



**AFSI CHIZUK MISSION IN ISRAEL**  
**April 17 - 25, 2018**  
**By Helen Freedman and Judy Freedman Kadish**

*The AFSI Chizuk Missions are so packed with activities, personalities, and discoveries, that it is impossible to condense it all in a report that would not turn into a book. Just citing the highlights will exhaust the reader, but here goes:*

**Day 1: Tuesday - April 17, 2018**

Our first stop was the IIHC - the Israel Intelligence Heritage & Commemoration Center in Gllot, which honors those who fell serving in Shin bet, Mossad and Shabak. Joint operations website <http://www.iicc.org.il>. Brigadier General Yossi Kuperwasser spoke to the group. He pointed out that victimhood keeps the PA together. He believes the struggle between the Arab groups is serious. Arabs inherit their refugee status; being a Shaheed - dying for Islam - is indoctrinated.



Meeting with  
Brig. Gen. (Res.) Yosef Kuperwasser



Israeli Intelligence & Heritage Commemoration Center

After a sumptuous lunch in Sarona, we continued on to south Tel Aviv for a tour with May Golan, - champion of the efforts to reclaim the area from Sudanese and Eritrean infiltrators, who are aided by anti-Israel NGOs. Their number has grown to over 100,000. May believes that solutions are elusive because politicians want to keep making news for political gain; it's not about the solution - but who gets credit!



With May Golan, CEO The Hebrew City NGO



In Tel Aviv May Golan



Street scene in Tel Aviv

We traveled on to Jerusalem and ended the day by attending a very moving Yom HaZikaron ceremony at the Kotel.



Two nighttime views at The Kotel on Yom HaZikaron

**Day 2: Wednesday - April 18, 2018**

We traveled to Wadi al-Haramiya, near Ofra, for a Yom HaZikaron Memorial Ceremony with the Binyamin region. One Arab sniper in 2002 killed 10 and wounded 12 Israeli soldiers and civilians in half an hour. Families, friends, and dignitaries paid tribute.



Marc Prowisor and Judy Kadish



Marc shows us the scene of the Wadi Al-Haramiya attack

AFSI friend Marc Prowisor described the harrowing rescue efforts with which he was closely involved. It was an emotionally moving experience.



We continued on to Shiloh - home of the Tabernacle for 369 years. Fascinating new finds in Old Shiloh were pointed out to us by our guide, Moriah, daughter of AFSI friend and guide, Era Rappaport.



Our guide Moriah in Shiloh



Beautiful view of Shiloh



Elad Ziv

We visited the new community in Amichai with Elad Ziv. We're happy to see it actually materializing and the DP's from Amona in their new caravan homes.

It was time to get to the First Station RR in Jerusalem for havdalah between Yom Hazikaron and Yom Ha'Atzmaut. Once the sadness of Yom HaZikaron was over, there was non-stop celebration, music, fireworks, and dancing - in which we all participated. We then departed for a celebratory dinner and continued celebrating 70 Years!



Celebrating Yom Ha'Atzmaut at the first RR station in Jerusalem



Vicki Williams, Hanna Cohen & Helen on Yom Ha'Atzmaut

**Day 3: Thursday - April 19, 2018 - Yom HaAtzmaut**

The Kotel in Jerusalem was our first stop. We enjoyed the fascinating video tour of the "Jerusalem Journey" - offered by the Western Wall Heritage Center.

L – R: Our visit to the Kotel in Jerusalem



We continued on to Gush Etzion with Col. Geva Rapp of Panim el Panim. We had the privilege to enter an army base with female soldiers in the control room with TV monitors, observing every movement picked up by the security cameras. These were Intense 4-hour shifts for the soldiers. Jewish learning, provided by Panim el Panim, strengthens the spirit of the soldiers.



Above 2 photos taken at the Gush Etzion Army Base



Elazar, Alon Shvut, and Netiv Avot are all very close to each other. Netiv Avot is slated for the demolition of 16 homes on June 20. Caravans will be placed in Netzer, near Elazar, where AFSI had planted trees with the Women in Green, in order to keep the land in Israeli hands.



Home in Netiv Avot scheduled for demolition

Eventually, 350 new apartments are promised to be built in Elazar. AFSI has steadfastly opposed all demolitions of Jewish homes and continues to do so. We pray that reason and justice will prevail so that the residents of Netiv Avot do not have to suffer the trauma and outrage of seeing their homes destroyed.

