

## The Return Migration of American Olim

If the approximately sixty thousand American Jews who immigrated to Israel, "made aliya," since 1967, it is widely estimated that at least one-third, or some twenty thousand, have returned to the United States.<sup>1</sup> One obvious reason for this high rate of return is the very fact that American olim are free migrants, mostly of the innovative type, who retain their American citizenship and passports, and can readily pick up and return should they so decide.

Although American immigrants in Israel have been widely studied, there has been a distinct paucity of empirical research on those who have returned to the United States. Particularly since they are such a large proportion of the American olim, and they are now, once again, part of the American Jewish com-

munity, the experiences of those who have returned are of particular interest.

### Previous Research

The first empirical study of return olim was by Gerald Engel.<sup>2</sup> He made an analysis of the responses to self-administered questionnaires sent to 443 adult American olim in Israel and 256 returnees who had lived in Israel for at least a year prior to 1967. His general conclusion was that those who stayed did so because of ideological convictions, whereas those who left did so for practical reasons. "Job opportunities, housing, and cost of living were practical considerations for leaving. The desire to live in the Jewish state, experience a religious environment, and enjoy a cultural life were ideological motives for staying."<sup>3</sup>

In 1970-71 Harry L. Jubas conducted an extensive study of a random sample of 1,178 American olim in Israel who had immigrated between 1967 and 1971,<sup>4</sup>

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and he included a series of questions to measure the relative importance of a variety of factors in their hypothetical consideration of returning to the United States.<sup>5</sup> The factor that was most frequently cited as an important one, by as many as 70 percent, was "red-tape and bureaucracy in Israel."<sup>6</sup> From his data Jubas suggests that there is a basic distinction between the American who came to Israel with a commitment to stay and the one who came on a trial basis. Where the latter constantly compares "the efficiency of America with the seeming incompetence of Israeli bureaucracy," the former "chooses to make light of the annoyances and says as does the Israeli, 'there is no choice.' He adjusts to this aspect of the new way of life with the optimistic hope of helping to change the system someday."<sup>7</sup>

Jubas's study was of American olim in Israel, however, and does not provide any information on those who actually returned. It may well be that most American olim complain about Israeli bureaucracy and even imagine this to be a major consideration for American olim to return to the United States. But that does not necessarily mean that it is, in fact, a major factor in the decision-making process of those who return.

In 1978 Mario Blejer and Itzhak Goldberg analyzed a sample of Western olim in the continuous longitudinal survey that has been conducted by Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics since 1969, in which more than one-third of the sample were from North America.<sup>8</sup> Utilizing a theoretical framework within which return migration is caused by the failure of expectations to materialize, Blejer and Goldberg found that one of the strongest determinants of return is unexpected

unemployment. Also, those unemployed workers who get discouraged and withdraw from the labor market are even more likely to return. When housing conditions are poorer than had been expected, there is also a propensity to return. Younger immigrants are more likely to return than older ones because the younger ones expect to feel the impact of the gap between expectations and reality for a longer period of time. Not surprisingly, when the cost of return is measured by family size, it has a negative effect on return. Finally, the researchers suggest that the more knowledge the olim had of Israel and its language, Hebrew, before they immigrated, the less the probability that they would return, "presumably because they reduce the gap between expectations and reality."<sup>9</sup>

There are, however, several limitations of this study for our purposes. Its findings are based on a sample in which Americans are only a minority and we cannot, therefore, know whether the findings would be different if the sample were only Americans. Also, the authors, being economists, began with a theoretical framework that assumed that economic variables relating to expectations and reality were the most significant ones, and they tested the data for those. But there may have been other factors at play in the decision to return that did not show up in these data because they were not explored.

