of the king.

Among the Jews of Yemen were many Torah scholars in all fields of Torah, the Oral Law and Halacha. Three hundred essays and books were written by the sages of Yemen. Their original works, mostly in handwriting, still exist today. There were great poets and liturgy composers (Payritanim), master craftsmen and outstanding artisans. They created special music, art and a way of life that they continued and guarded wherever they went.

They persistently tried at every opportunity to make connections with the Land of Israel and find out if the time has come to immigrate, but the hardships and troubles of their life in Yemen did not enable them to fulfill their wish.



Coming of the Yemenites

The Story of the 1882 Aliyah (Immigration)

Yearning for the redemption always beat through the hearts of the Jews of Yemen

With the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the conquering of Yemen by the Turks in 1872, the connection between the Jews of Yemen and the Land of Israel became stronger. In 1881 rumors broke out in Yemen that "Rothschild, the king of the Jews" bought land in the Land of Israel and permission was given by the Turkish Sultan for Jews to come and settle their land.

"And all the Jews of Yemen rejoiced greatly and thought for sure that the foreseen redemption had arrived, and that in this year or the next year they would be redeemed, and this is the beginning of the redemption. And all the people of Yemen awoke with great enthusiasm until every man, every family, orphans and widows, begged to sell their houses, belongings, clothing and holy books, rise up from Yemen and go to dwell in Jerusalem. And it was as if a new spirit entered the heart of each and every one of the Jews, the likes of which had never been since the day on which they went on exile" (From the memoirs of Rabbi Shalom Alsheich, A. Ya'ari, Massaot Eretz Yisrael, Ramat Gan, 1976, pp. 644-645)

The first two families left Sana in the middle of Sivan 1881, and five other families following after the ninth of Av that same year. They arrived in the Land of Israel on the eve of the Jewish New Year of 5642. The immigrants wrote to their brethren in Yemen how good the land was, and in Heshvan of 5642 (October 1881) nearly 150 souls immigrated. Since then, the Aliyah movement never halted, until in 1908 the population of the Yemenite community in Jerusalem grew to 2,500 people and in Jaffa to 200 people. Based on the verse: "I said, I will go up onto the palm tree" (Song of Songs, (the palm tree) is written **בַּתְּמָר אֶעֱלֶה בְּתָמָר** - 7:9) - 1882. The **בַּתְּמָר** with the same letters as the year Yemenites saw it as a sign that the year 1882 was the time to make their Aliyah, and even called the immigration wave "E'eleh Bitamar".

Their way was difficult and fraught with hardships and danger. They walked for many days through the desert, up mountains and down valleys. Women and small children made the way riding on the backs of camels, but the men walked all the way, until they reached the port city of Hoozeyda. They were required to stay in quarantine for a long period, until it was clear that they were not carrying diseases, especially Cholera. From Hoozeyda they had a rough sail to Suez on sailing ships, from where they made their way to Alexandria, by foot or by carts, until in Alexandria port they boarded a ship to take them to Jaffa.

And in spite of the loss of all their financial resources along the way, the hardship, trouble and misery they suffered, ill and hunger-stricken as they were, the Jews of Yemen arrived in the land of Israel starved and impoverished, but rejoiced and gave thanks to God that they merited to arrive at the land of their forefathers and place their feet on the Holy land.

Chapter 3

The Agony of the Absorption in the Land of Israel

The Yemenite Jews did not stay in Jaffa, as they aspired to travel to Jerusalem, "to endear her stones and cherish her earth".

However, when they finally arrived, they found Jerusalem an extremely overcrowded city of great poverty.. As a result of the large demand, the Moslem house owners raised the rental prices and the Yemenite immigrants, whose journey to the Land of Israel exhausted all the money they had – could not afford a place to sleep. Because of their physical appearance, they were initially treated with suspicion, and people thought that they were not Jews, but rather Arabs. The Jews of Jerusalem were not enthusiastic about offering them help. For lack of choice,

the immigrants had to live in caves and catacombs near the grave of Rabbi Shimon HaTzadik and on the slopes of the Mount of Olives near the small village of Silwan, in the area known as Shiloach.

