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Bridges for Peace

Israel

Teaching Letter



www.israelimages.com/Danny Yanai

The Heart of a Faithful Jew

Editor's note:

At our annual Bridges for Peace International Representative Institute, one of our speakers, Moshe Kempinski, who is a religious and faithful Jew, shared his heart with our Christian audience. Moshe and his brother own the Shorashim gift shop and bookstore in the Jewish Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem and are in constant communication with Christians in an effort to create better understanding between Christians and Jews.

There are certain assumptions we Christians make when communicating with Jewish people, which do more to close doors than open them. Moshe wants to help us deliver a positive message and be understood, and so he shared many of his observations to assist us in this endeavor. I thought his remarks and insights would be good to share with you in my *Israel Teaching Letter* series. This will be a very different kind of Teaching Letter, because it is a message from an Orthodox Jewish friend of Christians. While you may not agree with Moshe, it is still important that we understand the perspective on the other side of the dialogue.

To accommodate Moshe, we have departed from certain Bridges for Peace style practices. Since Orthodox Jews do not spell out the Lord's name in order to show reverence to God, Lord is spelled "L-rd" and God is spelled "G-d." Instead of using Jesus's Hebrew name, "Yeshua," we use "Jesus." Finally, we are not capitalizing pronouns relating to God.

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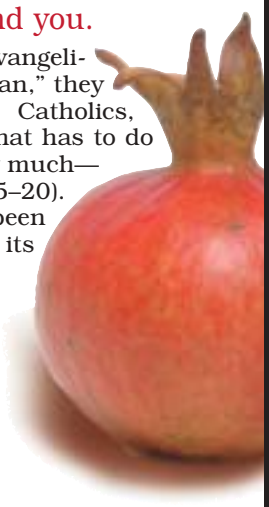


topic is “The Heart of a Faithful Jew,” but it’s a difficult thing to talk to Christians about, because of the complete misunderstanding Jews have of Christians and complete misunderstanding Christians have of Jews. Simply put, Jews do not understand you.

Rest assured that when you say to Jews, “I am an evangelical Christian” or “I’m a Christian Zionist” or “I am a Bible-believing Christian,” they do not understand what this means. Jews in general see Baptists, Catholics, Pentecostals, and all Christians as the same without distinction. Part of that has to do with the verse in your Bible, the New Testament—that I happen to like very much—where the book of Matthew says you know the tree by its fruit (Matt. 7:15–20).

The fruit that we’ve tasted through the centuries from Christianity has been anything but sweet. And as a result, there’s an old Jewish expression, “I don’t want to taste of its bitterness; so I won’t taste of its sweetness.” So that’s the major barrier you’re going have.

The other barrier is that you really don’t understand them. You’ve made a lot of assumptions, and you’ve been told a lot of things. Generally, those things haven’t been totally accurate, or you’ve heard accurate things, but you have already interpreted it through the understanding that you have, or your own Christian-definition filter, and developed something completely different from the Jewish understanding. Then you find yourself frustrated.



www.israelimages.com/Raffi Rondel

What Is My Motivation?

When my brother and I originally opened up our shop, we wanted a place to sanctify G-d’s name. How do you sanctify G-d’s name in a store? Well, no one, but no one, comes into this land unless they are invited by G-d. You think you made a decision to come here. You can kiss that thought good-bye. No one comes here unless G-d invites you. When you listen to his voice, you’re here, and then things happen. In the natural, on your pilgrimage you will have good food and bad food, a good waiter or a bad waiter, a good guide or a bad guide, till suddenly things get in the way of your spiritual journey. So we thought our store would be a great place to remind people about why they’re here in G-d’s land—to hear from him.

About 15 years ago, you Christians changed, and it was totally something unexpected for me. Suddenly, we began to see Christians checking into their Hebraic roots, their biblical roots, looking into what makes you a Christian and where you come from. “What did Jesus do?” became a burning question. If Jesus was Jewish and he lived in a certain Jewish milieu, then how would he have thought of things? You then thought, “Maybe if I understand the Jewish people a little more, I’ll understand who I am.” What happened, actually, is we started getting a few Christians at first, just a trickle. It started with the laypeople, until the pastors started to come too, and then whole groups. Now we get four to five groups a day walking into our shop. We shut the door and we talk.

