

After the official ceremony, which took place on the basketball court site at the Moked, we went to the cliff on the site for a very special event. Through the efforts of Haim, who had prearranged with about 15 settlements within eyesight of Har Chalutz, we lit a huge torch on the cliff to indicate the establishment of the settlement, and those 15 settlements in turn lit torches which we could see, establishing a bond of solidarity with settlements throughout the area. It was a very moving and exciting experience—and Kol HaKavod to Haim who was responsible for the idea and its implementation.

I would like to tell you about the people who live on the mountain. We are currently nine families, which include 8 Americans, 7 Israelis, one South African, one from Holland, and one from Scotland. There are currently four children at the site and three families are expecting. The families are Oscar and Esther Silberman, Ehud and Yonat Ryden, Frank and Gail Norton, Bram and Nitza Fine (and two-week-old son Ari), Hal and Esti Applebaum (who are expecting in December), all from the Garin in the States. In addition, there are Steve and Erela Wilson, who are expecting their first child in April. Steve is a former New Yorker who works in computers. Erela is a veteran Israeli and a graphic artist. Also, David and Karen Aharoni, their two-year-old daughter Yael (and another due in March). David is an Israeli who works in electronics in Karmiel, while Karen, originally from Scotland, works in a kindergarten. Also, Moshe and Shlomit Dante and their two year old son Elad. Both are Israelis. Moshe works in electronics at Elbit in Karmiel and Shlomit works at the Merkaz Klita in Karmiel (which is how we met them in the first place). Last but not least is Avi and Yael Avital and their 10-month-old daughter Maya. Avi is an Israeli who works as an independent salesman and Yael, originally from Holland, is a secretary in Karmiel.

I cannot say enough about this group of people. We are all in a very exciting, difficult and somewhat scary situation, and we have a tremendous task before us. Thus far I think we have done a great job and have worked together with a high level of commitment, cooperation and determination. My hope is that we continue on the same note we have started.

I must also add that we have another settler at Har Chalutz—a short, bespeckled fellow who is an exercise in constant motion—Haim Sharett. Haim is living in a caravan at the site on a semi-permanent basis and is salaried as a “Rabash,” the security head at the settlement. Haim continues to work non-stop for the advancement of the settlement, and plans to dedicate most of his energies in the coming year towards the planning and establishment of industry and the tourist project at Har Chalutz. I haven't the words to describe what Haim has meant to us, as those of you who know him can attest—and you can all rest assured that he continues to give 110% of himself to Har Chalutz.

I would also mention that in addition to the nine families living at the site, we have another ten or so member families actively involved with Har Chalutz, whom we hope to see joining us on the mountain very soon. Two families, Richard and Barbara Levine and their three-year-old son Ari, and Daniel and Dvora Oren, who have a four-year-old son, Nimrod, and another expected in December, should move to the site in the next two months, bringing our total to 11 families, including 8 children, by the end of December. Other garin families plan to move to the site in the spring and summer of 1986, and I think our chances are quite good of filling the first 20 caravans by fall of 1986.

Of course, in addition to all of us in Israel, there are all of you in the States. We anxiously await news of when you will be joining us, as we need you to come and help make this thing work. I finally got approval to attend the Kinus which takes place in two weeks, and I look forward to seeing my old friends from the Garin and meeting the new members who have joined since the time we moved to Israel. Well, normally, I would say at this point that we look forward to seeing you soon in Israel, but this time I can also say that I look forward to seeing you at the Kinus in New York. Lhitraot.

B'vracha,

Hal Applebaum
Mazkir, Har Chalutz