"And then, when the Yemenites started to settle in Jerusalem, there was no one in the world who could endure the suffering of the Yemenites in Jerusalem (I"ן). In the beginning of the summer they remained under the open sky, burning in the heat of the day and freezing in the cold of the night. They slept under the trees... abandoned and left in the fields, wrapped in hunger, large and small, infant and suckling, all begging for bread and there is none to be found, without the smallest coin in their pocket" (R Shalom AlSheick, the Story of the Immigration of the Jews of Yemen, A. Yafari, Masaot Eretz Yisrael, Ramat Gan, 1976, pp. 645-650). In May 1882, a group of American Christian families, headed by Horshay Stepford, met with the Yemenites (This was the group who established the American Colony near the Damascus gate). This American group, coming to Jerusalem for reasons of religious Messianism, believed that their Messiah would come again with the return of the Children of Israel to their land. The group saw in the Yemenites the lost tribe of Gad returning to the Holy Land, and hurried up to acquire for them living quarters, food and medical help. But the Yemenites, feeling that missionary intentions were involved in their benefactors' good will, cut all connections with them and, as a result, their condition deteriorated even more.

The Hekdesh (Consecration) Houses in the Village of Shiloach

The hardships of the Yemenite immigrants slowly gained the interest of the Jews of Jerusalem. Their suffering was reported and chronicled in newspapers of the time, "Halevanon", "Hatzfirah", "Hatasif" and especially in the newspaper of Rabbi Israel Dov Fromkin, "Hachavatzeler".

In Heshvan 1884, Rabbi Israel Dov Fromkin established the Ezrat Nidachim, (Help to the Remoted), society. This society was created in London and titled "Ezrat Nidachim Society, in honor of Moses and Judith" (Montefiore). Other members were Jews from both Palestine and abroad. The goal of the society was "to assist our poor brothers in finding housing and occupation and to prevent their falling into the hands of missionaries". The first to be helped by the society were the immigrants from Yemen. The society called out to their fellow Jews for donations to build houses for their brothers the Yeminites. Various leaders of the society traveled to meet the most prominent wealthy Jews of the time, to collect donations. Among the donors and active fund raisers were: Rabbi Azriel Hildesheimer from Berlin, Rabbi Yelakov Arieḥ Salphandi from Duckheim, Germany, Baron Morris Hirsch, Cloninus Kalman Halreich from London, Yoseph Kokia, head of the Georgian community in Jerusalem, Yoseph Navon, builder of the train tracks from Jaffa to Jerusalem (and

grandfather of Mr. Yitzhak Navon, later to be president of the State of Israel) and many others.

The society needed a donation of land as well, and from several offers they chose the land of Rabbi Boaz son of Rabbi (ר"י בוז) Yonatan Mizraḥi of the Sephardi community (ש"ס), the Babylonian (originating from Babylon, today's Iraq). Rabbi Boaz was not wealthy, but was an honest man and a true lover of the Land of Israel in all his might, and his good heart made him donate his land to set up a neighborhood next to the waters of Shiloach, with spring waters and gardens surrounding it.



Therefore he donated to the sephardi Kollel half of the land of sixteen thousand cubits he owned on the slope of the Mount of Olives, in order to build homes "for the families of our Yemnite brothers". As the funds were raised and the land donated, the society moved directly to commence the construction. On the 10th of Heshvan 5645 (1885) the cornerstone was laid for three houses, and by the second candle of Chanukah of the same year, the first three houses of the Shiloach village were inaugurated.

The 26th of Kislev 5645 was a day of great celebration in Jerusalem, a day of double joy: not only was the land redeemed in one of the most important sites of Jerusalem, but in addition, those immigrants who were so tormented and humiliated before, living on the edge of total despair, finally found their own place in Jerusalem. It was overcrowded and sunken in poverty, but it was a home in the heart of Jerusalem. Thus, for the Yemnite immigrants did the prophecy from the book of Zechariah finally come true: "Old men and old women shall yet again dwell in the streets of Yerushalayim, everyone of the elderly holding his cane in his hand, and the streets of the City shall be full of boys and girls playing in its streets" (Zechariah, 8 : 4-5).

"On that same day the crowd went out through the Lions gate: the Rabbis of Jerusalem accompanied by the leaders of Ezrat Nidachim society, the philanthropist Rabbi Boaz the Babylonian, heads of the Sephardi Kollel, joined by many

of the people of Jerusalem, and all climbed their way up the mountain and through the rocks towards the village of Shiloach. Upon their arrival at the site, the three houses revealed in front of their eyes, standing in glory and all of them as one recited, in the name of G-d and with great excitement, the blessing, for seeing a destroyed place in the Holy Land restored to its previous grandeur."