One of the interesting things is that everyone thinks they know why they came. Some people come to bless Israel. Some come to make an impact on Israel. Some come to evangelize Israel. Those are all the ploys G-d uses to get you here in the first place. You don’t come to Israel to bless Israel; you come to Israel to be blessed. You don’t come to Israel to make an impact on Israel; you come so that Israel can make an impact on you and change you. But you don’t know that at first.



Sylvia Large

Moshe teaching

How Can We Understand Each Other?

We get a whole range of people coming in with questions, debates, arguments, and sometimes with a very tender heart. We have watched the process moving over 15 years and developing to what has become a very

deep friendship with many Christians. It’s deepening with an intensity and a sensitivity that we didn’t even expect. One of the things that has helped us along is a passage in your Bible, Romans 11, which talks about being grafted into the olive tree of Israel as “wild olive branches.” But for 2,000 years, most Christians have believed that they were the blossoming branch of Christianity being grafted onto the withering root of Judaism—that they were replacing it or completing it or fulfilling it. People are finally beginning to realize, 2,000 years later, that you can’t have a blossoming branch if the root is withering. And if you want to understand what it is that sustains the branch, you need to come to grips with what it is that sustains the root. So, suddenly, there is that surprise, that new insight into the verse, and once you’re surprised, everything opens up.

Another verse from your Bible that has helped—it’s my favorite verse; I love it, even though I don’t agree with it—is 2 Corinthians 3:13–16, which says that we Jews have the veil of Moses over our eyes. That’s why you believe that I don’t see what you see. Why do I love this passage though I disagree with it? Because I have a lot of Christians who come into my shop, and we have to discuss Isaiah 53, Daniel 9, Psalm 2, Psalm 110, and then Isaiah 6, Isaiah 9, and the blood and atonement, etc. Finally, these Christians get frustrated with me and turn to G-d and say, “G-d, I can’t get through to this stiff-necked guy; I’m going to leave this one up to you.” Now, that’s an amazing moment. You know why?

Because my whole life is made up of leaving everything up to G-d, and so should you. If you and I can both do that at the same moment then everything will move according to G-d's purpose and will.

One day, we're going to find that the barriers that have existed between us will melt away like ice in the sun. So the dialogue has begun. But I'm not here to talk about dialogue. What I want is for you to understand the heart of a faithful Jew, because that will open us up to one another. I don't have the Great Commission. I don't believe that you have to be Jewish to come to G-d. I believe you have to seek G-d with your heart, soul, and might, as I do, and G-d will take care of the rest.

All of a sudden, all of us are going to look up to the heavens and find ourselves bumping into each other much more often. Regrettably though, we spend too much time looking down on each other, which causes us to be farther and farther apart. So I think if you begin to understand the people of the G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob a little bit better, then you will also begin to understand the G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob a little bit better.

We Need to Learn to Communicate

Let me explain to you who we Jews are by doing something that is imperative to our communication. Thank G-d, in my experiences with you, I have been able to learn your language. But you also need to learn our language. You see, we use the same words, but we don't mean the same thing; our definitions are different. I will give you an example: Some Christians will come to a Jew and say, "Do you have a relationship with G-d?" And a Jew will say, "Well, I hope so—I mean, I'd like to." And then some Christians will jump right down his throat and say, "You see, you guys are stuck under the law, under the burden of the law. You are involved with works, we're involved with faith—you are missing the whole point." They never ask the Jewish person, the next question:

Christian Q: "Do you love G-d?"

Jewish A: "I love him with all of my heart, all of my soul, all of my might."

Christian Q: "Do you believe G-d loves you?"

Jewish A: "I believe he loves me more than I can even express."

Christian Q: "Is G-d part of your life?"

Jewish A: "G-d is part of every aspect of my life. I wake up with him, I go to sleep with him, I dance with him, I cry with him, and I sing with him."

But Jews won't use the word "relationship," because "relationship" implies equality with G-d. So we don't use it, and then you think that we are disagreeing about our connection with G-d. Then, we are like two meteors colliding—we collide and then we go off in different directions—when, in reality, we don't really disagree at all.

