

dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

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Israel's *Extraordinary* Family Dynamic



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.

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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.

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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: Groups have the opportunity to serve with us for a period of one to four days.

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.

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Despite the global challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Jewish people making *aliyah* (immigrating) to Israel in 2020 is set to top 50,000—almost double the figure in 2019. What is behind this *aliyah* boom?

By Nathan Williams



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Be Still and Know that I am God

ANXIETY AND UNREST are hallmarks in our world today. Because of the COVID-19 virus, many people worldwide are without work while others work from home. Finances are deeply impacted, and sickness has claimed hundreds of thousands of lives. This isn't our only problem. People face discrimination because of their skin color. Racial unrest decimates American cities. Drug addiction, abuse of women and children and lawlessness increase. We see injustice, rage, looting and rioting. It is enough to make us give in to despair. As believers, we have a resource! In Psalm 46 we read, *"God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea... Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth! The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge"* (1–2, 10–11).

The word translated "still" is the Hebrew word *rapha* (רפּה) and can also mean release, abandon and let go. It isn't just being quiet. It is to release our anxiety—to trust in the Lord our God who is saying to us that He is our refuge. He is our source. He will help in times of trouble.

In Israel, one in seven people are afraid they will lose their home. Some 14.1% have reduced the amount they eat because they don't have enough money to buy food. About 1.9 million people (33.4% of the population) reported that they feel stress and anxiety. Another 16.2% say they feel depressed, and 18.4% feel lonely. Some 26% of the workforce have lost their jobs. Although some are returning to work, many remain without livelihood.

Praising God

We are so thankful that in the midst of this worldwide pandemic, God has allowed us to continue to faithfully show His character to the people of Israel. He has allowed us to be a refuge in time of need. We continue—with your help—to provide food to the people of Israel. We have not missed a single day of providing food. Even when we were in total lockdown, God helped us meet our commitments to the people of Israel in their great time of need.





Aliyah Continues

The Jewish people continue to come home. They are arriving every week and go immediately into quarantine for two weeks. Their numbers are expected to increase in the coming days, as many realize that their true home is with their Jewish family in Israel. Bridges for Peace continues to help them come home through Project Rescue and welcomes them with gifts for their home, especially now.

Volodymyr and Kateryna came to Israel from Odessa, Ukraine, with their thirteen-year-old son and three-and-a-half-year-old daughter. Leaving all their belongings behind, they came with only their clothes. They settled in the ancient city of Akko in northern Israel. They have no family in Israel.

Volodymyr told us, "Upon arriving in Israel, we moved into an absolutely empty apartment, and that is why your assistance is so significant for us." (In addition to food, we gave them blankets, pots and pans and school supplies for the children). "We are so endlessly grateful to you for receiving these items as a gift from you here in Israel."

As *aliyah* (immigration to Israel) increases, there will be even more need for our assistance.



Volodymyr and Kateryna

This is the Time

In the book of Esther, Mordechai tells the young queen: "Yet who knows whether you have come to the kingdom for such a time as this?" (4:14). I feel God has placed Bridges for Peace in Israel for just this time of need.

I thank you, our dear Christian friends, for standing with us and all Israel in prayer and financial support. We continue to lift you up in prayer that God will protect you from all sickness and that He will continue to protect your finances. Remember, He says: "*Be still, and know that I am God*" (Ps. 46:10).

Your gifts are offering hope to the people of Israel, feeding them, bringing them home, providing for their needs in their new country and revealing the character of God through our Christian team. Thank you for your faithfulness to the God of Israel and the people of Israel.

Blessings from Israel,
Rebecca J. Brimmer
International President
and CEO



Multibillion-Dollar China–Iran Deal

The Implication for Israel

US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP continues to push ahead with a “maximum pressure” campaign to dissuade the *mullahs* in Tehran from their nuclear ambitions. Concurrently, China is rushing to Tehran’s aid with a 25-year multibillion dollar economic and security deal that is guaranteed to take the pressure off.

According to the *New York Times*, which obtained a copy of the 180-page agreement marked “final version” and dated June 2020, the accord details a US \$400 billion Chinese investment in the Iranian banking, energy, cyber, telecommunications and transport sectors in exchange for China receiving a 25-year supply of cheap Iranian oil.

The agreement also promises close military cooperation between the two nations, including joint weapons research and development, combined military training and intelligence sharing.

In the document, Iran and China hail each other as “two ancient Asian countries...with a similar outlook” that “will consider one another strategic partners.”

The Chinese influx will not only negate Washington’s efforts to isolate the Iranian government, it also threatens to curtail the impact it had so far. Israel and the US have also appealed to the UN Security Council members to extend the arms embargo on Iran that expires in October. However,

China is sticking up for its strategic partner at the UN, opposing the attempts to activate the snapback sanctions.

The partnership also affords China a significant military and economic foothold in the Middle East, which sets off alarm bells for the US. However, Israel clearly has the most to lose.

“Any dollar going into the Iranian system is one that can likely be spent against Israel,” Carice Witte, executive director of SIGNAL, a think tank for Israel–China relations, told the *Jerusalem Post*.

This holds particularly true for military cooperation. Iran has made it clear on numerous occasions that it seeks Israel’s destruction. It thus stands to reason that “any of the new resources directed to the Islamic Republic’s army can potentially—and likely will—be turned on Israel,” the *Jerusalem Post* reports.

As part of the agreement, Iran can also look forward to a massive cache of advanced Chinese weapons. According to a Pentagon report, China is ready to sell attack helicopters, fighter jets and tanks to Iran as soon as the arms embargo expires in October. And with Iran using every soapbox to boast about the imminent annihilation of the Jewish state, it takes no guesswork to determine at whom those weapons will be aimed.

Ilse Strauss, *Bridges for Peace*

Iran Is the “Most Dangerous Country in the Middle East”

THE MIDDLE EAST is arguably one of the most explosive neighborhoods on earth, perpetually embroiled in anything from violent altercations to all-out war among tribes, cultures, belief systems and nations. Amid the battling extremist factions, terror regimes and genocidal dictators—many of whom hold Israel firmly in their crosshairs—one antagonist stands out.

According to Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi, the Islamic Republic of Iran is now the most precarious role-player in the region—and the Jewish state’s most formidable foe.

Kochavi ascribed Tehran’s top spot as “the most dangerous country in the Middle East” to the *mullah’s* “significant progress



Intercontinental ballistic missile

with its nuclear program,” extensive arsenal of “conventional weapons” and leading role in terror activities against Israel.

He warned that despite the considerable distance between Israel and Iran, the Islamic Republic finances groups operating on Jerusalem’s doorstep and has thus entrenched itself within easy striking distance.

Ilse Strauss, Bridges for Peace

Iran Terror Proxies Call for Unity to Fight Israel

HAMAS AND HEZBOLLAH have much in common. Both appear on a number of countries’ lists of designated terrorist organizations. Both are Iranian proxies that answer to terror overlords in Tehran, and both stock their weapons caches thanks to the generosity of Tehran. Both are perched on Israel’s border within easy striking distance of civilian populations— Hamas in the south and Hezbollah in the north. Both have the destruction of Israel as a *raison d’être* and have faced Israel on the battlefield repeatedly to achieve that goal. Had Hamas not been Sunni and Hezbollah Shiite, the two might have been terror peas in a pod.

According to Arab media, Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh dispatched a special terror-chief-to-terror-chief missive to Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah, calling for the two organizations to lay aside that lingering difference and “unite ranks” in an effort to stymie Israel’s efforts to apply sovereignty to Judea and Samaria as well as the Jordan Valley in line with US President Donald Trump’s peace plan.

The Hamas message, delivered to Hezbollah in Beirut, claimed that the prospective move presents “grave dangers” to the Palestinian cause. Haniyeh’s writ failed to explain how Israeli sovereignty in 30% of the biblical heartland to coexist alongside a prospective independent Palestinian state on 70% of the contested area equates to “grave dangers.”

Both Hamas and Hezbollah subsequently released statements. Hezbollah decried Israel’s sovereignty plans as “aggression against the Palestinian people,” *Associated Press* reported, and called for “unity” to “confront” the Jewish state.

“The Palestinian people are capable of confronting this plan,” the statement vowed.

The two terror groups cozying up comes after sworn arch enemies Hamas and Fatah—the so-called secular political party headed by Mahmoud Abbas governing 2.5 million Palestinians in parts of Judea and Samaria—announced they were laying aside years of bitter feuding, hatred and bloodshed to face the prospect of Israeli sovereignty as a united front.

Could Israel face a united trio of Hamas, Hezbollah and Fatah on and within its borders?

Ilse Strauss, Bridges for Peace



Hamas terrorist

Seal Sheds Light on Aftermath

OF THE BABYLONIAN DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM

HOW DID JERUSALEM deal with the destruction by the Babylonian army in the 6th century BC? A double stamp impression on a bulla and a seal made of reused pottery sherds, dated with probability to the Persian period, may provide an answer to this question. The findings were discovered in the course of archaeological excavations undertaken by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) and Tel Aviv University in the Givati Parking Lot Excavation of the City of David. They were found next to the rubble of a large structure that was destroyed during the Babylonian destruction of Jerusalem.

