

dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

June 2020 • Vol. 45 No. 3 • www.bridgesforpeace.com • Your Israel Connection®

Life As We Know It

BRIDGES FOR PEACE

Christians supporting Israel and building relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world.

It is our desire to see Christians and Jews working side by side for better understanding and a more secure Israel. Bridges for Peace seeks to be a ministry of hope and reconciliation. Through programs both in Israel and worldwide, we are giving Christians the opportunity to actively express their biblical responsibility before God to be faithful to Israel and the Jewish community. For too long Christians have been silent. For too long the Jewish community has had to fight its battles alone. It is time Christian individuals and congregations speak up for the people who gave us the Bible.

We are committed to the following goals:

To encourage meaningful and supportive relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world.

To educate and equip Christians to identify with Israel, the Jewish people and the biblical/Hebraic foundations of our faith.

To bless Israel and the Jewish people in Israel and worldwide through practical assistance, volunteer service and prayer.

To communicate Christian perspectives to the attention of Israeli leaders and the Jewish community-at-large.

To counter anti-Semitism worldwide and support Israel's divine God-given right to exist in her God-given land.

Dispatch from Jerusalem

The *Dispatch from Jerusalem* is Bridges for Peace's signature publication presenting positive news and perspectives from Israel to encourage understanding and support for the Jewish people and the Land of Israel.

Editor in Chief Rebecca J. Brimmer
Associate Editor Cheryl L. Hauer
Assistant Editor Ilse Strauss
Publications Manager Brenda Groat
Graphic Designers Kathy DeGagne, Brenda Groat, Rae Harris, Sarah Yoder

Subscription information

Contact your national office at the address listed to the right or refer to page 33 under "Information & Publications" for the subscription fee in your currency. For all other locations, a one-year subscription costs US \$25 and is mailed from Israel. Contact our International Headquarters listed below.

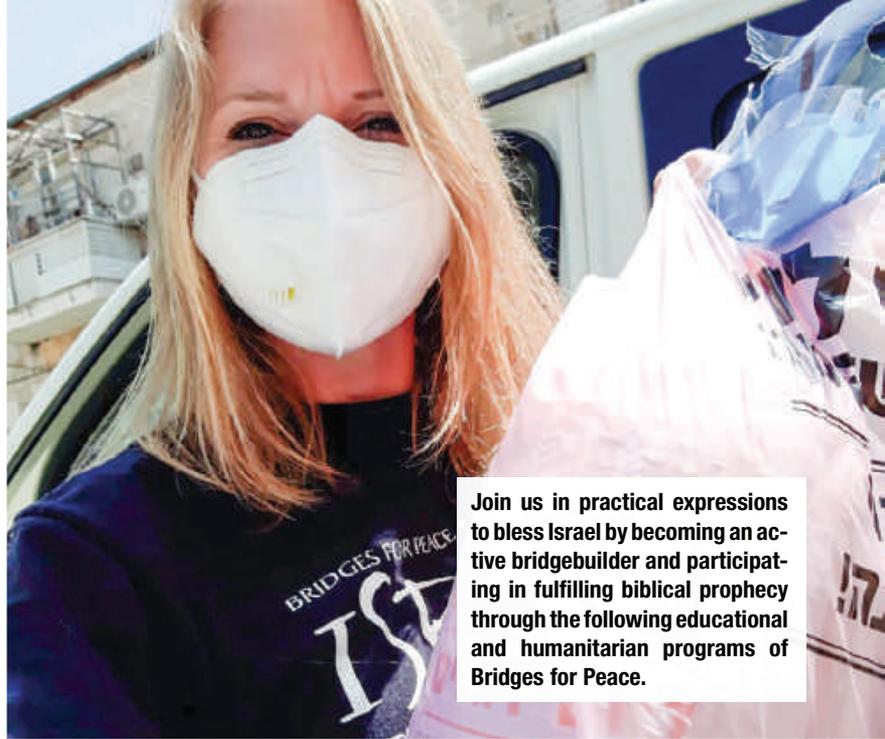


International Headquarters
PO Box 1093
Jerusalem, Israel 9101001
Tel: (972) 2-624-5004
FAX: (972) 2-624-6622
intl.office@bridgesforpeace.com

www.bridgesforpeace.com



BFP-USA
ECFA Member



Join us in practical expressions to bless Israel by becoming an active bridgebuilder and participating in fulfilling biblical prophecy through the following educational and humanitarian programs of Bridges for Peace.

Publications: The bimonthly Dispatch from Jerusalem, the monthly in-depth study of the Israel Teaching Letter and the weekly e-mailed Israel Current News Update with Prayer Focus. To subscribe, sign up on the front page of our website at www.bridgesforpeace.com

Chai (Life) Night Prayer and Study Groups: A monthly intercessory prayer program for groups desiring to "pray for the peace of Jerusalem" (Ps. 122:6).

Bridge-building Projects: Promote better Christian-Jewish understanding and support for Israel at the local and regional levels around the world. Projects offered include Hebrew classes, film series, Israel awareness programs, speakers bureaus and study seminars.

Bible Study Tours in Israel: Bridges for Peace provides a variety of travel opportunities and lectures to help you or your tour group gain a deeper understanding of Israel. (See page 28 for current tours.)

Discovery Groups: Tour groups spend one week with Bridges for Peace working on a community project in Israel.

Short-term Service: A wonderful opportunity for Christians to build sincere relationships by volunteering to serve as short-term staff assisting Israel's poor.

Operation Ezra Projects: Through our food banks, food gifts are distributed to help Israel's needy.

Project Rescue/Project Tikvah (Hope): These programs help the poorest Jews in the countries of the Diaspora.

ZEALOUS8:2: This branch of Bridges for Peace aims at reaching and impacting the young adult generation (18-30) with the message of God's plan and purpose for the nation of Israel (www.zealous82.com).

For more information, contact any of our national offices. We are also available to help you plan activities in your area. When you come to Israel, we would like to meet you or speak to your group. Please contact us in advance to visit our International Headquarters and Outreach Center in Jerusalem.

Offices

Australia

Tel: (61) 7-5479-4229
Toll free: (1) 800-000-661
bfp.au@bridgesforpeace.com

Canada

Tel: (1) 204-489-3697
Toll free: (1) 855-489-3697
info@bfpcan.org

Japan

Tel: (81) 3-5637-5333
bfp@bfpj.org

New Zealand

Tel: (64) 9-430-2943
bfpnz@outlook.com

South Africa

Tel: (27) 21-975-1941
info@bridgesforpeace.co.za

South Korea

Tel: (82) 70-8772-2014
bfp@bfpkorea.com

Spanish

Tel: (52) 646-238-7206
intl.spanish@bridgesforpeace.com

Russia

Tel: (7) 903-309-1849
info.ru@bridgesforpeace.com

United Kingdom

Tel: (44) 165-673-9494
ukoffice@bridgesforpeace.com

United States

Tel: (1) 321-637-0010
(1) 800-566-1998
Product orders: (1) 888-669-8800
postmaster@bfpusa.org

10 Unity: All It Took Was a Global Pandemic

After three elections, a year and a half without a fully functioning governing body, an unyielding political deadlock, ceaseless negotiations and a global pandemic, Israel has a unity government. What led to the seemingly endless impasse—and finally, the unity?

By Kate Norman

12 In Crisis, Israel Rises Above

Israel has weathered more than its fair share of adversities and challenges. Yet the nation's response to trauma and times of hardship goes beyond survival. Israel responds to crises with innovative solutions, pioneering answers and hope.

By Joshua Spurlock

14 The Joint List: Unpacking Israel's Unity Bloc of Arab Parties

For the first time in Israel's history, Arab voters played a critical role in the outcome of the election. The driving force was the Joint List, a unity bloc of four Arab parties that garnered a crucial fifteen Parliament seats, making them Israel's third largest party.

By Cheryl Hauer

18 Aliyah: The Call Upwards

Aliyah, literally “ascending,” is the term describing Jewish immigration to Israel. However, the word carries a weight of meaning beyond a move to another country. Orly Wahba shares her journey of making *aliyah* and coming home to Israel.

By Jo Sarah Stanford

20 The Blessings We Would Not Choose

Social distancing. Self-isolation. Lockdown. Quarantine. Many Israelis who begrudged the idea of confinement came out on the other side with a testimony of the surprising blessings they reaped from the time they wouldn't have chosen.

By Ilse Strauss

22 Beauty from Destruction: Repurposing Rocket Shrapnel

Taking something bitter and bringing good out of it is a very Jewish way to look at life. Some Israelis living near the Gaza border under constant threat of rocket fire are doing just that: turning rocket shrapnel intended for destruction into objects of beauty.

By Janet Aslin

24 “Hidden” Jews Come Out of the Shadows

There are Jews in the Diaspora who have remained virtually hidden for centuries, some secretly preserving their Jewish traditions through generations, and some having never known their roots. These Jews are now emerging from the shadows and into the light.

By Kathy DeGagne



REGULAR FEATURES

- 4 BFP In Action
- 6 Signs of the Times
- 8 Archaeology
- 16 Out of Zion
- 26 Quotes
- 28 Volunteer Opportunities
- 29 Recipe
- 30 Good News

Living by FAITH

*Without faith
it is impossible
to please
Him...*
Hebrews 11:6



IN HEBREW THOUGHT, faith is a combination of belief and action. James makes this clear when he says, “*faith without works is dead*” (James 2:20). This is exactly where Bridges for Peace is living at the moment. We are trusting in God to help us continue our work in this time of crisis.

Like most of the world, Israelis are socially isolating. The workforce is reduced significantly, with the remainder laid off from work, working from home or using vacation/sick leave. With over one million Israelis now unemployed, the need for food is growing exponentially. We are inundated with requests. The stores have food, but you have to have money to buy it, and increasing numbers of Israelis don't have the necessary funds. In a short period of time, the requests to Bridges for Peace for help amounted to nearly one million US dollars.

LOGISTIC CHALLENGES

With the government mandating that everyone stay inside, we were challenged to continue delivering food. Praise the Lord, we have made all our regular deliveries! It was made possible because the cities of Karmiel and Jerusalem issued permits to our volunteers to continue our work. In Jerusalem we were granted the permits within three hours of our request. This is only possible because of the relationships we have built over the years. Because they trust us, we found favor.

The permits allow us to leave our homes so we can continue delivering food within the prescribed restrictions. We wear masks and gloves. We leave 2 meters (6.5 feet) of space between people. We have only two people in a vehicle. We do not enter homes. Instead, we knock, set the food by the closed door and step back 2 meters (6.5 feet). All the families of the children on our Feed a Child program received food and food gift certificates instead of the regular lunch at school. We continue to regularly provide Holocaust survivors on our program with food parcels.

TREMENDOUS NEEDS

Michael Freund, founder and chairperson of Shavei Israel, called recently. We have worked together in the past to help bring the Bnei Menashe home from India. Now 200 of the new immigrant families have lost their jobs. They didn't have a surplus of funds in the bank or extra food at home and are now becoming desperate. We immediately organized generous food parcels for all 200 families in their community, even though we didn't have a budget for this need. The man receiving the food on behalf of the community said: "You are an organization of blessing." The next call for help came from Rabbi Kenneth Brander of Ohr Torah Stone and our friend Rabbi David Nekrutman, asking for urgent help for members of their community suddenly finding themselves in need. We immediately organized food supplies for another 80 families. Then the city of Karmiel asked for food for 2,200 Holocaust survivors who reside there. We determined that we could give food parcels to 1,200 of them. Sadly, we don't have the funds to give to all 2,200.

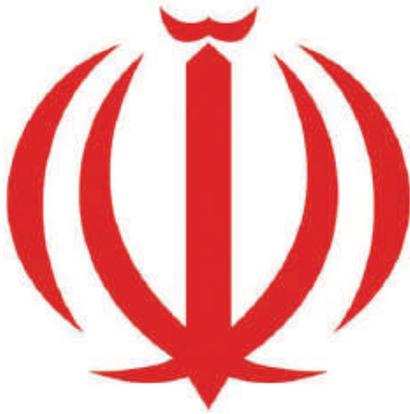
CAN YOU HELP?

The needs are tremendous. Please join your faith with ours. We earnestly desire your prayer. If you can, combine action with your prayer and faith in God by sending a contribution to help us reach out with Christian love to the people of Israel as they suffer. No contribution is too small or too large. Every day we are praying for you and your family. We are praying that God will provide for your every need and keep the plague away from you. We are committed to continue blessing the people of Israel as God provides. Is He asking you to be part of that provision?

"And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

Blessings from Israel,
Rebecca Brimmer
International President and CEO





IAEA Reports Iran's Stockpile of Enriched Uranium Nearly Tripled

THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) has issued two reports as part of its role in monitoring the 2015 nuclear agreement signed by Iran and six world powers. The agency's first report, as seen by the *Associated Press*, stated that "as of Feb. 19, Iran's total stockpile of low-enriched uranium amounted to 1,020.9 kilograms (1.1 tons), compared to 372.3 kilograms (0.42 tons) on Nov. 3, 2019." The amount is alarmingly close to the 1,050 kilograms (1.16 tons) the Washington-based Arms Control Association says would be needed to produce a nuclear weapon, *Fox News* reported.

The second report gave details on Tehran's refusal to allow the IAEA to visit two sites that are suspected of being locations where Iran stored undeclared nuclear material or performed activities related to its nuclear program. The request for an on-site visit was denied by Iran.

Iran's nuclear program has been the focus of concern since the 1979 Iranian Revolution. The United States and Israel in particular have warned that the nation's leaders would not hesitate to use an atomic weapon in case of conflict. In 2015, the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) was signed between Iran and the P5+1

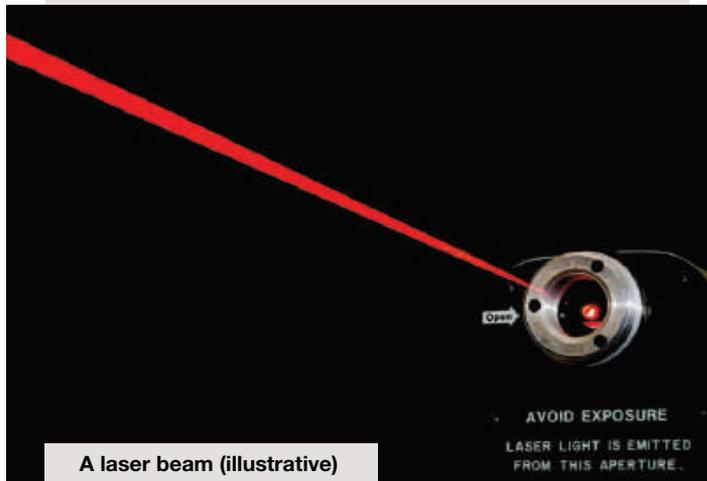
(permanent members of the UN Security Council—US, UK, France, Russia and China—and Germany). Under the terms of the JCPOA, Iran agreed to limit the purity rate of its enriched uranium to 3.76%, the size of its stockpile of enriched uranium to 202.8 kilograms (0.22 tons) and the number of centrifuges in return for certain economic incentives.

