**הקשר הרב דורי: סיפור העלייה ממרוקו וההתאקלמות בישראל – (באנגלית)**

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By: Batsheva Atias

Country of Birth: Morocco

Uncle David's activity in the underground and as an aliya activist:

I am Atias Batsheva, the grandmother of Gili Azulai, at the HaBiluim school in Gedera, married to Michael Atias. We have 3 children, 5 grandchildren and the sixth is on the way. I was born in Morocco in 1950. My parents are Rachel Harush and Meir Hamo. I have eight brothers and sisters, I am the fifth after 4 boys. It is said in the family that my parents were very happy and organized a big party for me, attended by most of the community. After that, three more girls and the youngest son were born.

Our parents raised us with a lot of love, made sure to instill in us general values as human beings and values based on Jewish tradition. Our family has a very close relationship, we meet often, for joint meals and of course for all family events. The extended family is extensive and maintains excellent relations of closeness. Abroad almost all of us lived in the same city, and we, the children, were able to reach the family, and especially the grandparents, as easily as we wanted. We had a very good and satisfying life. The great dream of the Jews in Morocco was to immigrate to Eretz Israel. In my parents' house and in the extended family they spoke of yearning for the Land of Israel. I had two uncles who fled from Morocco to Israel (my father's brother and my mother's brother). For us, the children, they were heroes who succeeded in realizing their dream. They were legends, David Mordechai and David Amram. It should be noted that the first escape was not successful, they were caught by the Moroccan authorities on the border between Morocco and Spain, were returned to the city and put in jail. In order to release them from prison, the parents promised to be involved so that there would be no further attempt to escape. They had to pay a ransom. My uncles, of course, did not give up their will to move to Eretz Israel and decided to try again. They put my mother in the middle of the matter and she took care of them for money and other traveling supplies of sorts. This time they succeeded in fulfilling their dream, but my grandfather and uncle paid the price, they were imprisoned for one month and paid a high fine to be released. All this was made possible by the family's acquaintance with a police officer who intervened in their favor. My uncles couldn't maintain constant contact, since letters could not be sent directly to Morocco. We got my uncles' letters through France, through acquaintances that lived there. We received a picture of the uncle as a soldier, the pride was great and yearning for Israel was intensified.

My childhood in Morocco:

At the age of 5 I studied at a Jewish school called "Alliance", studies were conducted in French. During the evening and vacations we had Hebrew lessons. The classrooms were located near the synagogue. The lessons included the study of Hebrew letters, songs of the Land of Israel and especially the holiday songs we sang in ceremonies in honor of Jewish holidays. I joined my four brothers, who were already in school, and accompanied me all the way, until they graduated and went to study outside the city or in France. I remember that at the end of first grade, at the main ceremony of the end of the year, we all received awards for, all of the families were very proud. At the age of 8 we moved to the city of Fes, the city was larger and the most important cities of Morocco. The city was characterized by distinct Moroccan cultural motifs. It is one of the most beautiful cities in Morocco, to which many tourists come. We acclimated very quickly because my brother and I were good students. My mother constantly checked out our homework and made sure to take us out early in the morning before we went to school for a walk to get a breath of fresh air and eat oranges, which were considered a fruit full of vitamins.

Memories from my parents' home:

One of my most memorable times was when we listened to Arabic news broadcasts from Israel. Every evening my parents gathered around the radio, and we the children had to keep quiet so that our neighbors would not hear or know that we were longing for information from Israel. Another memory is: my mother's and my grandmother's solicitude about Uncle David, who was a member of the Jewish underground and an aliyah activist. The truth is that we, the children, didn't really understand the matter.

The Jewish underground in Morocco:

The underground was a secret organization that operated during 1956-1964. The underground operated within the framework of the Mossad for Special Assignments. The aim of the underground was to bring about the immigration of Moroccan Jews to Israel and to establish a Jewish underground for self-defense in Morocco. This underground was called 'Hamisgeret' and was composed of several branches of defense, the Home Front Intelligence, the Aliyah branch from Eretz Israel and a branch of the youth movements. The underground was an illegal movement that operated against the existing government, which did not allow the Jews to immigrate to Israel.