Another example is when a Christian comes to a Jew and says, "How do you know you are going to heaven?" And a Jew will answer typically, "Well, I hope so, you know I..." And then certain Christians will jump right down his throat again and say, "Ach, well you guys have no assurances, we Christians have assurances—why don't you go to the sure thing instead of going for the guessing game?" But, you know, these same Christians never bother asking the next question:

Christian Q: "Do you guys believe in heaven?"

Jewish A: "Well, yes, we do"

Christian Q: "Do you believe in salvation and redemption?"

Jewish A: "Of course. Yes, we do"

Christian Q: "Do you believe in eternity?"

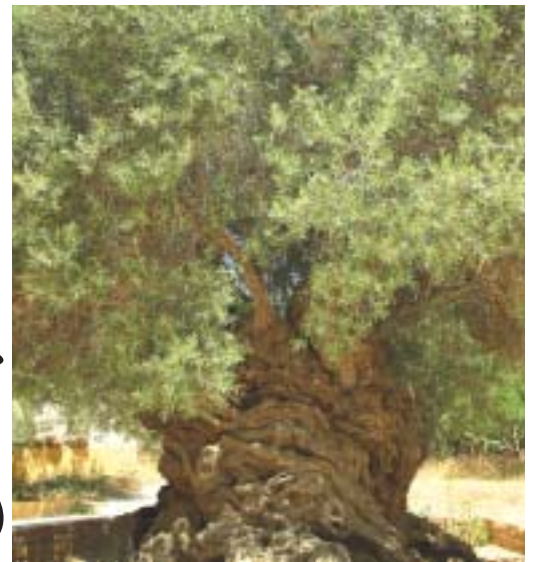
Jewish A: "Definitely, we do."

Christian Q: "Is the focus of your life heaven, salvation, and eternity?"

Jewish A: "No, it's not. The focus of my life is not about heaven, salvation, and eternity. The focus of my life is, 'G-d, am I cleaved unto you or am I not? Am I loving you or am I not? Am I walking with you or am I not? Am I living my life with you and for you or am I not?' For Jews, salvation and eternity are a by-product and result of our connection to G-d. We don't obey and serve G-d because that is going to get us into heaven. We obey and serve G-d because he is G-d, and we love him with all our heart, soul, and might. Heaven, salvation, and eternity are the results of correct living with and for G-d."

Do we disagree? I don't think so. But we think we do, because we are not taking the same on ramp to the freeway to G-d. In the end, we wind up colliding and finding ourselves in different parts of the universe, which is very sad.

Grafted in



You can't have a blossoming branch if the root is withering.

And the truth
about G-d is
that He is
always speaking
to us, but
we are not
always listening.



Listen

Here is another misconception. It is sort of cute, but it actually indicates something much deeper. Christians like to say to Jews something like, "G-d told me to speak to you" or "G-d told me that I should come here." If you say that to most Jews, they'll say "OK...bye!" On the other hand, if you say to them, "I feel G-d impressed upon me" or "I feel impressed by G-d," then they'll understand. Words are very important. You see that in Scripture. If you say the wrong words, things can get critical. There is much in the Bible to warn us about our words: Don't say this, don't vow that, don't write this or that. This is because when we say words, it is assumed that we mean what we say. But, sometimes, by saying things in a certain way, we produce a paradigm shift, which becomes more and more shifted until we are totally misunderstood by one another. More importantly, we begin to see things differently than we ourselves intended.

Let me go back to my example. When you say that G-d spoke to you or G-d talked to you, you are actually implying a non-truth according to Jewish thought. Because when you say G-d spoke to you, you are implying that there are times when G-d is not speaking to you. And the truth about G-d is that He is always speaking to us, but we are not always listening. And to say what you say may produce a paradigm shift, where all of a sudden you begin to believe that you need to be waiting upon G-d, when the oppo-

site is the case—G-d is always waiting upon us! He is waiting for us to make a choice to listen to what He is saying. He is waiting for us to turn to him. Remember what is written in Psalm 40:6, "*Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but my ears you have pierced; burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not require.*" It is all about listening.

Coming to Israel is going to teach you how to listen. If nothing else, if you walk out of this country having learned how to listen—to hear that still, small voice—you will be blessed in an overwhelming fashion. And that means you will hear G-d speaking everywhere. Remember, this is his appointed land and his appointed place, and Jerusalem is his appointed city. You will hear G-d speaking in ways you never expected, from people you never expected—from a taxi driver to a falafel (fried balls of ground chickpeas) salesman. G-d speaks here clearly and succinctly. Though he is always speaking—everywhere—here, you will hear him much clearer than in any other spot in the universe.

