

The Subbotniks

Velvl Chernin



The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research
and Strengthening Jewish Vitality
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Preface

The series “Field Reports of the Rappaport Center” provides insights and information with regard to specific issues of Jewish life, giving a voice to local community people addressing those issues in a straightforward manner. The present publication, the sixth in this series, is in a somewhat special category. Titled “The Subbotniks” it was not (as might have been expected, on the basis of other titles in the series) authored by a member of the Subbotnik community. However, it was authored by a person very much “out in the field”: Dr. Velvl Chernin, formerly of Bar Ilan university and now a senior emissary of the Jewish Agency in the FSU. Dr. Chernin has taken a great interest in the Subbotniks, a group whose name is known to many but whose reality is known but to a few – of whom Dr. Chernin is, arguably, the best informed. Wide-ranging travel to remote areas of the FSU have enabled the author both to survey the far-flung communities of Subbotnik Jews existing today, and to form a well-grounded opinion with regard to the Jewishness of these groups. One result has been, the enabling of immigration to Israel for those Subbotniks who choose that option. This fascinating Field Report enables the reader to acquire a geographical and cultural “map” of the Subbotniks, and thereby to gain respect and admiration for this courageous and worthy community.

It is our hope that the insights expressed in this publication will motivate Jewish communities and leaders to take a new look at the Jewish attachments of groups regarded as peripheral to mainstream Jewish life – and encourage them to seriously consider and implement new, more responsive and more inclusive strategies towards such communities, world-wide.

* * *

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those whose efforts have enabled the publication of this report by Velvl Chernin: Ms. Iris Aaron, organizational coordinator of the Rappaport center, who edited the Hebrew text and was also directly responsible for proofreading and for coordination with the press; Ms. Denise Levin (English text editor); the Ben Gasner studio (cover graphics), and Art Plus press.

The Rappaport Center

The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research and Strengthening Jewish Vitality is an independent R & D center, founded in Bar Ilan University in the spring of 2001 at the initiative of Ruth and Baruch Rappaport, who identified assimilation as the primary danger to the future of the Jewish people.

A central working hypothesis of the Center is that assimilation is not an inexorable force of nature, but the result of human choices. In the past, Jews chose assimilation in order to avoid persecution and social stigmatization. Today, however, this is rarely the case. In our times, assimilation stems from the fact that for many Jews, maintaining Jewish involvements and affiliations seems less attractive than pursuing the alternatives open to them in the pluralistic societies of contemporary Europe and America.

To dismiss such subjective disaffection with Jewishness as merely a result of poor marketing and amateurish PR for Judaism is an easy way out – which we do not accept. Rather, a concurrent working hypothesis of the Rappaport Center is that the tendency of many Jews to disassociate from Jewishness reflects real flaws and weaknesses existing in various areas and institutions of Jewish life today.

The first stage of all research projects of our Center is, therefore, to analyze an aspect or institution of Jewish life in order to identify and understand what might be contributing to “turning Jews off”. However, since assimilation is not a force of nature, it should be possible to move beyond analysis, characterizing and formulating options for mending and repair. This is the second stage of our activities, and these two aspects are reflected in our name: The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research and Strengthening Jewish Vitality.

The Rappaport Center views the Jewish People as a global community made up of a large number of nodes that link and interconnect in multiple and complex ways. Recognizing and respecting the wide variety of contexts and aspects of Jewish life today, we realize that insights and solutions relevant to specific communities and institutions are not necessarily directly applicable elsewhere. Yet the interconnectivity of Jews worldwide, enhanced by modern modes of communication, means that novel analyses and responses to problems and issues facing specific Jewish frameworks

are of more than local significance. Thus, work carried out at our center can be of benefit to all leaders, activists and institutions motivated – as we are here at the Rappaport Center – to respond creatively to the challenges of assimilation and to enhance and strengthen Jewish vitality.

In addition to “Field Reports”, the Rappaport Center publishes a series titled “Research and Position Papers”, authored by outstanding scholars and experts. These papers present original and interesting findings concerning issues pertaining to assimilation and Jewish identity. Written at a high level of cultural and conceptual analysis, they are nevertheless not ‘ivory tower’ research; they bear operational implications for ameliorating and improving real-life situations. The research and position papers of the Rappaport Center are an invaluable and original series, and constitute a significant addition to the collection of any public and research library and to the bookshelves of all individuals interested in, or concerned with, the future of the Jewish people.

