**30.5.24**

Hi all,

Can you believe it we have just past the 5-month anniversary of our Aliyah. How the time flies.
So there a number of key themes that have dominated the challenges we have faced so far that I thought you might be interested to read about. In no particular order.

**Language**
Quite seriously, if you or anyone you know is thinking about Aliyah, I cannot stress too highly the value of making the effort before you come to try and learn as much Hebrew as possible. Even though we both read and can understand a little bit, you really do struggle without it. True that Google translate is a godsend and a lot of people will speak in English but many don’t and so much here is done by app, and SMS texts most of which are only in Hebrew. Basically, without good Hebrew you are left out in the cold so often and the many battles with officialdom are so much harder.

**Hurdles**
You often hear about Israeli Bureaucracy. Frankly its not that bad, its just that working your way through it without fluent Hebrew is hard and many of the assumptions one makes as a Brit are no longer true like…..needing an appointment for everything, and I mean going to the Post Office for a stamp. Knowing when you can and should push in….vital or you’ll wait all day. Once you get to a desk and speak to the right person, its usually run well and most are really helpful, but it can be hard sometimes to find out how to get the appointment, where to go and how.

**Travel**
OK so great news folks….we now have a car and I at least have an Israeli driving license. Can you believe that it took two weeks just to get insurance. Roz and I were insured through John Lewis in the UK before we came and the insurance companies here just couldn’t understand why we were insured by a shop!!! See what I mean. It took all the time for our agent here to convince them that it was a real insurance company. All I have to do now is work out the parking….yet another app.

**Medical**
OK so this is where Israel is a lot better in many respects because the system is set up to achieve preventative medicine. Your GP is only a referral service and anything wrong you go straight to a consultant. To be fair you can wait 2 – 5 months to see the consultant but once you do they send you for loads of tests and they check everything carefully. Quite impressive. You belong to a scheme (we belong to Maccabi), and you can go to all the consultants and hospitals registered with them. I had quite a major test last week in a clinic called Assuta in Raanana which is part of the Maccabi scheme and I have to say that the whole experience was really as pleasant as it could be….and no nonsense, they put you out so you don’t have to go through difficult and painful stuff.

**Grandchildren**
Bless our wonderful grandchildren – so now we’re experiencing at least a little of the hands-on grandparents thing. Its very strange because on the one hand it’s the most wonderful thing in the world to be part of their lives and on the other its so hard. We had Yosef who is 5 and Eli who is 2 for a week whilst our baby granddaughter had to have some surgery last week. Waking up at 4.00am with Eli ready to play is quite an experience when you’re not so young anymore, and working out what he wants when he can’t say the words properly, so you just have to work it out – all very entertaining.

**Where to live**
So the other exciting news is that we move in PG to our new flat on 1st August where we will be renting for a year with an option for 2 years. We can’t wait for our shipment to arrive and to see all our “stuff” again. I really hope it will help us to feel more settled rather than on an extended holiday. Holidays are wonderful for a week or two but after a few months you need to settle down. We have loved living with Roz’s Mum and she has made us so welcome but to have our own place where we can invite our new friends, decide on what we do when and how etc will be amazing. The new flat has a nice balcony and we’re really looking forward to welcoming visitors to join us there for a nice cool drink – That’s an open invitation to you all!!!!

OK, so I think that kind of sums up how we’re getting on. People ask me what do we miss from the UK. For me its just two things – firstly being part of Camp Simcha has been very hard. I really miss being part of it all and taking so much pride in all we achieved, but also being part of such a lovely team. The other thing I miss is familiarity – its hard living in a world where so much is unfamiliar. It’s a journey and an exciting one full of adventure. I love living in a country full of such diversity and colour, I love living in our own country for all its faults its Jewish and nobody can make me feal like I don’t really belong and we love living by the sea – there’s nothing like watching the sun go down over the sea in the evening, but I’m a home boy and I long for our new home to have the feeling of familiarity. Blue sky every day’s quite nice too!!

Warmest wishes to you all,

Neville & Roz