Develop Your Walk with G-d

There is something else you are going to learn in Israel: Israel is all about teaching us how to be a better servant. Sometimes people think that the best way to be a better servant is to be a better witness, when it's really the other way around. The greatest servant is the ultimate witness of G-d's awesomeness. Regrettably, many people in your faith believe that it is so much easier to give out a tract than to *be* a tract. Yet what G-d wants of all mankind is to walk in a G-dly fashion. G-d is bringing all types of people into this Land. He whom you call the Father is he whom I call G-d. I believe that just as the Father speaks to me and to my purpose in this life—which is to be cleaved unto the Father with all my heart, soul, and might—He is saying to you that your purpose is to be cleaved unto the Father with all of your heart, soul, and might. Based on what I have read in your Bible, I believe that Jesus was telling you the same thing, which is that your purpose is to be cleaved unto the Father. Again, my own view of what I've been watching around me developing and blossoming is that the Father is gathering all his children under whatever pretext it takes for him to get them to come into his house, into his Land, to develop a relationship between them and him. Each individual experience will be completely different from anybody else's.

When we say our silent prayer, the *Amidah* (or the *Shemoneh Esrei*, our most important prayer after the *Shemah*), we start it by saying, "Blessed art thou, O L-rd our G-d, G-d of our forefathers, G-d of Abraham, G-d of Isaac, G-d of Jacob." Now those prayers were put into writing as a springboard, meaning that is not the only way we pray; we use that as a beginning, and then we move on into our own personal prayers. This prayer was written by the Great Assembly, in which there were three prophets—Zechariah, Malachi, and Haggai. Each word is carefully chosen, but the question you may ask is, "So why are you repeating yourself? Why are you saying, 'Blessed art thou, O L-rd our G-d, G-d of our forefathers, G-d of Abraham, G-d of Isaac, G-d of Jacob?' Shouldn't you just say, 'G-d of our forefathers' or 'G-d of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob'? Isn't that enough?" We say what appears to be a repetition, because the relationship that Abraham had with G-d was different from the relationship that Isaac had with G-d and Jacob had with G-d—and each one of us, by the way, has to hold very strongly in his or her heart the unique and different relationship we have with G-d.

It is easier
TO GIVE OUT
a tract
than to
BE a tract!



Be a servant.
Be a vessel.

Understanding Jews a Little More

I want to take you a little deeper into our Jewish psyche by explaining a Jewish practice you've all seen. It is important to understand that we Jews express what we feel by what we do.

Actually, a little while ago, I was speaking to a group of Christians, and one person asked a question that I hadn't heard in a long time: "If you had to define what it is that Christians can learn from Jews, how would you define it?" Well, that's a toughie. I said to her that Judaism defines itself by putting together things that seem to be opposite. One example is the two major issues of the love of G-d and the fear of G-d. It's too easy to fall in love with G-d and lose the fear. It's too easy to be fearful of G-d and not feel the love.

There's a verse in the Psalms that says, "*One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek him in his temple*" (Ps. 27:4). Where it says "*to seek him in his temple,*" the Hebrew that is translated "seek" is *l'vakar*, which also means "to visit." One of our sages says, "If you're living in front of G-d all the days of your life, how can you visit?" If you're visiting there, that means you're not living there, right? Well, the sages explain that you want to get to the point where you stand before G-d all the days of your life and never lose the awe of being a visitor. It's that balance of walking with G-d, in love and fear, both at the same time. In fact, in our prayers, we call Him, "Our Father, our King" (*Avenu, Malkeinu*).

Another example of this I would point to is that we Jews see no distinction between faith and works; they go hand in hand. If you tell a Jewish person about the whole debate that goes on in some Christian groups about faith or works, he doesn't know what you're talking about. I don't think James would have known either. That is because James, who was Jewish, believed as we Jews do that you can't have faith without works, and you can't have works without faith. They're interlinked. There is a symbiosis, a coming together, because faith is represented by our works and our works brings us into a deeper faith. This is because you're working for something you can't see, and you don't necessarily see an immediate reward. Those are the two elements that make up who we are.