Heading towards Tel-Aviv, we arrived at Sunset Hall in Bat Yam where we were to join Eli Beer and celebrate Israel's 70th, in honor of which 70 Ambucycles were dedicated for United Hatzalah. We enjoyed the fantastic party, great music, dancing, and celebration!



Helen in front of new ambucycles



Entertainers at United Hatzalah Dinner

### Friday, April 20, 2018

We began the day at Oz v'Gaon with Nadia Matar and Yehudit Katsover. A warm welcome is always provided for AFSI. Judy and Helen made introductory remarks. Sam Solomon followed with praise for the work of WIG, and then Ken Abramowitz gave his talk on saving Western civilization. He stressed that the battle between We and THEY is underway. Yoram Ginsburg, architect and senior lecturer at Ariel, stressed the need to plan for Sovereignty - to create TAMA 100 until 2048. The present plan, created in 2005 under the Sharon government, doesn't include Judea and Samaria. A new plan is vital!



AFSI is warmly greeted in Oz v'Gaon



Nadia Matar & Yehudit Katsover listen to Judy speak



Ken Abramowitz delivers speech

We continued on to Hebron, the home of our Matriarchs and Patriarchs, and some of the most amazing people in Israel. We visited Yifat Akobi, heroine of Hebron in her new home in Beit Leah, adjoining Beit Rachel. Both buildings were recently reclaimed by the Jews of Hebron.



Extraordinary sacrifice and devotion turns these buildings into homes.

Judy, Yifat Akobi and Helen



We returned to Yerushalayim to prepare for Shabbat services and the festive Shabbat meal.

**Day 5: Saturday - April 21, 2018**

Shabbat in Yerushalayim is always special. Morning services were followed by a lavish lunch and a little down time. We gathered in the late afternoon to walk to Old City for Seudah Shlishit and Havdalah at the Beit Wittenberg home of Recheli and Rabbi Suberi. This was an Inspirational conclusion to Shabbat. Pinchas, one of the Rabbi's students, helped with translating and guiding us in and out of the twisting, narrow streets of the Old City. While the men were davening Maariv, the women were taken to the roof of the building from where we could see the many illegal homes built by the Arabs. This is a pervasive problem in Israel that seems to be ignored, but like the weeds in a garden, can be very destructive.

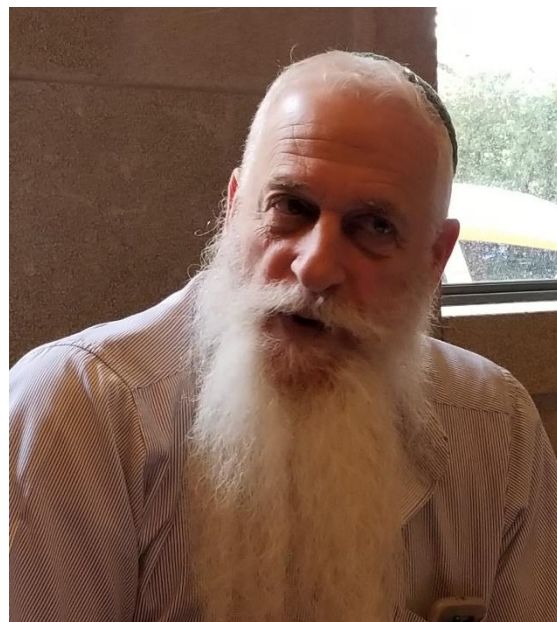
Motzei Shabbat - Some of the group went off to Machane Yehudah for food and fun. Others remained at the hotel to attend a talk by Yehuda HaCohen, somewhat controversial speaker. He has alternative ideas about how to deal with the Sovereignty issue, some of which are unfamiliar and could be disturbing.

**Day 6: Sunday - April 22, 2018**

Yaakov Hayman, our Temple Mount guide, met us at our hotel, rather than at the entrance to the Temple Mount, because a heavy, cold rain discouraged ascending the Mount. A map of the Temple Mount was shown, created in 2013 by surveyors. We were shocked to hear that the Israel Map Authority has not acknowledged the map. This prevents proper registration of the Temple Mount site whose ownership by Israel must be legalized. The hope is that visitors will go to the Temple Mount rather than the Kotel.