"The Yemnite immigrants who were to live in the houses made the blessing "to affix the Mezuzah" and the whole crowd answered "Amen" and praise to the Lord. Afterwards, the Yemnites gathered and sang one of their hymns, like they used to do in Yemen on similar occasions. The feelings of all those gathered were awakened so greatly, that many eyes shed tears" (Hachavatzelet, Kislev 1885).

Additional houses of Ezrat Nidachim were built. Each group of houses built, was inaugurated with great joy by the people of Jerusalem and the Rabbis. "Whoever saw this place only several months ago, when it was completely desolate, and whoever sees now the houses built there, will say with a joyful heart: "G-d, the builder of Jerusalem" (Hachavatzelet, 25 Adar 1886).

In 1891 there were already 45 houses of the Ezrat Nidachim society standing. The houses were consecrated "to the Jewish poor of Jerusalem" and named "the Hekdesh (consecration) houses".

The poor families who were given the right to settle in the houses, used to live in them three years and afterwards moved out to make room for other needy families. The first residents of the houses were the immigrant families from Yemen, followed by the poor of other communities of Jerusalem. Sections of the Hekdesh houses were used as community structures of the village of Shiloach: synagogue, Tahnud Torah, etc. The Hekdesh houses, named also the houses of the Sephardi Kollel, were run for years by the Sephardi Community Council of Jerusalem and not the Ezrat Nidachim society, since the society completed its pioneering mission in building the houses and settling the homeless.



The Yemenite village in the Shiloach

Chapter 5

"And a City shall be built on its former mound of destruction"

1. Establishing private houses.

After living for several years in the Hekdesh houses, the Yemenite immigrant families slowly improved their situation, acquiring private land and establishing by their own hands a charming Yemenite neighborhood south of the Ezrat Nidachim houses. In his memoirs, Rabbi Yoseph Madmoni, the Rabbi of the village, tells of how the Yemenite immigrants acquired ten dunams of land close to the Hekdesh houses from an Arab lady called Fatma daughter of Mustafa, owner of land in the area. The families divided the ten dunams among themselves and each family received a small estate of 10 by 10 cubits. This purchase occurred in 1891 and many documents attest to the continued acquisition of nearby land by Yemenite families in the years to follow. Mr. Moshe Yahud, one of the children who were born in the Shiloach village, wrote: "I think of it even and I can not fathom it, it does not give me rest... How the Jews of Yemen built the houses in the village of Shiloach on that steep slopes of the mountain, without a paved road... I can imagine to myself what difficult labor they kept doing so faithfully, carrying building blocks on the backs of camels, water for the construction on donkeys. With what amount of stubbornness and persistence, of the spirit, what amounts of will power, toil and sweat of the brow they had to put in, and built all those orderly community buildings, synagogues and ritual

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baths. What was the persistent and stubborn strength of faith that goaded them to their holy work?"

"The houses are built by their owners, not professionally planned. Each has a different style... one is built of coarse stone and another of crafted stone, built with whatever at hand, everyone doing as much as he could afford and with the physical strength he had when returning in the evening from a day of work in the city, working in the light of the stars and the moon while putting one course of stones on top of the other, each man helping his neighbor... until they raised the walls and arched the roofs, affixing the Mezuzot and entering to dwell in the new place that even though it is not at all a mansion – for them there is no better than it, and it was greater to them more than any palace in the world. The few streets behind the houses are paved with coarse stone and though they were narrow, cleanliness reigns..."



(I. Zrachi, The Village of Shiloach, Am Oved Publishers, 1980 p.128).

Forty-five houses were built by the Yemenites in the village of Shiloach, who constructed them with their own hands. Within them they lived, in the tradition of Yemen, a quiet and peaceful life.