The most comprehensive and systematic study of American returnees from Israel is that of Dashefsky and Lazerwitz.<sup>10</sup> On the basis of data from the Israel Immigrant Absorption Survey (IIAS), conducted monthly by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, they com-

pared the characteristics of American olim still in Israel three years after their arrival with those of olim who had already left. Their findings refine the conclusions of Engel and Jubas. At first glance, they point to the importance of the religious factor in distinguishing between the two groups. As Dashefsky and Lazerwitz put it, "Consistently, those who stayed were more religious and had more Jewish education than those who left."<sup>11</sup>

When subjected to numerous statistical procedures for measuring causality, however, the significance of the religious factor was found to be much weaker. In fact, analysis of the data indicated that only about 20 percent of the difference between those who stayed and those who returned could be explained by this variable. Rather, the only factor that had any significant predictive value was confidence of staying. In line with the earlier suggestion of Jubas, Dashefsky and Lazerwitz found that those who were more confident of staying after having been in Israel either two months or one year (depending on which survey was used for the sample) were more likely to still be in Israel after three years.<sup>12</sup> Although the data suggest that those with higher education and those with weaker or less active Jewish commitment tend to return, no meaningful causal relationship could be established between the characteristics of the returnees and their decision to return. We are, thus, still left with the problem of understanding why American olim return. It is precisely this question to which the study at hand was addressed.

This chapter presents an analysis of return aliya or, as some might call it,

American yerida, based on data gathered through telephone interviews conducted for the American Jewish Committee's Institute on American Jewish-Israel Relations with a group of seventy-one return olim. A "snowball" sample was generated in the tristate New York, New Jersey, and Connecticut area during the summer of 1983. Respondents were located through personal contacts or through their responses to advertisements placed in Jewish communal newspapers. At the conclusion of each interview, respondents were asked to suggest names of others who might be contacted. Obviously, subjects selected in this manner do not constitute a random or representative sample of returning olim, nor does such a small sample allow for broad generalization of findings. Still, their responses suggest the rough profile of American Jews who stay in Israel for some time and then return to the United States. The responses also allude to some of the critical variations in their decision to return.

All of the respondents had gone to Israel in 1967 or later, had stayed there at least one year, and had seriously considered permanent settlement during their stay. Their ages at the time they arrived in Israel ranged from sixteen to fifty-seven years, with a median age of twenty-four years. Their median age at the time of their return to the United States was twenty-nine years, with a range of twenty to sixty-four years. At the time they were interviewed, their ages ranged from twenty-nine to sixty-seven years, and their median age was thirty-five years.

Upon their arrival in Israel, forty-four respondents were never married, twenty-three were married, and four

were divorced. By the time they returned to the United States, only twenty-three were never married, forty-one were married, and six had been divorced. And at the time of the interviews, ten respondents were never married, fifty-two were married, and five were divorced.

Fifty respondents had no children upon arrival in Israel; at the time of return thirty-eight still had none, whereas eight respondents each had one child. Ten respondents each had two children when they left for Israel and thirteen respondents each had two children by the time they returned. Three respondents each had three children when they left for Israel, and four had families of three when they returned. Four respondents who left for Israel with four or more children returned with families of the same size.

Since the Israeli government includes in its return aliya statistics only arrivals who entered the country as new immigrants or potential immigrants, or those who change their visa status within two

months of their arrival in Israel, almost half of the respondents in this survey would not be included in the return aliya figures computed by the Israel Central Bureau of Statistics. But they are included here and are called olim because, despite their initial intentions and their visa status, the overwhelming majority, 84 percent, had obtained visas as immigrants or potential immigrants by the time they left the country. The mean duration of their stay in Israel was 3.9 years. Although this figure is skewed by several respondents whose stay exceeded ten years, it appeared probable that most of them actually considered aliya at some point during their residence in Israel.

