

ISRAEL ROUNDUP

YERUSHALAYIM

Rabbanim Turn Out to Honor Anglo Olim Kehillah of Afula

On the last day of Chanukah, members of an Anglo *kehillah* in Afula that made *aliyah* together this summer came to Yerushalayim, where they were greeted in the Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim hall in Sanhedria by prominent Anglo *chareidi* Rabbanim, *askanim* and others who came to show their respect and admiration for the group's historic effort in making *aliyah* as a *kehillah* to found Kehillas Chazon Elimelech-Afula.

The *kehillah* is the brainchild of Rav Nesanel Cadle, a *musmach* of Telz and former Rav of the *kehillah* in Yardley, Pennsylvania. Rav Cadle remarked, "The event offered our *kehillah*, and myself personally, a huge dose of *chizuk*. Not only from the remarkable words of the *Gedolim* who attended, but also from all the others who came out to support us, and offer real and tangible assistance."

"The main purpose of the event was to welcome and show support for this group of pioneering families that now came from the U.S. to establish a new community for Anglo *olim* in Eretz Yisrael, and that Rabbanim, community activists as well as 'simple' people here in Eretz Yisrael support these efforts," said Yoel Berman, founder of the Avira D'Eretz Yisroel project and the event's organizer, adding that this public show of support can have a ripple effect with an impact much wider than just for Kehillas Chazon Elimelech.

Ten of the *kehillah's* 17 families made the trip to Yerushalayim, in a bus provided by the Afula Municipality. There was one stop before the welcoming event — as Chanukah drew to a close, the group had a guided tour at Kever Shmuel HaNavi.

Rav Yehoshua Eichenstein, Rosh Yeshivas Yad Aharon, expressed his support for the creation of *kehillos* like this new one in Afula for people coming from America, where they can gain the *maalos* of living in Eretz Yisrael without being forced to immediately acclimate to a completely different culture, easing the transition.

Rabbi Yitzchak Pindrus of Degel HaTorah echoed this idea, mentioning that 25 years ago he was summoned by Rav Nachman Bulman, *zt"l*, who impressed upon him the importance of creating such *kehillos* for Americans, in the same way that communities from all over the world were represented in *kehillos* and shuls throughout Eretz Yisrael. If this was necessary back then, the need is only becoming greater, with the increased interest in *aliyah* as it becomes more feasible.

Rav Shmuel Weiner, Rav of Khal Zichron Nosson Tzvi in the heavily Anglo *chareidi* neighborhood of Ramat Eshkol, noted that today there are many organizations and initiatives to help those who want to come and be able to integrate in a healthy way to get the best from Eretz Yisrael, including *kehillos* like this.

Rav Yitzchak Breitowitz, Rav of Kehillas Ohr Somayach, explained what brought the Rabbanim to this event to honor the new *olim*. He quoted the *mish-*

nah in *Maseches Bikurim*, that the workers in Yerushalayim would stand up out of respect for people who were coming to perform the *mitzvah* of bringing *bikurim*, and that this is brought as a source for showing respect for people who are coming to perform a *mitzvah*.

Rav Zev Leff, Rav of Moshav Matityahu, added that if this is the case for people bringing *bikurim*, it applies all the more for people bringing themselves as *bikurim* — coming to live in Eretz Yisrael. Rav Leff mentioned that although there are certain negative traits of American society that would be better left behind when coming on *aliyah*, there are certain characteristics of American Jewry which *olim* can bring as a positive contribution to Jewish society in Eretz Yisrael. He also added that Eretz Yisrael is acquired through *yissurim*, as Chazal teach us, and he blessed those coming that they be *yotzei* these *yissurim* through toil in Torah and *mitzvos*.

Rav Daniel Travis, *Rosh Kollel* and author, spoke about the lesson of the proximity of Chanukah to the ominous days of the eighth, ninth and tenth of Teves, commemorating the translation of the Torah into Greek, the demise of Ezra HaSofer, and the siege of Yerushalayim. There are victories, but the struggle goes on, and there is still much to do. As with any positive thing, there are obstacles in the way of making the move to Eretz Yisrael, and those who work to overcome them are worthy of our admiration.