For all of us involved in the activities of the Rappaport Center, and indeed for all Jews and people of good will concerned with the vitality of the Jewish people, the publication of this report is an opportunity to acknowledge once again the vision and commitment of Ruth and Baruch Rappaport. It is their initiative and continued generosity that enable the manifold activities of the Rappaport Center – thus making an important contribution to ensuring the future well-being of the Jewish people. May they continue to enjoy together many years of health, activity, satisfaction and happiness.

Zvi Zohar, Director
The Rappaport Center for Assimilation Research
and Strengthening Jewish Vitality



1. Historical Background

Documents from Russian archives attest to the fact that the forefathers of the people now called Subbotniks observed, at least partially, the commandments of Judaism already during the first half of the eighteenth century C.E. Ecclesiastical documents refer to the following characteristics of the members of the “Judaizing sect”: 1. Observance of the Sabbath “according to the Jewish custom”; 2. Non-consumption of pork; 3. Negation of the belief in Jesus; 4. Practice of the rite of circumcision. No mention is made of the Talmud, or of Hebrew as their language of worship.

It should be mentioned that the group appeared prior to the Russian annexation of the Polish areas later to be called “the Pale of Settlement”, with their large Jewish population. Some of its members claimed that they observed Mosaic Law, and that it was the religion of their forefathers that they had previously been forced to hide. There is evidence that approximately a hundred years earlier, during the Russian wars against Poland, some Jews reached Russia as prisoners of war, became vassals in the villages, married Russian women, “but continued to view themselves and the children born to them as belonging to the Jewish religion”. The possibility can not be completely ruled out that the “Judaizing sect” of the eighteenth century was connected to those Jews, though there is no proof.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the persecution of the Subbotniks by the state and by the Russian Orthodox Church increased. By the end of the 1830s, the vast majority had been exiled from the European part of Russia to Siberia, to the Caucasus and to the southern Volga region. Most of their children were handed over to Christian families and forcibly baptized. The Subbotnik exiles established new communities in remote areas, while many of their brothers in the European part of Russia, who had been forced to convert to Christianity, returned to the folds of their Mosaic religion. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the Subbotniks began getting closer to normative Judaism, in particular in its Ashkenazi form. Since then, they split into two streams:

- a. Subbotnik converts to Rabbinic Judaism, known as “Gery”, “Talmudisty” or “Shaposhniki” in Russian – the latter deriving from the word “shapka” (meaning “hat”, and referring to their custom to cover their heads while praying);

- b. Karaite Subbotniks, who rejected the precepts of the Talmud and of rabbinical teachings, and regarded Karaism as their model for emulation in the Jewish world. They are characterized by strict observance of the laws of family purity and by abstention from the impurity imparted by touching a corpse.

Both groups asserted that they observe the Jewish religion or Mosaic Law. As known, Subbotniks participated in the Zionist Movement almost from its inception.

There is evidence from the end of the nineteenth century about Subbotnik converts who attended Jewish Yeshivas, purchased ritual articles from Jews, and employed Ashkenazi Jews as *melameds* (religious instructors for their children), *chazzans* (synagogue cantors), and *shochets* (ritual slaughterers) for their communities. There is also some evidence of marriages between Subbotniks and other Jews (i.e., with Ashkenazi Jews in Siberia and with Caucasian Jews in Azerbaijan). It can be asserted that during this period, the Subbotnik converts fully adopted the Ashkenazi form of the Jewish commandments and rites. In addition, customs specific to them can be identified, such as the burial of men, women and children in separate lots, treating *Lag Ba'omer* as the date when it is obligatory to visit the graves of one's parents, standing all the while when praying, reciting the Jewish prayers in their Russian translation, and so forth. At the same time, we have practically no evidence of formal acts of *giyur*, though it must be taken into account that, had such acts occurred, they would probably have been concealed, as *giyur* was forbidden by the laws of the Russian Empire.

After the first Russian Revolution of 1905, the situation of the Subbotniks improved and they gained some form of recognition from the Russian authorities, and even succeeded in constructing synagogues in some of their communities.

