How the name Tel Aviv came to be

There is perhaps no other city in the world that has undergone as many name changes as Tel Aviv did in its early days. «Agudat Bonim Batim» (The Home Builders' Association) was the name of the association that decided to establish the new neighbourhood. «Ahuzat Bayit» (homestead) was its second name, whilst about six months after the neighbourhood's establishment in late 1909, a fierce debate raged amongst the then leaders of Ahuzat Bayit over what name would be suitable for the new Hebrew neighbourhood: New Jaffa, Neve Jaffa, Nof Jaffa, Aviva, Yafeh, Shannah, or Ivria. It was almost decided that it would be called Herzliya.

Everyone wanted to commemorate Herzl in some way in the new neighbourhood, until finally Menachem Sheinkin proposed the name Tel Aviv. He recalled that this was how Nahum Sokolov had translated the title of Herzl's book «Altneuland» (whose literal translation is: «Old-New Land»). What Shenkin did not know was that a neighbourhood by that name already existed in Ness Ziona at the time. In any case, a democratic vote was held and, by a majority, the name Tel Aviv was chosen.

In the final vote, the name Tel Aviv won, having received 20 votes, compared to the name Neve Yafo, which received only 15 votes. When the founders of Tel Aviv decided on the name of their city, they were unaware that the name appears in the Bible.

Sokolov once explained why he had chosen the name «Tel Aviv» as a translation of «Altneuland». He said that he found this combination of words particularly interesting, as it brought together the old and the new. «Tel» means an ancient ruin, and «Aviv» is the season of blossoming and renewal.

(Translated with DeepL.com)