The story of my uncle who was an underground activist:

My uncle David, my mother's brother, is the son of my grandfather Yom Tov and my grandmother Zehava Harush. The story took place in the late 1950s in the city of Fez, during the times when Jews were forbidden to immigrate to Israel. Uncle David was involved in underground Zionist activity without his parents' knowing. He made sure that my older brothers participated in the activities of the youth movements in the city. I recall that during this period some of my uncles immigrated to Israel, apparently with the encouragement of my uncle. He told me that when he immigrated to Israel, it was not the first time he had been in Israel. He came here several times for training and briefing in Morocco. He worked for the departure of the ship 'Egoz' to Israel. But when the 'Egoz' tragedy was discovered, most underground activists are exposed. My uncle managed to escape to a hiding place until the calm settled. Unfortunately, some members of the underground were exposed and were subjected to very severe torture, both themselves and their families. My uncle continued underground Zionist activity in secret until his immigration to Israel. Since then, he participated every year in the Memorial Day ceremony for the fallen of Egoz in Ashdod, where a monument was erected in their memory. As a resident of Ashdod I participated several times in this Memorial Day, and it is always emotional for me. Unfortunately I could not attach my uncle's medal and certificate.

Immigration to Eretz Israel:

The Immigration from Morocco: From the Independence of Morocco (1956) to Operation Yachin (1961). In the years when the French ruled Morocco, emissaries from Israel came and helped organize the aliyah. However, since 1956, when Morocco gained independence, exit gates were locked for Jews and they were able to leave Morocco only in secret. Between the years 1961-1964, the aliya called "Aliya Gimmel" or "Operation Yachin" began. Operation Yachin was an underground activity and under many risks. It was conducted out of an agreement and a blind eye from the Second King and his government, when the condition was that no Zionist would deal with the emigration of the Jews, but rather with an international migration organization. On the 28th of November (On the 28th of Kislev) 1961 in an operation called Operation Yachin or Aliyah C that lasted until 1964, about 80,000 Moroccan Jews immigrated to Israel. The Moroccan authorities themselves did not fight with the immigration efforts of the Jews most of the time, when the official destination of which was Europe, even if they later immigrated to Israel. In 1962, my family immigrated to Israel. My parents were afraid to involve the children in making the decision to move to Israel. Of course, we felt the tension that accompanied the decision, and there were frequent visits of family members in our homes for consultation and separation. The members of the underground came to our house in the dark of the night and informed my parents at every stage of the process, as well as maintaining utmost secrecy. My father bought large wooden crates in which we collected only some of the important objects of the house. The excitement was very great. We, the children, too, kept secrecy and separated only from our Jewish friends, as well as grandparents and uncles who promised to join us in the future. The men of the aliyah gathered our boxes in the dark of the night. We went quietly to the railway station. We reached the big city of Casablanca and from there we boarded a ship to France. The travel conditions were very difficult. They hid us in the bottom cabin of the ship, it was stuffy and very crowded. Most of the passengers contracted seasickness and vomited during the whole trip. I remember that in the Straits of Gibraltar the conditions of the voyage were especially difficult, there was a storm and all the men began to pray that we would arrive safely to Israel. At the end of the voyage, we reached the city of Marseille in France, to a former concentration camp called Conrads, where we stayed for about a month while we were waiting to sail to Eretz Israel. The children took advantage of this time to get to know more children and play during the day. The adults went to the city of Marseilles and were shopping for electrical appliances, bedding and other supplies. About a month later we boarded a ship on our way to Eretz Israel. The enthusiasm was great and the expectation was long. The conditions of travel on this ship were better than the previous one, we could board the deck, observe the sea and enjoy better conditions.  
I would like to note that in the port of Haifa my uncles who immigrated to Israel were waiting for us. The anticipation was very tense. When we arrived at the port, my mother recognized my uncles from afar. The joy was great and the excitement intensified.  
Luckily, we arrived in Haifa on Israel's 14th Independence Day. We were received with many festivities and gifts. It is hard to describe the joy, we arrived in the Land of Israel. We got off the ship and my parents fell into the arms of my uncles from Kfar Sava and the aunt from Haifa. While we were on board, the members of the aliyah informed my parents that we were going to live in Ashkelon. The uncles tried to dissuade us from agreeing to live in Ashkelon and to live in Haifa or Kfar Saba for family unification. There were differences of opinion between the uncles which made Father decide to live in Ashkelon. My father went to Ashkelon to receive the house that was actually a shack and we stayed in Haifa with my aunt. Haifa was beautifully decorated (as children, it looked even fancy), we stayed in Haifa for about a week, enjoyed ourselves very much, and thought that all of Israel looks like as beautiful and developed as Haifa.  
By the end of the week we went to Ashkelon and we were very disappointed with what we saw. The neighborhood of immigrants in Ashkelon was mostly huts and sand dunes. We never saw so much sand, our feet sunk at the door of the hut, there were no sidewalks, there was no electricity, and we lacked the basic equipment that we needed. During the night we heard howling jackals and we were very scared.  
 However, my parents accepted and understood the difficulty of the situation and eight months later we moved to a small apartment in a building with electricity.  
My parents enrolled us in a school, we were integrated into mixed classes of immigrants and veterans. It was very hard for us because we did not understand the Hebrew language, and I was very frustrated.  
My uncles who have been in Israel for a while came to visit us and recommended to my parents to register my brother and I to study in the framework of a youth village under boarding conditions, because they attached great importance to the values of the Land of Israel - work, studies and a very rich social and cultural life.   
We studied at the Nitzanim Youth Village for about 4 years until 10th grade. It was one of the most beautiful periods of my life. I got along with everyone very quickly, danced in a dance group, was in a theater group, and social life was very satisfying. As part of the band we performed all over the country and at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv. My parents were very pleased. Every Sunday my mother visited us at the youth village and we went to visit my parents once a month.   
In 1966, I moved to the Kanot agricultural school where I completed my studies until my matriculation certificate. It is important to note that the relationship I had with the teaching staff and the management was excellent. They made sure to meet all our needs and directed us to follow-up studies, each student according to his or her outstanding inclinations and talents. My little brothers stayed in Ashkelon in the immigrant neighborhood. I have no doubt that I have received a more quality, social and educational education.