The Example of the Prayer Shawl

Now, here is an example of what we do that will help illustrate what I am saying. I know that many of you who come to Israel by plane surely see Jews on the plane. Some were putting on prayer shawls, which is part of our prayer ritual. I'm sure a lot of you have been taught about prayer shawls. [For more information, go to www.bridgesforpeace.com, click on "Publications & Media," then "Israel Teaching Letter," and read the article "The Hem of the Garment."] However, let me just give a Jewish overview without getting into the little details.



The wearing of the prayer shawl is based on Numbers 15, which says, "*Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'Throughout the generations to come you are to make tassels on the corners of your garments, with a blue cord on each tassel. You will have these tassels to look at so you will remember all the commands of the Lord, that you will obey them and not prostitute yourselves by going after the lusts of your own hearts and eyes. Then you will remember to obey all my commands and be consecrated to your G-d'*" (Num. 15:38-40).

In Judaism, we have a symbolic system based on numbers. Every Hebrew letter has a numeric value: *aleph* is one, *beth* is two, *gimel* is three, etc., so words also have numerical equivalents. There are 70 names for G-d in the Bible. That's an important thing to think about and study, because each name represents a different relationship that we have with G-d. They don't represent different parts or characters of G-d; they represent different relationships we have with G-d, because G-d is a unique unity; he is one. Yet there is a relationship with the G-d of justice, the G-d of mercy, the G-d of love, the G-d who works in nature, etc. The name of G-d, spelled in Hebrew *Yod-Heh-Vav-Heh*, is the most private name of G-d and the most holy name of G-d representing the attribute of mercy. It is so sacred for us that we don't even pronounce it. Just as we don't call our earthly father by his first name neither do we call G-d by his private name. Therefore, when we see this name in the Bible, we say *Adonai* or L-rd.





You will have
these tassels
to look at
so you will
REMEMBER . . .



The letters making up this sacred name is equal to 26. When we tie the 8 fringes with knots and wrap them around 26 times, we are hinting at G-d's attribute of mercy. When we continue wrapping it up 13 more times, we allude to the word *ehad* or "one." The tassel then becomes a declarative statement: "The G-d of mercy; his name is one." Still that doesn't explain the verse: Why does Numbers 15 say, "You will have these tassels to look at so you will remember all the commands of the L-rd"? What's the connection?

The connection is very simple. The numerical equivalent for the word for fringes (*tzitzit*=600), plus the 5 knots and the 8 strings we use adds up to the number 613, which happens to be the number of commandments in the Law of Moses in the Bible. When I say commandments, I don't mean the 10 Commandments only, but all the ordinances given in the *Torah*.

Act to Show Your Devotion to God:

As I have said, the numeric value of the letters for the Hebrew word for one, *ehad*, is 13. This is also true for the numeric value of the Hebrew word for love, *ahavah*. You may ask, "What does love have to do with it?" It has everything to do with it. One of the deep misunderstandings Christians have about us Jews, based on a reading or misreading of Paul, is the assumption that we Jews do good works because we want to get into heaven. You say we can't get there by our works. You will use the verse from Isaiah 64:6 that says that "*all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.*" This conversation just goes over Jewish heads, because for us the fulfillment of the Law by our righteous acts or deeds has nothing to do with salvation.

The fulfillment of the Law for a Jew is simply the fulfillment of the will of G-d, who is the Beloved. If I know my wife desires something, I want to give her a gift of love. There is no deeper gift than giving her something I know she desires. If G-d, whom we love, says, "These are the com-

mandments I want you to do," then I want to do them forever, because I love him. It is about love, not about getting into heaven. Remember, for us Jews, heaven is a by-product and blessing of living righteously and pleasing G-d throughout our lives. So every aspect of the doing is simply a gift to G-d, the Beloved, and it is truly based on love and faith, not just works for works' sake.