According to Prof. Yuval Gadot of the Department of Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Cultures at Tel Aviv University and Dr. Yiftah Shalev of the IAA: "Despite the numerous excavations conducted in Jerusalem to date, so far the findings revealed from the Persian period are extremely meager and therefore we lack information regarding the character and appearance of the city during this period."

Seal impressions—bullae—were small pieces of clay used in ancient times to sign documents or containers (for example, storage jugs for agricultural produce collected as a tax) and were intended to keep them sealed en route to their destination. Oftentimes, the objects on which the seals were stamped were themselves left unopened or did not endure (especially the documents), but the bullae remained preserved, leaving evidence of the administrative authorities and even of the people representing them.

The double seal impression was discovered on a large piece of clay. The size of the clay piece, about 4.5 centimeters (1.7 in), indicates that it was used to seal a large container, perhaps a jar, and not a document. The imprint bears the image of a person sitting on a large chair with one or two columns in front of him. The design of the image is indicative of Babylonian-style composition. The character is probably a king, and the columns represent the gods Nabu and Marduk.



Another bulla of this style, also from the Persian period, was discovered in excavations carried out by Dr. Eilat Mazar on the eastern slope of the City of David.

The seal is made of a large, locally made pottery sherd with a circular frame engraved on its outer side and is divided into two sections containing several linear inscriptions. The engravings probably represent two characters, and it may be a pseudo-epigraphic seal (bearing drawings designed to resemble letters). On the other side of the seal is a fragment, which may be indicative of a handle that was attached to it in the past. The size of the seal, about 8 centimeters (3.1 in) in diameter, indicates that it was used to seal large objects.

Other artifacts were discovered along with these items, including a broken pottery vessel decorated with a face of the god Bes. According to the researchers: "Discovering the new findings on the western slope of the City of David adds much information about the city's structure during the period of the Return to Zion, a period we knew about mainly from biblical literature (the books of Ezra and Nehemiah). The paucity of the findings from this period made it difficult to understand the status and extent of the city. The findings from the Givati Parking Lot Excavation shed light on the renewal of the local administration, in a location similar to the one that existed before the destruction of the First Temple, about 100 years prior."

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA

Jordanian Ammunition Stash

FROM THE SIX DAY WAR DISCOVERED

THE WESTERN WALL Heritage Foundation and Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) archaeologists were surprised to discover an ammunition stash from the Six Day War while excavating beneath the lobby of the Western Wall Tunnels. The Jordanian ammunition stash (known as a "slick") included rifle magazines full of bullets, a bayonet and other rifle parts. The ammunition was hidden in the bottom of a British Mandate period water cistern.

Israeli police bomb-disposal experts came to the site to examine the findings.

According to Dr. Barak Monnickendam-Givon and Tehila Sadiel, directors of the excavation on behalf of the IAA: "While excavating the water cistern, a surprise awaited us: about ten full magazines [for a] Bren light machine gun, full clip chargers and two bayonets [for] a British Lee Enfield rifle. Usually in excavations we find ancient findings from 1,000 or 2,000 years ago, but this time, we got a glimpse of the events that occurred 53 years ago, frozen in time in this water cistern. Apparently, this is an ammunition dump that was purposely hidden by soldiers of the Royal



Full magazine of a Bren machine gun

Jordanian Army during the Six Day War, perhaps when the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) liberated the Old City."

Assaf Peretz of the IAA, who identified the ammunition, said: "This is ammunition that was produced in the Greenwood and Batley Ltd. factories in Leeds, Yorkshire. Based on the head stamp on the rim, the ammunition was produced in 1956 and reached the Royal Jordanian Army. The discovery of the ammunition stash for Bren light machine guns matches two other Bren guns that were found about a year and a half ago in a different water cistern in the Western Wall Plaza."

The Western Wall Heritage Foundation said: "Along with other glorious discoveries of our nation's past from the Second Temple period, we are also happy about discovering findings from the war of this past generation to return the Jewish nation's heart and be able to cling to the stones of the Western Wall. This discovery is a privilege for us—to be able to acknowledge the miracles of the Creator of the Universe at this site."

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA



THE CHANGING FACE OF JERUSALEM

By Nathan Williams, *Director of Marketing and Communications*



FROM THE WINDOW at Christ Church Guest House, I watched the ancient sandstone streets swell at all times of the day and night as pilgrims went about celebrating *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles). Just like the Jerusalem conjured in my imagination—a city lost in time, an eternal city, untouched by the winds of modernity—my first stay in the Old City brought this vision to life. From sitting in the oldest Protestant Church in the Middle East to wandering through the Arab *shuk* (market) and discovering the narrow, winding streets of the four quarters, staying in the Old City was like being transported back in time. In reality though, the Old City is only a part of the real Jerusalem. Outside the walls, Jerusalem is bursting at the seams, and the Jerusalem emerging from the construction and infrastructure boom may look different than we have ever imagined.

EVACUATE AND CONSTRUCT

Modern city planners faced many challenges in this ancient city: aging buildings with archaic infrastructure; a lack of housing due to a population explosion; and an outdated transportation network conceived a century ago. For the first, a unique idea called *Pinui*

Binui (Evacuation and Construction) was put forward. Old housing complexes would be demolished and replaced by a number of new apartment buildings with modern and innovative infrastructure as well as additional floors, bringing new real estate onto the market. These projects often included added benefits to residents, such as playgrounds and parks, as well as additions of secure rooms or bomb shelters where previously the building had none. This initiative has been a proven way to upgrade derelict urban areas, turning them into revitalized residential areas. The shortage of vacant land for new developments within the city means the potential for growth lies in the sky. Accordingly, skyscrapers have sporadically been going up all over Jerusalem as part of *Pinui Binui* projects.

INTO THE FUTURE

Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion recently announced that the absorption center in the southern neighborhood of Gilo will be demolished, with seven high-rise towers boasting 1,294 housing units taking its place. “This is another *Pinui Binui* project that will benefit disadvantaged populations and improve the quality of life of all the city’s populations,” explained Lion.

Former Mayor Nir Barkat was also a champion of renewal projects. In 2016, Barkat inaugurated the Jerusalem Gateway project, which is touted to become the most prominent business district in Israel. Currently under construction around the Jerusalem International Convention Center at the entrance of the city, the project includes 24 skyscrapers which will offer commercial space to 60,000 expected workplaces and 2,000 hotel rooms.

Moreover, the train linking Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, which has been in full service since December 2019, has city planners and developers hoping that the upgraded transport links will attract big business to set up shop in Jerusalem.

There are also more ambitious projects in the pipeline, like extending the underground train line from the newly opened Yitzak Navon station in the city center to the Old City and Western Wall. The Tourism Ministry is spearheading a project to install a cable car line that will run from the First Station center in the German Colony, across the Hinnom Valley around Mount Zion and to the Western Wall, allowing tourists to bypass the Old City’s congested roads. Finally, in the very early planning stages is a giant Ferris wheel to be

installed at the Armon HaNatziv Promenade. Proposed to be half the height of the famous London Eye, the development would include a sculpture garden, bicycle paths and eateries with six hotels going up nearby.

CRITICS' ANSWERED PRAYERS

When the Chords Bridge at the entrance to Jerusalem was unveiled in 2011, it was welcomed with contempt, not only for its exorbitant price tag but also because this interpretation of King David's harp did not blend with its surrounding environment. There is an ongoing dichotomy when it comes to every new development in Jerusalem: some love it and some hate it.

In an informal poll on a Facebook group for Jerusalemites, Secret Jerusalem, we asked residents what they thought about the changing face of Jerusalem. "Wonderful," said Joe Aminoff, "there is no reason why Jerusalem should be just four-floored cream-colored buildings."

Keren Sharabi shared strong feelings in the opposite. "The cable car and Ferris wheel, horrible ideas! Jerusalem has a wonderful and beautiful old-world charm. Why would anyone want to destroy that?"

Elana Benkamoun remained level-headed, saying, "I like the new but I also love the old. As long as historical buildings are preserved, I am all for new buildings."

Yaakov Sobel brought a spiritual perspective, saying, "Three times a day I say the *bracha* [blessing] *Binyan Yerushalayim* [Rebuilding of Jerusalem]. HaShem [literally, "The Name," a title used in Judaism to refer to God] is answering my prayers."

The blessing Sobel refers to is the fourteenth benediction of the *Amidah*, the central prayers of Jewish liturgy recited three times a day by Orthodox Jews. This prayer expresses the Jewish desire to have the city of Jerusalem rebuilt as the City of the Lord on earth, stating: "Rebuild it speedily, and in our days, as a structure forever." It concludes with the words: "Blessed are you Lord, the builder of Jerusalem."

Rabbi Jack Abramowitz, an author for the Orthodox Union, explains: "We don't want Jerusalem restored just so that we can have a beautiful metropolis; we desire it as part of returning to the service of God in our land."