In the 1920s and 1930s, following the Bolshevik Revolution, many Subbotniks participated in the Jewish Agricultural Settlement Movement, which was supported by the authorities and partly financed by the JDC (American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee). Subbotniks settled in Jewish kolkhozes in the Crimea, in the southern Ukraine and, later on, in Birobidzhan; some as individual families among non-Subbotnik Jews and some in separate Subbotnik-only settlements under the auspices of the "GEZERD" (Association for Rural

Placement of Jewish Toilers). Thus two Subbotnik kolkhozes were established in the Crimea, as part of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast (region), Freidorf.

During the period when religions were persecuted by the Soviet state, Jewish tradition was preserved better in isolated rural settlements than in the urban Jewish population. There is much evidence of religiously committed Jews who fled the cities in the late 1930s and early 1940s, and settled in Subbotnik villages in order to continue maintaining a religious lifestyle. But, ultimately, the persecutions reached these villages, too.

In the 1920s and early 1930s, several Subbotnik families managed to immigrate to Israel. In the same period, members of the Russian Christian Molokane sect also arrived in the Land of Israel. They were considered by many Jews in Israel as a kind of Subbotnik, and some converted to Judaism with time. That, apparently, is the source of the opinion that there are “Christian Subbotniks”.

During the Second World War, some Subbotniks were annihilated by the Nazis since they were viewed as Jews. Many men who were mobilized to the army, and (like most villagers) served in the infantry, died in action.

In the 1950s, persecution of the Jewish religion intensified also in the villages of the Subbotniks, and some communities disintegrated and ceased to exist. In the early 1960s, a large group of newly religious descendants of Subbotniks established contact with Rabbi Levy, then Rabbi of Moscow. They initiated a campaign to immigrate to Israel, and founded a form of Kibbutz in the northern Caucasus. After the Six-Day War, the majority of the adult males in the group were arrested. Yet, in the late 1970s and early 1980s, most of the group's members managed to immigrate to Israel. Many of their children now live in the religious Kibbutz *Yitav* in the Jordan Valley, affiliated with the TAKAM (the United Kibbutz Movement).

In the 1970s, the residents of the village of Ilyinka, in the oblast of Voronezh, also embarked on a struggle to immigrate to Israel. Some moved from their village to the Jewish Caucasian settlement, Kuba, in northern Azerbaijan, in order to maintain a Jewish lifestyle, managing to immigrate to Israel from there. By the mid-1990s, all the residents of Ilyinka had, in fact, immigrated to Israel.

2. The Current Situation

The following survey is based on fieldwork conducted between the years 2003–2005. It relates only to Subbotnik converts to Rabbinic Judaism. Karaite Subbotniks will be referred to only when in contact with Subbotnik converts. According to the data in our hands, five principal concentrations of the Subbotnik convert population have been preserved until our times:

a. The Voronezh Region

One of the large concentrations of Subbotnik converts in the past two centuries was in this oblast (region) in southern Russia, in particular in its south-eastern part, today defined administratively as the Talovsky Rayon of Voronezhskaya Oblast. There were two big villages of Subbotnik converts there. In addition, several small communities of Subbotnik converts (10–20 families in each community) lived in other villages among the Christian majority.

From our visits to the village of Ilyinka, we learned that the Subbotnik settlement there had ceased to exist (its members, who were mainly from the Matveyev and Kozhokin clans, had kept the Jewish commandments and had been registered in their Soviet identity cards as Jews). Almost all its residents had immigrated to Israel in the 1970s and 1990s, and most of the houses in the village were deserted and neglected, except for those which housed recent Russian refugees from Central Asia. In 2005, four Jews lived in this village, the youngest of whom was over fifty, and they, too, planned to immigrate to Israel.

Twenty five kilometers from Ilyinka is a large rural settlement by the name of Vysoky. Approximately 400 of its residents have immigrated to Israel since the early 1990s. Today, there remain in the settlement over 200 Christians and some 800 Subbotnik converts (the Gridnev, Bichamikov, Chernykh, Voronin and Shishliannikov clans, and several smaller families). Some Vysoky residents are the offspring of marriages between local Subbotniks and Ashkenazi Jews (for example, the Liubarov family, whose great-grandfather was Ashkenazi), and in the case of at least one family – between local Subbotniks and Caucasian Jews.