Iran has long been suspected of violating the JCPOA and has not always allowed IAEA inspectors free access to its nuclear sites. However, in 2018 when the United States unilaterally pulled out of the agreement, Tehran began to be more open about its violations and announced steps it would take to renege on its commitments. Increasing its number of centrifuges and amounts of enriched uranium are two of those steps.

Publicly, Iran continues to deny that it is attempting to develop an atomic weapon.

The ancient Persians were masters of chess, a complex game of strategy—and their descendants today are no different. The world needs to continue to be alert to the moves they are making and the possible consequences.

Janet Aslin, *Bridges for Peace*



A laser beam (illustrative)

Israel's New Answer to Drone Threats: Laser Beams

ISRAEL HAS ADDED ANOTHER LAYER of defense against aerial threats with a new laser defense system revealed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Corporation.

During tests, the system named Drone Dome successfully tracked and shot down with its high-power laser several UAVs [unmanned aerial vehicles] and drones during both daylight hours and during the night.

"Today we completed a series of successful experiments with the most advanced system in the world for combating UAVs," said Brig-Gen (ret.) Shahar Shohat from Rafael's aerial defense division.

"During these experiments, we examined and demonstrated the system's vast capabilities against a single and even multiple aerial targets."

The Drone Dome aerial defense system is meant to deal with the threats of UAVs, drones and other unmanned aerial aircraft threats against military and civilian targets, such as airports or other strategic infrastructures.

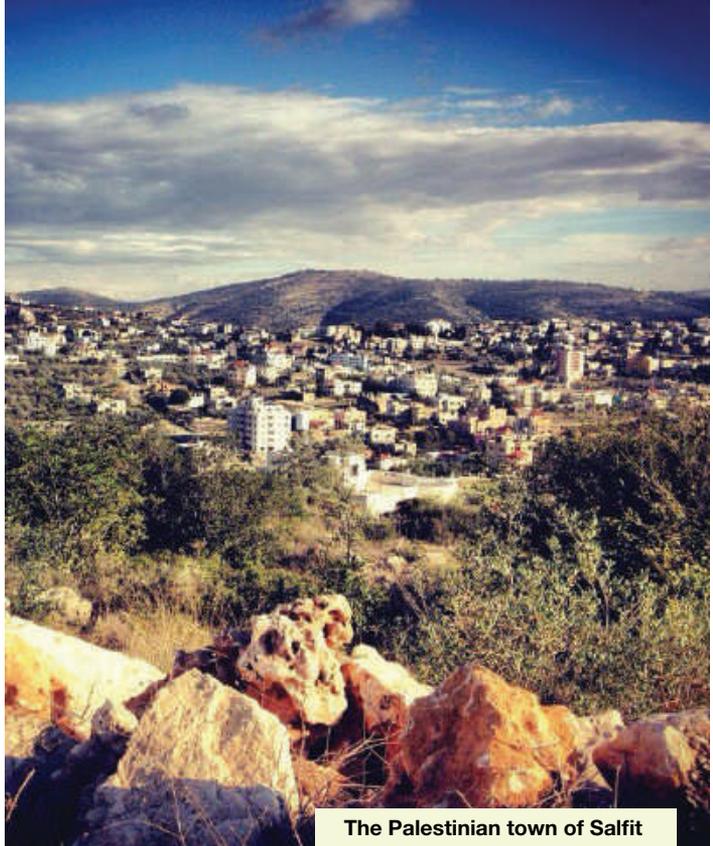
Drone Dome is part of Israel's multi-level aerial defense network, which includes the Iron Dome, David's Sling and the Spyder defense systems—all used to protect against rockets, missiles and UAVs with various range capabilities.

Drones present unique challenges that set them apart from traditional airborne threats, such as missiles or warplanes.

They can fly below standard military radar systems and use GPS technology to execute pinpoint attacks on sensitive targets for a fraction of the price of a fighter jet.

They can also be deployed in "swarms," which can trick or elude conventional defense systems. Even small off-the-shelf drones can be turned into weapons by rigging them with explosives or simply crashing them in crowded areas.

Excerpt from an article by Yoav Zitun, *Ynetnews*



The Palestinian town of Salfit

You're a "TRAITOR" if You Sell Land to Jews

ANY PALESTINIAN who sells land to Jews is "a traitor," according to the Palestinian Authority [PA]. This was recently reiterated by a PA governor who instructed the PA police to "take the firmest steps" against anyone who has sold or transferred land to Jews. He emphasized that anyone doing so is "a traitor":

"Salfit District Governor Abdallah Kmeil... emphasized that it is important to defend the land, cultivate it, and defend it from the occupation and the danger of the settler enterprise. He emphasized that it is necessary to receive a security permit from the district before any land sale, both from within Palestine and from outside of it. He said that he has instructed the [PA] Security Forces to take the firmest steps against anyone who is proven to have secretly sold or transferred lands to the occupation, or to have collaborated in the matter. He also emphasized that anyone who does not follow these instructions will be labeled a traitor."

[Official Palestinian Authority daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, February 19, 2020]

Palestinian law signed by PA President Mahmoud Abbas states that one who attempts to sell land to Jews will be sentenced to five years of hard labor, and one who actually succeeds in selling land to Jews will be given a life sentence with hard labor.

Excerpt from an article by Nan Jacques Zilberdik, *Palestinian Media Watch*

The Stones Cry Out

ARCHAEOLOGY AND THE JEWISH CONNECTION TO THE LAND



By Kathy DeGagne, *BFP Staff Writer*

THE JEWISH CONNECTION TO THE LAND has ancient roots, first birthed when Abraham came to the place where God led him, and then thoroughly established the moment Joshua and the Children of Israel set foot on Canaan's soil.

God placed His name upon the Land and marked it as His own. Then He gave it to Abraham's posterity in an everlasting covenant. Those footsteps on the land 4,000 years ago are forever seared into Israel's soil. There the Jewish people bled, toiled and grew deep roots. Even during the periods when they were forcibly exiled, they yearned to return to the land of Zion. The historic attachment to their homeland continues to be affirmed in their songs, prayers—and in Israel's ancient stones.

Archaeological Evidence

The Palestinians have spent decades trying to erase Israel's historic connection to the Land and attempting to assert their sovereignty with war and acts of terror. Israel is the illegitimate "occupier" of the land and the Jews were never there, they say. Though the international community has swallowed the false Palestinian narrative—hook, line and sinker—the archaeological evidence of its Jewish ownership is being unearthed in every corner of Israel. Jews were here for 4,000 years; they settled from the Negev in the south to Mount Hermon in the north, and from the Golan to the Mediterranean. They built their homes and their synagogues and left their indelible mark in the ground.

Maybe a desire to affirm the Jewish right to the land explains why so many Israelis are eager to participate in Israel's archaeology digs. Ordinary citizens, school-age children and Israel's young soldiers get involved in the process of excavating sites with the encouragement and oversight of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). Ordinary Israelis just out for their daily walk have uncovered many significant finds—not so surprising when you consider the remains of ancient civilizations lie just beneath their feet.

Under Jerusalem

Nowhere in Israel is that wealth of archaeological evidence more pronounced than in Jerusalem. Recently, archaeologists working in the City of David uncovered an ancient thoroughfare called the Pilgrimage Road, a wide-stepped limestone staircase ascending to the Temple Mount from the Pool of Siloam. Thousands of Jewish pilgrims from the first century AD flocking to Jerusalem for the three great pilgrimage feasts ritually washed in the pool at the base of the City of David, then made their way up the road to worship at the Temple.

Beneath the Pilgrimage Road is a massive drainage channel, discovered after the Pool of Siloam was unearthed. Rebels of the Jewish Revolt (AD 66–70) went underground and hid in this drainage channel as Roman soldiers sacked Jerusalem. From the drainage channel and the road, archaeologists unearthed an oil lamp, a ring inlaid with a blue stone, a decorative table in fragments, a golden bell that had fallen from the hemline of a priestly garment, cooking pots, stone vessels, a table used to measure liquids and a child's drawing of a *menorah* (seven-branched candelabra).

Thousands of coins inscribed with the words "For the freedom of Zion" were also discovered, a moving testimony that the inhabitants of Jerusalem still hoped beyond hope that they would be victorious in defending their homeland against the Roman legions.

Ze'ev Orenstein, director of International Affairs at the City of David Foundation, said, "These findings show that the connection between the Jewish people and the ancient City of Jerusalem is a matter of fact and not a matter of faith."

Sealing the Deal

Other discoveries in the City of David are rather smaller but no less impressive. An extensive collection of tiny clay bullae (seal impressions) that seal official documents have been found in the excavations. In the spring of 2019, a 2,600-year-old bulla inscribed with the name "Nathan-Melech, Servant of the King" was discovered in the excavations of the old Givati parking lot in the City of David. Nathan-Melech was an official who served King Josiah, and his name is found in the Bible in 2 Kings 23:11. It is just one of the many bullae from the First Temple period (1000–587 BC) that have been unearthed in the vicinity and are inscribed with the Hebrew names of court administrators from the kingdom of Judah. The fact that the personal seal of a court official to King Josiah has been brought to light is of immense importance to the truth of the historic Jewish narrative in the Land.

Sifting the Soil

One of the most absurd fictions that Palestinian leaders present to the world is that there was never a Jewish temple on the Temple Mount, a story easily refuted by archaeology alone. Although archaeologists aren't allowed to dig on the Temple Mount, the Muslim Waqf (religious authority) illegally removed massive amounts of earth from the Mount and dumped it in the Kidron Valley. Archaeologists believed the discarded soil contained too many important artifacts from the First and Second Temple periods to just let it lay in a heap. They were right. Volunteers and archaeologists of the Temple Mount Sifting Project have recovered over half a million artifacts to date.

Some notable finds include a 2,700-year-old First Temple clay seal inscribed with the name of a priestly family mentioned in the book of Jeremiah, 6,000 coins from the Second Temple period and stunning geometric stone floor tiles that paved King Herod's Temple Mount.

Though many archaeologists are leery of promoting a national narrative with their work, the ancient stones seem to have a voice of their own. Who owns the Holy Land? Strong archaeological evidence continues to agree with the historical and biblical record. Israel belongs to the Jewish people.



A Second Temple coin from the Jewish revolt against the Roman legions



UNITY:

All it Took Was a Global Pandemic

By Kate Norman, *BFP Staff Writer*

IN APRIL 2020, THE UNTHINKABLE HAPPENED—as it always does in Israeli politics. Former Israel Defense Forces chief and Blue and White party leader Benjamin (Benny) Gantz agreed to a unity government with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that will see both serve as prime minister on a rotating basis. The Benjamins, answering the cries of the people of Israel, compromised and came to a deal—though the unity agreement is less cohesive than it sounds. The product of a year and a half of political bickering, the deal is filled with endless safety nets and contingency plans protecting each party from the other. Nonetheless, it arms Israel with a fully functioning governing body after such a long span of being hobbled by a caretaker government. After trudging through an unyielding political deadlock, dead-end negotiations and weathering the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout, the unity government—imperfect though it may be—allows Israel to move forward stronger, barring future vetoes and intergovernmental disagreements. What finally brought unity out of a seemingly endless impasse?

Prologue

In December 2018, Netanyahu dissolved the Knesset (Parliament) and gambled on an early election when his majority coalition crumbled. MK (Member of Knesset) Avigdor Lieberman, defense minister at the time, resigned his post in protest of Netanyahu accepting a cease-fire with Hamas, the terrorist organization in control of the Gaza Strip, after days of rockets raining from the terror enclave. Lieberman broke away with his party, secular Yisrael Beiteinu. Public opinion assumed the election would be a slam dunk for Netanyahu.

In Israeli elections, people vote for political parties, not candidates. Each party is given a number of seats in the 120-seat Knesset based on election results. The president chooses a candidate based on election results and party recommendations to put together a majority coalition and become prime minister. If the candidate is unable to do so within the deadline, the president passes the baton to another candidate. If that person fails, the mandate returns to the Knesset, who can propose another candidate to try before the Knesset is forced to dissolve and return to elections.

Elections: Round One

Netanyahu's Likud party won a narrow victory in the April 2019 elections—just one seat above Gantz's 35 Blue and White party seats. Everyone was confident that Netanyahu would be able to garner a majority coalition, even when he asked for a 2-week extension after an eventful 28 days that included four major holidays and over 700 rockets launched from Gaza that killed four civilians.



Yisrael Beiteinu won five seats in the election, giving Lieberman the leverage to block Netanyahu's first attempt to form a coalition. The two met multiple times to hash out a reconciliation that would restore Lieberman to his former position as defense minister and give Netanyahu the needed seats. They could not agree, however, on the polarizing issue of drafting ultra-Orthodox Jews for military service. Lieberman would not budge, and Netanyahu could not afford to alienate the religious parties in his right-wing bloc. Thus the clock ran out and the Knesset voted to dissolve itself and go to a second election in September 2019 rather than allow runner-up Gantz a shot at forming a coalition.

Rematch

Netanyahu, dazed from his unexpected failure in the first round, buckled down for the rematch. He presented himself as a strong, irreplaceable leader, promising to assert Israeli sovereignty over the Jordan Valley and more land in Judea and Samaria if reelected.

The outcome of the second elections, however, left the Jewish state in murky water with no clear winner. Though Blue and White won more seats than Likud, Gantz did not have enough support to make himself a viable candidate for Israeli President Reuven Rivlin to tap to piece together a coalition. Before the final votes were in, Netanyahu called on Gantz to form a broad unity government.

The ensuing game of political chess was embroiled with squabbling and finger-pointing that left the nation in a frustrating limbo as both Benjamins tried and failed to negotiate a unity government. The Jewish state was then forced into the unimaginable: a third round of elections within a one-year period, with no end of the political stalemate in sight.

Third Time the Charm?

On March 2, Israelis flocked to the polls—again—despite fears that turnout would be low due to voter fatigue and the COVID-19 pandemic. Yet Israel saw its highest voter turnout in the three elections. Clearly, the people were eager to break the stalemate.