2. Work and Financial Support

The inhabitants of the village of Shiloach were laborers, and they never turned down any kind of work they could do for their living. Among them were those who worked at embroidery, whose families would sit and embroider under the tutelage of Mrs. Shani, from the 'WIZO' organization which concerned itself with selling their work. Others established grocery stores in the village and supplied the locals with basic necessities such as flour, salt and oil. The Husni family raised cows and sold their milk. Shlomo Hazi traded wheat, which he brought on an adventurous journey from across

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the Jordan river. There were also others who owned stores in the Old City of Jerusalem. From the village came the first stonecutters and quarrymen of Jerusalem stone, such as Salah Yahud and Yehuda Harai, (who were among the stonecutters of the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem). Each family in the village of Shiloach cultivated a small garden next to their house where they grew vegetables and sweet smelling herbs. Others sowed wheat and barley fields for their donkeys and cows.

3. Coexistence

Continuing in the traditions of their life in Yemen, the residents of the village of Shiloach persevered in maintaining peace and tranquility with their Arab neighbors. The Yemenites spoke their language and knew their customs. The good neighborly relations were seen in good time and bad. At the end of the Passover holiday the Arabs baked pita bread to bring to the houses of their Jewish neighbors, and the Jews reciprocated with gifts of food at all times. This special relationship between the Jews of the village and their Arab neighbors expressed itself again during the riots of 1929 as will be told later.

Moshe Husni, one of the children of the village, tells in his memoirs: "We had an Arab neighbor who was unable to conceive. My grandfather, Yatakov Husni, would prepare for her a medicinal of herbs. After two years a child was born, but his mother was unable to suckle him so my mother suckled him. This baby's name was Muhammad Kamna and when he grew up, he took advantage of our family when

in financial straits, loaning us money in hope to take our land in the village as a pledge.



4. The Mukhtar (Head of the Village, Village Leader)

The village of Shiloach had a Mukhtar who represented the people of the village to the local government, institutions of the 'Yishuv', and the Arab neighbors. By his authority, he also dealt with the internal matters of the local Jews. The first Mukhtar was David Awad, followed by Aharon Avraham Maliach.

5. The Religious Leadership and the Synagogues

At the head of the religious leadership of the Yemenites of the Shiloach stood three Rabbis who immigrated from Santa in 1882: Rabbi Yoseph Sa'ad Madmoni, Rabbi Yichia Tzarom and Rabbi Shalom Araqi. Over time, two of the Rabbis left the village and dispersed

among other groups of Yemenites while Rabbi Yoseph Said Madmoni remained the Rabbi of the Shiloach village. Rabbi Yoseph Madmoni was the "mori" (the religious teacher) for the children of the village, wrote Bar-Mitzvah sermons for the children and gave Torah lessons before the community in the synagogue on every Sabbath. Rabbi Madmoni was a Posek, instructed his people in Jewish Law (Halacha), an interpreter of the Halacha, who judged and clarified matters amongst the locals and represented the residents to the government and institutions alongside the village Mukhtar. There were three Yemenite synagogues plus one Sephardi synagogue in the village. The synagogue in the neighborhood of the 'Hekdesh houses' is the only structure of the 'Hekdesh houses' left standing to this day.

6. Educating the Youth

At first, the boys of the village studied with the mori, while the girls and younger children did not have a formal educational framework.

In 1918, a kindergarten was established in the village of Shiloach. Mrs. Rivka Katz from Motza was the first teacher and later, in 1920, was joined by Yehudit Bendel.

Aside from Hebrew education, the kindergarten children who came from poor families received a nutritious lunch. Unfortunately, there were many orphans in the Yemenite village. In a list of the children of the village compiled in 1918, there were 50 children in the village, 23 of which were orphans.

Over the course of the years, the children of the village transferred to study at the Sephardi Talmud Torah in the Old City of Jerusalem and in the afternoons would return to the village to study with the mori. The girls were also sent to study outside the village at the Hadassah school in the Old City.

The way to the school was difficult and winding. Without a paved way, the children would leap over rocks in the summer and find themselves stuck in mud in the winter, while heading down to the Kidron valley, back up to the Dung gate and from there into the Old City of Jerusalem. More than one of the girls of the village feared to pass through the dimly lit area next to the Dung gate, frightened of being harassed by young hooligans from Silwan.

