**Chapter Four - Halachic and social initiatives**

In the 1950s, Hever HaRabbanim was an initiator and activist in a number of halachic and social arenas. This period was dramatic in the shaping of religious life in Israel, and initiatives were required to upgrade the halachic and spiritual level in the country. As Hever HaRabbanim had taken the initiative in the publication of Torah Umedina , so too were they active in other areas: A.  Composition of the Independence Day Prayer by Hever HaRabbanim, for the first Independence Day celebrated in the country, in the year 5709. B Preparations for the shmita year. C. Establishing the yarchei kallah program. D. The 'settlement adoption project', i.e. strengthening settlements – mainly in the periphery – from a religious point of view.

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One of the controversial topics between the ultra-Orthodox public and the religious-nationalist public is the issue of the special prayer composed for Independence Day. Considering the fact that it was the Chief Rabbinate that published the Independence Day prayer, the impression one gets is that this prayer, which includes the reciting of Hallel and a special haftora, as well as other rituals that distinguish it from the regular weekday prayer, was written by the Chief Rabbinate.  However, the conception and execution of a special prayer for this day was actually the work of the rabbis of Hapoel HaMizrachi, who then asked for the approval of the Chief Rabbinate.

In April 1949, after discussions in the Knesset and the government, the Independence Day Law was passed. The law states that the Knesset declares the 5th day of the month of Iyar as Independence Day; that Independence Day will be a national holiday, and that the Prime Minister is authorized to issue instructions regarding the official raising of the flag, and national celebrations on Independence Day.  Over the years, revisions were made to this law. For our purposes, the important point is the new halachic questions faced by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel and whose main point was to examine the spiritual and halachic dimensions of Independence Day. Shmuel Katz points out that it was deemed especially important to impart a religious character to Independence Day because this contributed to shaping the spiritual image of the state, and was an expression of the religious Zionist view espousing the religious significance of the State of Israel.[[1]](#footnote-1)

One of the questions faced by the Chief Rabbinate in this matter was the question about the prayer on Independence Day: which prayer, if any, was to be instituted? What texts were to be included in the prayer?

During the month of Nissan 5709 two announcements were published in HaTzofeh on behalf of the Chief Rabbinate, from which we learn about the Chief Rabbinate's position on the matter: the first was published on the 11th of Nissan and focused on the subject of national mourning. As we know, Independence Day falls on the days of counting the Omer, when mourning customs are observed. The Chief Rabbinate ruled that mourning customs would be canceled on Independence Day. This decision apparently drew opposition from many, since canceling or abolishing religious laws is considered a far-reaching step in halacha, much more so than instituting a special prayer. Therefore, the Chief Rabbinate issued another announcement on the 20th of Nissan. In this announcement, the Chief Rabbinate retreated from canceling mourning customs on Independence Day on the grounds that the Old City of Jerusalem was not under the rule of the State of Israel. At the same time, the Chief Rabbinate published its decision regarding the nature of the day: no *tahanun* prayer is to be recited on this day; in the morning prayer, the Hallel is to be recited without a blessing, yizkor for the commemoration for fallen soldiers the War of Liberation and a prayer blessing the State of Israel; a festive meal and song, and giving gifts to the poor.

The Chief Rabbinate's decision regarding the festive prayer for Independence Day was too general and did not give sufficient expression to the significance of the miraculous nature of the day. This topic preoccupied Hever HaRabbanim from its establishment and one of the first questions that preoccupied its founders was the subject of the Independence Day prayer. The intention was to instill a religious and festive content into Independence Day by composing a prayer with a fixed text.

Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, who edited the Torah and Medina compilations (which we discussed in detail earlier) took the time to deal with this matter as well, together with Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neria, founder of Yeshivot Bnei Akiva and members of Hever Rabbinim. The idea was to give Independence Day a festive character but not to overemphasize the halachic ramifications of the day, because the state was governed by distinctly secular majority and not by the Torah.[[2]](#footnote-2)  Rabbis Yisraeli and Neria composed a special prayer service for Independence Day and then they asked for the approval of the chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Uziel. The order of prayers included:

At the *arvit* [evening] prayer, people were to dress in holiday clothes, recite chapters of the Psalms and stanzas from "Lecha Dodi" Aravit prayer, say "Shema" 3 times "The Lord is God", "a prayer for the miracle wrought, blowing the shofar and the Shehechyanu prayer.