Exit polls predicted a big win for Netanyahu with 59 seats. By the time the final votes were tallied, however, the premier's bloc had dropped to 58 seats, putting him in a similar position to the first election in April 2019. It wasn't enough to make him the clear victor over Gantz. In fact, it put him far enough to convince Rivlin—in addition to the left-wing and Arab parties recommending Gantz as the candidate—to give Gantz the first attempt at forming a government.

Right off the bat, with Rivlin's encouragement and pressure from the COVID-19 crisis, Gantz and Netanyahu entered into negotiations for a unity government with terms for rotating turns as prime minister and dividing ministerial seats between their parties.

The Home Stretch

Gantz outraged his Blue and White allies by negotiating with Netanyahu, causing a split in the party. But multiple meetings that seemed to lead nowhere sparked fears of an unprecedented fourth election. The major sticking point was who would control the judiciary committee—a major point of contention for Netanyahu, who is currently under indictment for corruption charges, which he has labeled an attempted ousting. Gantz wielded his newfound power as Speaker of the Knesset to leverage anti-Netanyahu bills, which he had previously been blocking for the sake of negotiations, to pressure the sitting premier to sign the deal. On the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day in Israel, the two met and inked an agreement.

All for One or One for All?

Netanyahu will remain in power until October 2021, at which time he will pass the baton to Gantz, who will serve for another 18 months as prime minister. The unity government provides relief as Israel's first fully functioning government in a year and a half, but whether it will function as a cohesive body remains to be seen. With a unity agreement that sets up a chessboard with fail-safes, checks and balances, and veto power, the future still looks a little uncertain—but nonetheless brighter with the first hurdle out of the way.

IN CRISIS, ISRAEL RISES ABOVE

By Joshua Spurlock, *The Mideast Update*

THERE IS A SAYING that those who do not learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Israel has learned a lot from its history and has overcome many tests and trials so that they aren't repeated. While the coronavirus pandemic has created unprecedented challenges, Israel tragically has lots of experience in dealing with unimaginable problems—and they've developed some unprecedented solutions.

ISRAEL'S COURAGE

During the early 2000s, Israel faced dozens of suicide bombings by Palestinian terrorists in buses, markets, restaurants and more. It led to a horrific death toll and even more widescale psychological damage. Even up until recently—years after the terror campaign known as the Second *Intifada* (uprising) ended—the wife of retired Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Spokesperson for International Media Lt. Col. Peter Lerner “would get uneasy” when a bus pulled alongside her car. “So much so was the impact of living under the constant threat.” According to Lerner, the situation was “truly shaking to the core of any and almost everybody living in Israel at the time.”

Rather than crumble or learn to live with the horror, Israel went on the offensive with a major act of defense: then-Prime Minister Ariel Sharon announced the construction of a security fence to keep the terrorists out of Israel. “While it was extremely controversial from an international law perspective, it gave Israelis the confidence that life can go on,” Lerner said.

The security fence ultimately separates the Palestinian areas of Judea and Samaria—which some call the West Bank—from the Israeli communities. Its construction sparked an international controversy, as some accused Israel of trying to impose borders on the Palestinians, despite the fact that a fence could easily be moved or dismantled if needed. Yet in the face of some negative press, Israel pressed on—and it worked. According to Lerner, “the security and the safety of Israeli citizens at the time outdid any political concerns.”

The fence wasn't the only measure. An intense Israeli military campaign known as Operation Defensive Shield took the fight to the terrorists, going back into Palestinian areas and cleaning out terror strongholds. Combined with Israel's offensive acts, the security fence “curbed the suicide bombings, brought them down within five or six years to almost completely gone,” Lerner explained.

There were more than 100 Palestinian bombing attacks on Israelis from 2000 to 2006, murdering hundreds and wounding many more. With just over half the fence finished in 2006, there were less than 10 bombings in Israel over the next decade combined. “From a strategic and tactical perspective, it makes sense,” Lerner said. “If you can put up a physical barrier that will actually make it hard for [terrorists], if they will have to use more efforts



Home Front Command training

to try and plan and implement these attacks, yet while they are doing these efforts you can gather more intelligence in order to intercept them on their way, then it just makes sense.”

ISRAEL'S CREATIVITY

Following Israel's disengagement from the Gaza Strip in 2005, a new crisis emerged in the form of Gazan terror groups launching thousands of rockets from the coastal enclave toward Israeli communities. Israel responded by creating the Iron Dome, a unique, short-range missile defense system that Lerner describes as “definitely the strategic defining component that changed everything with relation to terrorist activities originating from the Gaza Strip.”

Although the system provides safety by intercepting rockets in the air to prevent them from hitting Israeli civilians, it can also provide time to think clearly. Lerner pointed out that the Iron Dome gave Israel's decision makers “room to act calm and collected without the looming threat of this gut response when you see Israeli deaths; they're able to calculate their steps in a way which makes more sense strategically and not get drawn into a conflict that would be hard to perhaps overcome.”

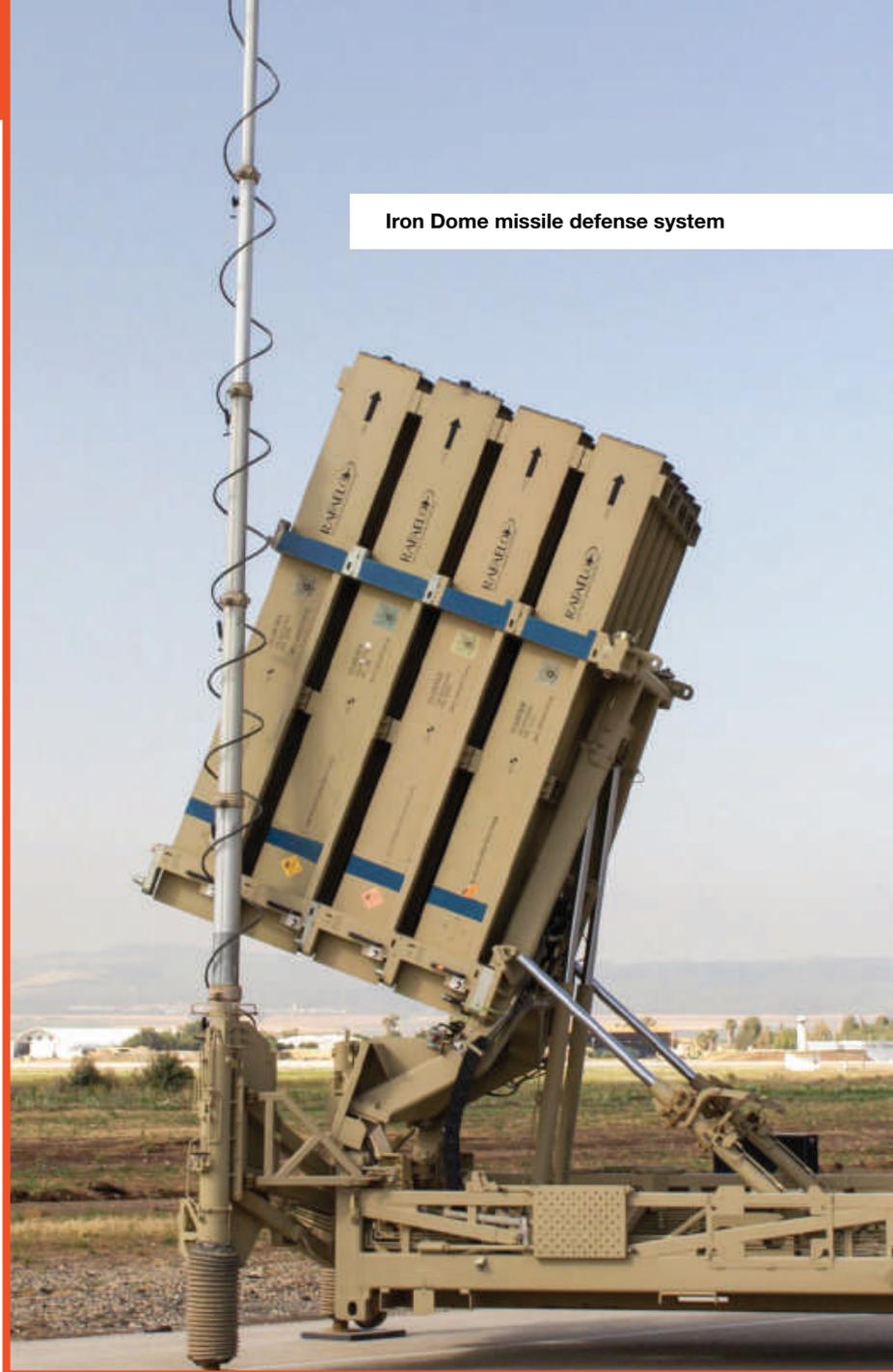
Lerner does, however, feel there is a downside to the Iron Dome in that it has reduced pressure to fully address the threat posed to Israel's south while the psychological toll of attacks continues. At the same time, it might help to someday encourage terrorists to reach a deal with Israel and stop the violence.

The technologically innovative answer to the Gaza rocket problem has indeed changed the conflict. The Sderot Media Center website noted that over 9,000 rockets and mortars were fired into Israel from 2001 to 2010. After the Iron Dome became operational in 2011 and Operation Protective Edge in 2014, the number of rockets and mortars that hit Israel or have been intercepted by the Iron Dome dropped to less than 300 in the following three-and-a-half years. Perhaps most tellingly, Hamas terrorists in Gaza shifted their weapon of choice from rockets to arson balloons.

ISRAEL'S COMPASSION

Not content to merely overcome its own challenges, Israel has sent rescue and medical teams around the world to respond to earthquakes and disasters such as the 2011 tsunami in Japan. According to Lerner, the Home Front Command in Israel trains constantly for horrific scenarios like a rocket taking down a building, giving them ample training for natural disasters. Regarding Israeli medical and search and rescue teams being able to help at all times, he added, “Perhaps it's more of always being prepared, mainly having to respond on short notice.” Whether helping others results in diplomatic and political successes or not, Lerner believes Israel steps in primarily because “it's the right thing to do. We have the tools, we have the means, we have the ability, we

Iron Dome missile defense system



have the knowledge, we have the know-how, we must do it.”

“I think the most common denominator about crisis is it always hits you suddenly,” Lerner pointed out. That fact “to a certain respect differentiates us from other militaries...because the terrorist attacks always hit at home, our missions are not expeditionary missions thousands and thousands of miles away. You always have to respond and react quickly, so I think that means we always have to be prepared for the crisis, and that's what they do.”

Israel's response to crises throughout its traumatic history offers more than just help or lessons for others. It offers hope.

The Joint List:

Unpacking Israel's Unity Bloc of Arab Parties

By Cheryl Hauer, *International Vice President*



MK Ayman Odeh,
head of the Joint List

COFFEE DRINKERS IN ISRAEL love a good café *hafuch*, the Hebrew word for cappuccino that literally means “upside down.” But Israelis say the word applies to more than coffee. In general, they claim, life itself is often *hafuch* in Israel. At the time of this writing, Israelis are in COVID-19 lockdown, confined to their homes in the Land whose very existence is meant to guarantee freedom for the Jewish people. Life upside down.

Prior to the coronavirus pandemic, *hafuch* had captivated the headlines as well, but this time in the political arena. The world looked on bemused when, after three elections, Israel seemed unable to form a government for the first time in her 72-year history. Israelis went to the polls, politicians bartered, coalitions were formed and then crumbled and elections were held again—all to no avail. Neither the right nor the left seemed able to break the deadlock and bring together a coalition that would govern the nation. After the third election was over and votes had been counted, the right failed in its coalition building efforts. The left was at last poised to take over. Until it all came crashing down around them—again. Politics upside down.

Although the situation was fraught with complexity, for the first time in Israel's history, Arab voters were poised to play a critical role in the third election's final outcome. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Likud party had won 36 Knesset (Parliament) seats and through their coalition-building efforts ended up with 58—only 3 short of the necessary 61. Benny Gantz, leader of the Blue and White opposition party that had won only 33 seats in the election, cobbled together a coalition that brought their final numbers to the sought-after 61. At the heart of the win—and eventually the loss—was the Joint List, a unity bloc made up of Israel's four Arab parties. Together, they had garnered 15 seats, making them Israel's third largest party and a seeming necessity for any winning coalition.

The List

The Joint List is a bit *hafuch* itself. It was formed in 2015 as a united slate of political parties with vastly differing ideologies and political goals. So differing, in fact, that they disbanded in January of 2019. However, they came together again for the September 2019 election for the sole purpose of unseating Netanyahu's right-wing government. But who are they and what do they actually believe?

Hadash is the largest and oldest of the parties, founded in 1977 by the Arab Israeli Communist Party. It advocates for a two-state solution, social democracy, separation of religion and state and favors pro-environment solutions. It is demographically inclusive with Knesset members who are male, female, Muslim, Arab-Christian, Druze and even Jewish.

The party, led primarily by Islamists and Palestinian nationalists, drew grave criticism in 2019 when one of its Knesset members, Yousef Jabareen, spoke at a pro-BDS (Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions) conference in London. Calling Israel an apartheid state guilty of illegal occupation, he called for Palestinians to mobilize against it. Accusing Israel of war crimes, he demanded the boycott of “settlement products” and international companies who deal with Israel. Israel’s Public Security minister made an unsuccessful attempt to keep Jabareen from participating in the conference. “This is a black day for the Knesset,” he said. “Arab MKs spewing lies and hatred against Israel.”

Balad was established in 1995. It calls for the creation of a Palestinian state and refuses to acknowledge Israel’s right to exist as a Jewish state. It is opposed to cooperating with any Zionist entities and has seen many of its most senior members convicted of supporting terrorism. The chairman of the party, Azmi Bishara, was investigated for assisting Hezbollah during the Second Lebanon War, while MK Basel Ghattas was imprisoned for smuggling cell phones to Palestinian prisoners in an Israeli jail. Perhaps most famous, however, is MK Hanin Zoabi, who participated in the so-called Gaza Freedom Flotilla in 2010. Zoabi sailed on the Turkish passenger ship, *Mavi Marmara*, bound for Gaza and carrying armed activists who attacked Israeli troops, resulting in the death of 10 activists and the wounding of several soldiers.

Although the other parties are for the most part nationalist and secular, **Ra’am** is home to the radical Islamist sector of the Arab population. It was established in 1996 by the Southern Islamic Movement and has openly supported terrorism. More recently they have called for greater cooperation with the Jewish population and have integrated women into the party hierarchy. Today their members are religious Muslims supporting a two-state solution, a strong religious involvement in matters of state, and social welfare policies. The party draws significant support from the Bedouin communities of the Negev.