7. The Best of Tradition

In the village a special manner of life developed, following the traditions and customs from Yemen. It was only natural that new groups of immigrants arriving from Yemen would spend their first days in the Land of Israel in the village of Shiloach. Some of the new immigrants were absorbed into the 'Hekdesh houses', and others acquired their own land and houses in Shiloach, while still others spread throughout the land of Israel. When there was a wedding in Shiloach, Yemenites would gather from all over Jerusalem to join in and celebrate the occasion according to the best of Yemenite tradition. Even though the return home would be in the dark over unpaved roads, no one would give up on the occasion to meet and celebrate together.

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The singing and dancing would be accompanied by percussion instruments, dabukas, tunkulas (a copper plate struck by small hammer), and drumming on oil barrels that were readily available. The festivities could be heard from afar.

The bread of the villagers was baked in small ovens in their yards, and was dipped in shug and hilba and eaten together with the soup and kubane. Water was drawn from the spring of Shiloach, as well as from a well called in Arabic Bir Ayub (Job's well) and cisterns dug near the houses to collect rain water. Everyone helped each other in the village spontaneously and altruistically. Most of the villagers found livelihood enough for their living, even in poverty, and helped the needy with necessities and food. To this day, many children raised in the village look back with nostalgia to the joyous atmosphere that reigned in the village of the Yeminites.

"The people of the village of Shiloach lived according to the customs of their forefathers year after year summer and winter, going about their work and completing their chores, propagating and raising their children for Chupa (marriage canopy, wedding) and good deeds. And though wealth did not dwell amongst them, they were happy with their lot and blessed the Lord who brought them out of the land of their Diaspora and planted them in the holy place near the walls of Jerusalem" (Y. Zrachi, The Village of Shiloach, Am Oved Publishers, 1980, p.133).

Beginning of the Decline of the Village

Chapter 6

1929

The tranquil life in the village of Shiloach and its prosperity was sadly cut short in 1929. In the month of Av, 1929, dreadful Arab riots and pogroms broke out in Hebron, the Old City of Jerusalem and many other parts of the land and the security situation deteriorated a great deal.

One morning, when the residents of Shiloach were about their work in Jerusalem and the women of the village were toiling in their homes, cooking, cleaning and baking, a strange Arab appeared in the village shouting in the streets: "Just you wait, the day will come and we will slaughter you like we slaughtered the Jews of Hebron!!!"

That same evening, the residents of the village, represented by Aharon Malach and Rabbi Yoseph Madmoni, approached the Arab Mukhtar of Silwan, Haj Muhammad Gozlan. Gozlan gathered the leaders of the Arab village and demanded that they stop the gangs and not allow harm to come to their Jewish neighbors. For this, the people of the village thanked him in a letter they sent to the community council in Jerusalem after the riots calmed down:

"We the undersigned, the residents of the village of Shiloach, want to inform... that we must express our thanks to that dear man of good heart, the honorable sir Haj Muhamad

Gozlan... and his acquaintances of good heart who showed outstanding human relations to their neighbors, the residents of the Jewish neighborhood of Shiloach during the pogroms of Av, 1929, and did not allow the gangs of ruffians who moved about the area of our settlement Shiloach to inflict upon us harm... "

However, the situation worsened and the threats of Arab gangs and rioters against the Jews grew. They were no longer able to rely on the promises of their Arab neighbors, and without a choice, some of the residents of the village left their homes to settle as 'refugees' in the Sephardi school

Chapter 7 The Village of Shiloach withers away

1930-1938

in the Old City of Jerusalem.

With the calming of the riots across the land, some of the residents of the village of Shiloach returned to their houses, but the village never fully recovered to its previous glory. The relations between the Jews and Arabs became strained and never came back to its previous level of coexistence. The Hadassah clinic in the village, that was evacuated when the inhabitants left, never opened again after their return, along with the only telephone line in the village, which was in the clinic. The families that lived in the 'Hekdesh houses' did not return to them with the calming down of the riots, unlike the private houses that were re-inhabited in the summer

of 1930 by 20 families, comprising 100 people altogether.

A Call for Help

The residents, loyal to their small village although it was in the heart of hostile environment, sent letters to the national institutions, asking for their involvement in saving the crumbling settlement. In a letter to the Zionist Administration, at the end of 1931 they wrote: "... You are aware of our situation... after the hardships that have found us, after the pogroms of Av 1929 and following the difficulties in convincing the community to return to the village and re-inhabit their homes... and now the time has come to pay for the phone calls... and in the situation we found ourselves today we have no possible way of paying even with the smallest coin... we turn to your honors to continue assisting the village in this matter, seeing as it is an important factor in our Yishuv, and without it - it is very difficult to inhabit this remote place".