As I have discovered during my time in Israel, the Jewish people view biblical prophecy not as a list of forthcoming attractions, but rather as a "to do list," actively pursuing how they can be a part of fulfilling the prophetic words of the Bible. This is true when it comes to rebuilding Jerusalem. There are those who are not in complete agreement with the style of architecture being used or the height of the buildings, but nobody can deny that we are witnessing an answer to the prayers of centuries of Jewish and Christian hearts, not only that Jerusalem will be rebuilt and be a praise in the earth, but that the divine rule of God on earth will indeed be realized.



Above: the Chords Bridge



Above: the Arab shuk (market)





Israel's *Extraordinary* Family Dynamic

By Kate Norman, BFP Staff Writer

NOWADAYS WHEN WE TRAVEL, especially internationally, we are warned to be careful of strangers. Beware of pickpockets, chancers and cheats. Be aware of your surroundings. Don't wear your wallet in your back pocket or carry an open purse. Keep your valuables close to keep them safe. Don't trust strangers on the street.

This is wise advice—even when traveling around the Holy Land. Israelis are quick to warn you if you're walking around with your backpack open. Yet as tourists, immigrants and other out-of-towners quickly learn about Israel: this nation has something that others seem to have lost. Despite the conflict, despite the political and religious turmoil, despite the myriad of cultures mixing together, the streets filled with a hodgepodge of native Israelis and immigrants, Gentiles, Arabs, secular Jews, ultra-Orthodox and everyone in between, people in this country treat each other like one big family. They trust each other. We see it every day on the streets of Israel.

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT

One Bridges for Peace volunteer stopped by a tiny corner market after work on a Friday to buy a bouquet of flowers for Shabbat (Sabbath). When she opened her purse, however, she was dismayed to find that she had no cash to pay for the flowers. "*Al tidag!* Don't worry about it!" the

shop owner told her with a smile and a casual flip of his hand. "Take the flowers and pay me on Sunday or Monday. *Shabbat shalom* (Peaceful Sabbath)!"

To the logical Westerner, this is no way to run a profitable business—yet this act of kind trust is a surprisingly common practice for shop owners here. Another volunteer shared an experience when she was shopping for a necklace in the Old City of Jerusalem. She found a piece that she liked but couldn't decide whether it was just what she was looking for. The shop owner told her, "No problem! Take the necklace home, decide if you like it and either bring it back or pay for it later."

People walking through the streets downtown early in the morning will notice bags of potatoes destined to become crispy French fries sitting outside restaurants and food stands—often hours before the proprietor arrives to open up shop and retrieve the delivery. They don't worry about the possibility that someone in need (or not) will take advantage of the opportunity and swipe the potatoes.

FAMILY ROAD TRIP

This remarkable practice of trust doesn't pertain specifically to business, either. It permeates every aspect of life in Israel, including public transportation—and not just because we trust the bus drivers with our lives as

they audaciously weave in and out of Jerusalem's chaotic traffic.

Jerusalem commuters trust each other every day on the bus. Mothers hauling strollers and shopping bags with young children, toddlers and babies in tow often rely on perfect strangers to help them lift their stroller and baggage into and out of the bus. Travel-weary people sitting in the back of a crowded bus, rather than elbow their way through the horde of ornery commuters to scan their bus pass, will tap the shoulder of the stranger in the row ahead and pass their card forward, trusting that the card will be passed from person to person until it finds its way to the front, is scanned to pay for the ride and finds its way back to the original card holder. And it always seems to work just fine. It's simply part of the rhythm on Israeli buses.

Recently, one of our volunteers watched as a man stuck his head into an open bus door to find a kind stranger to take a set of keys and deliver them to another man waiting at the next bus stop.

EXTENDED FAMILY

What makes the people of Israel put such unflinching trust in each other? Perhaps it is ingrained as a teaching of Judaism. Religious Jewish people often look for opportunities to do a "*mitzvah*." In Hebrew it translates to "commandment," such as the commandments given by God to the ancient Israelites through Moses in the *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.). The word is often used on the streets of modern-day Israel in the context of a good deed done in joy rather than fulfilled as an obligation. Israelis delight in helping each other. They're not giving a stranger on the street directions or spare change, they're helping extended family.

Israelis also place a high value on life—perhaps because of their history of struggle and persecution as well as their faith. Everyone from a cousin sitting down to the table for Shabbat dinner to a stranger on the street is part of the extended family. Israelis live life ingrained with a we're-all-in-this-together mindset. Another volunteer said she sometimes sees small children around the ages of 4 and 5 unaccompanied by a parent approach a crosswalk and grab the hand of an adult they clearly aren't related to. Without a second thought, the children cross the street knowing that hand, no matter whom it belongs to, will see them safely to the other side. It's not a stranger to be feared or distrusted—it's simply a member of their extended Israeli family lending another helping hand.



A History of

By Ilse Strauss, News Bureau Chief

"No"



YOU COULD HEAR A PIN DROP as the two judokas stepped onto the mat. Tensions had been mounting for days before the match as Egyptian Islam El Shahaby faced a floodgate of criticism from fans for failing to withdraw from the first round of the heavyweight judo tournament in the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics against Israeli Or Sasson.

Despite the hype, the bout was over in minutes. Sasson emerged victorious—yet the real confrontation was only beginning. As the two judokas faced each other for the traditional bow, Sasson stepped forward, hand extended. El Shahaby backed away, leaving Sasson's hand dangling in midair.

Cameras flashed, committing the moment to cyber memory. Hours later a meme of El Shahaby shunning Sasson's outstretched hand flooded social media. "Hundred years history of the Middle East—in one picture," the caption proclaimed.



Israeli Or Sasson and Egyptian Islam El Shahaby

PLAYING THE BLAME GAME

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's push to apply Israeli sovereignty over Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria elicited worldwide outrage. A chorus of voices bayed for Israel to retreat from "occupied land" and desist from encroaching on the future sovereignty of a Palestinian state. The subtext behind the accusations? If Israel would compromise and give the Palestinians what they want—a sovereign state in Judea and Samaria with east Jerusalem as capital—decades of strife would come to a peaceful close.

However, these accusations reduce the conflict to a dispute over territory and cast Israel in the role of unyielding land grabber. More importantly, they gloss over the countless efforts to resolve the conflict where Israel said yes to land for peace negotiations, while the Arabs respond with a resounding no. **No**

In fact, the past century shows a cycle of Israel approaching the Arabs with an outstretched hand of peace and the Arabs backing away, leaving Israel's hand dangling in midair.

NO ON REPEAT

The cycle of "no" started before the Palestinians identified as a people, when "Palestine" was still a geographical

throwback to Rome's attempt to erase Jewish traces from the land.

The 1937 Peel Commission proposed dividing the Promised Land into two states for Jewish and Arab populations. The Jews agreed. The Arabs did not. **No**

Ten years later saw a near repeat of the sequence of events. This time the 1947 UN Partition Plan proposed two states for two peoples. Again, Jewish leaders said yes. And again, the Arabs said no, instead starting a war to obliterate any hope of a Jewish state. **No**

Israel won the 1948 War of Independence. However, the Jordanian army captured Israel's biblical heartland—Judea and Samaria—and renamed it the West Bank. Nineteen years later, Israel again miraculously beat back the invading armies in the Six Day War, gaining control of, among others, Judea and Samaria.

Once the battle died down, Israel offered to give up the land gained in exchange for peace. Arab leaders responded to Israel's outstretched hand of peace with the "Three No's": no to peace, negotiations and recognizing Israel. **No**

Egypt, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates have since changed their minds and signed a peace treaty with their Jewish neighbor. However, the Palestinians continue leaving Israel's hand dangling in midair.



Israeli PM Yitzhak Rabin, US President Bill Clinton and Yasser Arafat at the signing of Oslo I

HOPE DEFERRED

The Oslo Accords stand as a watershed in the Israel-Palestinian conflict. Following clandestine peace talks and a promise from the Palestinian Liberation Organization, headed by Yasser Arafat, to recognize Israel's right to exist, Oslo I—a timetable for Mideast peace—was inked in 1993. Oslo II, or the Israeli-Palestinian Interim Agreement on the West Bank and Gaza, followed two years later.

Ambassador Alan Baker, former legal counsel of Israel's Foreign Ministry and head of the International Law program at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, remembers the moment. "We stood in the hotel, kissing and hugging...including Arafat. There was genuine elation that we've overcome the obstacles. Now it was just a question of going through the stages of negotiations to cover all the points."

The elation proved premature as it became clear that Arafat had no intention of keeping his promises. Days after embracing his Israeli brethren, he made statements "that the whole aim is to go through stages, the ultimate stage being that there won't be a Jewish entity," Baker explains. Moreover, violence erupted across Israel with a series of Palestinian terror attacks, a harbinger of terrible days ahead.

