

by Yishai Fleisher

The Talmud relates a story that Rabbi Akiva and a few colleagues came up over a Jerusalem hilltop and saw the ruins of the Temple splayed in front of them. The rabbis began to weep, but Rabbi Akiva laughed. His colleagues were mystified. "Akiva" they asked, "how can you laugh at such a painful sight?" He answered simply: "The prophecies of destruction have come true, surely therefore, the prophecies of redemption shall come about as well."

Much of our self-image depends on our perspective and attitude. Rabbi Akiva had the ability to see the big picture even as things looked bleak, and so too today, we Jews have to remain positive in spite of sorrow, and resilient in the face of adversity.

A look at our world might indeed bring us to tears. Global anti-Semitism is feeding off fascist-Islam and has Israel in its genocidal crosshairs. "Palestinian" murderers shoot Jewish children at point blank range. Anti-Semitism disguised as anti-Zionism besieges American college campuses. Jews all over the world are under attack.

Yet, if we look at the big picture we see that in our time Israel's Jewish population continues to grow, Aliyah to Israel is still happening, and our glorious Jerusalem is constantly being built. The prophecies are coming true.

Jewish history is leading us back to Israel. The notion that Israel needs a strong Diaspora to survive is oxymoronic; it is as absurd as saying that in order to maintain a strong body it should be cut into two. American Jewry and Israeli Jewry are two pieces of one whole and our destiny is to reunite. The stronghold of the Jewish people is Israel, and that is why our enemies are trying to destroy it.

Today our job is to strengthen the Jewish people by giving strength to our future in Israel. The following is a short list of totally doable, pro-active, post-cynical, neo-Zionist ideas; weapons with which to reinvigorate the spirit of Israel and the Jewish people:

Israel Campus RV:

Bring in the troops! Let's send out a pro-Israel RV to every North American college campus. Jewish activists will spread Israel cheer and Aliyah spirit to the myriad of Jewish students who have been deflated by anti-Semitism and

"Palestinian" lies. The Israel tank will be equipped with movies, Israel information material, and much Jewish pride. It's time to attack the campuses full on and to win the battle for Jewish minds.

Adopt-an-Oleh:

In the spirit of Nefesh'bNefesh, let's create a program by which philanthropic and organizational money is allocated to buying out the debts of American Jewish college graduates and young families. Young people who are eager to settle the Land, and who are willing to work hard are deterred from moving by their loans and debts. We can help these young people overcome that challenge by making funds available to them so that they can make Aliyah today.

Retirement Homes in Israel:

No one should have to choose between life in Israel and dedication to their aging parents. Let's help families move to Israel by building state-of-the-art retirement homes and assisted living communities in Israel. Americans are accustomed to a high standard of amenities and care – we should provide it. We must create a community low on transition anxieties and high on comfort. Our parents deserve it.

"Three Times A Year" Program:

Let's create a program by which Jews who reside in the Diaspora can visit Israel three times a year. One 'pilgrimage ticket' gets a Jew to the Holy Land for the holidays. This program will boost Israel's tourism industry and create a bond between Jews all over the world. "No man will covet your land when you go up to appear before Hashem, your G-d, three times a year." – Exodus 34:23-24

Online Aliyah registration and Israel Apartment raffle:

Let's make the process of moving to Israel easier by creating online Aliyah registration. Jews interested in Aliyah can sign up to receive information and begin opening up their file on the web. Furthermore, we can encourage immigration and awareness by raffling an apartment in Israel every month to those who register! This year in Jerusalem!

Aliyah Boat:

Let's organize a ship that will take 2500 American Jews on Aliyah. We will set sail from Manhattan harbor bound for a new life in the Holy Land. On the boat we will study Jewish history, basic Hebrew, and Israeli folk dance. Together, we will watch as the sun rises from the east, over our ancient HomeLand. EXODUS! - The Aliyah Boat promises to be the adventure of a lifetime!

We can make all of these ideas come to life, and there is much more that can be done. At this crucial time, fear is sin, and inaction is unforgivable. We need to open our eyes, recognize the problems, and then turn to action. We Jews must unite as never before under the flag of Israel and the Shield of David. We have to fight to inherit that which is rightfully ours.