The Christian population views the Subbotniks as Jews (*Zhidy*). The latter complain of manifestations of anti-Semitism by residents of the neighbouring

villages and the local authorities. This is the situation in spite of the fact that the residents of Vysoky were registered in Soviet documents as Russians. It is very noticeable that there are no pigs in the settlement and that geese are raised, instead. In the houses, strict care is taken to keep milk separate from meat and not to eat *treife* (food ritually unfit for eating according to Jewish Law). However, the settlement no longer has a *shochet* (ritual slaughterer or, as he is called by the locals – *rezak*), and individuals slaughter animals according to their best understanding of the ritual requirements. Communal prayers are held in private homes, and the one remaining Scroll of the Torah is kept in whatever house mourning services were most recently held. Prayers are conducted using old *siddurs* (Jewish ritual prayer books), and are based on *Nusach Ashkenaz* (the Ashkenazi rite). However, the prayers, including the *Shema Yisrael* prayer and *Kaddish* (prayer for the dead), are usually recited in the Russian translation printed in those prayer-books, because no one in the settlement understands Hebrew any more. The residents of Vysoky are punctilious about celebrating the Jewish Festivals (for example, *Purim*, Passover, *Lag Ba'omer* and the Feast of Weeks), about baking *Matzot* (unleavened bread) for Passover and, in particular, adhere strictly to the rituals of religious burials and the maintenance of a separate Jewish cemetery.

A large part of the village youth go away to attend universities and remain in the cities, in particular in the city of Voronezh, where they participate in activities at the synagogue and the Jewish youth club.

Since the 1970s, intermarriages have been occurring in Vysoky, in spite of strong parental opposition to marrying “people not our own”, defined by them as “Russians”, “Christians”, and even “*Goyim*” (Gentiles). The Israeli Embassy only gives immigration visas to Subbotniks married to Subbotniks or to other Jews. The rest do not receive visas, even if they divorce their non-Jewish spouse.

Last year, an *Ulpan* (school for learning Hebrew) was opened in Vysoky, and it operates once a week. The Jewish Agency is currently organizing a religious community and a youth club. The village children have participated in summer camps held by the Jewish Agency and *Habad* (a Hasidic Jewish sect).

Most of the Vysoky Subbotniks who immigrated to Israel have settled in Beit Shemesh, where a large group of immigrants from Ilyinka also live. Another

group of Subbotnik immigrants wants to found an agricultural settlement in Israel. Since the Vysoky immigrants are defined as “traditional” (*masorti*), their children attend Israeli schools belonging to the religious (*dati*) education stream.

A group of Subbotnik converts (approximately 200 families), connected by marriage to the Vysoky community, has also survived among the Christian majority in several villages in the area, such as Gvazda, Klyopovka and Nikolskoyei. However, Jewish organizations are not active there. When we visited the villages of Klyopovka and Gvazda, in the Buturliski Rayon of the Oblast of Voronezh in April 2005, we discovered some 70 members of the sect who had not converted to Christianity and who keep the Jewish religion to the best of their ability (we have a list of their names). The Subbotniks have their own lots in the cemeteries in these villages, and their gravestones are without crosses, even though also without prominent Jewish characteristics, out of fear of the Christians. It is worthy of mention that, while in Vysoky the children of mixed marriages do not convert to Christianity and, in practice, the non-Jewish spouse joins the Subbotniks, the custom in these smaller communities is inverted: Subbotniks who marry Christians must convert to Christianity. Those who marry Vysoky Subbotniks move to the Vysoky community.

On the other hand, eight Subbotnik families live on the small settlement of Shishliannikov, about 20 kilometers from Vysoky, and there are no mixed couples or Christian residents there.