Ta’al was founded in 1980 by Ahmad Tibi, former adviser to Yasser Arafat. The party supports a two-state solution and the separation of church and state, but is much more center leaning on social issues. Founder Tibi promotes the subjects of national pride and honor, which draw significant support and popularity among young voters. Many believe that without Tibi, the party would eventually disappear.

The Coalition Came Tumbling Down

Gantz had campaigned on a Jewish-only government platform, a government that would not rely on the Arab Joint List. He was joined by Avigdor Lieberman, one of Israel’s most right-wing politicians, and his Yisrael Beiteinu party. But when Gantz at long last received the recommendation of 61 Knesset members to form a new government, the Arab Joint List were card carrying members of the coalition. At the very last moment, three Jewish coalition members withdrew, unable to sign on the dotted line with coalition partners who were anti-Zionist terrorist supporters.

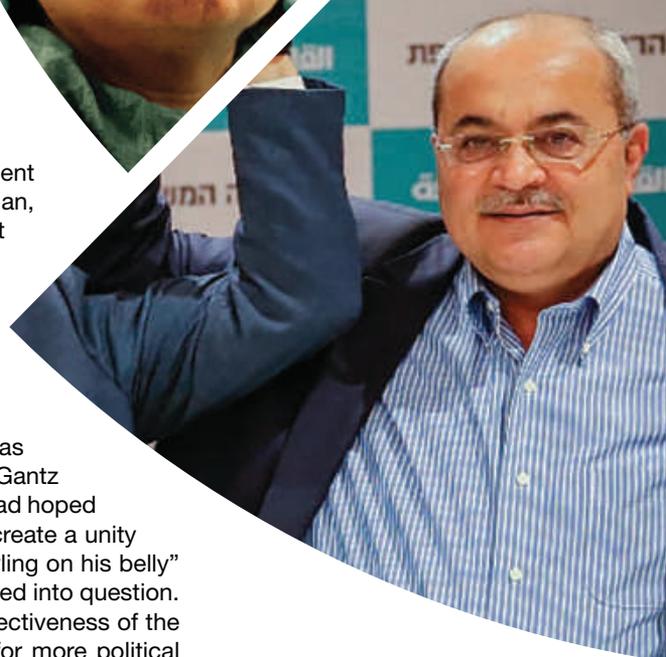
What ensued was a maelstrom of political maneuvering. As the baton appeared to pass from left to right and back again, one of the few constants was the disappointment and anger expressed by the Joint List. They had trusted Gantz and imagined an Israel in which they could influence the kind of change they had hoped for for decades. On April 20, Netanyahu and Gantz signed an agreement to create a unity government, dashing those hopes and moving Tibi to accuse Gantz of “crawling on his belly” to shamefully unite with Netanyahu. The Joint List’s future effectiveness is called into question. Will they ever regain the influence this last election bought them? But the effectiveness of the unity government also remains a question mark. All the parties may be in for more political *hafuch*—or is this perhaps the beginning of Israeli politics finally right side up?



MK Mansour Abbas,
Ra’am party member



MK Hanin Zoabi,
Balad party member



Ahmad Tibi,
former adviser
to Yasser Arafat

Israeli Invention Reduces the Risk of Contagion for Medical Personnel

OVER THE PAST SIX DECADES, the tiny nation of Israel has repeatedly demonstrated its huge heart of compassion for those in need. Regardless of where hardship hits, the Jewish state is often the first on the frontlines, bringing medical personnel, rescue workers, drought relief specialists, scientists, equipment and inventions to those who need it most.

The COVID-19 coronavirus presents a unique challenge: almost the entire world faces the pandemic that threatens to ravage societies, health care systems and economies. In the midst of global hardship, Israel is once again on the frontline, bringing its scientific and technological ingenuity to help the world battle the invisible enemy. Israeli inventions have produced medications currently tested as a possible antidote, tools for rapid diagnosis and early detection, and methods to help slow the spread of the disease.

The latest Israeli addition to the COVID-19 arsenal is a sticker that attaches to surgical masks to add a crucial layer of protection to safeguard medical personnel against the virus.

The 3D-printed sticker—simply called “Maya”—is made up of disinfectant-coated nanometric fibers that capture nanoparticles—and any viruses they contain—thus neutralizing the coronavirus as it comes into contact with the mask.

Maya is the brainchild of a mechanical engineering team led by Prof. Eyal Zussman from the Technion–Israel Institute of Technology. Both Israel’s Ministry of Health and the Directorate of Defense Research and Development gave Maya their nod of approval in early April. Days later, the Galilee Medical Center in northern Israel became the first medical facility to equip its personnel with the sticker to test its effectiveness in curbing the infection rate among medical teams.

Some 4,000 years ago, God made a promise to a man from Ur of the Chaldeans from whose lineage He desired to birth a people for Himself. “*I will make you a great nation...and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed*” (Gen. 12:2,3b), He vowed to Abraham. Today we continue to see the partial fulfillment of this prophecy in the numerous ways in which Israel blesses the nations of the world—particularly in a time of crisis like this.

Ilse Strauss, *Bridges for Peace*

Israel Helps Blossom the Desert in Developing Countries

ISRAEL’S FIRST PRIME MINISTER, David Ben-Gurion, is well-known for his belief in the importance of the nation’s southern desert regions. He said, “It is in the Negev that the creativity and pioneer vigor of Israel shall be tested.” Since the establishment of the modern State of Israel in 1948, farmers and researchers alike have been working side by side to fulfill Ben-Gurion’s vision as well as Isaiah’s prophetic words that “...*the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose*” (Isa. 35:1b)—with tremendous success.

Israelis have never kept the benefits of their achievements to themselves, sharing the fruit of years of labor and research with those who want to follow in Israel’s footsteps to farm semi-arid areas around the world. “Many farmers...look to Israel as a model of how to manage and flourish in conditions of water scarcity and a hotter, drier climate,” Ram Fishman, director of Tel Aviv University’s Nitsan Sustainable Development Lab, tells *Israel21c*.



Farmers in the US and Europe are often first in line to buy and implement the Israeli solutions. However, millions of farmers from developing countries in Africa and Asia do not have the same kind of funds their counterparts in developed countries do, and therefore cannot afford the Israeli technology, *Israel21c* explains. This is where Nitsan Sustainable Development Lab comes in.

Fishman and his team believe that the power of Israeli innovation can make the greatest difference among those who do not necessarily have easy access to it. Nitsan thus enables “Israeli technology and its innovation system in agriculture, water, energy and other fields to diffuse and realize their potential to assist sustainable development in low-income settings,” the Nitsan website explains.

This entails Fishman and his team conducting intensive field work researching the prevalent problems facing farming communities in rural Asia and Africa and then implementing an Israeli solution to address the issue.

“We do have an amazing amount of knowledge and experience from agronomists, farmers, companies and R&D centers,” *Israel21c* quoted Fishman. “Our lab’s purpose is to be a bridge between these smallholder farmers and Israeli expertise and technology.”

Janet Aslin and Ilse Strauss
Bridges for Peace



Digital X-Ray Revolutionizes Health Care

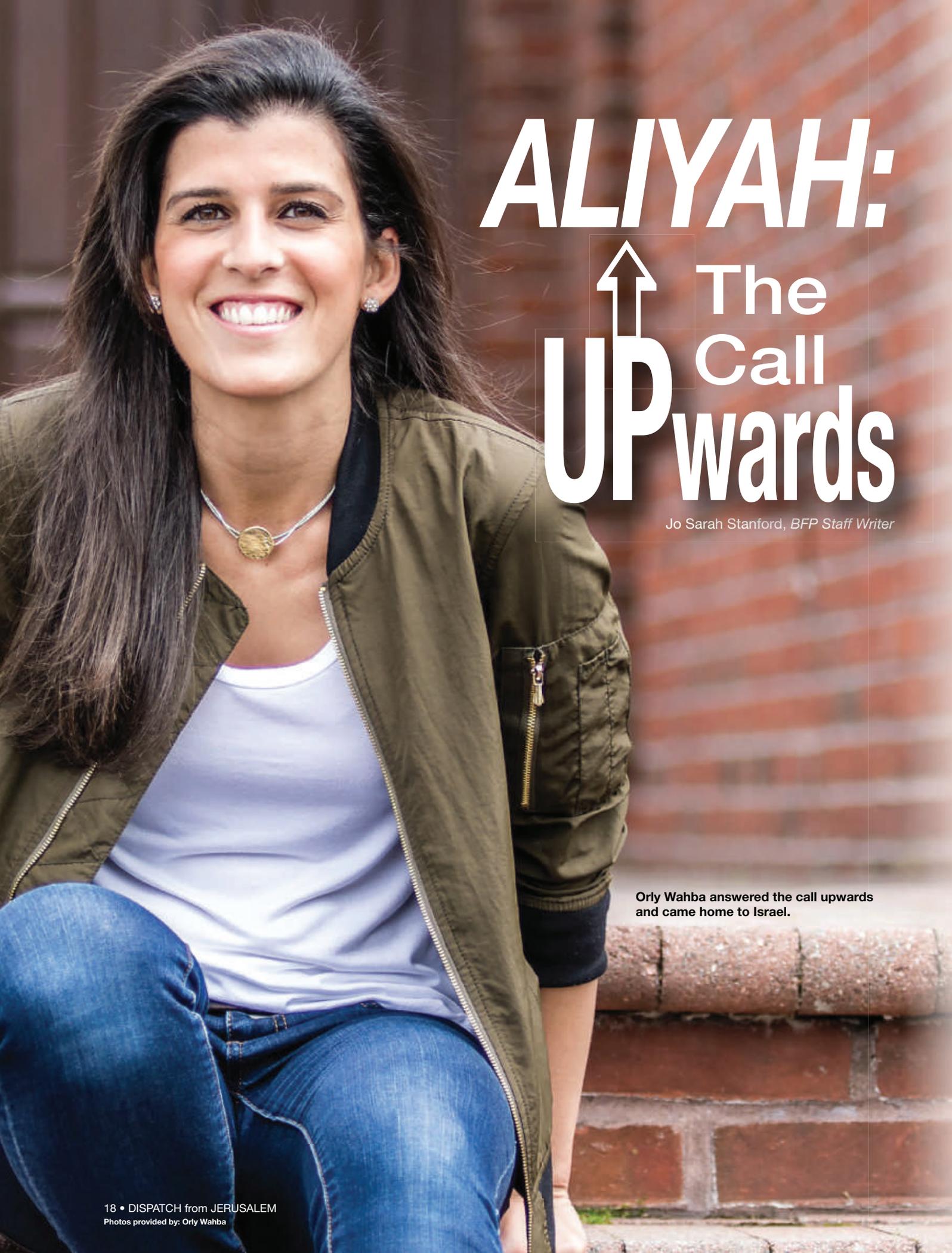
MODERN MEDICINE has an array of tools that aid the diagnostic process. None have possibly been more valuable than the X-ray machine. Discovered in 1895 by a German physicist, X-rays allow doctors to see beyond the body’s outer covering of skin and get a clearer understanding of what is happening within. This allows a head start for treatment, which often saves lives. Sadly, two-thirds of the world’s population are unable to benefit from early detection of disease, such as cancer, because the current analog technology is expensive and not widely available outside of the world’s wealthier countries.

All that is about to change dramatically. Nanox, an Israeli company, has developed a digital system that can perform multiple types of imaging at a much lower cost than the US \$1–3 million price tag for the current analog machines. Its accompanying cloud-based software will not only store the images but allow them to be read by health care professionals anywhere on the globe.

Combining Israeli ingenuity, improvisation and problem-solving skills with Japanese technical precision and punctuality, 60 Nanox employees of both nationalities are working in Neve Ilan—a suburb of Jerusalem—and Tokyo. They have already seen a prototype of the system tested at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem and will seek regulatory approval in several countries this year.

The ultimate goal of Ran Poliakine, Nanox founder and CEO, and his team is an initiative for preventative health care—for each person on the planet to have at least one medical screening once a year. According to the World Health Organization, such screenings have the potential to save millions of lives from cancer-related deaths alone each year. The company is planning to have 15,000 systems in place by the end of 2022.

Janet Aslin, *Bridges for Peace*



ALIYAH:

↑
The
Call
UPwards

Jo Sarah Stanford, *BFP Staff Writer*

**Orly Wahba answered the call upwards
and came home to Israel.**

“AND I WILL ESTABLISH *My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you. Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession; and I will be their God”* (Gen. 17:7–8).

Four thousand years ago, God made a covenant with Abraham, promising the land of Canaan—now Israel—to him and his descendants forever. Throughout Israel’s ancient and modern history, there have been times when the Jewish people were scattered among the nations. However, through captivity and exile, the Jewish people have always returned. This return is known as *aliyah*.

MORE THAN A PHRASE

Aliyah, literally “ascending,” is the term used to describe Jewish immigration to Israel. However, the word carries a weight of meaning beyond a general move to another country. In biblical terms, it is used to describe the times when the people would “go up” to the temple in Jerusalem for the feasts. The Scriptures are also full of the prophets proclaiming God’s promise to return the people to the Land.

In 1948, after 2,000 years of dispersion—though a remnant always remained—Israel was declared an independent, modern nation. Then–Prime Minister David Ben Gurion called on Jews dispersed around the world to “return” to their homeland. “We call upon the Jewish people throughout the Diaspora [the Jewish population outside Israel] to unite with us in our homeland by making *aliyah*, by building the Land and by taking part in this momentous undertaking of the redemption of the Jewish people, which has been the dream of generations.”

In 1950, the Law of Return officially granted Jewish people worldwide the right to immigrate to Israel and become a citizen. Over the first few decades, hundreds of thousands flocked to the fledgling nation. Today, over 30,000 *olim* (immigrants) make *aliyah* every year, with chartered flights arriving to crowds of people cheering and waving flags, welcoming Israel’s newest citizens home.

ANSWERING THE CALL

Orly Wahba made *aliyah* in March 2019. Leaving behind family and friends in America, she made the lone journey to begin a new life in Jerusalem. Wahba grew up in the Sephardic (mainly Jews from Spain and Portugal) community of Brooklyn, New York. Her parents, of Jewish–Egyptian descent, met in America. Her father immigrated there after serving in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), while her mother went as a child.

Even from the age of four, during family visits to Israel, Wahba felt a connection—especially to Jerusalem—and

felt that she was meant to be there. There were many points in her life where she wanted to “make the jump,” but she was very close to her family and her community. Her parents, two brothers and two sisters all lived on the same block. It was not easy for her to leave the support that her close-knit community provided.