Education:  
  
In 1968, I enrolled in the track of kindergarten teachers at Beit Berl College. I completed my studies with honors and was assigned to work in the Sefer settlement (A community of new immigrants in development) in order to cancel the repayment of the loan I received for my studies. I arrived in Ashdod and stayed there until this very day.

Marriage and starting a family:

In 1970 I married Michael Atias. We established a family. We have 3 children: Arik, Galit, Gili's mother, my grandson and Hila. We have 5 grandchildren and sixth on the way. My children and grandchildren live outside of Ashdod. Arik lived in Lapid, Galit in the settlement of Gedera and Hila in Tel Aviv. We usually meet up on the weekends and on holidays and keep in close contact with lots of love and caring.

Professional career in education and teaching:

I worked for 10 years as a kindergarten teacher. I enjoyed education very much. However, my dream was to become a teacher of movement and dance, so I decided to study the subject at the Wingate Institute. My studies lasted about three years. I studied while working. I was appointed pedagogical instructor of kindergarten in the northern part of the Southern District.  
In order to complete this position, I was offered the opportunity to become a kindergarten teacher, ie to promote children with special needs. I had tremendous satisfaction following both of my roles. I succeeded in promoting the children and kindergarten teachers, and I was highly regarded by my supervisors. After completing my studies at Wingate, I began teaching movement and dance in kindergartens as well as in a special needs education school. I studied special needs education for a degree, and later specialized in guiding parents and families. I worked at the school for about 7 years, was vice principal and was responsible for all of the holidays events and graduation parties. Later, I was appointed to be in charge of the special needs education in every southern district and then I was supervising special needs education for preschoolers in the district. As part of my work as a supervisor, I participated in the writing of a program designed to locate and treat children with special needs from the age of three. The program appealed to me very much, I decided to try to bring the plan to Ashdod. I interested the city's education department into implementing a program called "Ma'agan" (support system garden) to pre-compulsory kindergartens in the city, and funding it. There was a sweeping agreement, to my delight.   
I left the supervision after managing the program for 15 years with the participation of professionals such as psychologists and occupational speech therapists, parental tutors, horticulture reinforcement and more. The program was very successful according to all the dimensions examined through the evaluation and measurement programs.

Today:

I am a pensioner for the Ministry of Education and continue to work two days a week as a parent and family facilitator, in a program I conducted. I transferred the management to a younger team. I enjoy very much activities related to leisure culture such as: plays, lectures, corporate meetings, trips, activities, and of course my wonderful family. I devote more time to my lovely children and grandchildren.

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