



הארגון העולמי של בתי הכנסת  
והקהילות האורתודוקסיות  
World Organization of Orthodox  
Communities and Synagogues



70 שנה למדינת ישראל

איחוד בתי הכנסת  
והקהילות בישראל  
Union of Synagogues and  
Communities in Israel



## Iyar 5778-2018 Jews and Judaism-Israel and the Diaspora From 5708[1948] to 5778[2018]

### Jews in the State of Israel

In 5708[1948] there were about 600,000 Jews in Israel. In 5778[2018] there are 6,589,000 Jews in the state of Israel.

Projection: In 2050, there will be 15 million residents in Israel.

In the past year 177,000 babies were born in Israel.

### Cities, towns and townships in the state of Israel

In 5708[1948] there were about 500 cities, towns and townships, all over Israel. In 5778 [2018] there are 1214 cities, towns and townships in the state of Israel.

### Aliya and Olim

Since the establishment of the state in 5708, 3.2 million Jews came on aliya from all over the world.

### Life Expectancy in Israel

In 5708[1948] Life expectancy for men was 64.9 years, and for women 67.5 years.

In 5778[2018] Life expectancy in Israel is men-80.7 years and women 84.2 years.

### Jews in the Diaspora

In 5708[1948] The world Jewish population numbered 11.5 million, of which 600,000 were in Israel.

In 5778 [2018] The world Jewish population numbers 6.589 million in Israel, 5.7 million in the United States, 460,000 in France, 388,000 in Canada, 290,000 in Great Britain, 181,000 in Argentina, 180,000 in Russia, 117,000 in Germany and 113,000 in Australia.

#### Identity and Identification



56% of the Jews in Israel identify themselves as follows: Traditional- 24%, Religious/Traditional 12%, Religious- 11% and Ultra-orthodox [Charedi] 9%.

#### Synagogues and Study Halls [Batei Midrash]



In Israel there are over 10,500 synagogues, in which there are 1.5 million steady worshippers, men, women and children of all ages, in the various liturgical modes. Additionally, study halls [batei midrash], within the synagogue, have been, and continue to be, established, providing venue for designated study for tens of thousands of people, parents and children.

#### World of Torah



Researchers and experts agree that there has never been, neither quality or quantity wise, the large number of people, immersed in Torah study, as there is, today, in the state of Israel. Counted amongst this group are 130,000 yeshiva students who are enrolled in Yeshivot Gevohot, Yeshivot Hesder, Pre-army Mechinot and kollels.

#### From Zion will Torah Flourish- Torah of the Land of Israel



More than 10,000 yeshiva students and young women from the Diaspora spend a year of study in Israeli Yeshivot, Seminars, colleges and Ulpanot. Many of them settle ultimately in Israel.

#### Torah Literature and Online Responsa



In the state of Israel and in communities in the Diaspora there are annual publications of thousands of books, halachic and philosophic novellae, in addition to the establishment of Torah websites that include Halachic and hashkafic responsa.

#### Tradition and Jewish Culture



Many Israelis are expressing increased interest in tradition and Jewish culture. Men, women and children are participating in study gatherings, assemblies, happenings and prayer, on Jewish holidays.

### Chief Rabbinate of Israel

60.7% of the National Religious public, feel that it is appropriate to see the Chief Rabbinate as authoritative halachic decisors on issues pertaining to the public domain.

The information and the projections above, are based on conclusions reached by the Central Bureau of Statistics, "Geocartigraphia", Research fora and more.

# La"g Ba'Omer 5778

**Customs, Prayers and Petitions, Songs and Liturgical Supplications, Shearings [chalakot] and Bonfires, Melodies and Dances In the annual commemorative ceremony in memory of the Rash"bi [Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai], La"g Ba'Omer in Miron**

## Origin of the Custom

From the time that Rabbi Isaac Ashkenazi Lurie [Ha'Ari HaKadosh] {1572-1534} ascended, on La"g Ba'Omer, to the gravesite of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai [Rashb"i], on Mount Miron, and performed the Chalaka[haircut for three year old boy, without eliminating the payot] ceremony, the tradition has continued for hundreds of years. The number of people ascending to Miron, on La"g Ba'Omer, continues to increase and now numbers tens of thousands of men, women and children. Many ascend during other days of the year.

## The Chalaka Ceremony

Three year old boys, being carried on their parent's shoulders, and visitors to Miron, take part in the haircutting ceremony, which leaves the payot and signs of payot intact.

## Lighting Ceremonies and Bonfires

The lighting of a torch, perched on a special pillar, posted on the gravesite of the Rash"bi, symbolizes the lighting of a memorial candle, composed of clothing of sick people, in need of a recovery.

During the course of years, Chasidic Admo"rim and Rabbis requested and received permission to perform lighting ceremonies in the peripheral area around the gravesite. Israeli children light bonfires all over Israel as their emulation of the lighting ceremony in Meron.

After midnight a lighting ceremony is held at the gravesite of Rabbi Yochanan the Shoemaker [May his merit protect us]. This year Rabbi David Shefer [may his light shine] will light this torch in synch with the tradition of his father, Rabbi Avraham Shefer, grandson of Rabbi Chaim Shefer and Rabbi Zvi Hertz [of blessed memory], who lit this torch 120 years ago. For pictures of the lighting ceremony at the gravesite of Rabbi Yochanan the Shoemaker, please see: <https://goo.gl/PLehC2>.