A significant proportion of the respondents were oriented toward the professions, as shown in Table 1. In fact, before they went to Israel, 43.6 percent of them had held professional occupations. By the time they returned to America, however, the proportion of professionally employed individuals had risen to 62 percent, and to 69 percent at

TABLE 1

## Occupational Status Before, During, and After Stay in Israel

Occupation	Before Aliya	First Job in Israel	Last Job Before Return	When Interviewed
Professional*	43.6	47.9	62.0	69.0
Student	38.0	14.1	5.6	5.6
Homemaker	9.9	5.6	4.2	12.7
Clerical worker	7.0	12.7	8.5	7.0
Other	1.4	4.2	2.8	4.2
Kibbutz worker	-	12.7	9.9	-
Unemployed	-	2.8	7.0	1.4
Total	99.9	100.0	100.00	99.9

\*Includes teaching and human services.

the time of the interviews, Thirty-eight percent were students at the time of their arrival in Israel; that percentage dropped dramatically by the time they returned to the United States. This change is probably related to the life-cycle process, but it also suggests that many students obtained their first professional jobs in Israel, and others completed their education there.

The structured interviews, which were conducted over the telephone, included questions about the respondents' motives for going on aliya, their reasons for returning to the United States and the differences between their current Jewish affiliations, practices,

and attitudes and those they reported for the period preceding their aliya. Questions also touched on their attitudes toward Israel.

## Findings

### Aliya

As mentioned, the respondents in the sample arrived in Israel with a variety of goals. Some came for a year's study, others for temporary employment, and still others to immigrate. As Table 2 shows, less than half of the sample considered themselves olim upon their arrival in Israel.

TABLE 2

## Intentions upon Arrival (%)

Aliya	47.9
Explore aliya	28.2
No aliya intention	23.9
Total	100.00

An examination of their visa status when arriving in Israel supports their self-defined reports. As shown in Table

3, 55 percent expressed an intent to make aliya by using either an immigrant or potential immigrant visa.

TABLE 3

## Visa Status upon Arrival (%)

Immigrant	9.9
Potential immigrant	45.1
Tourist	36.6
Student	5.6
Other	2.8
Total	100.00

All of this suggests that at least a majority of the respondents arrived in Israel with aliya as a possibility, though they did not come exclusively for that

purpose. They then went through a serious decision-making process concerning aliya during an extended stay in the country. Whatever their initial

plans, almost all of the respondents had at least initiated the process leading to permanent residence in Israel. Their responses indicate a pattern of motivations for aliya that differs somewhat from that found for post-1967 American olim in general. Jewish and Zionist considerations dominate. The respondents left for Israel with a commitment to Jud-

aism and a desire to participate in a Jewish society. In these ways they are similar to other American olim. But the religious factor that was found to be important to increasing numbers of post-1967 American, was even less important to these respondents than their desire for general change and their minority status in the United States.

TABLE 4  
Reasons for Aliya  
Rated as "Very or Somewhat Important" (%)

Potential for fuller Jewish life in Israel	85.9
Zionist convictions	81.7
Desire for change	57.7
Minority status as Jews in U.S.	53.5
Potential for fuller religious life in Israel	42.3
Assimilation in U.S.	32.4

### Return

In their theoretical guidelines for the sociology of migration, Mangalam and Schwarzweller suggest that "if those deprivations that led to migration persist after relocation, and if high value continues to be attached to those desired ends, then adjustment difficulties (manifested by a second migration or a 'return migration') can be anticipated."<sup>13</sup> It was cogent, therefore, to determine whether the return migration of our respondents was motivated by a perception that Israel did not fulfill or live up to their Jewish expectations.

The respondents in this study were presented with two different sets of questions dealing with their reasons for returning to the United States. They

were first asked to name the primary and second most important reasons for their own return. Later, they were presented with a list of possible reasons for their having returned and were asked to evaluate each.