The population of Shiloach decreased from year to year. Several of the families living in the private homes of the village, even considered the possibility of moving to the Jewish neighborhoods in the center of Jerusalem.

On 18 Iyar, 1933, the residents of the village wrote to the JNF (Jewish National Fund): "This is a disgrace for all of Israel and all our national institutions with the JNF at their head, who had to quickly come forward with advice on how and with what to save a settlement of 48 years from falling into the hands of strangers with gaping mouths waiting to swallow

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it at the first chance...". In the letter, the residents of the village suggested an immediate plan of action for recovering the site and saving the neighborhood. Unfortunately, practical answers were not forthcoming.

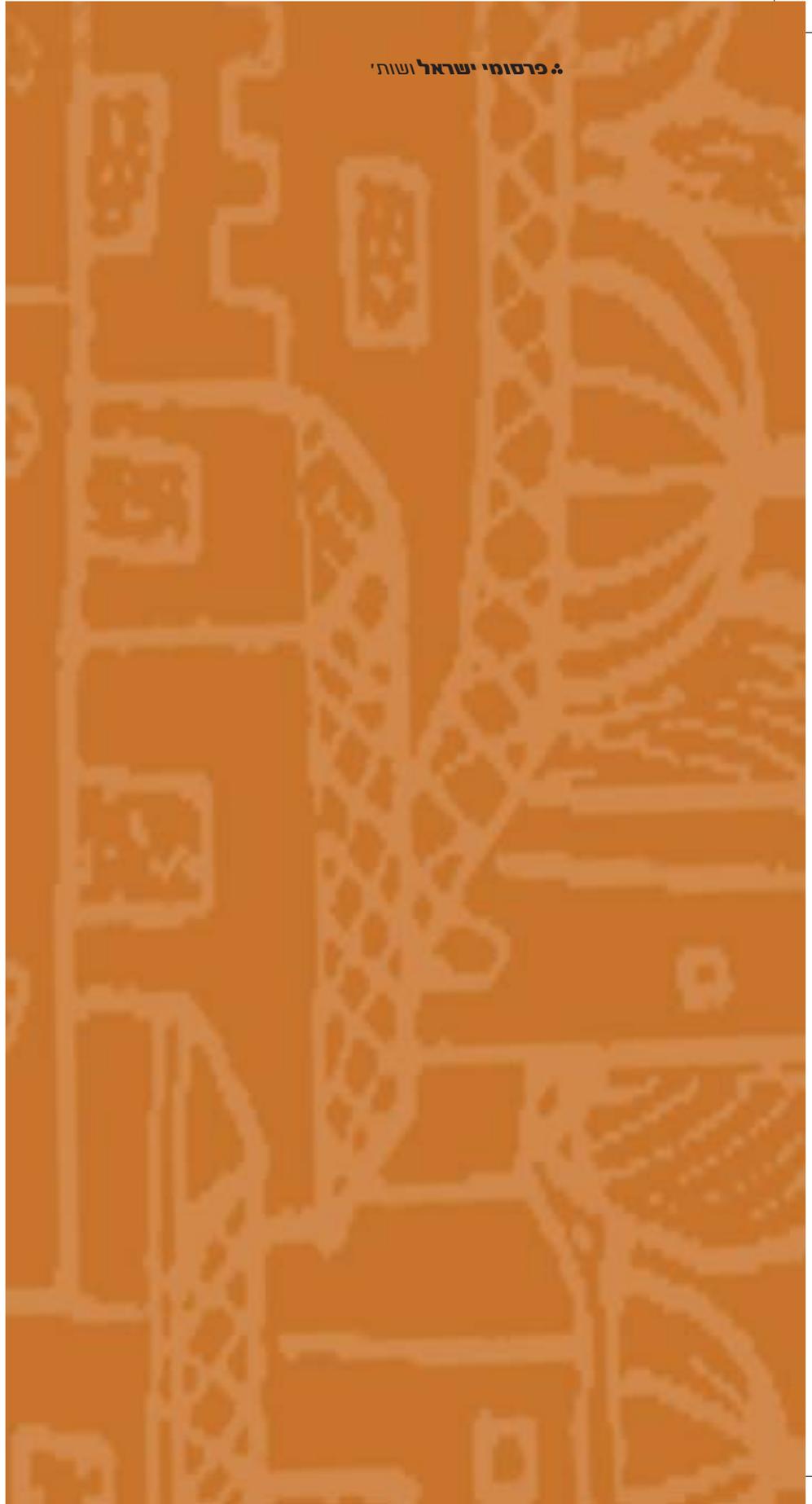
The security situation in the village deteriorated greatly, until the village was completely cut off from the Old City and the western part of Jerusalem. The cut off residents became unemployed against their will and, fearing for their lives, held onto their land with all their might.

