



MEVASSERET מְבַשֶּׁרֵת
ZION צִיּוֹן

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The ambivalence regarding Aliyah has always and will always exist. I'd like to share with you some reflections taken from the recently published, "Letters to Yitz." The late Arthur Jaffe grew up in the Hashomer Hadati Movement in Cleveland, and had been planning on making Aliyah following his Hachsharah program in New Jersey. The year was 1948. For various reasons, he ended up staying in America and never made Aliyah. The irony of Arthur Jaffe's story was that he was murdered in Cleveland, just a year after he had finally bought an apartment in Israel. I am quoting excerpts from his letters to his brother, some thirty years later, because any one of us could be writing the same words today. Time marches on, but the words remain the same:

"All those years of religious upbringing, of talking about Palestine, involvement in the Hashomer Hadati youth movement, and the moshava summer camps. How could they expect me to be loyal to them as parents, yet not be loyal to the ideas and feelings they gave me as a religious Jew? They think this business of Palestine is for 'other people,' when you really get down to it. For refugees, for New Yorkers, for shlichim (emissaries), for professional Zionists, and for other people's children — but not for Arthur! ...What astounds me is that only a few young Jews in America, three years after the Holocaust, really understand what is going on. Everybody here wants a Jewish State, but nobody wants to live in it. The ultra-orthodox don't even want a Jewish State, unless Moshiah himself rides in to announce it. They probably wouldn't believe him even then....Sooner or later, beyond all the socializing, fund-raising, and running around building a movement, you'll have to decide what all this means to you personally. For some, it's just a passing event in their lives. Some will carry Zionism like a hunchback for the rest of their lives. Others will settle for nothing less than the real thing, Palestine."

The preceding letter was dated January 20, 1948, a letter to be contemplated by all.

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