At 35, Wahba moved to Israel temporarily, planning to live there for just one year. However, within the first 24 hours, she suspected that it might be for longer. Very soon she began plans to make the move permanent. Wahba lived in Israel for a year and a half before returning to the States for three months to make the final preparations for *aliyah*. At 37, and not wanting to wait for a special chartered flight, she hopped on a plane by herself. She was met at Ben Gurion Airport by a friend holding a sign, welcoming her to her new life.

“While I love New York...there is something that this place—and specifically this city [Jerusalem]—fills you with that is very difficult to describe. You can only feel it.” Wahba explains the reason behind her move. “It feels like, here, I am really living.” During her one-year adventure, the call to make *aliyah* only grew stronger and stronger. “It’s like hearing a sound so loud you can’t ignore it. So I knew I had to stay, and I knew I had work to do here.”

Wahba holds strongly to the Jewish principle of *tikkun olam* (“repairing the world”), and feels that in making *aliyah*, she is best positioned to make a positive impact in the lives of others. “I feel in my heart something very magical and special—emerging from here, from this city, from this place—that is going to impact change around the world.” She knows without a doubt she made the right choice.

AN EVERLASTING PROMISE

Many people, even pilgrims and tourists, feel the pull of Jerusalem, though most—like Wahba—are unable to put it into words. Israel’s long history and ancient call upwards seems to permeate her very stones. Yes, God’s everlasting covenant to Abraham still calls His people home today.

“Then they will know that I am the LORD their God, for though I sent them into exile among the nations, I will gather them to their own land, not leaving any behind” (Ezek. 39.28 NIV).



The Blessings We Would Not Choose

By Ilse Strauss, News Bureau Chief

THE SOUND OF THE LOCK clicking into place echoed through our apartment with a thump of unfamiliar finality. My husband and I stood rooted to the spot, staring at the door we'd just closed behind us. Without saying a word, each knew what the other was thinking: "That door will only open again in two weeks' time."

On an otherwise ordinary Tuesday morning at the beginning of March, my husband and I went into quarantine for 14 days. We joined the ranks of some 130,000 people in Israel who were sent to their homes for the two-week period of isolation after being exposed to a possible COVID-19 coronavirus carrier in a bid to stop the disease from running rampant through Israel's tiny population.

As we stood staring at the door that now sealed us in from the outside world, I dreaded the days ahead. How would we cope without sunshine, fresh air, human interaction or a change of scenery? How would I fill 14 days devoid of friends, coworkers, people to see, places to be and differences to make? However, as I contemplated the undesirably empty stretch of time ahead, I had no idea of the good that would come from 14 days of quarantine. I wasn't the only one. Many Israelis who begrudged the idea of confinement came out on the other side with a testimony of the surprising blessings they reaped from the time they wouldn't have chosen.

The Roads Now Taken

Quarantine and lockdown turned out to be the unlikely incubator for previously unexplored opportunities. "I started two online *shiurim* (classes/lessons) and a talk show type program that were really successful," shares Rabbi Uri Pilichowski. "I don't think I'd have the idea or the audience if it wasn't for quarantine."

Pilichowski's classes—a daily *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.) TV show for kids and a talk show style interview program for adults—continue today, with great success. "I feel privileged that I have the tools...to help families through this."

For others, quarantine marked the start of a long overdue journey. "I always knew I had a book in me," says Yonni. "I told myself I'd start writing one day, tomorrow, next week—and a decade passed. But quarantine nixed all the excuses of being too busy—and I started writing. If I wasn't confined to my house, my book may have remained a dream."

Then there were the opportunities to savor the crucial things of the heart that often fall by the wayside as we run the rat race. "My baby is learning to walk and I get

to watch every step," offered Lahav, who lives in Tel Aviv. "It's nice."

All By Myself?

Perhaps one of the most precious blessings of isolation was the way it knitted Israelis together. It takes a village to raise a child, an African proverb teaches. In the same way, I—and thousands more—learned that you need a community to survive—no, thrive, in quarantine. Israel always has a strong sense of community, it's population like a large, extended family. History has taught the Jewish people the importance of standing together, that the collective can accomplish—and weather—what the individual can't. Although Israelis across the spectrum disagree on everything from politics and sports to where the best *hummus* is found, hardship has a way bringing the nation together to face the onslaught side-by-side. Family is, after all, family. Battling COVID-19 was no different.

"I recently moved into my building and didn't know my neighbors well," shares Rivka. "A day after my quarantine started, there was a knock on my door. My upstairs neighbor wanted to see if I needed anything. That gesture told me I wasn't alone. In that moment I knew that I—we—would be okay." Several more knocks followed, each from a concerned neighbor who wanted to let Rivka know she was looked after, cared for and part of a family.

The sense of community went beyond neighborly concern to perfect strangers lending a hand. Days after the first Israelis went into quarantine, the following offer appeared on a popular Facebook group: "So, is anyone quarantined and needs us to bring some groceries, and drop them off by your house?"

The trend persisted. On the evening Israel announced the closure of all schools and kindergartens, sending children home to parents who had to be at work the next morning, an understanding mother posted on the Facebook group, "If you have nowhere to take your kids tomorrow morning, contact me."

Israel's sense of community continued through the quarantine, and then as social distancing morphed into lockdown. Video clips emerged of thousands of Israelis streaming onto their balconies and cheering from their windows to applaud health care workers, coming together as a nation to lift up the arms of those at the forefront battling the virus. More clips emerged of the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4, "Hear, O Israel," centerpiece of Jewish prayer) resounding from balconies and windows to be picked up and passed



on by neighbors until the proclamation of the one true God echoed through darkened, deserted streets.

As human contact and even proximity disappeared from daily life, Israel—like the rest of the world—found alternative ways to unite, meeting up virtually in online “venues” like Zoom, GoToMeeting and Facebook Live. Social media also became the platform for the faithful to gather across borders and the conduit that carried “*the word of the LORD from Jerusalem*” (Isa. 2:3) into the nations.

A beautiful example of this is an international online prayer meeting—the brainchild of 21-year-old Israeli student Yarden Leitner—that rallied renowned international rabbis, including the chief rabbis of Israel, and half a million viewers around the world to cry out to God and blow the *shofar* (ram’s horn) in unison.

“On mad days like these, when everyone is locked inside their homes...we’ve decided that while the situation could separate us physically but not spiritually,” explained Leitner. “We decided we could...unite like the people of Israel have never united before.”

Blessed, Regardless...

At the time of writing this article, the lockdown in Israel continues. With increasingly more countries following suit, millions are now in isolation. I hope that by the time you read this article, we will have battled and beaten the invisible enemy, looking at the coronavirus, infection, quarantine and lockdown in the rearview mirror. If not, may our eyes be open to the blessings to be had as we pass through this time we would not choose.



Beauty from Destruction:

Repurposing **ROCKET** Shrapnel

Janet Aslin, *BFP Staff Writer*



Rockets that have
been fired into the
town of Sderot

ALTHOUGH THE PHRASE, “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade” has not been credited to a rabbi but rather to an American philosopher of the early 1900s, it could have been. The idea of taking something bitter, an adversity or difficult circumstance and bringing good out of it is a very Jewish way to look at life. And sadly, throughout the centuries, the Jewish people have had many opportunities to put this into practice.

In 1948, the modern State of Israel was born and immediately plunged into a war that claimed more than 6,000 lives. During the nearly 72 years since, Israelis have lived in a rough neighborhood, surrounded by those who seek their annihilation. Through it all, Israel has sought peace and hoped for a better future for its children. Perhaps no others have been challenged with this reality more than the people living near the Gaza security fence—communities facing the constant threat of rocket fire from terror groups in the coastal enclave. Here are two examples where rocket shrapnel—something intended for destruction—is being changed into objects of beauty to be enjoyed.

ROCKET NECKLACES

Yedidya and Shiran Harush are a young couple raising their family in Shlomit, a tiny community 700 meters (2,296 ft) from the Egyptian border. It is also very close to Gaza and is one of the communities that has endured more than 13,000 rockets and mortars since 2005, when Israel left the Gaza Strip in a bid for peace.

The idea for the rocket necklace was born in 2014, as Yedidya and Shiran sought a way to take a piece of shrapnel through airport security on a visit to the United States, where the Jewish National Fund planned to present it to the governor of California. They decided to try turning the shrapnel into a piece of wearable art.

The twisted and jagged pieces of Qassam rockets are hardly attractive—the remains of a weapon of war, intended for death and

destruction. However, once the metal pieces have undergone the process of cleaning, grinding and polishing, they become works of art, things of beauty. Many of the couple's striking necklaces incorporate the shape of the Land of Israel or the Magen David (Hebrew for the "Star of David").

The jewelry-making process itself has turned out to be healing and therapeutic for the couple. Speaking to the *Jerusalem Post*, Yedidya said, "Even in the darkest and most negative times, we turn that into something positive. It's an amazing message to the world. We are the people of Israel, and we don't war. Instead, we focus on light and positivity."

Visit www.rocketnecklace.com to see the wide array of beautiful jewelry that is being created from pieces of metal originally launched in hatred. "Our prayer is that one day we will run out of materials," Yedidya says.



ROSES FROM ROCKETS

Another small community in Israel's Gaza periphery has produced a similar initiative—Rockets into Roses. Yaron Bob, who lives in the small *moshav* (collective community) of Yatev, is putting his skill as an artist, blacksmith and welder to use as he transforms the twisted and jagged remains of Qassam rockets into beautiful roses, candlestick holders and *menorahs* (seven-branched candelabras). These items "symbolize the perseverance of the people of Israel. Living symbols of Israel's endurance in the face of Hamas and Islamic terror," Bob shares via his website, www.rocketsintoroses.com.

Like the community of Shlomit, Yatev is also on the frontlines when it comes to rockets launched from the Gaza Strip. Residents have less than 15 seconds to find shelter when they hear the Code Red air raid siren.

Searching for a way to respond to the horror and uncertainty of the rocket attacks, Bob began to form roses as an expression of peace. In an interview with *CBN*, Bob said, "I needed to make something that will say growth and prosperity and to make something out of the destruction and after the ruin of the Qassam." Each rose takes between three and four hours to create and is welded onto a piece of metal shaped like the nation of Israel.

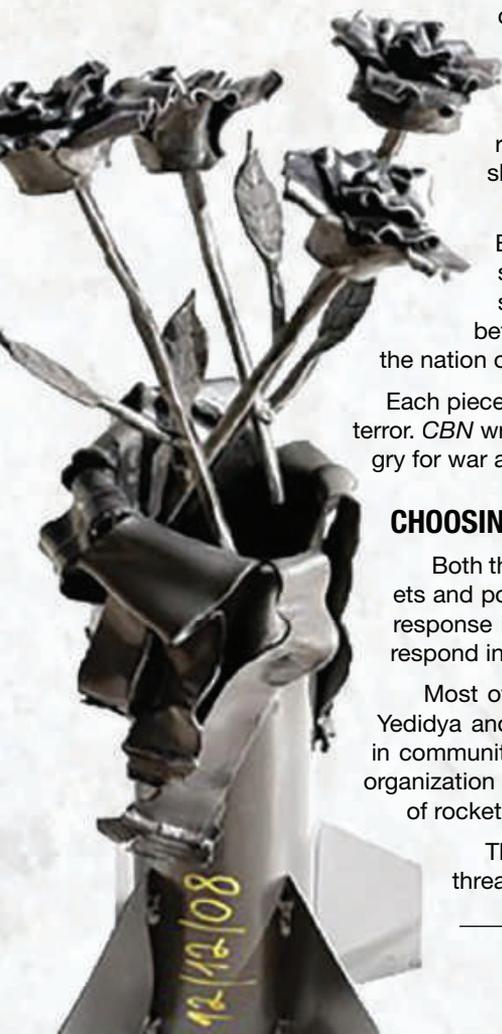
Each piece is unique and provides patrons with a way to stand with Israel in the face of ongoing terror. *CBN* writes about Bob, "His goal is to somehow let the world know people here are not hungry for war and that they want to make something beautiful."

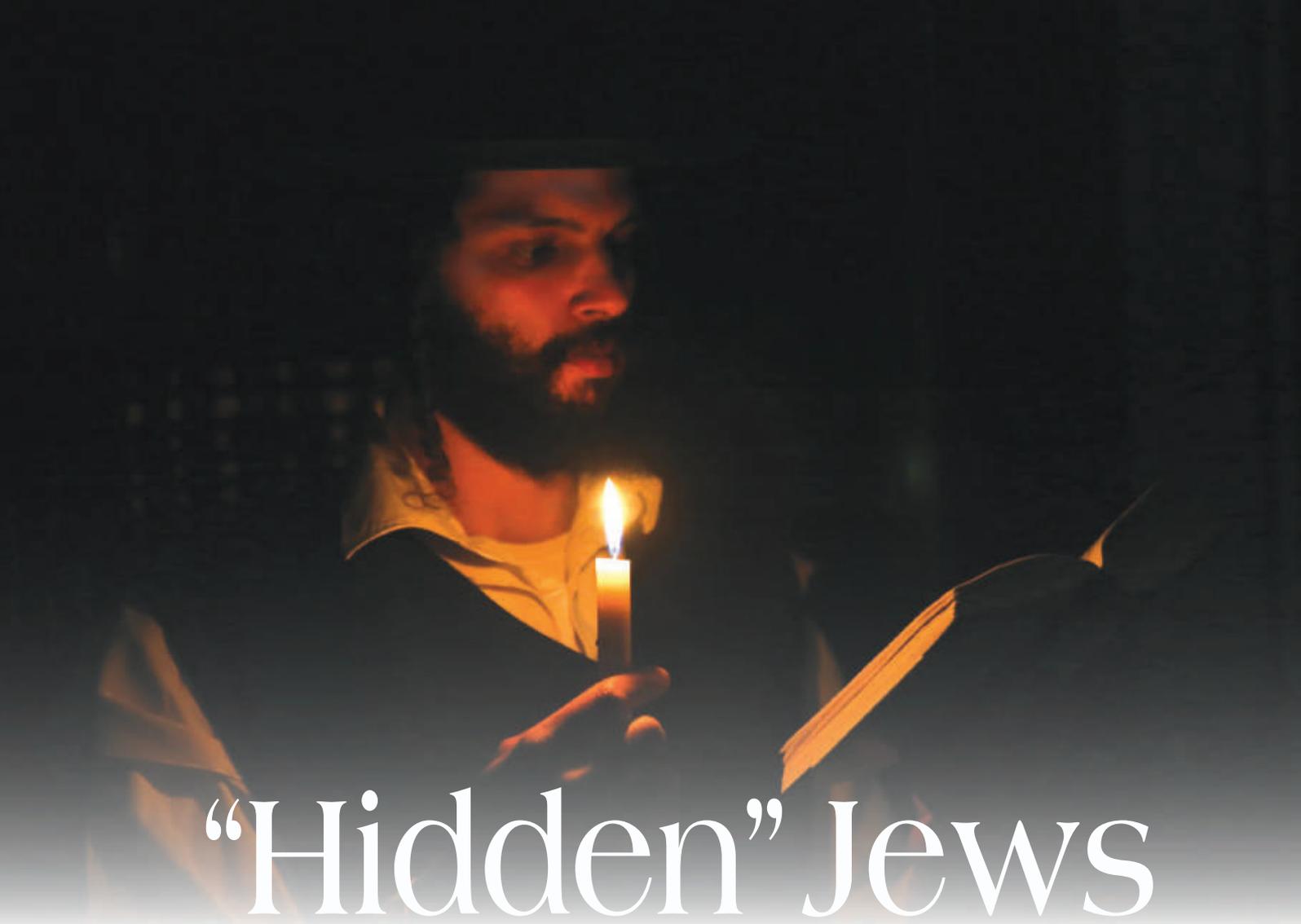
CHOOSING LIFE

Both the necklaces and roses were ideas born from the reality of the threat of incoming rockets and possible death. The hatred represented by each launch could have generated a similar response in those being targeted. However, we see two Jewish families making the choice to respond in positive ways—making lemonade out of lemons, so to speak.