Over the next five years, Israel and the Palestinians implemented various interim agreement milestones and embarked on permanent status negotiations. However, what started out promising reached a catastrophic crescendo in the 2000 Camp David summit. US President Bill Clinton reportedly proposed the creation of a Palestinian state in Gaza and 97% of Judea and Samaria, with east Jerusalem as its capital. Again, Israel said yes. And again, the Palestinians said no. Clinton later lamented the "no" as a "colossal historic blunder." With the hopes of peace dashed, the broiling Palestinian violence erupted in the Second *Intifada* (uprising), Baker recalls.

The next seven years saw a few more failed trips around the peaceful coexistence mountain. Then came the 2007 Annapolis conference, where Israel and the Palestinians committed to negotiate a peace deal. After a number of meetings between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Olmert offered Abbas 93.7% of Judea and Samaria as a Palestinian entity with east Jerusalem as its capital. Abbas never responded.

The last push for peace came in 2014 with the Kerry Framework Agreement. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu apparently said yes to the proposition and offered a number of concessions. But true to form, Abbas said no.

No

PEACE, PEACE WHEN THERE IS NO PEACE

According to Baker, the historic chorus of "no's" informed the philosophy behind President Donald Trump's Peace for Prosperity plan and marks a shift in tactics. It accepts that the international community "can no longer wait for the Palestinians to agree because the chances...are virtually nil...The idea was to shock them [the Palestinians] into coming back to the negotiating table...This could happen. However...it looks highly unlikely."

"Since 2000, there's been a huge element of fanaticism in the Palestinian psyche," Baker holds. "The Islamic philosophy, one that stands at the basis of their present existence, absolutely rejects any idea of an Israeli state...Their mindset is far more extreme than it ever was."

The implication? The Palestinian leadership is no longer able to accept any kind of offer that includes the existence of Israel.

In June, Abbas magnanimously offered to resuscitate peace talks with Israel—with the preconditions that Israel withdraws to pre-1967 borders and the Trump peace plan remains off the table. "This is empty talk," says Baker. "Abbas knows if he talks the language of peace—at least in English—the Europeans will accept him as the ultimate statesman. Basically, he doesn't have the authority or capability..."

If the past is a prologue for the future, the prospect of the Palestinians clasping Israel's outstretched hand and returning to the negotiation table willing to settle for anything but 100% is not a viable one. Any push for peace that fails to acknowledge this truth and reduces the conflict to a territorial dispute—with Israel as the unyielding land grabber—is akin to flogging a dead horse and blaming Israel when the lifeless creature fails to gallop into the sunset.

No

No



Israeli Watermelons

Fueling the Future

THE MALALI WATERMELON has things a bit backwards. With normal watermelons, you feast on the flesh and discard the seeds. However, with this Israeli watermelon named for Kfar Malal, the agricultural community in central Israel where it was first cultivated, you feast on the seeds as a crunchy, nutritious snack and discard the bland flesh and rind.

While the Malali watermelon contributes some 2,800 tons of seeds to the nut industry every year, growing a crop only to dispose of 97% of its total weight is not ideal. In fact, an estimated 56,000 tons of Malali watermelon pulp is discarded annually. "The wastage here is clear and glaring," Yoram Gerchman, associate biology professor at the University of Haifa, told ZAVIT *Environment and Science News Agency*.

However, a recent study conducted by one of Gerchman's students found that the pulp can be used to produce ethanol, an alternative renewable biofuel for vehicles.

The benefits of biofuel are sung worldwide. Ethanol-based fuel reduces carbon monoxide emissions, harmful particulates, hydrocarbons and sulfates. Moreover, it also reduces the dependence on limited reserves of fossil fuels like coal, oil and natural gas.

The flip side is, however, that making ethanol requires land and resources, which means earmarking agricultural land to produce industrial and non-food crops. In tiny Israel, where every inch is precious, this has been impossible, putting the Jewish state's ethanol industry on the back burner.

The Malali watermelon may change that. As an existing crop, producing ethanol from the pulp means salvaging something that usually goes to waste without requiring additional agricultural land, ZAVIT reports.

Moreover, the Malali watermelon requires much less water than its edible counterparts, which makes it an ideal crop with a high yield for arid regions.

Gerchman has ample experience researching ethanol production from organic material such as pruning, olive and paper waste.

He does, however, feel that the Malali watermelon holds particular promise for the ethanol industry. "It turns out that watermelons are fermenting very well. This is the easiest waste I have ever worked with."

If all goes according to plan, Israel's Malali watermelon may help fuel the future.

Ilse Strauss,
Bridges for Peace

Israeli Invention *Gives Sight to the Blind*

A GROUNDBREAKING Israeli invention is bringing the hope of restored sight for those suffering from corneal blindness.

Nearly 30 million people worldwide are blind in one or both eyes due to damage or disease to the structure or shape of the cornea, with some 2 million new cases reported each year. While a cornea transplant offers a beacon of hope for restored sight, the option is far from a guarantee. Not all patients are viable transplant candidates, and even those who are may reject the transplanted cornea. Then there's the hurdle of impossibly long waiting lists.

The bottom line? Many who suffer from corneal blindness have been doomed to a life of darkness—until now.

CorNeat KPro, the first artificial cornea that integrates with the eye wall, is set to start the first human implantation clinical trial in Beilinson Hospital on ten test patients who are not candidates for, or have failed at least one transplant.

The device is the brainchild of CorNeat Vision, an innovative ophthalmic medical device company based in central Israel. The synthetic device's lens promises the same optical quality as a perfectly functioning cornea and integrates with the eye tissue using a nano-fabric skirt inserted under

the conjunctiva—the white part of the eye—for optimal healing. The CorNeat KPro thus replaces deformed, scarred or opacified corneas to restore vision immediately after implantation and has been hailed as a “revolutionary innovation in corneal replacement therapy.”

“Our device's implantation procedure, which has been developed and perfected in the past four years, does not rely on donor tissue, is relatively simple and takes less than an hour to perform,” said Dr. Gilad Litvin, CorNeat chief medical officer and KPro inventor. “We expect it will enable millions of blind patients around the world, even in areas where there is no corneal practice nor culture of organ donation, to regain their sight.”

Ilse Strauss, *Bridges for Peace*

Actors to Shoot Scenes from Home *Thanks to Israeli Start-up*

ISRAELI START-UP tech company D-ID launched new technology that will allow the film and television industries to turn still images into vivid and lively videos.

This deep-learning technology can manipulate images to replicate even the finest movement in a source video, called a “driver.”

D-ID's new service could save film and television productions countless shooting days. Star actors will only have to arrive at the set once and have their picture taken. The rest of the shooting can be done from anywhere else. D-ID offers a mobile app that allows actors to animate images with their takes.

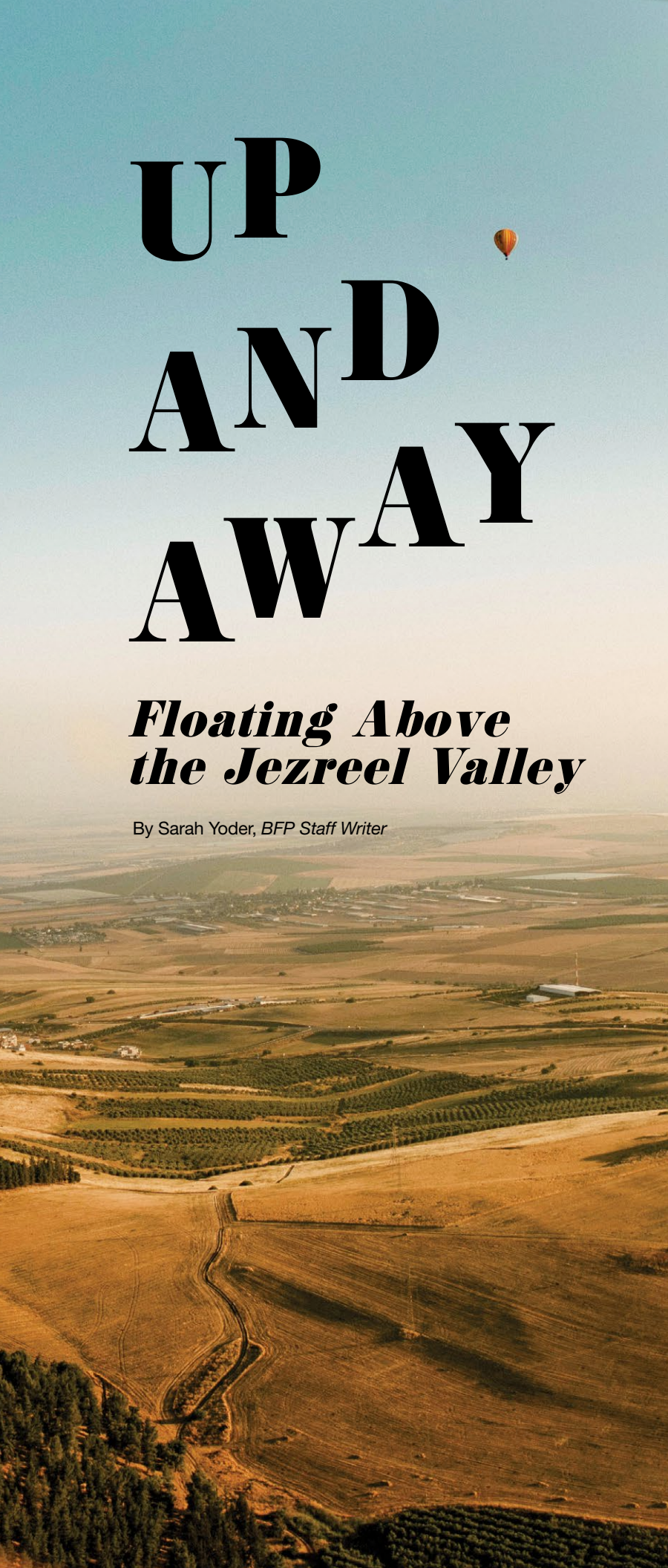
The model can also generate teeth that match the original image, even if the person is pictured with their mouth closed.