In the morning prayer: Hallel without a blessing, a special haftora "Od hayom beNov", the blessing "Hanoten yeshu'a" for the president and the government, "Mi Shaberach" for the Chief Rabbinate and "Yizkor" for the victims of the Holocaust, the fallen in the War of Liberation, and especially for those who were killed in Gush Etzion.[[3]](#footnote-3)

This prayer service was submitted to Rabbi Uziel for approval. Rabbi Uziel made a number of comments and corrections, and the order of prayer was published the 30th of Nisan 5709. Although today there are several versions of the Independence Day prayer, this prayer is a milestone in instituting the Independence Day prayers recited today.[[4]](#footnote-4)

This initiative, from the Hever HaRabbanim, was one of the first actions considered an achievement by that group at that time. At the second conference of Hever HaRabbanim, which we discussed previously, this was one of the topics that was raised. (This conference was convened after the prayer service was fixed). Rabbi Reuven Katz, the chief rabbi of Petah Tikva, who questioned the special need for Hever HaRabbanim , objected strongly to the prayer service compiled by the rabbinical group, claiming that this was "contrary to the decision of the rabbinic elders", meaning the ultra-Orthodox rabbis.  He later explained that "instituting the reciaition of Shehechyanu, Hallel, reading the Torah and haftora is against halacha and should not be added.[[5]](#footnote-5)  This opposition, which comes from inside Hever HaRabbanim shows that the opposition to the Independence Day prayer does not come from the ultra-Orthodox camp alone. Asher Cohen defines the sense of obligation that the Zionist rabbis felt toward the ultra-Orthodox rabbis as the fear of establishing a new halachic ruling. This approach, which rejects the concept of composing new prayers, represents the conservative view reminiscent of the concept coined at the time by Rabbi Moshe Sofer ("Hatam Sofer"–'New is prohibited by the Torah.’[[6]](#footnote-6)  In this you can see how the different trends in religious Zionism (conservatism versus innovation) were manifested already then.

Israel's chief rabbi, Rabbi Ben Zion Chai Uziel, who participated in this conference explicitly declared that he approved the Independence Day prayer service. In his answer to Rabbi Katz, Rabbi Uziel explained that this prayer was prescribed as thanksgiving for the miracle of the establishment of the state and the victory over the enemies. Moreover, Rabbi Uziel pointed out that even a private individual for whom a miracle was performed is commanded to say the prayer of thanksgiving, and indeed, even his family is commanded to hold a festive meal to mark it.

These unequivocal words of Rabbi Uziel, which indicate the support he gave to this initiative of Hever HaRabbanim , are also reflected in his later words, which carry criticism both of those within Hever HaRabbanim who opposed composing prayer and of the ultra-Orthodox rabbis, who naturally also opposed it:

*We did not prohibit work on that day and we did not add a single paragraph in the Amidah prayer, but we established a thanksgiving prayer for the miracles. Is this day less than the 15th of Av? Great miracles were performed for us and therefore we ensured that the public would come to the synagogue to recite a prayer of thanksgiving and not celebrate the day only with revelry and parties.*

Rabbi Uziel's explicit statement shows his unreserved support for the compilation of the Independence Day prayer by Hever HaRabbanim without a trace of criticism of the rabbinic group. Despite this, Shmuel Katz points out that this order of prayer opened the door to disputes.[[7]](#footnote-7) It is possible that if the initiative had come directly from the Chief Rabbinate, it would have won wider acceptance. And despite all this, this case demonstrates the power of Hever HaRabbanim, who piloted a definitive course of action that the Chief Rabbinate ultimately gave its consent.