On the 4th of Sivan, 1936, they wrote to the Hebrew Community Council: "The continuing situation has greatly worsened and our hopes for an end remains in the air. It has been more then a month that we can not go to work and must live trapped in our houses day and night... Who knows if the situation will worsen, if we are able to continue our stay here, but for the while we do our best in attempt to continue, and what will be will be".

Leaving on Orders

On the 14th of Av, 1938 (11/8/38), the British police guard departed the village of Shiloach, leaving the neighborhood abandoned and without defense. Three days later the inhabitants of the village received an order from the British government that for security reasons they should leave the neighborhood immediately. The 40 people remaining in the village were evacuated and relocated to the Old City of Jerusalem. The village of Shiloach was deserted. After 52 years of continual Jewish settlement, the Yemenite Village came to a tragic end.

✦ פרסומי ישראל ושות'



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Chapter 8

The Destruction of the Village

The village of Shiloach was destroyed. The British initially promised that the "Jewish refugees" would be able to return but they ultimately reneged on their promise. Notwithstanding pleas by the various Jewish governing bodies, the British weren't even able to protect the Jewish property in the area. With the Jewish residents forced to desert it, the British would not allow them to return to their homes again, even though the situation calmed down. Their Arab neighbors looted their houses, removed the doors and windows and belongings left behind, and completely destroyed several of the houses.

On Teveret 1939, Shlomo Ya'akov Madmoni ת"ר, one of the residents of the village, went to check on the state of the Torah scroll he had hidden in his house. Madmoni crossed by way of the valley of Ben Hinnom and was murdered by local Arabs. In Elul 1940, the Ohel Shlomo (Tent of Solomon) synagogue was desecrated. Arabs from the village demolished the site, destroyed holy books and burned the Torah scrolls. The residents of the village, scattered throughout

Jerusalem, (in the Old City, Nachalat Achim, and other neighborhoods), preserved in their hearts the memory of the village and hoped to one day re-establish it as in days of yore.

The destruction of the village greatly depressed Mr. Yitzhak Ben Zvi, the head of the National Committee (later the second president of the State of Israel), Ben Zvi requested of the JNF to redeem the land of the village of Shiloach, and to bring about a reestablishment of the village. He believed in the ability of the JNF to handle this strategic point, being a crucial part in the struggle over Jerusalem.

Mr. S. Ze'evi (father of Rehavam Ze'evi % ¢), the lawyer Mayer Ben Tov, Moshe David Gaon, (father of singer Yehoram Gaon) and many other Jerusalem people made a tremendous effort to rescue the village, but to no avail. In the War of Independence, the village of Shiloach fell, along with the heart of Jerusalem, into the hands of the Jordanians. After the reunification of Jerusalem in the Six-Day War, the children and grandchildren of the first settlers and builders of the village found a desolated village. There had been mounds of destruction, houses had been plundered and Arabs had illegally occupied, squatted and built on the Jewish land within and around the Yememite Village.

A Village Seeking Redemption

Jerusalem is united and the State of Israel grows. With thanks to G-d, we mark 122 years since the allyah (immigration) of our brothers - the Yememites, to the Land of Israel and 120 years since the first Jewish immigrants took hold of the land in the village of Shiloach.

For 52 years the holy Yememite community lived, in joy, beauty and creativity in the flourishing Yememite Village near the Temple Mount – in Kfar (village) Hashiloach, on the slopes of the Mount of Olives.

Today the village stands desolate, full of foreign houses, illegally occupied. It has been 66 years since the Jewish residents were driven and forcibly evicted from their homes in the Yememite Village.

May we see the renewal of the village and the redemption of Jerusalem, Amen.