## Songs and Liturgical Poems [piyutim]

During the course of the years gone by, Rabbis and minstrels [paytanim], in communities all over the world, composed songs of praise, tribute and prayers. Those most well known include: "Bar Yochai-your joy sustains", and "And you shall proclaim "such is life- Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai"", traditionally sung on Friday nights.

## The melodies and the choreography

In honor of the memorial ceremony for Rash"bi on La"g Ba'Omer, in Miron, Klezmerim [saxophonists and other wind instrument musicians], played the so called melodies of Meron. Visitors to Miron dance the "Meron Dances" .

For further information, please see Wikipedia entry Melodies of Meron <https://GOO.GL/4pfjeU>

### צהלי ורוני חטיבה שבע

צהלי ורוני חטיבה שבע  
הנודעת מידן ועד באר שבע  
צור ישראל נצחון לך הנחיל  
חיל שרינוך שחרר הגליל  
שיר המעלות אל הגבעות  
אל ההרים אשא עיני  
ממירון רבי שמעון  
צועד לפניך בר יוחאי.

In the war of Independence in 5708 [1948], after the liberation of Miron, Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neriah, ob"m composed the song: Rejoice and celebrate Division 7, which is sung at the gravesite of **Rabbi Yochanan the shoemaker** after midnight.



In the picture: **P'tachia Neriah**, son of rabbi Moshe Zvi Neriah ob"m, who is dancing La"g Ba'Omer eve in Miron, continuing his father's tradition.



**The Lighting and the Bonfires**









**The Chalaka**



**The songs and the liturgical poems, melodies and dancing**

# Jerusalem-Light of the Universe

## In the 51st year of the Unification of Jerusalem

	<p><b>Population of Jerusalem</b></p> <p>Jerusalem is the largest city in the state of Israel.          In 5708[1948], the population of Jerusalem numbered 82,900 people.          In 5727[1967], the population of Jerusalem numbered 266,300 people.          This past year, the population of Jerusalem numbered 865,700 people, of which 542,000 were Jews [62% of the city's residents.</p>
	<p><b>Identity and Satisfaction Level of Jerusalemites</b></p> <p>35% identify as Haredim [ultra orthodox]          19% Religious          12% Traditional/Religious          12% Traditional/Religious-lite          21% Secular.          Satisfaction Level: 92% of those above 20 years of age indication satisfaction with their lives.</p>
	<p><b>Jerusalem-Capitol of the Torah World</b></p> <p>Jerusalem, capitol of Israel, is also the all-time capitol of the Jewish world of Torah, with Torah study exceeding the past, with tens of thousands studying Torah in Yeshivot and Kollelim.          Torah Domiciles: Approximately 10,000 men and thousands of women spend a year of study in Yeshivot, seminars and Ulpanot.</p>
	<p><b>Seventieth anniversary of the state of Israel</b>  <b>World Torah Assembly</b></p> <p>In the presence of HaRav HaGaon Rabbi <b>David Lau</b> shlit"a, Chief rabbi of Israel and Chairman of the Chief Rabbinical Council, prizes were given to outstanding Torah Rabbinic personalities, including Community Rabbis, Roshei Yeshiva and heads of Torah Institutions and Initiatives, whose contributions carried unique significance to teachers and disciples of Torah, wherever they are.          The awards were presented in the World Torah Assembly, in the presence of a large crowd in Jerusalem, with attention given to the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the state of Israel and marking 50 years to the reunification of Jerusalem. At the assembly, learned presentations were offered surveying the wide range of innovations pertaining to Torah learning, to Torah observance in modern medical practice and to Halachic applications in new technologies.</p>
	<p><b>Blessing of the Trees on the Heights of Mount Scopus [Har HaZofim]</b></p> <p>In the presence of HaRav HaGaon Rabbi <b>David Lau</b>, shlit"a, Chief Rabbi of Israel, HaRav HaGaon Rabbi <b>Shlomo Amar</b>, shlit"a, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Mr. <b>Daniel Attar</b>, Chairman of the Board of Directors of K"KL, the Zmartya Choir sang the Blessing of the Trees Ode, conducted by the compose, Dr. <b>Uri Aharon</b>.</p>
	<p><b>Shabbat Shlom Yerushalayim- 27 Iyar 5778 [12-05-2018]</b></p> <p>The central festive prayer of <b>Shabbat Shlom Yerushalyim</b>, in the presence of HaRav HaGaon Rabbi <b>Aryeh Stern</b>, shlit"a, Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem, Mr. <b>Nir Barkat</b>, mayor of Jerusalem, will take place, G-d willing, in the Jerusalem Great Synagogue, with the participation of community leaders from Israel and abroad. The cantor Rabbi Chaim Adler together with the choir conducted by Eli Yaffe, will sing "Prayer for Jerusalem", composed by HaRav Shear Yashuv Cohen, of blessed memory. The public is invited.          For photographic survey of Jerusalem then and now view link: <a href="https://goo.gl/9FsCa44">https://goo.gl/9FsCa44</a></p>