The pattern of responses is strikingly similar to those of previous studies, namely, although Jewish issues were among the most salient in the respondents' initial move to Israel, they were not salient in the decision to return. When asked to give primary and second most important motivations for return, they did not mention Jewish considerations at all (see Table 5), and when specifically asked to evaluate "Jewish life in Israel" as a reason to return, only a small minority evaluated it as very or somewhat

important (see Table 6). Rather, as Tables 5 and 6 show, economic and familial considerations were strong influences, as were professional opportunities, difficulties of daily life, and criticism of or estrangement from certain aspects of Israeli society.

Other researchers who asked their respondents to list hypothetical reasons for returning report similar findings. Harry Jubas, for example, found that complaints about bureaucracy, lower living standards, lack of occupational opportunities, and separation from family were mentioned most frequently. Similarly, Engel found that job opportunities, housing, cost of living, and familial problems ranked highest. Engel also pointed out that olim who returned to the United States were more critical of certain aspects of job satisfaction,

income, and standard of living than were those who remained in Israel.<sup>14</sup> Return, based on both past studies and the findings in this study, can indeed be described as motivated by "daily life concerns swirling around one's family and institutional needs."<sup>15</sup>

But a somewhat different picture emerges from a closer look at the motivations for return suggested by the respondents themselves, as shown in Table 5. Although still among the more important reasons listed, family reunification ranks considerably lower than other factors. But the most dramatic difference lies in the degree of importance ascribed to Israeli bureaucracy. Bureaucracy has been reported as the most distinctive and common problem experienced by American olim in their adjustment to Israel and as the most

TABLE 5  
Reported Reasons for Return (%)

Reason	Primary	Second Most Important
Professional opportunities	19.4	8.5
Societal criticisms	18.1	16.9
Economics	13.9	8.5
Personal	13.9	4.2
Family reunification	9.7	15.5
Educational opportunities	8.3	4.2
Housing	5.6	-
Commitment, end of immigrant rights	2.8	4.2
Social problems	2.8	2.8
Political criticisms	2.8	-
Bureaucracy	1.4	-
Desire for change	1.4	8.5
Army service	-	2.8
Children's adjustment	-	1.4
No answer	-	22.5
Total	100.0	100.0

**TABLE 6**  
**Reasons for Returning the U.S.**  
**Rates as "Very or Somewhat Important" (%)**

<b>Familial*</b>	
Reunification	66.2
Spouse's adjustment	44.2
Children's adjustment	16.6
Overall mean	42.3
<b>Instrumental*</b>	
Income	45.1
Difficult daily life	45.1
Israeli bureaucracy	40.8
Living quarters	28.2
Overall mean	39.8
<b>Expressive*</b>	
Sense of foreignness	45.1
Belonging in U.S.	31.0
Language difficulties	25.3
Size limitations of Israel	21.1
Difficulty making friends	12.7
Jewish life in Israel	12.7
Overall mean	20.9
<b>Security*</b>	
General security tensions	18.3
Time commitment to Israel army	11.2
Overall mean	14.8

\*Categorization follows that of Dashefsky and Lezerwitz, "Role of Religious Identification."

important reason for hypothetically considering returning to the United States among American olim; it also ranked very high in the present lists of evaluated motivations for return (Table 6). It was, however, very low on the list of primary reasons offered by the respondents in this survey and was not mentioned at all in their list of second most important reasons (Table 5).

The discrepancy in the relative importance ascribed to Israeli bureaucracy in

the two tables may result from differences in the way the questions were formulated and the responses tabulated. Table 5 summarizes the responses to open-ended questions in which the respondents were asked to identify the two most important reasons for their return, whereas Table 6 reports the respondents' evaluations of a present list of possible reasons. Thus, Table 6 tends to highlight the pervasiveness of certain problems, whereas Table 5 tends to indicate

which problems were most acute.