“We've created a model that is divided into three deep-learning networks and trained it on tens of thousands of videos of people talking,” said D-ID Chief Technological Officer Eliran Kuta. “If the driver smiles and exposes their teeth but the image has a person pictured with their mouth closed, the model can replicate the missing pixels and adjust them to match the target face.”

D-ID claims that their new service is not meant to replace actors, but will allow them to work from home during the coronavirus pandemic and after.

D-ID technology currently mostly works for portrait images. However, D-ID founders said this technology could be easily be expanded to videos featuring running, jumping and moving objects.

Excerpt from an article by Yuval Man, *Ynetnews*



UP AND AWAY

Floating Above the Jezreel Valley

By Sarah Yoder, BFP Staff Writer

THE EARLY MORNING stillness broke with the sound of a propane burner flame penetrating the air. A small crew worked skillfully at their task, tugging at the mounds of colorful fabric piled in the field. Gleeeful anticipation mounted in our group as we watched the fabric take the shape of a balloon that grew larger with each blast of hot air from the propane burner. The balloon began to billow in the wind, growing so large that it blotted out the low-hanging sun on the horizon.

It was an early Sunday morning in May when our group of 13 climbed aboard the enormous hot air balloon. This experience was one of our final excursions on the Zealous Israel Project, an 11-month discipleship program connecting young adults to God's heart for Israel.

I will never forget the childlike wonder I felt as I climbed over the side of the wicker basket that anchored the hot air balloon. As I took hold of the rope handles fastened inside the basket, I was jolted by the sound of the burner flame, this time feeling the heat sweep across my face. A soft jolt rattled the basket, and I peeked over the edge to discover that we were already a few inches off the ground. We began to glide along the field at a steady pace, rising higher and higher to meet the endless blue sky above us. At a height of 4,200 feet (1,280 m) above the ground, we were afforded an aerial view of one of the most significant valleys in Israel: the Jezreel Valley.

The Way to the Sea

Nestled in the north between the Mediterranean Sea and the Sea of Galilee, the Jezreel Valley encompasses more than 145 square miles (375.5 square km) of fertile soil. The valley is surrounded almost entirely by mountain ranges: Mount Tabor to the north, Mount Gilboa to the east, the mountains of Samaria to the south and Mount Carmel to the west. As we drifted through the sky like a boat on a lazy river, we could see each of these mountain ranges peeking through the early morning mist that hung low in the valley. Soon the fog began to lift and we could see beyond the mountain ranges to the borders of Lebanon to the north and Jordan to the east.

The Jezreel Valley was part of a major trade route in ancient Israel, primarily because of its easy terrain and close proximity to the coast. This route—referred to in Isaiah 9:1 as “*the way to the sea*”—was the main thoroughfare going from Egypt all the way to Mesopotamia. As far back as Abraham's time, this route served as a bridge between Africa and Asia

and would have been used by local travelers, merchant caravans and invading armies alike.

One of the most famous sites in the Jezreel valley is Tel Megiddo, or Megiddo Hill. Because of its strategic height and location at the lower end of the valley, whoever controlled Megiddo effectively controlled the traffic on the trade route. Over the centuries, many fortified cities were built on this hilltop, which is thought to have seen more battles than any other location in the world.

God Will Sow

While the Jezreel Valley is more commonly known for its historical significance, the intrinsic value of this stretch of land is understood through its name. It is named for the ancient Israelite city of Jezreel, which means “God will sow”—clearly speaking to the fertile nature of this valley. The name also characterizes God as the Master Gardener, implying that the soil will only bear fruit at His command.

When the Jewish people were exiled from the land after the destruction of the Second Temple, agriculture in the Jezreel Valley was abandoned. Over time, the once vibrant farmland became inundated with swamps, uninhabited until the first Jewish communities were established in the lower Galilee region in the early 1900s. These small communities worked diligently to drain the swamps, and the land responded to God’s chosen people.

Today, the Jezreel Valley is considered the breadbasket of Israel as it produces the majority of Israel’s grain. The valley is filled with orchards and fields that yield a variety of crops such as corn, melons, carrots, peas, cotton and sunflowers. This variety of texture and color makes for an enchanting patchwork of fields that characterizes the idyllic agricultural wonder. God has sown an abundance of seed in this beautiful valley, causing it to “*blossom and bud*,” as prophesied in Isaiah 27:6.

The Cycle of Life

A sweet stillness settled over my soul as the hot air balloon drifted back down to the fields below. How good and pleasant it is to be reminded of the simplicity of the cycle of life—a seed is sown, the earth responds and life is sustained. After climbing out of the balloon basket, we harvested a few carrots from the adjoining field. As we drove away from the field, enjoying the fruit of the land, I knew that the Jezreel Valley will forever remind me of this simple truth: God will sow.



A large, close-up photograph of Ayatollah Khamenei, an elderly man with a long white beard and glasses, wearing a black turban and a patterned shawl. He is leaning forward and kissing General Qassem Soleimani on the forehead. Soleimani is an older man with grey hair and a beard, wearing a black shirt. The background is dark and out of focus.

2020

A Bad Year for IRAN

By Joshua Spurlock, *The Mideast Update*

THE YEAR 2020 has been a tragic and challenging year for the world—from the coronavirus pandemic to protests to political battles. But it's been an especially difficult year for Iran. The economy has struggled under sanctions imposed by the US, the leader of Iran's top terrorist spy agency was assassinated and then mysterious explosions hit Iran's missile and nuclear programs. And the year isn't even over yet. Here are some key ways 2020 has been a year Iran would rather forget—and why that may be some much-needed good news for the rest of the world.

LOSS OF LEADERSHIP

One of the most impactful incidents in 2020 for Iran occurred just three days into the new year, as General Qassem Soleimani was assassinated by the US. Soleimani was the elusive head of the Quds Force of the Revolutionary Guard, Iran's main group tasked with international attacks. The US State Department quoted a senior US official in February calling Soleimani "a genius at scrambling our operations" in Syria and Iraq. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called Soleimani an "arch-terrorist."

Dr. Jonathan Spyer, a researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security and a Middle East Forum fellow, said the impact of the loss of Soleimani has been mingled with other setbacks for Iran, especially economic problems.

Ayatollah Khamenei kisses Soleimani



Qassem Soleimani

As a result, Iran has had “a loss of forward motion, to some degree” in the region. Spyer added that Iran’s campaign in Iraq has been “most keenly” impacted by the loss of Soleimani and his deputy in Iraq, who was killed with Soleimani. Iraq, Iran’s neighbor and a key piece of the regime’s efforts to build an empire spanning the Middle East, has a blend of diverse proxy groups that require an Iranian liaison with a special touch. According to Spyer, Soleimani had that special touch, and the death of his deputy in Iraq makes the loss worse.

Spyer also highlighted the importance of the former Quds Force leader’s role more broadly across the Middle East. “Soleimani was the key strategic mind that was holding that sort-of ‘militia-proxy empire’ together, and I think there is evidence that his replacement, Esmail Ghaani, is not necessarily a mind of similar caliber, or at least his in-depth knowledge of the Arab world and of Israel and of the Middle East is not on the same par.”

According to Spyer, it’s “very feasible that it will take a while” for the Quds Force to recover.

LOSS OF MONEY

The US-led sanctions on Iran—including oil sanctions—didn’t start in 2020, but their impact has been profound this year, exacerbated by plunging oil prices and the coronavirus economic impact. In July, Iran’s currency, the rial, hit an all-time low—and then just kept falling, dropping below 250,000 rials to the dollar, according to Iran’s *Press TV*.

On July 5, Meir Javendafar, Iranian analyst and editor of the *Iran-Israel Observer* blog, translated an Iranian newspaper headline in his comments on the economic concerns: “‘Experts have suggested: #Iran on its way to [becoming] #Venezuela,’ says the front page of the *Aftab-e Eghtesad* economic daily today. With the Iranian currency tanking, massive corruption, sanctions, oil based econ & inflation expected to rise, many in Iran are clearly concerned.”