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One of the important actions that indicate the leadership demonstrated by Hever HaRabbanim in Torah and halachic matters in its first decade is the activity leading up to the year of shmita in 5712-1952. The shmita year represents one of the most prominent of the commandments contingent upon the land. Once every seven years it is forbidden to cultivate the land of Israel, and the produce of the land becomes "hefker" or ownerless. When the first settlements were established in the Land of Israel at the beginning of the 20th century, it was clear that abandoning cultivation of the lands would put an end to the Jewish settlement in the Land of Israel. Towards the year of the shmita in 1889, a halachic solution to the problem was found: "heter mechira" [[8]](#footnote-8) This is a procedure whereby the land is temporarily sold to a non-Jew for the duration of the shmita year in order to avoid the prohibition of working the land.  

A solution was found which, on the one hand, meets the requirements of the halacha, and on the other, takes into account the contemporary needs of the country. The ultra-Orthodox rabbis vigorously opposed the solution on the grounds that the permit is not halachically valid.  In terms of the ideology of the ultra-Orthodox, there was no need to find a solution, since they opposed Zionism in any case. Religious Zionism, as part of its ideology, supported the solution.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The polemic surrounding the shmita year in 1889 exists to this very day. In our case, the establishment of the state in 1948 put the issue on the agenda, in preparation for 1952, the first shmita year during statehood. For the first time, it became necessary to prepare for shmita in a sovereign Jewish state.

Hever HaRabbanim , led by Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, began to operate in this area as well. It should be noted that most of the rabbis of the agricultural settlements in Israel were members of Hever HaRabbanim, and this issue was very relevant for them. One of the prominent rabbis who dealt with the shmita issue in the Land of Israel (even before the establishment of the state) was Rabbi Moshe Sternberg. Rabbi Sternberg had been a rabbi in Ukraine, and after he immigrated to Israel he established the rabbinate in religious worker settlements in Israel. He served 18 years as the rabbi of Kfar Pines, and died at a young age in 1958. In collaboration with Rabbi Yisraeli and Rabbi David Salomon, he was a member of the 'Committee of the Mitzvots Contingenton the Land' of Hever HaRabbanim.

The issue of shmita was placed on the agenda of Hever HaRabbanim, as mentioned previously, at the second conference that convened in Nisan 5710. Rabbi Yisraeli explained his view on the subject, revolving around his idea that in the new reality of a sovereign state, the heter mechira can be given up:

*The problem arises if the acceptable form of the heter suits our situation today, in a sovereign country, if the time has come to think about observing the mitzva according to Torah law. Perhaps by making maximum use of the sixth year in adjusting the planting cycle and expanding the sowing areas, it is possible to greatly reduce the types of work prohibited in the seventh.year. Some of the problems of supplying fodder for livestock can already be solved by sowing clover early.[[10]](#footnote-10)*

Rabbi Yisraeli tried to settle the issue of the shmita year by making maximum use of the cultivation of the land in the sixth year, thus not relying on the heter mechira. In an article in the third volume of Torah Umedina, Rabbi Yisraeli offered an alternative proposal for the heter mechira– "hefker" That is, instead of selling the land to non-Jews, abandoning the land and thereby expropriating it from Jewish ownership.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The Chief Rabbinate did not accept Rabbi Yisraeli's opinion. This shows the difference between the Chief Rabbinate and Hever HaRabbanim. The Chief Rabbinate was dealing with the national reality of a secular society.  Without heter mechira, serious problems would arise; what's more, most of the farming was done by the secular kibbutzim and moshavim. Hever HaRabbanim , naturally, seemed to be free of this responsibility. In any case, Rabbi Yisraeli was vigorously engaged in preparations for the shmita year based on the heter mechira. Ahead of this year, the committee he led initiated gatherings of "committee days" of rabbis to study and practice the laws and consultations were held with farmers and agronomists as to which jobs can be scheduled earlier or later.[[12]](#footnote-12)  In addition to this, Hever HaRabbanim engaged in disseminating information . It convened lectures on the subject and published instructions regarding the shmita year.[[13]](#footnote-13)    The proposal made by Hever HaRabbanim regarding the year of shmita was published in the fourth issue of Torah Umedina.[[14]](#footnote-14)

In preparation for the shmita year of 1958, Rabbi Yisraeli worked on the subject as part of the Chief Rabbinate–At that time he was already a member of the Chief Rabbinacal Council. It should be noted that all actions were taken with the approval and instruction of the Chief Rabbinate. At the same time, the activity was initiated by Hever HaRabbanim. The very fact that the Chief Rabbinate "approved" and did not lead the activity by itself, shows the strength of Hever HaRabbanim, who also piloted this move.