Israeli bureaucracy and the desire for familial reunification are both chronic, widespread problems; hence their high showings in Table 6. Nevertheless, they are not acute difficulties; they are less important than those that actually prompted return, as Table 5 shows. A similar pattern was reported by Antonovsky and Katz in their study of pre-1967 American olim. Although bureaucracy was the issue about which the olim most commonly complained, it was found to be less significant than standard-of-living and health issues as the most serious problem.<sup>16</sup>

The respondents also distinguished between economic difficulties and professional opportunities. The latter, a reflection of the relative size and modernization of Israel, was cited by slightly more respondents than was economic difficulties. Although Engel and Jubas present similar distinctions among the important hypothetical reason for return, the relative importance of the two factors is not consistent among the studies.

Another important discrepancy between Tables 5 and 6 concerns the impact of criticism of Israeli society on the decision to return. This emerged in Table 5 as a significant reason for returning, ranking high both in the lists of primary and second most important reason for returning. Perhaps "a sense of foreignness in Israel" (Table 6) incorporates those criticisms of Israeli society, and it ranks high even though it was classified in the expressive category among comparatively low-ranking motivations. Moreover, the reasons listed in the instrumental category may also have implied general criticisms of Israeli

society. The four categories used in Table 6 — familial, instrumental, expressive, and security — follow distinctions introduced by Dashefsky and Lazerwitz, who observed that among their small sample of forty-six returned olim, stated reasons for return clustered around these four themes. This pattern, with the same approximate importance attributed to each of the categories, repeated itself in the data presented here.

The shift from the Jewish concerns that seem to have inspired the respondents' aliya to the familial, economic, professional, and societal difficulties that appear to have impelled them to return was probably accompanied by a reevaluation of their lives in Israel. As shown in Table 4, among their reasons for aliya those that place the locus of motivation in the United States (minority status, assimilation) are less important than those that place the locus of motivation in Israel (Jewish life, Zionism, religious life). When it came to their return, however, the locus of motivation was in the country of emigration (Israel) rather than in that of immigration (the United States). A large plurality of the respondents (40.8 percent) stated that problems in Israel weighed more heavily in their decision to return than did attractions to the United States (21.1 percent). This is in contrast with motivations of the more typical Israeli emigres, *yordim*, for whom "whatever the range of 'push' factors ... the 'pull' of America retains its historical efficacy and strength."<sup>17</sup> The finding, however, is consistent with that reported by Dashefsky and Lazerwitz in their study of American returnees.<sup>18</sup>

The interpretation that push factors have more significance than pull factors



TABLE 7

**Distribution of Push and Pull Factors  
in Decision to Return**

Problems in Israel	40.8
Attraction of U.S.	21.1
Equal influence	14.1
No answer	23.9
<b>Total</b>	<b>99.9</b>

in the return is reinforced by comparing the preparations the respondents made prior to having left the United States for Israel with those made prior to having returned to the United States from Israel. As shown in Table 8, over 60 percent of the respondents said they had

made serious arrangements for employment or study in Israel prior to leaving the United States. By contrast, nearly three-fourths (73.2 percent) reported that they had not made any arrangements for the United States at the time of their departure from Israel.

TABLE 8

**Arrangements Before Israel and Return (%)**

Arrangements	Leaving for Israel	Returning to U.S.
Did nothing	35.2	73.2
Enrolled in education program	39.4	2.8
Made contacts, had job	21.1	23.9
No answer	4.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>99.9</b>

Preparations and the perceived push/pull factors highlight the different approaches the respondents took to their two moves. Since their initial migration to Israel as motivated by pull factors, they made plans for their future in Israel. Their return to the United States, on the other hand, was motivated by push factors and, therefore, there was more of an urgency in leaving and less time to plan what to do upon their return to the United States.

It may, however, be that the differences between their planning for the move to Israel and their lack of planning

for their return are due to the fact that they were Americans who had been socialized in American society and culture. They may have felt that in moving to Israel, a new society and a new culture awaited them and, therefore, they had to plan carefully for their successful integration into that environment. In contrast, they may have felt sufficiently familiar with conditions in the United States to be able to postpone planning until after they were back.