Yehuda HaCohen



Yaakov Hayman

AFSI may be the first American group to gather at the Israeli Consulate in Jerusalem recognizing it as the new US Embassy in Jerusalem. We assembled there, taking photos and singing anthems to mark our visit.



Outside what became the new site of the United States Embassy in Jerusalem!!

We drove on to the Shomron, with our first stop in Itamar with Rabbi Moshe Goldsmith. We assembled in the beautiful Rennert Synagogue for an introductory talk and then traveled on to the hilltops to enjoy breathtaking views of Har Gerezim, Mount Ebal and Shechem. The city, now in Arab hands and referred to as Nablus, is off limits to Jews with the exception of Kever Yosef, which Jews have very limited visitation rights to, and only when protected by the IDF.



In the Shomron on a mountaintop in Itamar



Sign forbids entrance to Israelis – meaning Jews



We went on to the wheat fields of Yitzhar with Ayelet and Akiva HaCohen whose drive and determination have created a very successful flour mill. Neighboring Arabs have planned to burn down the fields, so AFSI agreed to help with building a fire wall. Mincha in the beautiful little synagogue on top of the hill was very meaningful.



AFSI men daven in Yitzhar shul



Ayelet HaCohen & daughter



Akiva HaCohen

In Havat Gilad, we met Ilana Shimon and Marc Prowisor who had worked with AFSI in dedicating new security cameras for the community. The murder of Rabbi Raziell Shevach, on the road outside Havat Gilad made the cameras a priority. The Rabbi's widow, Yael, joined us.

Helen, Judy and Marc Prowisor in front the AFSI dedication sign: *"Dedicated with much love to the Security of our Chaverim in Chavat Gilad from Americans for a Safe Israel"*



Ilana Shimoni, leader of the Havat Gilad community

Avi Zimmerman met us at Ariel, a city that is celebrating its 40th anniversary. It is home to Ariel University serving 15,000 students. Avi showed us where 16,000 new homes will be built and took us to the memorial building for Ariel's first mayor and founder, Ron Nachman.



Ron Nachman was Ariel's founder and first mayor



Ariel – A thriving view

We met Ezri Tubi, the creator of Boomerang, at his studio in Ariel. We viewed some of his most famous videos, including the one on Amona and Netiv Avot, which AFSI had commissioned. We believe we must protest the indecent and irrational demolition of Jewish homes in Israel. The group had a good laugh viewing the “donkey carts” video. Ezri filmed the supposed Arab primitive mode of transportation and showed us that over 50% of the cars being driven on Israel's roads have Arab license plates. Not a single “donkey cart” was in sight.



Ezri Tubi

We spent the night at the Eshel HaShomron Hotel in Ariel. Menachem and Tova have renovated the hotel so that it is very comfortable for guests. It's sad that AFSI is one of the few Jewish groups to stay there. TripAdvisor has to list this hotel!



**Day 7: Monday - April 23**

Traveling north to Kfar Vradim in the Galilee, one sees the takeover of the land by Arabs. Minarets and sprawling villages and cities cover the land. Magnificent Arab villas, homes, and apartment buildings are everywhere. Our reason for going to the home of Aharon Pulver, head of the Israel Independence Fund, was to learn about Arab attempts to take over the new construction in Kfar Vradim. Unfortunately, the problem seems to defy a solution.



With Aharon Pulver in Kfar Vradim

We went on to Pequin and the cave of the RASHBI - Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai, where the Rabbi and his son hid from the Romans and where he wrote the Zohar. The ancient synagogue houses relics from the 2nd Temple. We felt privileged to be visiting there.



In Pequin with Aharon Pulver

We arrived in Kiryat Shmona, on the Lebanese border and were greeted by Nechami Genis and Maya Mizrachi, leaders of Ayalim. In the 15 years of their existence, 22 student villages have been built and are occupied by them. Some are built from scratch, as in Lod where there are 150 students, from containers, as in Sderot, and from mud blocks, as in Ashalim in the Negev. Students work with the community volunteering 300 hours each year. The government gives

financial support and expects the villages to be located primarily in the Negev and Galilee.



Nechami Genis and Maya Mizrachi

Kfar Giladi was our overnight hotel. It was so lovely, we regretted that we had only one night to stay there. It was a home talent evening with Doug Altabef speaking about Im Tirtzu and the campaign against the NIF. Ken Abramowitz spoke about the gap between the PA perception and reality as being too large to bridge, and Charlie Bernhaut presented an impressive PowerPoint on the history of Jewish music. As a collector owning 13,000 albums of Jewish music, as well as, cassettes and DVD's, Charlie has been broadcasting his treasure trove through radio and internet for over 40 years.