Another important point to note: the fact that Rabbi Yisraeli, who thought that one should make use of the heter mechira after the establishment of the state accepted the position of the Chief Rabbinate, shows that Hever HaRabbanim did not try to take the place of the Chief Rabbinate, but to act within it, as it too accepted its authority as the final arbiter in halachic matters. In this case, as in the other cases we have mentioned, Hever HaRabbanim showed itself to be a leadership organization, but one that operated to help the Chief Rabbinate in areas where it discovered weakness in its work.

In 1958, one of the members of Hever HaRabbanim, Rabbi Moshe Sternberg – who was one of the pillars of activity in the field of shmita – passed away. His death at a young age was particularly painful for Rabbi Tchorsh, precisely against the background of the formation of Hever HaRabbanim during the first decade of the state. At Rabbi Sternberg’s funeral, attended by many, Rabbi Tchorsh described the deceased rabbi: "His face is like that of the sun that used to shine all over the village. What sorrow and grief that this good sun has set at the noon of the day, at the noon of life.”[[15]](#footnote-15)

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The purpose of the yarchei kala is the gathering of "baalaei batim" (that is, people who work throughout the year for their livelihood), during the summer days for the purpose of studying Torah in a atmosphere of vacation. The purpose of this enterprise was to introduce the subject of Torah study even among those who are not yeshiva students. The enterprise, which began in 1951, actually restored something that had existed in the times of the Mishna, in Babylon.

The first gathering of "yarchei kala" was in the summer of 1951 in Kfar Pines, and was organized every year by Hever HaRabbanim. In the early days of the state, this was a significant innovation for two main reasons: (1) "Yarchei kala" were known from the period of the Mishna. Until then, this had been merely history. hever HaRabbanim transformed it into a reality, thus demonstrating the romantic-national dimension that accompanies attaining sovereignty, which was thought to be the renewal of an ancient state, in the religious context.(2) The Torah world was at a low ebb at that time. After the Holocaust and the world wars, many yeshivot had been destroyed in Europe and the yeshiva world became much reduced. The very fact that an enterprise was established, which is Torah study for laymen - was a revolution at that time. Rabbi Tchorsh was proud of the 'yarchei kala' initiative, and saw it as a major enterprise for strengthening religious life in Israel:

*Just as we see to the education of the next generation, from kindergartens to public schools, high schools and yeshivot, so we need to take care of the continuation of the Torah generation for the rest of our lives. We need to act so that all comrades will continue to study Torah, even those who work in workshops, on scaffolding, in factories, in the field, in the army, in clerical work, the religious intelligentsia, so that the continuation of Torah study will not be interrupted, so that a strong bond will be created between Torah study and their way of life. This role should be part of the foundations of the movement, which is essentially Torah-centered and strives to see the rule of the Torah in the Land of the Torah.[[16]](#footnote-16)*

This enterprise was part of the revolution in the rabbinical world; The enterprise that connect the rabbis to the public was only one link in the chain of achievements of the rabbinic world in Israel in general, and in religious Zionism in particular.  It should be noted that only one year later the "yarchei kala" enterprise was also founded in the Ponivez yeshiva by the Rosh Yeshiva, Rabbi Yosef Kahaneman. In other words, Hever HaRabbanim was ahead of the ultra-Orthodox in this.

One of the prominent rabbis who was a partner in the yarchei kala enterprise was Rabbi Elimelech Bar Shaul1913-1964) ). Rabbi Bar Shaul was born in Jerusalem to the Shaulzon family who belonged to the Lubavitcher (Chabad) Hasidism. He studied at Yeshivat Etz Haim and Yeshiva Hebron.  He was close to the chief rabbi, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook.  In 1941 he married and settled down in Jerusalem.  In 1943 he was elected rabbi of Sde Ya'akov, and in 1949 moved to teach at the Kalatsk yeshiva in Rehovot, which later merged with Yeshivat HaDarom . In the summer of 5711 (1951) he was appointed the chief rabbi of Rehovot. At the same time he taught at Yeshivat Kerem be’Yavne and Yeshivat HaDarom. As a member of the Hapoel HaMizrachi rabbinical group, Rabbi Bar Shaul was a central figure in the yarchei kala enterprise. In the memorial book for Rabbi Bar-Shaul, it was emphasized that his membership in Hever HaRabbanim focused on the Torah aspects and not on the political aspects because he believed that a rabbi should be apolitical.[[17]](#footnote-17) Nehemiah Zvi Aminoah aptly described the yarchei kala in a literary style, and among other things, he emphasized Rabbi Bar Shaul's contribution to this:

