

spectrum.

The rising prevalence of intermarriage over time can be seen in the USA but is offset somewhat by the growing Chareidi and Orthodox populations.

demographic processes and trends is an essential component of community development work, and is all-too-often overlooked when planning for our

vibrant Jewish legacy. Over the last three decades Aish, alongside other outreach organisations, have increased our investment in outreach and

stand as a testament to the success of organisations encouraging young Jews to embrace their tradition and heritage."

# The joys of Bein Hazemanim

**Akiva Aaronson**  
JERUSALEM REFLECTIONS

Over here in Eretz Yisrael, *Maariv* on Motzoei Tisha B'Av was at about 8:15pm. Walking out of shul after davening we were greeted by a blanket of warm night air, only then realizing the strength of the air conditioning inside. The heat of the day came as no surprise since temperatures that week had hovered around the early 30s centigrade, Tisha B'Av being one of only two days a year - the other Yom Kippur - when the streets are quiet, parents in no mood to chase after children outside!

About an hour after *Maariv* we reassembled for *Kiddush Levanah*, by then life coming back to normal, very much like the start up after Shabbos. Suddenly, the streets were a burst of activity, people hastily walking here and there, cars speeding and buses pulling up one after the other. An hour or two later, sons began arriving home from yeshiva, typically a journey of a couple of hours from wherever they are located around the country. Before long, the *salon* floor - the combined lounge-dining room - is covered with cases and hat boxes. In the *cheder sherut* - utility room - piles of white shirts begin appearing. *Bein Hazemanim* has arrived!

The choice of activities during the *Chofesh HaGadol* (Summer Holiday) depends very much on the size of one's purse and the nature of one's family. The papers are full of adverts. For those who can afford it, a hotel



in peak season will cost you about 1,500 shekels (\$325) per night for a room, twice its off-peak price. Clearly, anyone requiring a few rooms looks elsewhere.

An alternative is to rent a *tzimmer* - small holiday home - also usually in the north of the country, set in pleasant surroundings and likely equipped with a small pool. It's more cost effective, at about \$750 a night, and bearing in mind it provides a dozen or so beds, it's a reasonable choice for a day or two. It's enough to entertain the *kinderlach* and to give them something to talk about afterwards with their friends.

Most cost effective of all is to simply 'swap' apartments with family or friends in another part of the country, those in coastal areas enjoying coming up to the cities, whilst those in the cities enjoying the pleasures of the coast. An *avreich* in one of the

outlying areas might also rent you his apartment for a modest fee, so you have the extra *mitzoah* of helping him through the year. Whatever your destination, the family has the same feeling of excitement, packing up and setting off!

For those remaining at home, many day excursions are available. The *Yam HaGadol* (Mediterranean) is always a firm favourite, buses running from the various towns to approved 'separate' beaches up and down the coast. At a cost of 45 shekels (\$10) per person, men's days are Monday, Wednesday and Friday, and for women it's Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. Buses do the rounds of each *shechunah*, departing at about 2:15pm, so one has a chance to daven *Mincha* and eat quickly before leaving.

Reaching the coast at about 3:45pm - the sun is still

overhead - suntan lotion is of course a 'must', and so, too a vest ('undershirt' in American) to wear in the water. The tour companies allow you three hours there, although if you spend that long in the water itself, you'll return home a beetroot! Around an hour before sunset the *matziel* (lifeguard) announces from his watch tower that the beach is soon closing, although it'll take him a few more blasts on the loudspeaker to get everyone out of the water. Finally, he raises his voice: "*Ani chozer...*" (I'm repeating for the last time!) and slowly the beach empties. As the sun lowers towards the horizon the clatter dies down, and for the first time one hears the breaking of waves as they rush up the shore.

Full day activities departing from Jerusalem include a trip to the Kinneret - a two-and-a-half-hour journey - at the cost of 100 shekels (\$22) a person, which includes *kever* Rabbi Meir Baal Hanes and the Rambam, so you're infused with *ruchnius*, too. Another day trip also to the north might be the ancient port city of Acco, which includes a *shayet* (boat trip) out to sea. Eastwards, you might enjoy the cool waters of the Banias, fed by waters flowing down from Mt. Hermon, and, of course, there's the *Mekomos Hakedoshim* - Tiveria, Amuka, Tzfas and Meron.

Whether you go north, south, east or west, it's one of the few occasions during the year when we leave the towns and appreciate the beauty of the land. "It's a good land, a land of streams of water, of springs, hills and valleys, a land upon which the eyes of Hashem are always on it, from the beginning of the year until the year's end."

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