While heartbreaking for individual Iranians, the economic setbacks in Iran have also drained Tehran of resources to attack Israel and others. “In all countries [where they are engaged], Iran is struggling to some degree,” said Spyer.

Sanctions and COVID-19 have left Iran with less funds, Spyer added, “and therefore that’s creating problems and tensions regarding its relations with its ‘proxy empire,’ if one can put it that way.”

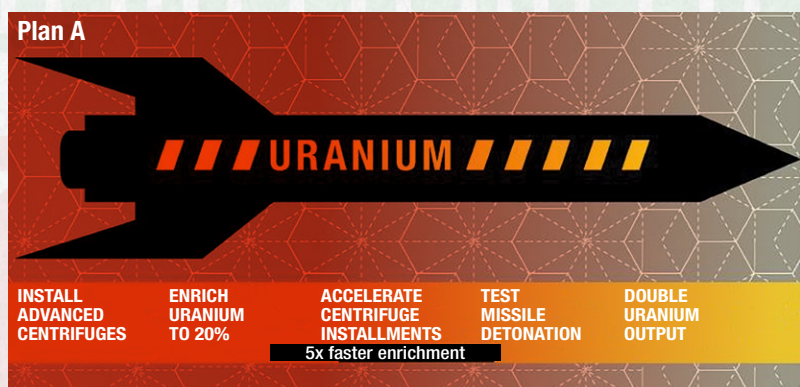
The shortage of money, he surmised, in both Iran and places like Lebanon and Syria, is having “probably a greater impact right now than the loss of Soleimani.”

LOSS OF SECURITY

At the time of writing this article, it remains unclear if the suspicious explosions in Iran over the summer were officially sabotage or accidents. However, their timing and locations—including nuclear and missile sites—make sabotage

likely for at least some of them. The blast occurring at the Iran Centrifuge Assembly Center (ICAC) at Natanz was especially devastating.

According to David Albright, the president and founder of the Institute for Science and International Security (ISIS), the ICAC played a “unique role” in mass-producing advanced centrifuges, the machines used to make nuclear fuel. He said having thousands of such machines would have enabled Iran to “drastically shorten the time” to produce weapons-grade uranium and made it “far easier” to hide centrifuges in a secret site.



The center took around six years to build, Albright said. Replacing it will likely take at least a year. That’s a real blow to Iran’s nuclear plans. While Tehran could still “breakout” for a nuclear weapon in as little as three months, Albright holds that the blast at Natanz buys time to counter such a threat.

“Although the destruction of the ICAC does not eliminate all the risks posed by Iran’s centrifuge program, its destruction has eliminated the most dangerous threat posed by Iran’s centrifuge program in the short to medium term,” said Albright.

Spyer noted that the impact of the explosions in Iran are also more than just physical, as Tehran took pride in the idea of fighting abroad to allegedly defend the home front. “That would sometimes be the way in which the regime would explain to the people as well, the reason for money being spent in Lebanon, in Syria, in Israel, and Gaza, a long way from home, by doing this ‘we’re keeping the fire a long way away from our borders.’ There is a sense right now that’s no longer the case,” said Spyer.

“The Iranians are realizing you can do covert action against other countries for a certain period of time. After that, don’t be surprised if other countries start doing covert action against you...I think it probably is giving Iranian leaders and the Iranian public a reason to think carefully about what’s been going on in recent years.”

Going forward, if Tehran thinks twice about interfering in other countries, what could be a bad year for Iran just might be a better year for everyone else.

THE JEWISH ROLE



Though very few people might immediately recognize it as such, 3:53 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on July 2, 1964, was a seminal moment in global history. It was then that US President Lyndon Johnson signed into law the American Civil Rights Act. Joined at the White House by congressional leaders and others, including civil rights leader Martin Luther King Jr., the president signed the most sweeping American civil rights legislation in over a century. It created a legal foundation for the long and arduous journey toward equality for minorities in the United States.

Few at the time would have realized the impact this landmark legislation would have, not just in America but beyond her shores as well. Even fewer were aware that such legislation would not have come into being at all but for the efforts of America's Jews. And certainly no one would have imagined that the day would come when virulent anti-Semitism would find a home in the very pro-minority organizations that the Jewish community had so staunchly supported.

TRACING THE LEGACY



As early as the 19th century, Jews were America's fiercest proponents of equality for black Americans and ending slavery. In the racist south of the 1800s, Jewish storekeepers were virtually the only Southern merchants who addressed black customers as "Mr." and "Mrs." and permitted them to try on clothing. Though they often put themselves at risk, these Jewish people did all they could to acknowledge the dignity of each individual, regardless of color, and to care for a black population that suffered in poverty. The result, however, was often additional persecution for an already marginalized Jewish community, with synagogues being dynamited, cemeteries desecrated and individuals murdered by the Ku Klux Klan.

In the 20th century, the Jewish community was at the forefront in the fight for civil rights. They were the earliest supporters of organizations like the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, and their participation in the civil rights actions of the 1950s and 1960s was overwhelming. The 1954 Supreme Court decision that called for the integration of America's schools was strongly influenced by briefs submitted to the court by the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League. It is estimated that 90% of the civil rights lawyers in the south in the 1960s were Jewish and 30% of the white volunteers who rode freedom buses to the South and registered black people to vote were also Jews. The murder of two such Jewish volunteers, Michael Schwerner and Andrew Goodman, in Meridian, Mississippi, is credited as being the impetus for the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

FROM LYNCHPIN TO ANTAGONIST



Fast forward 55 years and the fight for racial equality is still raging. Today, a new generation of activists is calling for change, but this time, the movement is sweeping



the globe—not just America. Under the banner of BLM, demonstrators have filled the streets in London, Melbourne, Toronto, Brussels, Berlin and Paris with the message that the injustices minorities have faced in their nations—both past and present—must be addressed.

However, BLM is impacting the international community with something other than just its fight for racial equality. At demonstrations held across the world, signs declaring "Black Lives Matter" and "Racism Must End" are intermingled with those that say "Freedom for Palestine" and "Israel is an Apartheid State." Among their other demands is a call to end all US military support for Israel. According to the *Australian Jewish News*, the activists claim that in a series of secret training sessions, Israeli security forces taught US and UK police to use the deadly stranglehold that killed George Floyd. BLM UK has endorsed Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) and is calling for targeted sanctions against Israel in line with "international law against Israel's colonial genocidal regime."

Perhaps even worse is the resurrection of age-old anti-Semitic canards by BLM leaders and their partner organizations. Using Instagram as a platform, the Jews are again accused of controlling global wealth, owning the banks and making sure the rich (Jews) get richer at the expense of the poor (minorities). It was Zionist money, we are told, that financed the international slave trade, which they call the biggest holocaust and crime against humanity.

What a tragedy it is that a movement whose aims might otherwise be embraced by millions around the world have tainted their message with hypocritical, vile, hate-filled, anti-Semitic rhetoric. How very sad that BLM leadership has forgotten that there was a time when Jews supported the black community with their time, resources and money, even at the pain of death because they believed when no one else seemed to that black lives do in fact matter. What an indictment that the same respect for human dignity is not reciprocated.

THE SURGING TIDE OF FAITH-BASED DIPLOMACY

I HAVE KNOWN AND WORKED with Josh Reinstein since 2003. I, along with a few other Christian leaders, sat with Knesset (Parliament) Member Yuri Shtern and Reinstein, strategizing how to make better connections between the Knesset and Christian leaders around the world. In 2004, the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus was born. Over the past 16 years, we have seen amazing changes in the face of Christian–Jewish relations. The work of the Caucus and its sister organization, the Israel Allies Foundation, both headed by Reinstein, have changed the face of diplomacy for Israel. Faith-based diplomacy was born as Christian political and spiritual leaders join with Jewish leaders to forge a better future for Israel and the world.

I was privileged to receive a manuscript to review, and I immediately sat down to read it. I found it riveting. I encourage every Christian who cares about Israel to read a copy. If you aren't from the United States, don't think this book isn't for you. If you are from the United States and aren't sure about President Donald Trump, don't think this book isn't for you. Regardless of where you live or what your political affiliation, every Bible-believing Christian needs to read about and understand the importance of Israel to God, what the Bible has to say about Israel, the historical realities that influenced the present, the forces aligned against the people who love the God of Israel (both Jewish and Christian) and how our efforts can make a difference.