One of my favorite encounters involves a pastor who wrote to me: "Moshe, it's very nice what you told my group about the fulfillment of the Law being the fulfillment of the will of G-d, the Beloved, but you can't convince me that you Jews aren't caught up in the minutia of the law, the letter of the law, the little details, all these little things that you do." This pastor and his group were in Jerusalem during *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles) many years ago. Referring to this holiday, when we purchase our *lulav* (collection of palm, myrtle, and willow branches) and *etrog* (citron) to wave before the L-rd (Lev. 23:40), he wrote, "I saw how one Jewish guy was buying a palm branch and he had a ruler to see how long it was, and another guy had a magnifying glass to check out blemishes on the citron fruit. You guys have added all these rabbinic, midrashic, talmudic, man-made laws, and you're forgetting about G-d." I wrote him back: "Thank you so much for your thoughtful words, but sometimes you can have eyes and not see anything at all. You may be right; G-d may not care if the palm branches are a little bit bent, and he may not care about this or that blemish on the citron, but these are not G-d's gifts. These are *my* gifts to G-d! I want these to be the most perfect palm branch and citron fruit that G-d ever created. The whole rabbinic system, the whole talmudic system is about how do I give a gift back to G-d that is as perfect as I can make it. That is because I love G-d with all my heart, soul, and might!"



Sylvia Large



www.israelimages.com/Hanan_Isachar

This is not an
expression of law
and legalism;
it is a statement of love.

Since each of us is different, we each have different ideas as to how to give our perfect gifts of service to our L-rd. For example, when Leviticus 19:27 says not to shave the side of your head, because it was a pagan custom, some Jews say, "I'm never going to bring scissors to the side of my head. I'm going to grow these down as side locks." This is not an expression of law and legalism; it is a statement of love.

Getting Into God's Presence:

Back to the prayer shawl. You'll see Jewish people who wrap themselves up in it when they pray. Why do they do this? Being wrapped in a prayer shawl is akin to being enveloped by the divine presence of G-d himself, which we call the *Shechinah*. You call it the Holy Spirit or the *Shechinah* glory. That's essentially our whole purpose in this world: to be wrapped up in and be a vessel of G-d's presence! It's not really about Israel, it's not about us, and it is not about getting to heaven. It is about being a vessel for the presence of G-d, here and now.

There is a verse in the prophets that says that describes G-d's presence leaving the Temple Mount (Ezek. 11:23). The problem with the understanding of the verse is that it is impossible, because G-d said my presence is there forever. So it makes no sense, unless you really investigate what G-d meant when He said that his presence left. If you go back to the Bible, you see that he doesn't use the word *Shechinah*. He uses the word *kavod*, which means "glory." So it's G-d's glory that Ezekiel sees leaving the Temple Mount. It's a different aspect of G-d. And what's G-d's glory? G-d's glory is the manifestation of G-d.

Therefore, it is our obligation to attempt to declare his glory and be the vessels for that glory to be revealed. When the Jews were kicked out of the Land and the Temple Mount, G-d's glory left with them. Our purpose in the world is to be a vessel, so we can bring G-d's glory back and be a light to the nations. The reason that it is so critical for us to come back to this Land is not so much to be safe from persecution, because that hasn't happened here either. It is because we're involved in bringing G-d's glory back to His land. Ezekiel 36:8 says, "*But you, O mountains of Israel, will produce branches and fruit for my people Israel, for they will soon come home.*" Even the land has heaved a sigh of relief, because the people that G-d put on this Land to express his glory are coming back. So because of that calling that we have, we want to be that vessel, and you'll find some Jews completely wrapping themselves in the prayer shawl, which is akin to being enveloped by G-d's presence. At the same time, we devote our lives to expressing G-d's glory by keeping his commandments.

There's another amazing aspect of being wrapped in a prayer shawl. We also believe in a veil. Isaiah 25:7 says of the Temple Mount, "*And on this mountain He will swallow up the covering which is over all peoples, even the veil which is stretched over all nations.*" This is a prophetic passage. All of us have a veil over our eyes, which will be lifted on that mountain in a day to come. The veil that we believe everybody has is the veil that has plagued humanity from the first man till today, the veil of pride and arrogance. In fact, the closer you get to G-d, the easier it is to fall into the trap of pride and arrogance, because, sometimes, you're more caught up with being the vessel of blessing than enjoying the blessing of being in God's presence. Or worse, you're more caught up with the blessing than the Blessor, which is a whole other story.

One of the things that happens with prideful people is that they want to be seen. The secret of the prayer shawl is that when you're in the prayer shawl, there's no one looking, and you're in the most important spot in the whole universe, the exact spot where G-d put Moses, i.e., in the cleft of the rock. There's nobody there but you and him. We pray in a congregation, but we pray alone together. The congregation is only there to lift us up together, so we can get to that moment of being alone. The prayer shawl helps us do that.