The Bostoner Rebbe of Yerushalayim said that in contrast to the great waves of *aliyah* from other countries, of people who were running away from antisemitism and oppression, people from America generally come to do *retzon Hashem*, to grow in Torah, to live a Jewish life, and to experience the Yamim Tovim as they are felt only in Eretz Yisrael.

The Monastrihter Rebbe said that the people who take action and come on *aliyah* strengthen, as it were, Hashem's act of giving Eretz Yisrael to *Am Yisrael*.

Rav Yosef Kamenetsky and Rav Shmuel Malovitsky both said, in the name of the Chofetz Chaim and the Nesivos Shalom respectively, that those who are already in Eretz Yisrael when Moshiach comes will not need a special *zechus* to come, since they are here already. Rav Kamenetsky added that therefore, those who were able to move to Eretz Yisrael now "made a very smart move." Rav Malovitsky noted that we are reaching the halachically significant point of *rov yosheveha aleha*, in which most of *Klal Yisrael* are dwelling in the Land.

Rav Bezalel Ganz, son of noted author Mrs. Yaffa Ganz, came to Eretz Yisrael as a child when his parents made *aliyah* from Chicago. Both he and Rav Malovitsky are among the Rabbanim of the Kedushas Tzion organization, which promotes Torah values in the Israeli public sphere, including encouraging the *aliyah* of Torah-observant Jews. Rav Ganz told



The Monastrihter Rebbe speaks

the assembled in his encounter with *frum* Yidden from abroad in past, he was prised to hear that coming to live in Eretz Yisrael was simply not on their agenda. Rav Ganz said that he is sure that the existence of this new *kehillah* in Afula will help put *aliyah* back on the agenda, as it had been for hundreds of years.

Also affiliated with Kedushas Tzion is Rabbi Moshe Shimon Roth, the Sanz delegate to the Agudas Yisrael party in the Knesset and a veteran *oleh* from the U.S. himself. He told the *olim* that he is truly overwhelmed by their pioneering spirit, and the *zechus* they have of paving the way for others. He also gave his wishes for an easy and comfortable experience living in Eretz Yisrael, mentioning that this is, in fact, the proper way to fulfill the *mitzvah* of *yishuv Eretz Yisrael* — not to suffer and complain, but rather to make sure to be comfortable being back home in the Land.

"That so many great Rabbanim came out to welcome such simple individuals as ourselves was very moving. That we were the center of their attention was humbling and electrifying," said members of the Afula *kehillah* Avrohom and Shoshana Stubin. "We realize that though we feel challenged, having moved from America, our difficulties are really quite trivial compared to those of previous generations. The evening left us with a sense of purpose and the realization that we are yet another stepping stone in the history of our people."

"We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to be in the presence of such great *Rebbeim* who gave so much *chizuk* and *brachos* to all of the families in our



Rabbi Yitzchak Pindrus

kehillah. *Olim chadashim* work so hard to make this idea of coming home to Eretz Yisrael a reality. When you finally arrive and are among so many kind, supportive people, it further solidifies how grand this decision is, and we couldn't have done it without Hashem's helping Hand to persevere through it all. ... We enjoyed it immensely and we hope more will join us home soon," said Daniel and Yiska Bekteshi, also of the Chazon Elimelech-Afula *kehillah*.

Also in attendance were representatives of various entities that are involved in the *chareidi aliyah* scene, including Operation Home Again, which helps with community-based *aliyah*, and Nefesh B'Nefesh, which due to increased interest has now opened a *chareidi* division. Several Kedushas Tzion activists who attended the event did not understand English — the language in which all the speeches were given — but felt it was important nonetheless to come and show their support. Of course, on hand was event organizer Yoel Berman, founder of Avira D'Eretz Yisroel, an organization that promotes Israel's out-of-town communities for Anglo *chareidim* as a realistic way of settling in Eretz Yisrael.

After concluding remarks from the *kehillah's* Rav, Rav Cadle, the crowd broke out in spontaneous dance, singing "*veshavu banim lig'vulam*."



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Rav Cadle speaks



← Some of the new *olim*



← A view of the crowd



↑
Rav Eichenstein speaks



↑
Rav Leff speaks



← A view of the crowd



← Rav Kamenetsky speaks



← Rav Shmuel Malovitsky speaks



← Rabbi Moshe Shimon Roth speaks



← Rav Travis speaks