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# L'Hitraot

## Israeli vice consul heads for Miami

by Vida Goldgar

Oded Ben Hur wants to say goodbye Or, more appropriately, in Hebrew—L'Hitraot, till we meet again.

Israel's vice consul in Atlanta for the past 2 1/2 years left this week for Miami where he will assist in opening new consular offices for the State of Israel. The move will reunite Ben Hur with Consul General Joel Arnon, who was temporarily transferred from Atlanta to Boston and now is in charge of the Miami consulate.

The Southeast, based in Atlanta, was Ben Hur's first assignment after giving up a career as one of Israel's top entertainers to join the Foreign Service. In a farewell visit to *The Southern Israelite*, he said he couldn't have been luckier: "I hope my successors will enjoy the same cooperation I did and benefit from the same Southern hospitality and



Ben Hur

flavor that I did."

Admitting that he had to overcome something of a cultural shock when he first arrived from Israel, getting used to Southern

English and manners, he said, "The people made it so much easier for me.

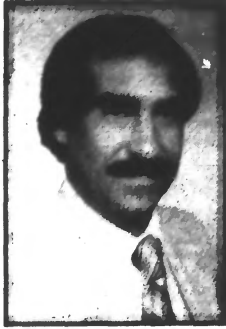
During the time he was here, Ben Hur had ample opportunity to learn about the South. He traveled throughout the region, meeting with Christian and Jewish groups, campus organizations and media representatives. Much of the time he tried to correct misconceptions about Israel, but he said "the people made it so much easier for me than for some of my colleagues in other parts of the country because the average 'man on the street' in the South is very sympathetic toward Israel."

Atlanta was Ben Hur's first assignment with the Foreign Service, but it wasn't his first visit to Israel. Twice before, in 1975 and 1976, he appeared here with the Hassidic Festival troupe. This year, he said, "It was nice to sit on the other side and watch it from the audience."

Why would a popular entertainer, appearing often on Israel television and radio, chuck it—and the considerably higher income—for the Foreign Service? Ben Hur hesitated for a minute, then said, "Well, communicating with people is my main interest and this seemed the best way to express it." Then, with an engaging grin, he added, "So far I haven't been let down."

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