What about the considerations that played such an important role in the initial decision of many American Jews

who go on aliya — the desire to fulfill their self-identities in a Jewish environment? Few of the returnees expressed dissatisfaction with Israel in this regard. How have their attitudes toward Judaism and Israel changed? Has there been a basic shift in the way they perceive and manifest their identity? Kevin Avruch has argued that American Jews who go on aliya, place primary emphasis on the Jewish component of their identity, and both he and others suggest that, once in Israel, they become much more conscious of themselves as Americans.<sup>19</sup> Does their return to America suggest, therefore, that their experience in Israel displaced Jewishness as the primary component of their identity? If so,

does this process continue after they return to the United States? How do the returnees fit into the American Jewish community?

The data in this study indicate that the personal religious and Jewish communal commitments of the respondents increased somewhat after returning to the United States. As shown in Table 9, synagogue affiliation increased generally, particularly among the Conservative and Havurah<sup>20</sup> affiliates, although there was some decline among the Reform affiliates. Likewise, synagogue attendance increased, most notably among those who attended services at least once a week. (See table 10).

TABLE 9

**Synagogue Affiliation  
Before and After Israel (%)**

	Before	After
Orthodox	29.6	29.6
Conservative	28.2	32.4
Reform	5.6	1.4
Other	1.4	11.3
None	35.2	25.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.1</b>

TABLE 10

**Frequency of Synagogue Attendance  
Before and After Israel (%)**

	Before	After
At least weekly	25.4	36.6
At least monthly	18.3	15.5
5 to 10 times per year	19.7	14.1
High Holidays	16.9	21.1
Never	19.7	12.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.0</b>

A further indication that the returnees maintained, if not intensified, their commitment to Judaism after their Israel experience can be seen in the patterns of Jewish education of their children. The high priority the returnees place on the Jewish education of their children is evident in the fact that more than 60 percent of them stated that they now, or plan to, enroll their children in Jewish day schools, and almost 30 per-

cent stated that they now, or plan to, enroll their children in supplementary Hebrew schools (Table 11). This is in sharp contrast to the general American Jewish patterns of Jewish education in which some 60 percent of school age children receive no formal Jewish education, and of the 40 percent who do, 26.3 percent attend day schools and 49.2 percent attend supplementary schools.<sup>21</sup>

Although these patterns conform

TABLE 11

**Planned or Current Jewish Education  
of Children of Returnees (%)**

Day School	60.6
Supplementary school	29.6
Unsure	7.0
No answer	2.8
Total	100.00

with the report of Dashefsky and Lazerwitz, who found that 53 percent of their respondents consider themselves more involved in the American Jewish community after their return from Israel,<sup>22</sup> the present survey does not provide sufficient evidence to conclude that this is the case, or that, where it is, the change was the direct result of the Israel experience. What respondents report at a later date about their previous values, beliefs, and behavior is not a reliable basis for any firm conclusions, and even if it is assumed that the respondents are accurate in their reports of their previous Jewish commitments and that, in fact, those commitments have intensified, this does not necessarily mean that they were influenced solely by their Israel experiences. These commitments may have intensified as part of the life-

cycle process, as is typical for American Jews in their twenties. It is not unreasonable to assume that these same respondents might have had more intensified Jewish commitment even if they had never immigrated to Israel.

Questioned as to their relative comfort as Jews in America since their return, as compared to how they felt before their aliya, approximately 45 percent reported no change, and the other 55 percent was virtually split between those who now feel more comfortable and those who now feel less comfortable.