The Amazon write-up for the book says: "We are living in mysterious yet miraculous times. On the one hand, we have witnessed the most remarkable fulfillment of biblical prophecy: the Jewish people's return to Israel and the prosperity and contributions of this tiny country in such a short time. On the other hand, we have seen an unexpected

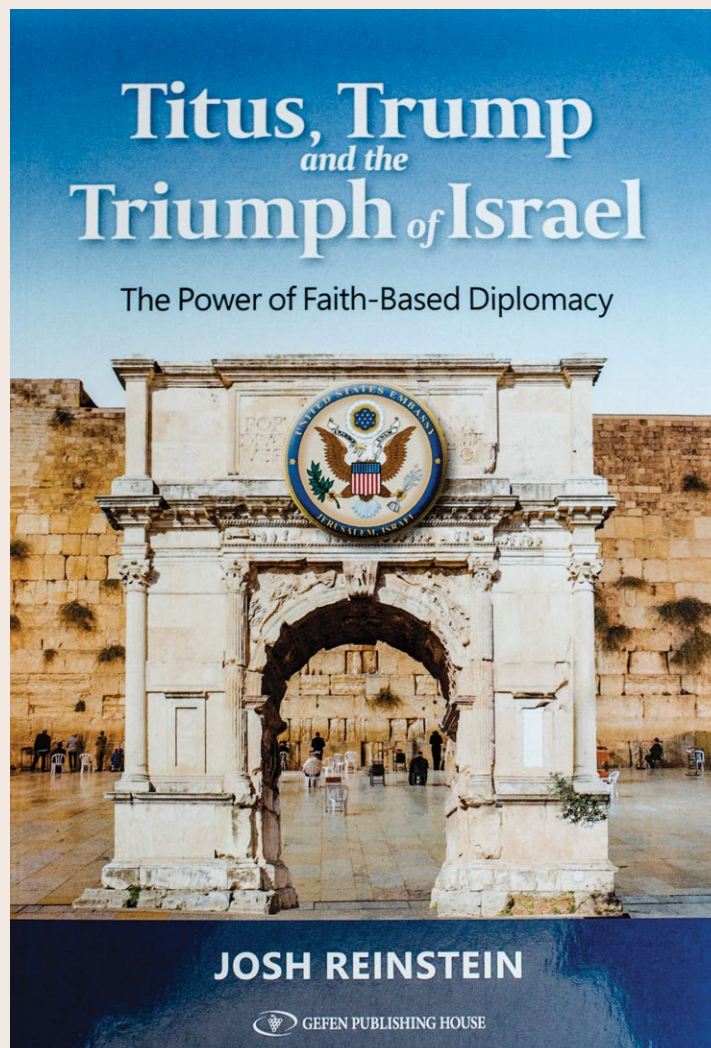
rise in anti-Semitism, which takes the form of anti-Zionism, and alliances between groups that are fighting against the most fundamental biblical values. The division in worldviews has become starker than ever. In this book, Josh Reinstein, who through his initiative of faith-based diplomacy is at the center of this tension, takes a unique approach to explaining what lies behind the recent wave of support for Israel and the counter force. He answers important questions to clarify what drives the political actions that we witness today and what path should be taken moving forward."

How have Christians made a difference through faith-based diplomacy? Reinstein uses the example of President Trump. Before the 2016 election, Christians worked to influence the Republican platform to line up with biblical truth concerning Israel. They were successful. After the election, President Trump and the administration continued to be influenced by Christian leaders. This resulted in the move of the US embassy to Jerusalem, with other nations subsequently following.

Why is this important? Reinstein answers: "One may wonder: Why do Bible-believing Christians care about Jerusalem? Christians believe that the Messiah will return to Jerusalem, setting the stage for a change in the world. The result is that two sides have formed. [Reinstein is not talking about political sides, but rather about a spiritual reality—those who

live in union with biblical principles and those who reject the Bible and God's plans]. On the one side there are people with Judeo-Christian values, while the other side involves people against those values who don't want to see those prophecies fulfilled. Because Jews and Christians both see Jerusalem as crucial to the future redemption, they are working together to keep it united under Jewish control. For them, control of Jerusalem is not a political fight to possess more territory, it's a biblical issue."

By Rebecca J. Brimmer, *Bridges for Peace*



Aliyah BOOM

DESPITE THE GLOBAL CHALLENGES created by the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of Jewish people making *aliyah* (immigrating) to Israel in 2020 is set to top 50,000—almost double the figure in 2019. That figure is anticipated to double again in 2021, with predictions of 90,000 new immigrants making Israel their new permanent address.

Israeli Minister of Immigration and Absorption Pinna Tamano-Shata recently announced these predictions at a sitting of the Knesset (Parliament). Tamano-Shata, an immigrant and the first Ethiopian-born woman to hold a seat in the Knesset, is a living example of the “Israeli dream” that all immigrants strive toward.

These predictions were echoed by the chairman of the Jewish Agency, Isaac Herzog, who similarly forecasts a massive increase of 250,000 new immigrants over the next 3 to 5 years. Herzog cautions though that as a result of the current pandemic, charitable giving in the Jewish world may see a significant decrease. Organizations that help Jewish people make *aliyah*, like the Jewish Agency and Keren HaYesod, rely on both public and private funding and may not be able to provide the same level of assistance to immigrants as in the past. Herzog is hopeful that the Israeli government will make the necessary provisions for any shortfall to facilitate the influx of Jews from around the globe.

Why Now?

The regathering of the Jewish people to the land of their forefathers is confirmed in many of the prophetic writings in the Bible. Jeremiah 16:16 speaks of the Lord sending fishermen to catch the Israelites from all the nations to which they were scattered. Then, many hunters are dispatched to hunt them down “*from every mountain and every hill, and out of the holes of the rocks.*” While the numbers may not be as significant as during the past waves of *aliyah*, we are witnessing a time where even far-flung exiles are indeed returning to the land of Israel.

Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic has exposed rampant anti-Semitism which is still lurking in many Western nations. This has also proved to be a motivating factor. There are always risks involved when immigrating to another country, and with unemployment already rising in Israel, many new immigrants face many challenges as they make the prophetic move to Israel. Bridges for Peace will continue to assist the Jewish people in returning to their ancient homeland and partner with immigrant communities throughout Israel, ensuring that these Jewish immigrants are given every opportunity to achieve their Israeli dream.

Nathan Williams, *Bridges for Peace*



The Season of

Dur

SUKKOT (FEAST OF TABERNACLES) commemorates the 40 years Israel wandered the desert en route to the Promised Land, living in temporary huts, or *sukkot*—with nothing but the faithfulness of God to provide for their daily necessities in a barren wilderness.

Today, their descendants celebrate *Sukkot* according to God's command, "*You shall dwell in booths for seven days...that your generations may know that I made the children of Israel dwell in booths when I brought them out of the land of Egypt...*" (Lev. 23:42–43).

In Jewish tradition, *Sukkot* is known as "The Season of Our Rejoicing," a nod to God's instruction to spend the feast in jubilation before Him (Lev. 23:40). Joy is thus a decision rather than a fleeting emotion. Moreover, Israel celebrates that God is their only source of joy, love, provision and protection. The God who met their ancestors' every need as they wandered the wilderness is the same God who continues to care for Israel today.

We've asked a few of our Jewish friends to share what *Sukkot* means to them.

Rejoicing

"In our liturgy, Sukkot is called 'our time of joy.' We celebrate this sacred holiday by living in temporary housing called a sukkah—three walls and a bamboo rooftop. It represents a joyous faith in living with uncertainty. Celebrating Sukkot in a reborn Israel, with all the uncertainty that surrounds our borders, is a living embodiment that our spirit can never be broken and our hope can never be extinguished."

—Rabbi David Nekrutman, executive director for the Ohr Torah Stone Center for Jewish-Christian Understanding and Cooperation

"Sukkot symbolizes being covered with an awning. God shows how He sends His awning to us, even when we are not in a safe place. We go out and leave our homes to be in a place where we trust only God's awning, His protection, over us. In Hebrew the word lesachech means to purify something, to make it softer and more beautiful. This is what God does on Sukkot. He sends us out from our safe homes, He purifies us, softens us so that we can see better how He takes care of us, how He protects us—because we are His children."

—Esther Weiss, owner of Esther's Gallery, Hurva Square, Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem

"Sukkot is full of meaningful symbolism and biblical commandments that are special and spiritual anywhere, but all the more so in Israel. One of the things that is most symbolic is the temporary nature of the sukkah itself as a dwelling, both because of the materials with which a sukkah is constructed and the fact that it's only a weeklong festival, drawing parallels to life being temporary as well. In Israel, the paradox of temporary-ness coexists with permanence, the beginning of the return of the Jewish people to the land of Israel from a biblical exile, to the fact that we observe it in the land, generations into our restoration home as a precursor for our final redemption."

—Jonathan Feldstein, president
Genesis 123 Foundation

"For me, Sukkot means that everything made by human beings is temporary, so we should appreciate everything and everyone around us every day."

—Steve Linde, editor-in-chief of the *Jerusalem Report*

"Sukkot is a time to gather in the blessings from above, both the fruits of the land of Israel as well as the fruits of higher consciousness, all designed to bring the world to greater level of unity and revelation of Hashem."

—Baruch Erdstein, Torah scholar/student, farmer living in Itamar

"Sukkot...is the holiday when I can and do completely immerse myself into a mitzvah (commandment). My whole body enters a sukkah. All our meals are taken there. We entertain there. It is a complete or full mitzvah in that sense and explains perhaps what a Jew is: total commitment to one's religion, heritage, culture and social community. God and our history surround us on all sides, up, down and around. What a wonderful feeling."