### Day 8: Tuesday - April 24

A must stop was at Amuka for special prayers regarding personal wishes relating to home and family. We proceeded on to Tsfat, the great mystical city. Shopping, visiting the old synagogues, walking the streets of the Old City were all quite magical. A TV crew from Channel 1, whom we had met in south Tel Aviv on our visit with May Golan, caught up to us in Tsfat and followed the group around. It will be interesting to see what, if anything, is reported!



Channel 1 filming our group



Helen and Charlie at Tsfat ancient Abuhav Synagogue



We began driving past the Kinneret, thru Tiberias, and down the Jordan Valley where we were met by Benny Gavrieli, who became our guide for the rest of the day. He took us to the Isle of Peace, where 7 Israeli girls were killed by Jordanian soldiers in 1997. We saw lots of great farming, along with 5 new hydro-electric plants. Since 1994, trucks being driven from Jordan to Haifa have been traveling over Israel's 4 bridges. Because of traffic jams, Israel plans to build a RR from Beit She'an to Haifa to accommodate the transfer of Jordanian goods. Such a good neighbor! Sde Eliyahu, Benny's traditional, religious Kibbutz, has become famous for its anti-pesticide approach to farming. Bio-bees, a spice factory, insects, pests, owls, all keep that Kibbutz free of pesticides. Date trees, male and female, (who knew?) depend on wind pollination. Solar electricity provides the power. It was all a great experience.



Benny Gavrieli



BioBee at Sde Eliyahu

After a wonderful dinner at the Kibbutz, we attended the Beit She'an sound and light show. It included a nighttime tour where the guide explained about the civilizations that were built, one upon another, over the centuries. In 749 AD a huge earthquake destroyed the city with the Jordan River flooding it. Excavations have slowly uncovered the ruins.



Beit She'an Sound and Light Show

We checked into the Beit She'an hostel for overnight, which proved to be a nice surprise.



Maskiot Synagogue

### Day 9: Wednesday - April 25

Traveling down the Jordan Valley, the first stop was Maskiot, built by those expelled from Shirat HaYam in Gush Katif. Shai met us, along with the security chief, in the beautiful new synagogue donated by the Moskowitz family. We learned there are 35 families in Maskiot at present with 25 new homes being built. The community needs new or repaired security cameras since the old ones were broken by the Bedouins who have taken over the areas. Steps are already underway to help the situation.



Main street in Maskiot

Rotem, in the Jordan Valley, settled initially by a lone woman, Shira Amusi, is now home to 45 families, and a wonderful shop where natural creams and lotions are sold. The village also boasts a great restaurant. Here, too, the Bedouins are expanding their camps, grazing their animals and on a deliberate path to taking over the land.



Lunch in Rotem



Shopping in Rotem



It was in Mitzpe Yericho that we had our greatest surprise. Standing at the Dead Sea balcony with a view of Jericho in the distance, we saw the most amazing moonscape landscape. The tawny desert color was shaded by the highs and lows of the land so that it looked like a painting. Totally unreal. Mitzpe Yericho is celebrating its 40th anniversary with 450 families and 2,800 children. Moshe Eyal spoke to us about the battle amongst the PA, the Bedouins, and Israel. The solution is not readily available. Our entire group piled into 5 jeeps and formed a caravan, driving thru the mountains. We stood on old ruins and viewed the sprawling Bedouin villages below with many of the structures bearing the EU flag. There is no mystery about who is funding this invasion of Israeli property in the strategically vital E1 area.



Beautiful Mitzpei Yericho



Our guide Moshe Eyal



Illegal Bedouin Villages on Israeli land

The official tour ended Wednesday night but adventures continued for those who extended their trip. Many Chizuk participants celebrated a special birthday of a group member in the old city and this concluded the AFSI Chizuk Mission of April 2018.

\*\*\*\*\*

**PLANS ARE BEING MADE FOR THE  
OCTOBER/NOVEMBER  
CHAYE SARAH CHIZUK MISSION TO ISRAEL**

***STAY TUNED FOR MORE INFORMATION***

\*\*\*\*\*