Most of the proceeds from their sales are used to benefit the residents of southern Israel. Yedidya and Shiran donate to the Jewish National Fund for the construction of bomb shelters in communities bordering the Gaza Strip. Bob gives to Operation Lifeshield, an Israeli nonprofit organization that builds portable bomb shelters and places them in communities under the threat of rockets.

These are only two examples of the many ways the Jewish people living in Israel, a land threatened by its neighbors, have chosen to respond to hatred and violence.



A man with a beard and long hair is shown in profile, reading an open book. He is holding a lit candle in his right hand, which illuminates the scene. The background is dark, and the lighting is warm and focused on the man and the book.

“Hidden” Jews

Come Out of the Shadows

By Kathy DeGagne, *BFP Staff Writer*

THERE ARE JEWS in the Diaspora (the Jewish population outside Israel) that have remained virtually hidden for over 500 years, some secretly preserving their Jewish traditions through the generations, and some having never known their roots were Jewish. Now, these Sephardic Jews are emerging from the shadows and into the light.

Jews in the Iberian Peninsula

Jewish history recounts that there have been Jews in Spain since the time of King Solomon. Many Jews fled to present-day Spain and Portugal after the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Through the centuries, they built Spain into a powerful empire, leading the world in commerce, medicine, seafaring, scholarship and literature.

That idyllic period came to an abrupt end in the late 14th century when Spanish Jewry was targeted by the Catholic Church, who feared the Jewish community was becoming too powerful—an all-too-familiar story for the Jewish people in the Diaspora. One hundred years later in 1492, all Spanish Jews were given the order to get out of Spain within three months. The Alhambra Decree demanded that they either convert to Catholicism, be exiled or be condemned to death without a trial. Many decided to convert, while others fled.

Lip Service Only

The Jews who converted were called Crypto-Jews (underground or hidden Jews), *Conversos* (Ladino for both willing and unwilling converts) or *Anusim* (Hebrew for forced converts). Another word was also applied to these Jews: *Marranos*, which means swine.

Many who converted were Christians by day, but, under the cover of darkness, they continued to celebrate their Jewish heritage and religion. The *Anusim* were forced to eliminate all signs of their faith, such as the *mezuzah* (Scripture box) on their doorpost and replace it with a cross. Many kept a small *mezuzah* in their pocket, touching it with one hand while kissing its former place on the doorpost—a small act of homage to their faith, but extremely dangerous if they were ever caught.

The Church suspected that these “new” Christians were not wholehearted and started to monitor them around the clock. Men, women and children went to the stake for crimes such as lighting candles on Friday night or fasting on *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement).

Exile

There is a valley just inside the Portuguese border with Spain called the “Valley of the Jewish.” During that fateful period over 525 years ago, between 50,000–80,000 Spanish Jews fled to this valley. It offered sanctuary in a very dark time. Spanish Jewry began their lives again in Portugal, built homes, towns and established new businesses.

Their sense of security was short lived. In 1497, Portugal began its own forced conversions of Jews, and like Spain, they were baptized into the Catholic Church—en masse and almost overnight. Within one century in the Iberian Peninsula, almost 250,000 Jews had been forcibly converted. Those who could flee went to Holland, North Africa, Germany, Italy, the Middle East and the Americas.

Yearning to Return

For *Anusim* in the 15th century, keeping the Sabbath meant certain death. However, in the 21st century, with the freedom to exercise their faith, keeping the Sabbath represents life itself. Many *Bnei Anusim* (children of the *Anusim*) yearn to return to Israel, the land of their forefathers, but entry into Israel has often been barred to Sephardic Jews who converted to Catholicism, even though their ancestors were coerced into conversion. Family research and cultural history combined with DNA tests are required to convince the Israeli government that they belong.



The Jewish district of Guarda, Portugal, dates from the 14th century.

Research indicates that there may be between 100–200 million descendants of the *Anusim*. DNA has determined that 1 in 20 Spanish males and 1 in 15 American Hispanics are descendants of these

Sephardic Jews. Many do not even realize that they are Jewish unless their families preserved Jewish traditions throughout the centuries. They kept their Jewish identities hidden in order to survive, but stories abound from people who remember their grandmothers lighting candles on Friday night, scrubbing pots on Passover or continuing traditions that to their grandchildren didn't make any sense in a Catholic household. Many of these present-day *Bnei Anusim* who have discovered their Jewish heritage are studying the faith and language of Israel in order to qualify to make *aliyah* (immigration to Israel).

Possessing the Negev

The Hebrew name for the Iberian Peninsula is *Sepharad*. God prophesied through Obadiah that the exiles in Iberia (and by extension all the places where the Sephardic Jews fled) will return to Israel and settle in the Negev. “*The exiles of this host of the people of Israel shall possess the land of the Canaanites as far as Zarephath, and the exiles of Jerusalem who are in Sepharad shall possess the cities of the Negev*” (Obad. 1:20, ESV, emphasis added). This prophecy is yet to be fulfilled, but a number of Israeli organizations are focused on facilitating the process.

Shavei Israel, headed by president Michael Freund, is helping the *Bnei Anusim* return to their Jewish roots and to the land of their forefathers. He explains: “Their ancestors, through no fault of their own, were abducted from us...Nonetheless, they managed to preserve their sense of Jewish identity down through the centuries, often at great risk to themselves and their families. We, the Jewish people, have a responsibility toward them. We need to embrace them and facilitate their return to the Jewish people.”

Emissaries from Shavei Israel in Spain, Portugal and Brazil represent a support network undergirding those Jews who wish to reconnect with their heritage.

With possibly tens of millions of “hidden” Sephardic Jews wanting to return to their homeland, many times more than the current total world Jewish population, *aliyah* could take on a staggering new dimension for Israel. Watch and marvel, for the fulfillment of Obadiah's prophecy may be just beyond the horizon.

Christians Blessing Israel in Times of Crisis: A Legacy Continues

DURING THE SIX DAY WAR of 1967, the founder of Bridges for Peace, Dr. G. Douglas Young, and his wife, Georgina (affectionately known as Snook), closed the lecture halls of the Israel–American Institute of Holy Land Studies (today Jerusalem University College) to help their Jewish neighbors beat the enemy. Young used the school van as an ambulance and ferried wounded soldiers through the frontlines while Snook turned their home into a refuge for battle-weary fighters and terrified neighbors. Their efforts sparked a legacy of Christians blessing Israel that continues to this day.

For over 50 years, volunteers for Bridges for Peace—which Young founded after the war—have come from around the world to bless Israel. Our volunteers have remained during times of war, terror and *intifada* (uprising) to help vulnerable Israelis weather dark days. Now, Israel—like much of the world—is again engaged in a war, this time against an invisible enemy. Like so many times in the past, our volunteers are here, working to see the vulnerable safely through to the other side.

Here is a glimpse of the gratitude of those receiving the blessings we pour out as well as a glimpse into the hearts of our volunteers who pour out these blessings with love.



A Thank You from Those We Bless

“At a time in which we are forced to practice social distancing, you have found a way to embrace us and inspire us. May you be blessed.”

—Rabbi Kenneth Brander, president of Ohr Torah Stone

“It is in times such as these that a person’s true character shines forth, and as a Jew, I am proud to be able to say that the people at Bridges are not merely friends—they are more like family.”

—Rabbi Michael Freund, chairman of Shavei Israel

“We knew you would come. You have helped us before and we knew you would again. We recognize you. You are the people who help. You are the people who bless. HaShem will bless you.”

—Tzvi Khaute, director of Menashe Aliyah & Absorption Center, Shavei Israel

“Bridges for Peace and its wonderful volunteers have always stood alongside the city and its inhabitants, helping in time of emergency and routine.”

—Moshe Koninsky, mayor of Karmiel

“To our friends and loved ones in Bridges for Peace... There is not enough time or space to cover all the blessed, important activities you are doing for the country.”

—Nissim from Dimona

“Thanks for your support and assistance. You are like angels...We love you! We will never forget your support during the difficult days!”

—Malak, an educator from the Delek School

“With everything going on...it really put my mind at ease to know a package was still going to be delivered!”

—A family on our Adoption Program

The People Who Bless

"I believe in times of crisis we see the true character of who people really are. Bridges for Peace volunteers have been diligently out on the frontlines serving the needy in Israel. I have watched people give of themselves and their time and energy so that others will not have to go without."

—Patrick Verbeten, Israel Operations director

"I grew up knowing about Bridges for Peace. One thing that stuck out was this: during war, our volunteers didn't leave, continuing food deliveries at the risk of their own lives. I can't help but think of these times in a similar light. This is not a war of bullets and missiles, but against COVID-19. During these times, when we could have gone home to our families, we stayed. We're here to give people the support they need. It is an honor to be here, doing what I'd heard about all my life: standing with Israel in their time of need."

—Eilir-Wyn Treharne, food bank floor supervisor

"I have the opportunity to be part of something much bigger than myself, part of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy and to have the privilege of being one who stands with and blesses Israel, not only in prayer, but in practical deeds. I remember receiving a call from a Holocaust survivor after we delivered a birthday cheer basket with her food delivery. 'You remembered my birthday!'...She was so excited about it that she called to thank me."

—Daniel Kirchhevel, deputy director of International Projects

"With a lot of the country shut down, people still need the support of Bridges for Peace, and now more than ever, they are excited that we remember their needs. Even though we can't share a handshake or a hug, they are so grateful that we're still here. It's a wonderful reminder that God is in control. He is working in all situations, so we should continue working with Him."

—Tim Schoenthaler, Zealous Israel Project member

"I have been feeling so blessed, even though my life is going through difficulties. The floor team is filled with joy because we're standing with Israel, even if this situation is tough for us as well. I'll never forget one of the men we supported telling me with happy tears that because of us, he doesn't feel so alone anymore."

—Asami Tsujimoto, Zealous Israel Project member

"God has really opened my eyes to see that the Jewish people know that Christians are here for them, ready to help. The Jewish people know that they can call on us, which is amazing when you think of what has transpired over thousands of years. That speaks to actions being louder than words."

—Sarah Balasny, executive administrative assistant

"Many of our Holocaust survivors know what it means to live in loneliness and isolation. Age and frailty mean that they rarely leave their apartments, dependent on those who come to visit for company. Now, the isolation is more



intense. Many told us that the loneliness is worse than their fear of the disease. What an honor to be able to bring a little bit of sunshine into the lonely lives of these precious people!"

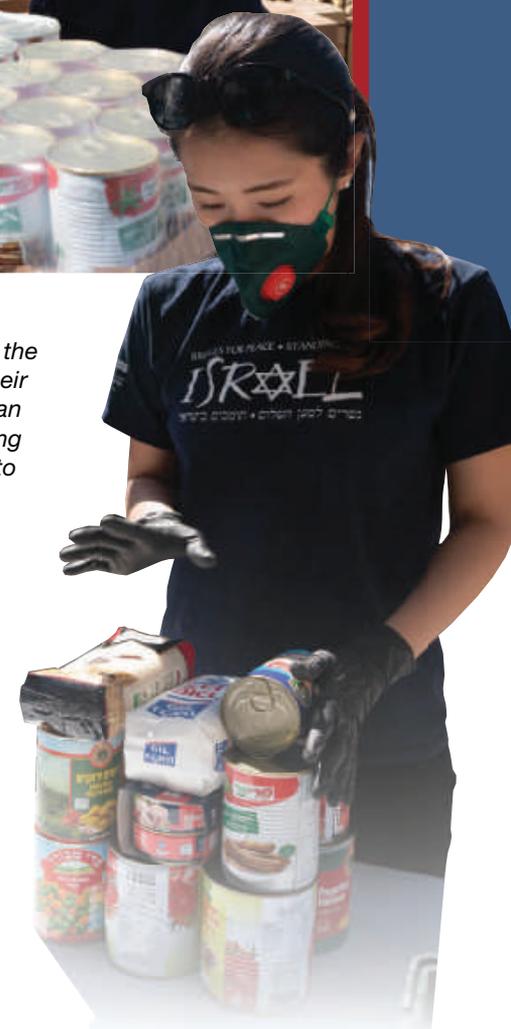
—Henry Strauss,
International Projects
assistant

"I am so grateful to help during such a time of need. It is so fulfilling to see people opening the door and seeing all the bags we've delivered. They ask with a delighted smile: 'Is this all for me?' I'm here for exactly this."

—Amanda Pennington,
Feed a Child supervisor

"I am so encouraged to experience our volunteers and managers thinking mostly about how to help the Israelis going through this time in the best manner possible. You can tell that the main driving power of all our team is love and care."

—Eli Shai Ken, procurement manager





TOURS

For more details on tours, see contact information on page 2.

Australia

STANDING WITH ISRAEL TOUR 2020

October 28–November 14, 2020

Hosted by: **Matthew Chivers**

Join us and experience the miracle of ancient and modern Israel. Celebrate the Australian Light Horse anniversary in Beersheva. See firsthand the work of Bridges for Peace and spend one day on a volunteer community project.

ENCOUNTER ISRAEL TOUR

February 14–27, 2021

Hosted by: **Matthew Chivers**

You are invited to join this lifechanging tour to encounter the miracles of ancient and modern Israel. Sail on the Sea of Galilee, explore the Old City of Jerusalem, marvel at the City of David and the ancient stronghold at Masada, pray at the Western Wall and much more.