It is about getting in the Presence of G-d here and now.

I think we'll all agree that this is what prayer is all about. I'm sure you've had the experience of people coming to you and saying, "I don't understand what you people believe about prayer. I've seen people pray and not be healed or pray and still be stuck in poverty." These detractors don't understand that G-d created the world in which we pray to him for things, we thank him for things, we praise him for things, but the answer we receive from him has nothing to do with those things. When we pray to him, praise him, and ask, we find ourselves cleaved unto him—that's the answer to all prayer. Suddenly, all things come into perspective. In essence, that's where we have to stand, in that place of aloneness where all we want is to be cleaved unto that oneness and presence of God.

So What Is the Essence of What I Am Saying?

There is so much more I could teach about, but all of it is focused on one point: It's not really about Israel. It's not about us. It's not even about you. It's all about the sovereignty of G-d. When you're trying to explain to people about Israel, you meet a lot of resistance, because Israel's a hard pill to swallow. The Jews may also be a hard pill to swallow for some. And yet, if you really want to stand with Israel, we need you Christians first to love G-d with all your heart, soul, and might, just as we need to love G-d with all our heart, soul, and might. This whole phenomenon is about all of us coming under the sovereignty of G-d. When you pray for the peace of Jerusalem, you are praying for G-d's sovereignty to prevail in the world. Where Jerusalem goes, so will you. If Jerusalem is rebuilt, so will your spiritual environment. If Jerusalem remains in ruins, so will your spiritual environment, because as Jerusalem goes, so goes the world. Standing with Israel and rebuilding Zion or Jerusalem is about seeing G-d's presence revealed in the earth.

So the secret of this whole phenomenon and what I'm watching in terms of Bridges for Peace is that you have developed a bridge of trust with the Jewish community, which is growing and will, eventually, get us both walking toward the same direction. Right now, we're still in parallel lines, but these lines, which used to be centuries apart, are almost touching, because our focus has suddenly become the sovereignty of G-d and G-d's leading, rather than anything else.

I said that 15 years ago, the Christian community started changing, and it did. If I had to define that change, I would say it is that you're wearing a mantle of humility that you weren't wearing before, and we are beginning to talk together and study toward the same goal. That's the big change. And that, again, is all about G-d's sovereignty. I'm not saying that we Jews have the mantle of humility, but as you have changed, suddenly Jews are saying, "Oh, we can talk." What I try to teach my Jewish brothers and sisters is that we can't convince you to let go of the Great Commission, because that's that is who you are. But I would try to convince you to begin to try to let G-d take care of the Great Commission and you just take care of trying to be holy. Then G-d will do what G-d has to do. That is where the bridge will be built and the bridge will be built to the Father. What's fascinating is that Bridges for Peace is beginning to build those bridges. I don't think about peace as it's been misconstrued today, but as the word that is one of G-d's names. It means "completeness," as in all the parts of the puzzle coming together, and that's exactly what's beginning to happen. We all realize that we are all really children of the same Father and, suddenly, calling each other brother or sister is not an empty statement; it's a true statement.

The final peace is going to happen if you can do two things: be patient and consistent with no ulterior motives, which is easy to claim but very hard to fulfill. You have to be unconditional in why you are here. If you are unconditional, you'll find Jews who will say, "OK, I can deal with this, I know his agenda, I know what he'd like from me, and I believe I know what I'd like to happen with him." In the end, we're both going to be happy, because we're both going to stand before G-d and thank him for this.

by Moshe Kempinski

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Walking toward the same direction...



Bridges for Peace has developed a BRIDGE OF TRUST with the Jewish community.



Editor's note: Moshe has only scratched the surface of our discussion, but this is a good start.

He invites questions, which you can send to him at shorashimshop2@yahoo.com or visit www.shorashim.net

Many pastors, Bible teachers, and laypeople have written and asked if they can use these notes for preaching and teaching. The answer is a resounding "yes"! That is why I am sending out this *Israel Teaching Letter*. It is my hope that the information contained herein will be disseminated over and over again, whether through the spoken word or by photocopying and redistributing these teachings. "For out of Zion shall go forth the law, the word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isa. 2:3).