The same factor, Jewish identity, played a role both for those who said they now feel more comfortable and those who said they now feel less comfortable as Jews in the United States. Those who reported feeling more comfortable added that their participation in

**TABLE 12  
Jewish/Israel Activities and Feelings  
Before and After Israel**

	More	Same	Less	An Answer	Total
Comfort as Jew in U.S.	28.2	45.1	26.8		100.1
Attention to Israeli news items	63.4	33.8	1.4	1.4	100.0
Positive attitude toward Israel	43.7	36.6	18.3	1.4	100.0
Centrality of Israel to own life	57.7	18.3	23.9		99.9

the American Jewish community was enhanced and that their pride in their Jewishness had become more resolute. Those who reported being less comfortable said that they miss the Israeli environment and they experience more intense pressures in their effort to maintain their ethnic and religious life in America. For both groups, the apparent consequences for their Jewishness were similar: a heightened Jewish self-consciousness after their experience in Israel.

Despite the respondents' positive attitudes toward their Jewishness, it might have been expected that they had become somewhat disenchanted with Israel, as was the case with many of the *yordim*, emigres from Israel, interviewed by Zvi Sobel.<sup>23</sup> On the contrary, as Table 12 shows, for a majority (57.7 percent) Israel appears to have become more central to their lives than before they left for Israel, because they had made personal friends in Israel and because Israeli culture continues to influence their lives. Only a small minority (18.3 percent) indicated a less positive attitude toward Israel after their return. Respondents were also twice as likely as before to follow Israeli news closely. This may

simply be the result of their familiarity with Israel, and not necessarily an affirmation of Israel's greater centrality in their lives. But in the context of all their other responses and statements, it does seem that their increased attention to Israeli news reports is part of the large impact Israel has had on them.

The respondents said that their contributions to the United Jewish Appeal and their purchases of Israel Bonds have increased. Whereas only 57.7 percent had given to these organizations before making aliya, 73.2 percent became contributors after their return to America. Again, this may be more a function of the life cycle than a result of their experience in Israel. When queried about the extent of their Zionist identification, a larger percentage than before considered themselves Zionists, though only slightly fewer viewed themselves as "strong Zionists."

An overwhelming majority (87.3 percent) believed that the American Jewish community should support aliya. And although over half disagreed with the statement "Every Jew should at least try living in Israel," the 40.8 percent who still held this view reflected a continued commitment to Israel. Asked what the

TABLE 13

**Zionist Self-identification  
Before and After Israel (%)**

	Before	After
Strong Zionist	36.6	33.8
Zionist	38.0	50.7
Non-Zionist	21.1	12.7
No opinion	4.2	2.8
Total	99.9	100.00

TABLE 14

**Probability of Reattempting Aliya**

Probability	%
None	16.9
Less than 50-50	35.2
More than 50-50	26.8
Definite	16.9
Unsure	4.2
Total	100.00

TABLE 15

**Agreement or Disagreement with Aliya-Related Statements (%)**

Statement	Agree	Disagree	Not Applicable	Total
The American Jewish community should support aliya.	87.3	9.9	2.8	100.0
Every Jew should at least try living in Israel.	40.8	54.9	4.2	99.9
I would discourage a friend from making aliya.	12.7	80.3	7.0	100.0

chances were that they would again move to Israel in the future, 52.1 percent replied that there was either no chance or less than a fifty-fifty chance that they would do so. On the other hand, 43.7 percent stated that they were either certain of attempting aliya again or there was more than a fifty-fifty chance that they would do so.

Despite their own experiences, the vast majority of the respondents remained supportive of the value of aliya. Only a small minority (12.7 percent) stated that they would personally discourage others from going on aliya. On the other hand, fully 87.3 percent stated that they felt the American Jewish community should

support aliya.

The data from this survey and others suggest that there are major weaknesses in the existing organized aliya efforts. Some are related to promoting and supporting aliya within the American Jewish community, whereas others are related to the retaining of American olim in Israel, that is, reducing the return rate of American olim. Before that, however, the issue of separation from family, which was cited as one of the major reasons for return migration, has another significant aspect to it, namely, that from the perspective of the parents in the United States whose children have not and may not be contemplating return migration.