Canada

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: EUROPE & ISRAEL TOUR

November 8–24, 2020

Hosted by: **Rev. Peter & Deanna Fast and Rev. Don & Victoria James**

A tour to Europe and Israel. Come face to face with the Holocaust, visiting the Anne Frank House, Corrie ten Boom Museum, Auschwitz concentration camp and more. Then fly to Israel, where we will learn about the struggle for the Jewish state and see how God has restored His Land and people of Israel. Tour includes the Netherlands, Germany, Poland and Israel.

**Option to extend Israel component.*

EXPERIENCE ISRAEL DISCIPLESHIP TOUR

January 31–February 11, 2021

Hosted by: **Rev. Don & Victoria James**

Join us as we travel through Israel and experience firsthand the wonder and beauty of the Land of the Bible.

**Special rates for pastors and their spouses.*

United Kingdom

DISCOVERING ISRAEL TOUR

October 13–20, 2020

Hosted by: **Michael Treharne**

Join us as we travel through Israel, exploring the Sea of Galilee, Golan Heights, Jerusalem, Judea, the Dead Sea, Masada, Megiddo, Caesarea and much more.

ARTISTIC ISRAEL TOUR

October 20–28, 2020

Hosted by: **Sian Treharne and Irina Song**

Join other creatives for this unique opportunity to experience Israel through the eyes of an artist. Marvel at the beauty and share in the wonder of the Land that God calls His own while you draw, paint and learn new skills.

United States

ISRAEL STUDY TOUR

October 25–November 6, 2020

Hosted by: **Bobby Peck**

Come experience the miracle of ancient and modern Israel by visiting the Land, experiencing the culture and meeting the people.

THE “FOLLOWING JESUS” ISRAEL TOUR 2021

March 1–12, 2021

Hosted by: **Bill & Liz Adams**

Join veteran hosts Bill and Liz Adams and an Israeli guide in the Land of the Bible, following in the footsteps of Jesus. This learning, worshiping and serving adventure goes off the beaten path without missing the essential biblical and historic sites. Partake in the privilege of blessing the Israeli people and re-greening the Promised Land.

BIBLICAL HOLY LAND TOUR

June 25–July 6, 2021

Hosted by: **Jill Czelusta**

You are invited to join this 12-day tour for the journey of a lifetime. Explore the Land of the Bible and experience Scripture coming to life.

VOLUNTEER WITH US

Manager, Facilities & Maintenance/Home Repair (Jerusalem)

(Long-term)

Home Repair Team (Karmiel)

(Long-term)

Web Developer

(Long-term)

Food Bank Floor Workers

(Short-term)

Administrative Assistant (Jerusalem)

(Long-term)

For more information, visit www.bridgesforpeace.com/get-involved/volunteer/



SUMMER Fattoush Salad

By Rae Harris, *BFP Staff Writer*

THE FATTOUSH SALAD is a Middle Eastern classic, consisting of simple, fresh vegetables, a lemony dressing and bread—lots and lots of bread. Traditionally, the salad is tossed with freshly toasted pita bread right before serving, allowing the pita to soak up the delicious dressing and melt into the rest of the salad. When in a pinch, you can use store-bought pita chips instead, but we highly encourage making your own. *Fattoush* makes for a quick and easy addition alongside your favorite main course, or top it with grilled chicken or fish to make it a meal all its own.

Ingredients

Pita Chips

2 large pitas, torn into medium-sized chunks
3 Tbsp neutral oil
1 tsp garlic powder
Pinch of salt and pepper

Lemon Mint Dressing

½ cup olive oil
½ cup mint, roughly chopped
1 Tbsp honey
3 cloves of garlic
Juice of 1 large lemon
Pinch of salt and pepper

Fattoush Salad

1 bag mixed greens or lettuce of choice
8 radishes, cut into quarters
1 cucumber, cut into chunks
10 cherry tomatoes, cut into quarters
¼ red onion, thinly sliced
2 Tbsp parsley, roughly chopped
2 Tbsp chives, chopped
½ cup crumbled feta cheese

Directions

To make pita chips:

Place oil in a large, nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Add pita pieces and spices and stir. Cook until pita is golden brown and toasted all over. The larger your skillet is, the less time it will take to toast the pita.

To make dressing:

Place all ingredients in a blender and blend until combined. Add more salt and pepper to taste.

To assemble salad:

Place all salad ingredients and pita chips in a large bowl and toss to combine. Immediately before serving, pour over the desired amount of dressing and toss until the salad is evenly coated.

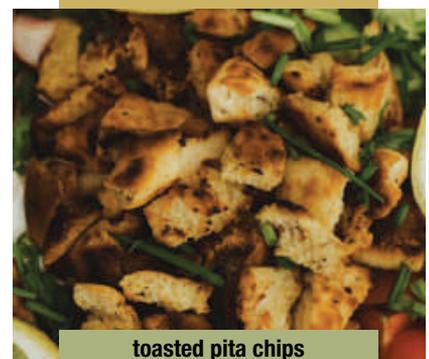
Serves 4–6



feta cheese



lemon mint dressing



toasted pita chips

Israeli Company Donates Potential **COVID-19** Drug to the US

IN THE MIDST OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC, a ray of hope appeared in the global fight against novel coronavirus in the form of an anti-malarial tablet. That tablet is called hydroxychloroquine sulfate, a generic drug that is currently being used for the treatment of malaria and autoimmune diseases, such as lupus and rheumatoid arthritis.

The *Times of Israel* reported that “according to the study carried out by Prof. Raoult [Institut Hospitalo Universitaire in France] on 24 patients with coronavirus, six days after the start of taking hydroxychloroquine, the virus had disappeared in three-quarters of people treated.” The drug has also produced encouraging results in China.

Based on these findings, Israeli pharmaceutical giant Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. quickly responded with the offer to donate ten million tablets of hydroxychloroquine to hospitals in the United States.

The company’s website provided this statement by Brendan O’Grady, executive vice president of North America Commercial: “We are committed to helping to

supply as many tablets as possible as demand for this treatment accelerates at no cost. Immediately upon learning of the potential benefit of hydroxychloroquine, Teva began to assess supply and to urgently acquire additional ingredients to make more product while arranging for all of what we had to be distributed immediately.”

Teva Pharmaceutical Industries Ltd. was established in Jerusalem in 1901 and has grown from a small business to one with a gigantic international presence. Teva is a global leader that produces over 3,500 generic and specialty medicines taken by over 200 million people.

Although it is a commercial business, traded on both the Tel Aviv and New York stock exchanges, Teva has demonstrated its Jewish roots by offering its entire inventory of this product at no cost and making plans to increase production. This well-known quote has been attributed to Judaism: “Whoever saves a single life, saves the world.” Teva is doing its part.

Janet Aslin, *Bridges for Peace*



Israel Moves ahead with Old City Train Station Named after President Trump



ISRAEL IS ALL ABOARD for a new train station in the heart of the Old City of Jerusalem. The Transportation Ministry announced that plans for an extension to the current railway line that will carry passengers directly from Ben Gurion Airport to the Western Wall are going full steam ahead.

The station, adjacent to the holiest site in Judaism and the spot where two biblical Temples once stood, will be named for the first world leader who stepped up to acknowledge Jerusalem as the eternal, undivided capital of the Jewish people—and ratified that recognition with an embassy move: US President Donald Trump.

Transportation Minister Bezalel Smotrich said the plan, which was initiated by his predecessor, received the necessary nod of approval from the National Planning and Building Council after being held up for more than a year.

In addition to the existing Tel Aviv–Jerusalem high-speed line that whisks passengers from one city to the other in just over half an hour, the plan entails extending the route to the Old City via a 2-mile (3-km) tunnel and two underground stations. Although the exact details of the route have not been announced, the train will make its final stop at the Western Wall.

Smotrich lauded the plan as a “historic” development, “very good news for Israeli residents and the millions of tourists” who will now have the option of an uninterrupted trip from touching down in the Jewish state to marveling at the Western Wall.

Ilse Strauss, Bridges for Peace

Ties between Israel and Azerbaijan Deepen

EACH SPRING FOR THE PAST 50 YEARS, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) has held a policy conference for delegates from America, Israel and around the world. One thing brings them together: they are all unabashedly pro-Israel. So, when the Shia Muslim country of Azerbaijan sent Samir Sharifov, its finance minister, to address the gathering of 18,000 Israel supporters, it was a very public and positive endorsement for the State of Israel.

Sharifov was part of a long roster of speakers, a “who’s who” of current leadership in the United States and Israel. The presidents of Columbia, Serbia and the Dominican Republic also addressed the crowd. So how did this historic event come about?

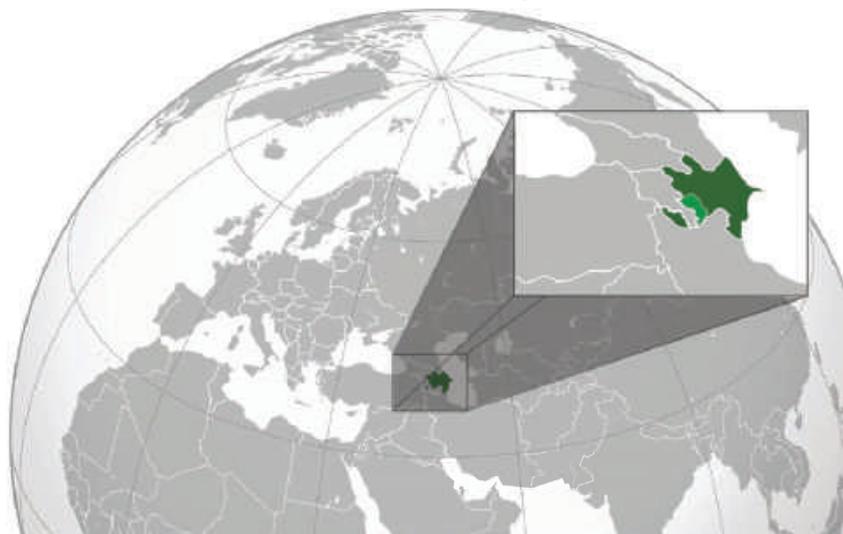
Azerbaijan is a small country with powerful neighbors—Russia to the north and Iran to the south. It was part of the former Soviet Union, achieving independence in 1991. Since that time, ties with Israel have been developing. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has made two visits to the capital, Baku—the first in 1997 and the second in late 2016.

In his address, Sharifov acknowledged that Israel supported Azerbaijan “in need with armaments.” He also read remarks from Azerbaijan’s first vice president, Mehriban Aliyeva, who reiterated the country’s gratitude for the Jewish

people, both in Israel and America, who have “maintained close ties with Azerbaijan and contribute to the strengthening of our relations with these countries. We are much grateful to them.”

The *Jerusalem Post* quoted Dr. Avinoam Idan of Haifa University: “It shows to everybody that they [Azerbaijanis] are not hiding this special relationship between Israel and Azerbaijan. They take the risk, they are willing to pay any price, to be under pressure from their neighbors.”

Janet Aslin, Bridges for Peace



BRIDGES FOR PEACE

HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS: Bring joy into the lives of people who have suffered so much. Partner with us to deliver food and supplies to Holocaust survivors to ensure their basic needs are met. More than providing food, we bring joy and companionship to these precious people, even including special birthday baskets as an extra treat for their special day.

WIDOWS AND ORPHANS: God is described as a champion of the *“fatherless and the widow”* in Deuteronomy 10:18, and He invites us in Isaiah 1:17 to partner with Him to *“defend the fatherless”* and *“plead for the widow.”* We help care for these people who are often unable to care for themselves. Help us provide food parcels to help make ends meet and put food on empty tables.

FOOD: You can help feed over 22,000 needy Israelis in 40 communities every month by supporting our food banks in Jerusalem and Karmiel.

ADOPTION: Sponsor an Israeli individual or family for one year and become personally connected by exchanging letters. Your gift will provide food, bus tickets, financial assistance for special needs and badly needed encouragement.

FEED A CHILD: Change the future for an impoverished Israeli child by providing hot lunches at school, birthday and holiday gifts, school books, a backpack filled with supplies and funds for special needs (sponsorship program). One-time gifts allow us to enhance the schools with computer labs, modern playgrounds, improved facilities and more.

ADOPT AN ISRAELI TOWN: Show compassion to needy families by supporting one of 18 Israeli towns that are experiencing severe economic hardship. We work with community officials across Israel to ensure that those in need are fed.

PROJECT RESCUE: We help the Jewish people of the Diaspora return to Israel. Your financial assistance helps pay for passports, visas, ground transportation, lodging and more. Thus far we have helped rescue over 76,000 people.

PROJECT TIKVAH (HOPE): Support the elderly and sick who cannot immigrate to Israel. Your gifts fund soup kitchens that provide hot, nutritious meals; heaters for the winter season for those living in unheated quarters; emergency medical assistance and more.

IMMIGRANT WELCOME GIFTS: Welcome new immigrants to Israel with a large gift package that includes a kitchen set of pans and utensils, blankets, school kits for children and a 3-volume Hebrew–Russian (or 2-volume Hebrew–Spanish) edition of the Hebrew Scriptures.

CRISIS ASSISTANCE FUND: Your gifts enable us to respond quickly to crisis situations. These may include critical needs, such as bomb shelters, ambulances or help for emergency situations, such as terror-motivated arson attacks and more.

HOME REPAIR: Teams of skilled construction workers renovate homes of the poor and elderly in dire conditions, fixing leaky plumbing, replacing broken windows, painting, plastering, rewiring and installing cabinets.

VICTIMS OF TERROR: We deliver special cheer baskets to anyone touched by terrorism. Special needs, such as wheelchairs, food vouchers and financial assistance for medical bills are provided for those in long-term rehabilitation.

DENTAL/MEDICAL AID: Bring back smiles to the faces of the poor. Israeli health insurance does not cover dental care or special medical needs. This fund helps the needy cover those expenses.