*The studies were fascinating. They studied some chapters of Mishnayat in tractate Sheviit and the Yom Kippur chapter in tractate Yoma. They analyzed and disputed over the halacha by means of a total restructuring of the exchange between the head of the yarchei Kala, Rabbi Bar-Shaul, the rabbi of Rehovot, and the public in the depths of knowledge. With the superlative explanations by Rabbi Bar-Shaul, who showed his prowess in analyzing the halachic issue, they went through the chapters in the Mishnah and the Gemara, with the commentators, the sources in Rambam and its main commentaries. It was exhilarating study, for the most part it reminded some of them of the days of their youth in yeshiva. One would ask and the other would answer.[[18]](#footnote-18)*



 Rabbi Elimelech Bar-Shaul - Chief rabbi and head of the rabbinical court

It should be noted that the fact that the yarchei kala enterprise was established within the framework of Hever HaRabbanim and not of the Chief Rabbinate shows the trend we discussed earlier: the leadership and power of Hever HaRabbanim where this was the role of the Chief Rabbinate. This topic came up in the various conventions as one of the impressive achievements of  Hever HaRabbanim in general, and Rabbi Tchorsh in particular.[[19]](#footnote-19)

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The religious situation in the Land of Israel at the time of the establishment of the state was in crisis. Within a few years, tens of thousands of Jews had immigrated to Israel from different countries. Beyond the technical problem of settling and absorbing them, an issue that was handled by various agencies, there was a problem in organizing the subject of the rabbinate in Israel. Different rabbis immigrated from different countries and it was necessary to bring into line the opinions on halachic issues. Providing for religious needs was not a developed service in remote settlements, ensuring that there was a synagogues, mikvah, rabbinical courts etc. The in gathering of exiles, which was in full swing at that time, required intensive action by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.  Beyond that, the Chief Rabbinate was working on promoting the Jewish image of the state and in its connection with the religious parties.

The founder of Hever HaRabbanim , Rabbi Tchorsh, hinted in the opening remarks of the first conference about the problems facing the Chief Rabbinate by saying that "the chief rabbis are totally immersed in these questions, , they hold meetings with the prime ministers and the government, but unfortunately the matter has not moved forward.”[[20]](#footnote-20)

Beyond activity on various issues as elaborated upon in this chapter, Hever HaRabbanim decided to act “on the ground”, in the settlements themselves, to take action on matters that the Chief Rabbinate could not deal with, at least at that stage .For this reason, they decided on the "Adoption Project", the main point of which is the adoption of settlements by a rabbi Hever HaRabbanim, who was supposed to respond to issues of religion, education, and everything in between. The "adoption project " is one of the most beautiful activities that have been conducted in the country," Rabbi Tchorsh later testified." This activity was conducted without noise and without loud advertising, and only few know about it.”  And not infrequently such activity was associated with physical effort and personal sacrifice.”[[21]](#footnote-21) At the fourth convention of Hever HaRabbanim , which took place in the month of Kislev 5714, the adoption project was on the agenda. The convention proceedings stated as follows:

*The Rabbis of Hever HaRabbanim are holding the "adoption projects". In other words, apart from their work as rabbis in their places of settlement, they adopt settlements where there are no permanent rabbis. Each is a special settlement, where they stay for a period of time and engage in teaching and religious guidance. Dozens of rabbis travel from place to place and impart Torah knowledge and teach halacha to those who seek it. The convention will give its attention especially to this and also to the issues of strengthening Torah and religious education in the country.[[22]](#footnote-22)*