## NOTES

1. An analysis of American olim who immigrated to Israel between the years 1969 and 1972, conducted by Dashefsky and Lazerwitz, indicated that at least 37 percent had returned. The Israel Central Bureau of Statistics finding is a 39 percent return rate for those who were in Israel less than five years. See Arnold Dashefsky and Bernard Lazerwitz, "The Role of Religious Identification in North American Migration to Israel," *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 22, no. 3 (September 1983): 265; Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, *Monthly Bulletin of Statistics*, Supplement D, January 1986.
2. Gerald Engel, "North American Jewish Settlers in Israel," *American Jewish Year Book* 71 (1970): 161-87. For more detailed analyses of specific aspects of the population in this study, see Gerald Engel, "Comparison between American Permanent Residents of Israel," Parts I-III, *Journal of Psychology* 71 (1969): 133-42; 72 (1969): 135-39; and 73 (1969): 33-39; idem, "Comparison Between Americans Living in Israel and Those Who Returned to America," parts I-III, *Journal of Psychology* 74 (1970): 195-204; 75 (1970): 243-51; and 76 (1970): 117-23.
3. Engel, "North American Jewish Settlers in Israel," p. 183.
4. Harry Lieb Jubas, "The Adjustment Process of Americans and Canadians in Israel and Their Integration into Israeli Society" (Ph.D. diss., Michigan State University, 1974).
5. *Ibid.*, chap. 7, pp. 189-245.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 191.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 195-96.
8. Mario I. Blejer and Itzhak Goldberg, "Return Migration — Expectation versus Reality: A Case Study of Western Immigrants in Israel," Maurice Falk Institute for Economic Research in Israel, discussion paper no. 7812 Jerusalem, September 1978, p. 3.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 26-28.
10. Dashefsky and Lazerwitz, "The Role of Religious Identification."
11. *Ibid.*, pp. 268-69.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 270.
13. J. J. Mangalam and Harry K. Schwarzweller, "Some Theoretical Guidelines toward a Sociology of Migration," *International Migration Review* 4, no. 2 (Spring 1979): 10.
14. Engel, "Comparison Between American Living in Israel and Those Who Returned to America," part II, Israeli Background.
15. Dashefsky and Lazerwitz, "The Role of Religious Identification," p. 272.
16. Aaron Antonovsky and Abraham David Katz, *From the Golden to the Promised Land* (Darby, Pa.: Norwood Editions, 1979), pp. 93-120.
17. Zvi Sobel, *Migrants from the Promised Land* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Transaction Books, 1986), p. 174.
18. Dashefsky and Lazerwitz, "The Role of Religious Identification," p. 272.
19. Kevin Avruch, *American Immigrants in Israel* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981).
20. A Havurah is a prayer and study fellowship which typically developed as an alternative to the formal synagogue structure.
21. Chaim I. Waxman, *America's Jews in Transition* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1983), p. 188.
22. Dashefsky and Lazerwitz, "The Role of Religious Identification," p. 272.
23. Sobel, *Migrants from the Promised Land*.

## Notes From Not Far From The Border

1

All my friends for whom I cosigned on loans have, one by one, left the country. I'm not angry at them. Each of them thought he was the only one, didn't know about the others; and I can certainly understand their desire to escape. But with all these loans to pay off, I've had to give up my flat and my lectureship at the university, and move to this small village out here in the desert.

It's a village of a few hundred, each family in a little cottage with a tiny yard. Some of them also have plots where they raise vegetables and turkeys and the like; but Ariela and I have never been the farming type. Ariela, in fact, wasn't too happy about having to come here at all; and not least because of having her vibraphone relegated to a cramped and not very private room. Myself, I haven't been doing much of anything yet; since there's virtually no rent we've been able to get by, and at this distance from the city and the university I find my academic interests have lapsed.

2

Finally at dusk you can step out of your cottage and stand and breathe in the sudden and magical cool. The desert hills have become soft silver hulls; the first Bedouin campfires twinkle from them.

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