The remnants of the community of Raskazovo, in the province of Tambov, some 400 kilometers from Vysoky, can also be viewed as belonging to the Oblast of Voronezh. It once was a large community in the midst of a Christian majority, and disintegrated due to assimilation and missionary activity. Today, the community has dwindled to several families, numbering several dozen souls, who still view themselves as Jews and observe the Jewish commandments to the best of their ability (burial rites, *Matzot* on Passover, candle lighting on the eve of the Sabbath, non-consumption of pork, and so forth). Several members of this community have married Subbotniks from Vysoky, and live there.

b. The Volga Region

Subbotnik converts from the Lower Volga region started immigrating to Israel during the First and Second *Aliyot* (waves of immigration to Israel). These

included the Dubrovin and Kurakin families, who played a prominent role in the history of Zionism. The Subbotnik converts remaining in the Lower Volga region are concentrated in the southeastern part of Astrakhanskaya Oblast, near the shores of the Caspian Sea, in several little urban and rural settlements, the largest of which is Liman. The Subbotnik converts do not represent a majority in any of these settlements, and they live in the midst of Christians, Moslems and Buddhists. There are no official synagogues (there used to be one in the village of Mikhaylovka, with an Ashkenazi *melamed*, who also served as rabbi and *shochet*), and communal prayer is held in private houses, using old, *Nusach Ashkenaz*, prayer books. Some old people still remember how to say the *Berachot* (ritual blessings) in Hebrew, using the Ashkenazi pronunciation. There are separate Jewish lots in the local cemeteries, and the Subbotnik converts meticulously observe the Jewish religious burial rites. The Subbotnik converts in this region maintain their Jewish identity and define themselves nationally as Jews even though, according to the older people, their ancestors were Christians who converted to Judaism. The Subbotnik converts from the Liman area attend synagogue in the capital city of the Oblast, Astrakhan. However, the local *Habad* Rabbi does not accept them as Jews. The Jewish Agency has recently started to be active in the community. Thus, for example, Subbotnik children participate in courses held by the Jewish Agency in Astrakhan. Israeli organizations are not active among the Subbotnik converts in the Astrakhan region, and there are no data regarding immigration to Israel. However, Subbotnik residents have turned of their own accord to the *Shlichim* (representatives) of the Jewish Agency, asking to immigrate to Israel.

During the Soviet period, Subbotniks in Volgograd, north of Astrakhan, established a religious Jewish community with a synagogue, "The House of David", named after its founder, the convert David Kolotilin. The synagogue was recently transferred to the custody of *Habad*, but the converts' offspring make up the lion's share of the community in the city (both local Subbotniks as well as refugees who arrived in the last decade from the village of Privolnoye, in Azerbaijan). According to the local rabbi, a *Habad* member, he does not use the term "Subbotniks". Rather, he views the members of the community as *Gerei Tzedek* (righteous converts, i.e., fully Jewish).

There are rural communities of Subbotniks in the Volgograd countryside. The connection with them is weak, and the local rabbi tends to view them as Karaites. I met some when they arrived at the offices of the Jewish Agency, requesting to

immigrate to Israel. According to them, they are not Karaites but, rather, Jews (*Zhidki*, as their Christian neighbors call them).

The matter of the rural communities in this region requires serious research in order to gather exact information.

c. The Region of East Siberia

In the nineteenth century, the Russian authorities exiled the Subbotnik converts to East Siberia, where new communities sprang up – the largest being in the village of Zima, in Irkutskaya Oblast. It was in here that the legendary Alexander Zeid was born to a Subbotnik mother and to an Ashkenazi Jewish father. He later immigrated to Eretz Israel where his deeds as a *shomer* (guard) earned him a heroic status in the Zionist “pantheon”. In the beginning of the twentieth century, a synagogue was opened in this settlement, which was subsequently closed by the authorities in the late 1930s. There is still a large Subbotnik community in Zima, and it has a separate cemetery, with Hebrew inscriptions on the gravestones. There are several villages in the vicinity of Zima whose entire populations are Subbotnik converts. Large Subbotnik communities, originally from Zima, also live in the cities of Sayansk, Bratsk and elsewhere. There is evident anti-Semitism in the area. However, 50 Subbotnik families in Zima, who applied for immigration visas to Israel, were turned down by the Israeli Consulate. The Jewish Agency holds activities in the region, but the Israeli consul has not yet paid it a visit. No organized worship has been held there for the past 20 years or so, ever since the death of the last of the older men who formed a *minyán* (quorum of ten adult male Jews required for communal worship). Moreover, the rate of intermarriage is high. A small Ashkenazi Jewish community also used to live in Zima, and some of the local Subbotniks are the offspring of marriages between their members and Subbotniks.

d. The Region of Central Siberia

Roughly 1,500 persons, representing about half of the residents of the village of Bondarevo (or, as it used to be called, Iudino) in the Republic of Khakasia in Central Siberia, are Subbotniks. The rest of the residents are members of the Christian Molokane sect. The Subbotniks of Bondarevo keep in touch with the Habad Shlichim (emissaries) active in the cities in the area. Subbotniks originally from Bondarevo (mostly educated) can also be found in urban Jewish communities, with the village serving as a type of spiritual center for them.