It is clear from this that the activity was carried out in settlements where there was as yet no rabbi, and thus Hever HaRabbanim temporarily filled the place of the Chief Rabbinate. These things focus the "adoption project" around the topic of teaching halacha.  In another reference in the fourth convention regarding the adoption project, there is a focus on the "practical" aspect of the activity:

*Dozens of new settlements were adopted mainly by our fellow rabbis who came periodically into contact with these settlements and by the beginning of the year 5714, 5000 visits were organized, mikvahs were set up, and eruvin were repaired, religious ritual objects and hundreds of tallits, tefillin and holy books were provided. Special attention was devoted to the education of local children about by establishing Torah classes, etc. The adoption project has now also been extended to the kibbutzim.*

Here the activity of Hever HaRabbanim in distinctly rabbinic fields is specifically mentioned, in addition to the activity of Torah lessons and lectures.

The "adoption project" can be linked to the difficult struggles in the field of education, which were in progress during this period.  Religious Zionism was struggling then to preserve the religious stream in the education system and against its being assimilated into the general state education system , especially when it came to the education of the children of immigrants.[[23]](#footnote-23)  In *Hatzofe*, the adoption enterprise was described as a response to the growing concern about the spiritual condition of the immigrants:

*The sharp difference in the way of life of the immigrants in a secular environment that surrounds them, the religious behavior of the elected leaders who were revered figures in their eyes - were all contributing factors to their breaking away from Torah and mitzvot. At that time the feeling of duty arose among faithful Jewry to stand at the gate, to be prepared for the coming trouble, to stop the spread of secularism. Hapoel HaMizrachi, the pioneer of loyal Judaism, stepped up to this campaign with all the tools at its disposal and even created new tools according to the new needs that arose.[[24]](#footnote-24)*

And in another article it was written:

*The rabbis adopted settlement points and took care of their religious matters, fulfilling their duties for minimal payment agreed upon with them in advance. They conduct visits twice a month to the immigrant settlements and it must be stated with satisfaction that since the beginning of this enterprise, there has been great benefit to the state of religious affairs at these settlement points.[[25]](#footnote-25)*

Rabbi Tchorsh's remarks at the fifth convention of Hever HaRabbanim (1957) reveal another aspect of their activity as part of the adoption project: intensive activity to appoint permanent rabbis in the settlements. This shows that Rabbi Tchorsh understood that the adoption project could be beneficial in the short term; however, in the long term, the Chief Rabbinate had to appoint permanent rabbis: "It is our duty to continue to act even more boldly with vigorous action to introduce permanent rabbis, spiritual shepherds in the new settlements who will lead their communities on the basis of the Torah and piety.”[[26]](#footnote-26)

The great demand for the adoption of settlements by the members of Hever HaRabbanim apparently created a shortage of rabbis who agreed to adopt settlements. For this reason, Rabbi Tchorsh appealed to married yeshiva students to also take upon themselves the task of adoption:

*And from here again will go forth the call to the yeshiva students of Israel, great in Torah knowledge, the chosen ones of all kinds: step forward for the sake of our Torah and holiness and come walk in these settlements to be guides of the Torah and reverence and to the life of the Torah in the land of the Torah for the sake of the spiritual character of the country.*

It is difficult to know to what extent the yeshiva leaders responded to this call by Rabbi Tchorsh. The important point here is the initiative of the rabbis to act vigorously in various fields with the intention of influencing the image of the rabbinate and the state. The adoption enterprise, unlike the Torah UMedina compilations, was a practical activity on the ground. The common denominator of all the activities of Hever HaRabbanim in the first decade is the initiative and leadership in matters that the Chief Rabbinate was supposed to handle, and for various reasons did not initiate action. However, the uniqueness of the settlement adoption project lies in the fact that it dealt with matters that traditionally were within the scope of the Chief Rabbinate's function: *eruvim*, *mikvaot*, Torah study. No one will dispute that these are the responsibility of the Chief Rabbinate.  A notable example is the activity of Rabbi Moshe Hadaya, rabbi of the city of Eilat, who was a member of Hever HaRabbanim.  He testified that "had it not been for Hever HaRabbanim, which was supporting him and encouraging him to take a public and fight for the sanctified values ​​of the Jewish people in a settlement where the stamp of secularism had been placed - it is possible that his rabbinical mission in the southern portal of the country would have failed.”[[27]](#footnote-27)