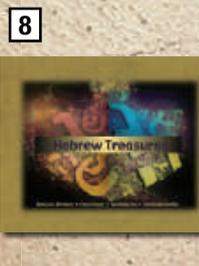
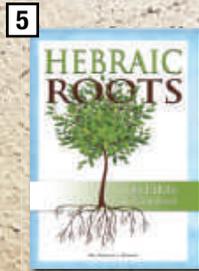
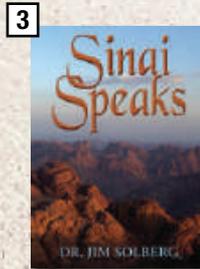
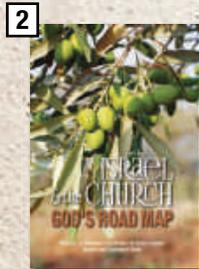
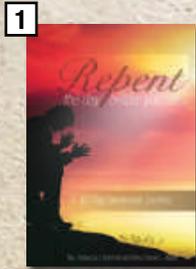
BRIDGES FOR PEACE

**CHRISTIANS SUPPORTING ISRAEL AND
BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN
CHRISTIANS AND JEWS IN ISRAEL AND
AROUND THE WORLD.**

DONATE



Recommended Reading



- 1 REPENT THE DAY BEFORE YOU DIE**
A 40-DAY DEVOTIONAL JOURNEY
 Rebecca J. Brimmer & Cheryl Hauer

 - Suggested homework activities to enhance the journey
 - Daily Scripture readings and accompanying prayer points
 - Full color & spiral bound journal
- 2 ISRAEL & THE CHURCH: GOD'S ROAD MAP**
 Rebecca J. Brimmer & BFP Leaders

Full-color revised edition introduces the Hebraic roots of Christianity and tells the story of God's covenant relationship with Israel. Includes study questions. Excellent for small group or personal study. **Also on Kindle.**
- 3 SINAI SPEAKS**
 Dr. Jim Solberg

Rediscover the *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.) and its relevant messages for today through this amazing devotional. Enter a new realm of Bible study as ancient stories with modern applications bring you closer to the God of Israel. **Also on Kindle.**
- 4 ISRAEL TOUR JOURNAL**
 BFP & MIUD Leadership

Each beautifully designed page describes an important biblical site; offers spiritual application, modern life lessons and Scripture verses; and provides a place to chronicle thoughts and reactions, creating memories that will last forever.
- 5 HEBRAIC ROOTS: THE BIBLE IN CONTEXT**
 Rebecca J. Brimmer

Our understanding of the Scriptures is shaped by our thinking and culture, which is quite different from the Hebraic background. Concepts that are sometimes complex and foreign to our Western worldview are explained from a Hebraic perspective. **Also on Kindle.**
- 6 JOSEPH & MARY: A MODEL FOR TODAY'S FAMILY**
 Cheryl Hauer

A fresh look at the lives of Mary and Joseph, gleaned from what history tells us of first-century family life—a desperately needed model for families today. **Also on Kindle.**
- 7 A GENTILE WITH THE HEART OF A JEW**
 Calvin B. Hanson

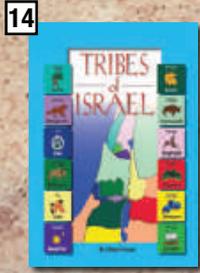
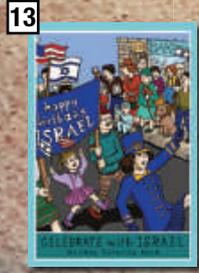
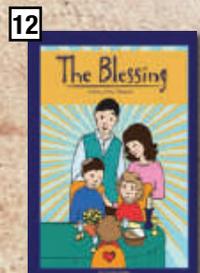
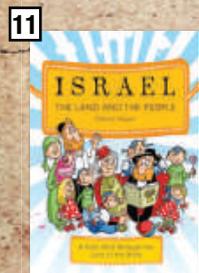
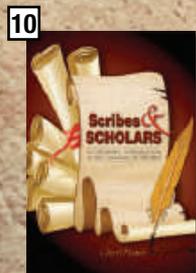
The life of Dr. G. Douglas Young, founder of Bridges for Peace, will inspire you to stand with Israel. His messages are timeless, his passion contagious. **Also on Kindle.**
- 8 HEBREW TREASURES**
 R. Brimmer, C. Hauer, T. Riddering & C. Sprinkle

The 20 word studies found in this hard-cover gift book are a good beginning to understanding the richness of the Hebrew language. Well-known scriptural texts will come to life in a refreshing new light. **Also on Kindle.**
- 9 FORGOTTEN PATRIOT**
 THE STORY OF HAYM SALOMON
 David Allen Lewis

Perhaps no one did as much to help establish the United States as Haym Salomon—a forgotten hero who gave everything for the cause of freedom.

ORDER ONLINE
 visit bridgesforpeace.com

Children's Books



- 10 SCRIBES & SCHOLARS**
 A CHILDREN'S INTRODUCTION TO THE LANGUAGE OF THE BIBLE
 Cheryl Hauer

Learn about the Hebrew language: write it, speak it, mix your ink, make a biblical scroll; includes fun activities and 40 Hebrew flash cards. (ages 11–14)
- 11 ISRAEL: THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE**
 Cheryl Hauer

Through puzzles, games, crafts and other activities, children will learn about Israel's land, people, food and language...and have fun doing it! (ages 7–12)
- 12 THE BLESSING**
 Carolin Sadler

Join a Jewish family as they joyfully share their *Shabbat* (Sabbath) traditions. The fourth commandment will become personal as your family learns to experience God's rest. (ages 7–12)
- 13 CELEBRATE WITH ISRAEL HOLIDAY COLORING BOOK**

Children will experience the joy and excitement of Israel's festival cycle through our holiday coloring book, a great introduction to life in Israel.
- 14 TRIBES OF ISRAEL**
 Cheryl Hauer

Well-known Bible stories come alive as your children read about the tribal lifestyle of the patriarchs. The book includes activities that will enrich their understanding. (ages 11–14)

Free Bookmark

1. Cut along dotted line 2. Fold 3. Tape or glue shut

CUT

תהלים פרק צא

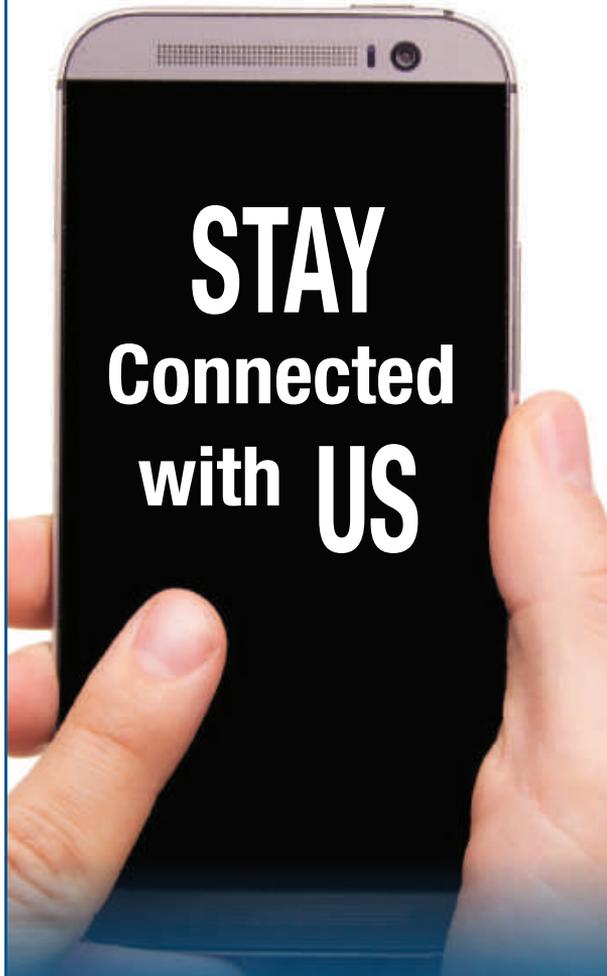
יֵשֶׁב בְּסִתְרֵי עֲלִיּוֹן; בְּצֵל שָׁדַי,
 יִתְלוֹן. אִמֵּר—לַיהוָה, מַחְסֵי
 וּמְצֻדֹתַי; אֱלֹהֵי, אֲבֹטָח-בּוֹ.
 כִּי הוּא יִצִּילֵךְ, מִפַּח יְקוּשׁ;
 מִדְּבַר הַוּוֹת בְּאַבְרֹתַי, יִסָּרֶךְ
 לָךְ—וְתַחַת-כְּנָפָיו תִּחְסֶה;
 צִנָּה וּסְחָרָה אָמְתוּ. לֹא-תִירָא,
 מִפַּחַד לַיְלָה; יַעֲוֶיךָ יוֹמָם.
 מִדְּבַר, בְּאִפְלֵ יְהוָה; מִקִּטְבַּ
 יִשׂוּד צְהָרִים. יִפֹּל מִצְדָּךְ,
 אֶלְךָ—וְרִבְבָה מִיְמִינֶךָ אֱלֹהֵי,
 לֹא יִגָּשׁ. רָךְ, בְּעֵינֶיךָ תִּבְטֵי;
 וְשַׁלְּמֵת רַשְׁעִים תִּרְאֶה. כִּי-
 אֲתָה יְהוָה מַחְסֵי; עֲלִיּוֹן, שְׁמֵת
 מְעוֹנֶךָ. לֹא-תִאֲנָה אֱלֹהֵי רַעַה;
 וְנִגַּע לֹא-יִקְרַב בְּאַהֲלֶךָ. כִּי
 מִלֵּאכֵי, יִצָּה-לָךְ; לְשִׁמְרֶךָ
 בְּכָל-דְּרָכֶיךָ. עַל-כִּפַּיִם יִשְׁאוּנֶךָ;
 כִּן-תִּגַּף בְּאֶבֶן רִגְלֶךָ. עַל-שַׁחַל
 וּפְתָן, תִּדְרֹךְ; תִּרְמַס כְּפִיר
 וְתַנִּין. כִּי בַ חֶשֶׁק, וְאִפְלֹטָהוּ;
 אֲשַׁבְּחֶהוּ, כִּי-יִדַע שְׁמִי. יִקְרָאנִי,
 וְאֶעֱנֶהוּ—עִמּוֹ אֲנִכִּי בְצָרָה;
 אֲחַלְצֶהוּ, וְאֲכַבְּדֶהוּ. אֲרַךְ יָמָי,
 אֲשַׁבְּעֶהוּ; וְאֶרְאֶהוּ, בִּישׁוּעָתִי.

PSALM 91

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High will abide in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust!" For it is He who delivers you from the snare of the trapper and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with His pinions, and under His wings you may seek refuge; His faithfulness is a shield and bulwark. You will not be afraid of the terror by night, or of the arrow that flies by day; of the pestilence that stalks in darkness, or of the destruction that lays waste at noon. A thousand may fall at your side and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not approach you. You will only look on with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. For you have made the Lord, my refuge, even the Most High, your dwelling place. No evil will befall you, nor will any plague come near your tent. For He will give His angels charge concerning you, to guard you in all your ways. They will bear you up in their hands, that you do not strike your foot against a stone. You will tread upon the lion and cobra, the young lion and the serpent you will trample down. "Because he has loved Me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him securely on high, because he has known My name. He will call upon Me, and I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble; I will rescue him and honor him. With a long life I will satisfy him and let him see My salvation." (NASB)

BRIDGES FOR PEACE
 bridgesforpeace.com

FOLD



THE COVID-19 coronavirus has affected nearly every sphere of society and highlighted the fact that we live in changing times. As we navigate these uncharted waters together, we want to make sure you continue receiving all the Bridges for Peace information and materials to keep you updated on events in Israel. Now you can also receive electronic copies of all of our publications sent to your inbox.

Subscribe now
 by completing the form at
bridgesforpeace.com/connect

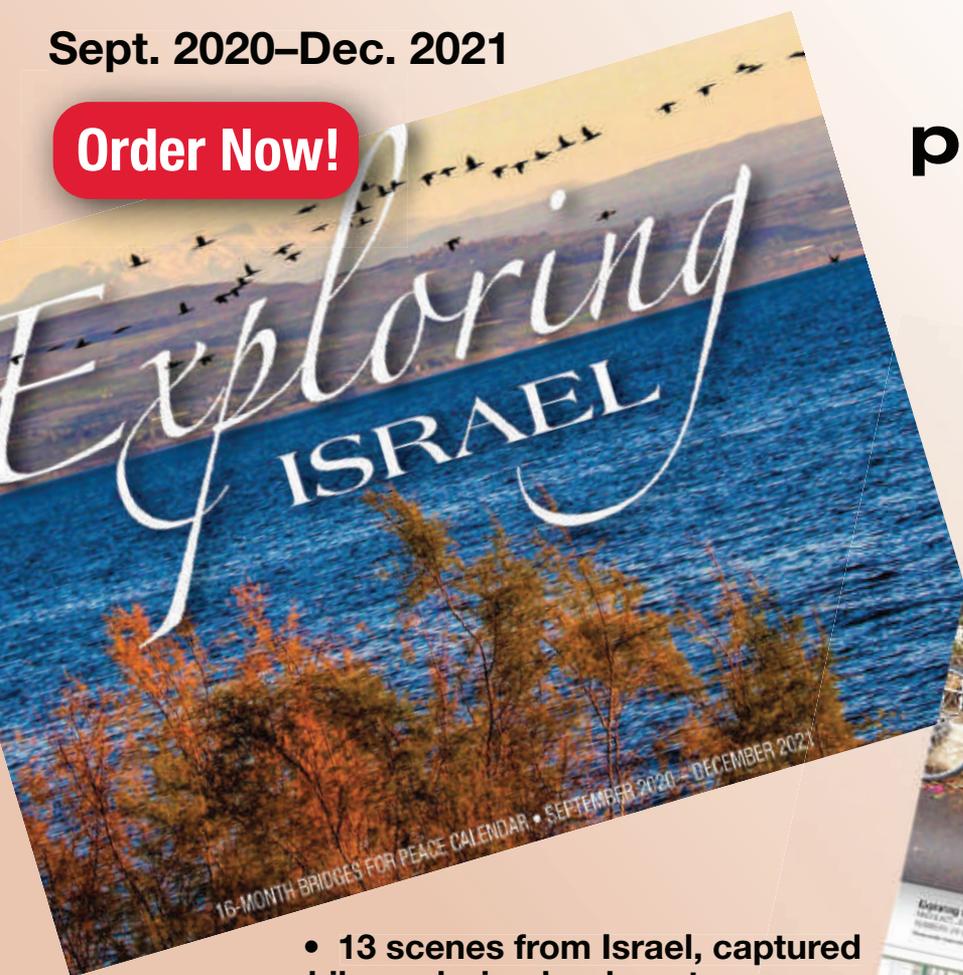
Rest assured that we are committed to protecting your privacy and will not share your information with a third party.

dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace • June 2020 • Vol. 45 No. 3
www.bridgesforpeace.com • Your Israel Connection®

Sept. 2020–Dec. 2021

Order Now!



**Get our new
photo calendar
*today!***

- 13 scenes from Israel, captured while exploring her beauty

- Each page suitable for framing
- Notation area for each day
- All Jewish holidays and BFP events marked
- Weekly *Torah*, *Haftarah* and New Testament readings
- Hebrew calendar explanations