The religious way of life continues in the village, and the percentage of mixed marriages is low. The Subbotniks of Bondarevo have a separate cemetery, but there is no rabbi, synagogue or Jewish Agency activity at the place, even though the latter's representatives have visited the village.

e. The Caucasus Region

The Caucasus region is now divided politically into South Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, and Azerbaijan) and North Caucasus (Russia). Today, the vast majority of Subbotnik converts from South Caucasus have fled to Russia as refugees. However, in order to understand their identity, their place of birth must be referred to.

Approximately 2,000 Subbotnik converts originally from the village of Privolnoye, in Azerbaijan, live within the territory of Russia. This large village used to have communities of Subbotnik converts and of Karaite Subbotniks, with each community leading a strictly religious life. Following the disintegration of the U.S.S.R., Moslem zealots from neighboring Iran started to infiltrate the area, and most of Privolnoye's residents left. Most now live in the cities of Russia: in Togliatti, in Saint Petersburg Province; in Volgograd, in the Volga region; and in the cities of North Caucasus – Krasnodar and Stavropol. A minority of the converts managed to immigrate to Israel, mainly thanks to family connections with Caucasian Jews who were their neighbors in the village. The Karaite Subbotniks established new communities – in particular in Stavropol. However, the Subbotnik converts did not manage to found new communities, and some participate in the activities of the existing Jewish communities in their new places of residence. Traditionally, the Subbotnik converts in Privolnoye prayed according to *Nusach Ashkenaz*, in Hebrew, while the Karaite Subbotniks prayed in Russian. Before leaving the village, there were instances of marriages between converts (they do not call themselves "Subbotniks") and Karaites and, according to custom, the women adopted the practices of their husbands. Now that they are dispersed throughout Russia, there are increased mixed marriages among the youth, even though the Subbotniks originally from Privolnoye continue to practice the Jewish religion and traditions.

A small group of converts from Privolnoye lives in Baku, the capital city of Azerbaijan, and there are also two small concentrations of Subbotnik converts in South Caucasus:

- (1) Two hundred to three hundred Subbotnik converts are officially registered in the city of Sevan, in Armenia;
- (2) A small group of (mainly aged) converts are organized around the synagogue in the city of Batumi, in Georgia. The members of this group have connections with the residents of Kibbutz *Yitav*, in the Jordan Valley in Israel.

At least two small rural communities of Subbotnik converts have been preserved in the province of Krasnodar, in North Caucasus:

- (a) A little over 100 people live in Rodnikovskaya. This group has family ties with Vysoky, as noted above. There is no *minyán*, but an old cemetery has been preserved, from the period when this congregation was larger;
- (b) One hundred to two hundred Subbotniks live in Mikhaylovka.

There is serious anti-Semitism in the province of Krasnodar, and the members of these communities want to immigrate to Israel.

Summary

It is my estimate that there are some 10,000 Subbotnik converts and their offspring living in Russia who still preserve their Jewish identity. Some of them are scattered, and some live in their traditional centers. In general, the older generation is strictly observant. However, among the younger generation, and especially outside the traditional places of residence, there are trends of assimilation. The Israeli Consulate is not sufficiently aware of the special problems of this group, of its history, of its contribution to the Zionist enterprise, and of its status according to *halakha* (Jewish religious law). The intervention of rabbinical bodies is required to ascertain the status of the Subbotnik converts with regard to their eligibility to immigrate to Israel. There is also a need for specially structured programs that will deal (if necessary) with issues of *giyur* and of returning to the folds of Judaism – in particular for mixed couples (The current practice of the Israeli Embassy to outrightly deny these couples' right to *aliya* is contrary to the Law of Return, and would not withstand the test of a petition to Israel's High Court of Justice). In addition, immigrants so desiring should be allowed to continue living as farmers, within the framework of agricultural settlements in Israel.