

COMMENDED-
NEWSPAPER
DESIGN OF
THE YEAR

THE JC

THE JEWISH CHRONICLE



MEET THE ^{P25}
DOWNSHIFTERS

GERALD
RONSON:
MY BIG ^{P22}
COMEBACK



5 JUNE 2009 • WWW.THE.JC.COM • £1
ספר זכרון • 13 SIVAN 5769 • NO 7310 • SINCE 1841

Aliyah soars as crunch bites

BY MARCUS DYSCH

► THE RECESSION has seen the largest influx of British Jews making aliyah for a quarter of a century.

The Jewish Agency for Israel and the immigration charity Nefesh B'Nefesh are predicting a "historic year" with the number of British olim expected to reach 800, the most since 1984.

Their forecast follows figures released this week showing that 201 people made aliyah from Britain between January and April, an increase of 53 per cent on the same period last year.

Danny Oberman, NBN's executive vice-president of Israeli operations, said: "It's a reflection of the economic situation.

"We are meeting people who are very pessimistic about the amount of time it will take for the Western economies to recover and for them to live a comfortable life. In Israel, they can do that now. We are feeling very positive."

The best month of the year so far was March, when 81 Britons moved, three times the number in March 2008.

Around two-thirds of the olim are married. Two-thirds also define themselves as Orthodox, with one-third Reform. Most are families, either middle-aged parents and teenage children, or younger parents with babies. A quarter are pensioners.

The biggest increase from diaspora communities has been in Britain. Aliyah from South Africa increased by 24 per cent, from North America by seven

per cent and France by five per cent in the first quarter of the year.

Rafi Nassi, Jewish Agency director in London, said the financial benefits of moving to Israel—new olim are exempt from paying tax on income from abroad for ten years—were most advantageous for those leaving Britain.

"In March we had about four times the number of people making aliyah. It's a win-win situation. Israel gets a good number of olim, and even if they do not pay tax, there is a financial benefit to Israel of them moving.

"I have met people who have had to delay their aliyah because they could not sell their home in Britain, and many who have moved because the recession is not as bad in Israel as it is here."

Mr Oberman said: "People are not moving overnight. They have considered it for many years but now the climate means they do not see the point in hanging around in the UK.

"The state of Israel's real estate and banking is nowhere near as bad as in Europe and North America. All these qualified people are a real shot in the arm for the Israeli economy."

NBN's Go North scheme offers English-speaking immigrants financial incentives to move to the Golan and Galilee in northern Israel.

Grants of up to £15,260 and vehicle subsidies are available to help olim, as well as help finding employment and social services assistance. Neil Hart

► CONTINUED ON P2

► TAKING ON THE BEST FROM ALL ARIAS



Soprano Claire Meghnagi is representing Israel in the BBC's prestigious Singer of the World competition, which begins tomorrow in Cardiff. Claire, 31, is one of 24 finalists picked from more than 600 singers who auditioned from 68 countries. The daughter of a synagogue cantor, she is married to cellist Zvi Orleanaky

Helps you work, rest and pray...

BY SIMON ROCKER

► RABBIS WILL be soon able to snack on one of the best-loved chocolate products when Mars Bars go under kosher supervision.

The London Beth Din's kashrut division was due to sign contracts yesterday with Mars to certify products made in its Slough factory.

As well as the popular snack bar, the division will also certify Galaxy Block, Galaxy Ripple, Snickers, Minstrels and three flavours of Tracker Bars.

Although Mars Bars and some of the other items have previously appeared in the London Beth Din's kosher

guides, certification will make them more appealing to those who keep stricter standards of kashrut.

Rabbi Jeremy Conway, director of the kashrut division, said: "I am delighted



that one of the world's leading brands has recognised the significance of the kosher market and has opted to become fully certified by the KLBD.

"We know the kosher certification of these six classic products will be greet-

ed with much excitement and we hope a wide range of further KLBD-certified Mars products will follow."

Fiona Dawson, managing director of Mars Chocolate, said: "We want our products to be enjoyed by as many consumers as possible. We are delighted to be working with KLBD to give our consumers what they want."

Certification guarantees rabbinical inspection of all ingredients and manufacturing agents used in a product. It also means that Mars will not change any of the certified products without Beth Din approval.

► LEADER, P32