At the end of this chapter, I will quote Nehemiah Zvi Aminoah, a member of the editorial staff of the *HaTzofe* daily, who also highlighted the problems in the adoption project: budget problems, the problem of authority, the problem of the distance from the center of the country, and the problem of the cultural gaps between the majority of religious Zionist rabbis and the immigrants from the Eastern countries. And this is how he described the difficulties in the adoption project:

*As I sit and gaze upon the faces of all of them, from the heads of this department to the last of the rabbis and instructors who were caught up in the work, and I share their sorrow because their heart is generous and their will is strong but their physical and budgetary capacity is slight. Yet greater than this is the sorrow and perhaps also the natural bitterness as is the fact, which you must mention at every opportunity, the fact that stands out from all the expression given to the situation and that is - that there is no coordination between the higher institutions and between the various divisions of the movement operating locally. And this is the factor that adds considerably to the deficiency in the great enterprise of the spiritual and social absorption of the religious "second Israel" into the Israel of antiquity–which is being renewed.[[28]](#footnote-28)*

The difficulties faced by the Hever HaRabbanim were not limited to the problems described above. One of the dilemmas that the rabbinical group faced was its relations with the official supreme rabbinic institution, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, which was treated with esteem by Hever HaRabbanim, but also a fair amount of criticism, as we will see below.

1. Shmuel Katz, “Harabbanat haroshit veyom haaẓma’ut” [The Chief Rabbinate and Independence Day.] in Itamar Wahrhaftig and Shmuel Katz, *Harabbanut haroshit leyisrael: shivim shana leyesoda* [The Chief Rabbinate of Israel: Seventy Years Since Its Establishment] (Jerusalem: Heikhal Shlomo, 2002), 229-237. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Mordechai Saar Marmorstein, *Avi dor hakipot hasrugot: Harav Moshe Ẓvi Neria, haguto, poalo vimkomo beiẓuv haetos haẓioni dati* [Father of the Knitted Kipa Generation - Rabbi Moshe Zvi Neria: His Thought, Work and Place in Shaping the Religious Zionist Ethos](Duvdvan Publishing, 2014), 223-233. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Archives of the Institute for Research on Religious Zionism, PM, 643. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. For an expanded discussion on this see: Aharon Arend, *Pirkei meḥkar leyom haaẓma’ut* [Research Essays about Israel Independence Day](Ramat Gan: Bar Ilan University, 1998). [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Minutes from the second conference of the Archives of the Institute for Research on Religious Zionism, PM, 645. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Cohen, *Hatallit vehadegel*, 45-46. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Katz, “Harabbanat haroshit veyom haaẓma’ut,” 229-237. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Asher Cohen and Bernard Susser, "The ‘Sabbatical’ Year in Israeli Politics: An Intra-Religious and Religious-Secular Conflict from the Nineteenth through the Twenty-First Centuries," *Journal of Church and State* 52, no. 3 (2010): 454–475. For more on *heter mekhira* during the shmitta year in 1889 see: Ze'ev Weitman, “Likrat shemitah mamlakhtit bemedinat Yisrael” [Towards a National Shemita in the State of Israel" (Alon Shvut, Gush Etzion: Tzomet Institute, 1993) [in Hebrew]; Shlomo Goren, “Yesodot heter hamekhira besheviit” [Essentials of the Permit of Recognizing Shmita], *Mishnat Hamedina* (Jerusalem: Hotsaat ha-idra rabah u-mesorah la’am), 219-263. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. # Ehud Luz, *Parallels Meet: Religion and Nationalism in the Early Zionist Movement, 1882-1904*

   (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988( 108-112. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Minutes from the second conference of the Archives of the Institute for Research on Religious Zionism, PM, 645 [in Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Rabbi Shaul Yisraeli, “Sheviit beadmat hefker vetzibur, vegader isurei hamalkhut beshviit,” [The Sabbatical Year in Ownerless and Public Lands and the Definition Governmental Prohibitions on Work during Shmita] *HaTorah veHamedina [The Torah and the State]* vol. 3: 122-141 [in Hebrew]. [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
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