—Yisrael Medad, journalist, author

"For me Sukkot is a time to get out of the routine. We leave our sheltered homes and our regular habits behind and go out to a temporary home. We confront and accept a reality different from the one we are used to. It is a time of... unity within the people of Israel and a time when we accept and unite with all the other nations of the world under the protection of G-d."

—Shmuel Drai, director of Keren Shemesh, an NGO providing mentorship to young entrepreneurs

"There is a connection between Pesach [Passover] and Sukkot. Sukkot celebrates the time when the Israelites lived in the desert when they left Egypt and came to Israel. Personally, because I wasn't born here and made aliyah [immigration to Israel], I consider myself to have come out of Egypt. Therefore, this holiday is so special to me."

—Silvio Pinco, IT consultant for Palron



Australia

ENCOUNTER ISRAEL TOUR

February 14–27, 2021

Hosted by: Matthew Chivers

You are invited to join this life-changing 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.

UK

UK ISRAEL TOUR

October 12–19, 2021

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.

Canada

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.*

PROMISE—PROPHECY—POSSESSION

March 14–25, 2021

Hosted by: Rick & Grace Knelsen and Réal Bois

Many say visiting Israel is a once in a lifetime experience. We believe it is much more than that. If you have visited Israel to see the biblical and historical sites and now long to go deeper, this is your opportunity to experience Judea and Samaria, the heartland of Israel. Marvel at the magnificent mountains of Israel, visit Jewish communities, meet the people who live there and feel their passion to be good stewards of the land

God entrusted to them. See where God spoke His promises to Abraham, where the prophets lived, and where prophecy is being fulfilled today as the Jewish people once again work the land. Experience the heart of God, the heart of the land and the heart of the people.

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: EUROPE & ISRAEL TOUR

November 7–23, 2021

Hosted by: BFP Canada leadership team

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 against all odds and see how our covenant-keeping God has restored His land and people of Israel. Tour includes the Netherlands, Germany, Poland and Israel.

**Option to extend Israel component.*

United States

THE LIFE AND LAND OF JESUS CHRIST

ISRAEL STUDY TOUR 2021

February 24–March 6, 2021

Hosted by: Dr. Dennis D. Frey & Dr. Noel P. Sanderson

Be immersed in the land and lessons of the Bible as you are led on an 11-day journey through Scripture while your local guide and driver bring the past and present culture of Israel to life for all your senses.

ISRAEL STUDY TOUR

March 13–25, 2021

Hosted by: Bobby Peck

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

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.

THE “FOLLOWING JESUS” ISRAEL TOUR 2021

March 7–18, 2022

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.

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

VOLUNTEER WITH US

The COVID-19 pandemic has left us short-staffed, and we are in need of both long- and short-term volunteers to fill the gap. Please note that ever-changing travel and visa procedures require flexibility.

Home Repair Team
(Karmiel)
(Long-term)

Web Developer
(Long-term)

Food Bank Floor Workers
(Short-term)

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



SEVEN SPECIES CAKE

By Sarah Yoder, *BFP Staff Writer*

"For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land...a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey." Deuteronomy 8:7a-8

THE SEVEN SPECIES are a collection of grains and fruits that depict the landscape of both ancient and modern Israel. As in the days of Joshua and Caleb, these seven species—wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives and dates—are still readily available throughout Israel today. This delightful recipe combines the best of these species to deliver a cake that celebrates the promise of abundance in the Land of Israel.

Ingredients

Sponge Cake:

5 eggs
¼ cup olive oil
1 cup sugar
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ cup barley flour
½ cup wheat flour
1 tsp baking powder

1 cup grape juice for soaking
8 oz (245 ml) fig jam for filling

Frosting:

8 oz (225 g) cream cheese, softened
1 cup white chocolate chips, melted
1 tsp vanilla extract
½ tsp salt
2 cups cream, chilled
1 ½ cups powdered sugar

Directions

To make the sponge cake:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 °F (180 °C) and coat two 8-inch (20-cm) cake pans with a thin layer of oil and a dusting of flour.
2. Beat together the eggs, oil, sugar and vanilla until the mixture is almost white in color.
3. Combine the dry ingredients and use a spatula to gently fold small batches into the egg mixture.
4. Divide the batter evenly between the two pans and bake for 18 to 20 minutes until golden brown.
5. Remove from the oven and run a knife along the edge of the pans. Allow to cool completely before removing.
6. Use a brush to soak each layer with grape juice.

To make the frosting:

1. Beat the chilled cream and powdered sugar together until stiff peaks form.
2. In a separate mixing bowl, beat the softened cream cheese until creamy.
3. Add the melted white chocolate, vanilla and salt and mix until combined.
4. Add the cheese mixture to the whipped cream and whisk until combined. Take care not to over-mix the frosting.

To assemble the cake:

1. Beginning with the bottom cake layer, apply a coating of fig jam followed by a layer of frosting.
2. Repeat for the remaining cake layer.
3. Frost the top and sides of the cake and garnish with slices of pomegranate, fig and dates.

Serves 12

Israel and the Bible

ISRAEL IS OFTEN CALLED “the Land of the Bible.” The land itself brings the Bible to life. Modern cities and towns have ancient biblical names. The plants, trees, birds and animals are talked about in the Bible. Father Bargil Pixner, a Catholic priest, described the land as the “fifth gospel.” Everywhere you turn in Israel, you will encounter the Bible.

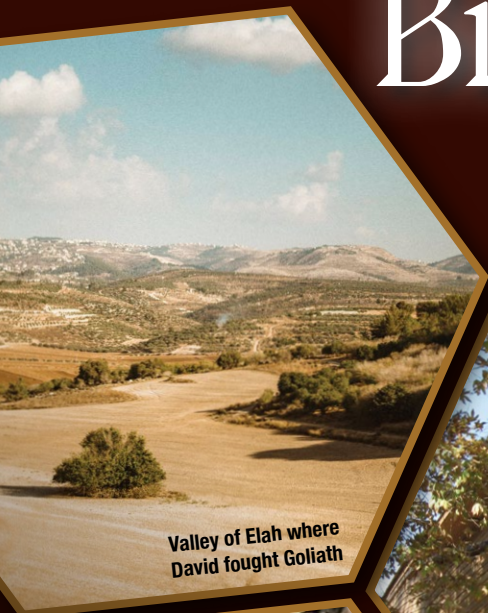
Education

When you study geography or history in Israeli schools, the Bible is one of your reference books. Field trips are often to biblical sites. Where better to learn about David and Goliath than in the very place the battle occurred? Even in secular circles, Bible study is popular. A nationwide Bible quiz program attracts participants from both the religious and secular communities. Religious men devote themselves to study. Many work a full-time job and then study *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.) in the evenings.

Culture

A visit to the zoo in Jerusalem is a must. The animals live in beautiful habitats. The habitats have explanatory signs that include a Scripture reference for each animal. My favorite thing is a huge rock called the Moses Rock. It dominates the landscape. Water flowing from the rock streams through the zoo—a graphic idea of the rock that provided Israel with water in the desert.

Art museums feature biblical scenes. The Israel museum exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls, mostly Bible texts from 2,000 years ago, draws thousands of visitors



Valley of Elah where David fought Goliath



Noah's Ark at the Biblical Zoo



Dead Sea Scrolls



Shabbat dinner

each year. Nearby is the Bible Lands Museum that features artifacts from the entire Levant.

Music, even popular music, often features biblical and spiritual themes. Driving down the road one day, I was listening to *Army Radio*, a popular Hebrew language station. A song started playing that immediately caught my attention. It was all about the great gifts that God gives and ends with a prayer for peace. I loved the song, but even more, I loved that God was being honored, thanked and prayed to on a secular radio station.

Street names are often biblical in nature. In the center of Jerusalem, we find the following streets: Tribes of Israel (Shivtei Israel), Prophets (Hanevi'im), Deborah the Prophetess (Devorah haNevia) and Jeremiah Street.

Leadership

Israeli military leaders study the ancient battles to gain strategic ideas for future battles in the same locales. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who is not considered religious, hosts regular Bible studies in his office and

home. His speeches often refer to the Bible. He is not the only one. I attended a *Hanukkah* (Feast of Dedication) program for families who had lost a son in battle. The audience was mixed, including religious, secular, rich, poor, immigrants from Ethiopia, Russia, Ukraine and more. Each speaker spoke about the miracles of God in the land of Israel. Prayers were said and the Bible explained. Current and former military officers were among the speakers.

Not Just for the Synagogue

Israeli homes become a little sanctuary each *Shabbat* (Sabbath). According to polls, approximately 75% of the population keeps the *Shabbat* with prayers, Bible discussions and songs. The holidays in Israel are biblical holidays. Each of them has biblical customs and biblical passages which are read and studied.

Come to Israel and encounter the Bible anew. In Israel, it is part of the very fabric of the land and people. In the meantime, let's get the Bible off the shelf and into our hearts.

Rebecca J. Brimmer, *Bridges for Peace*

Israel Sets Up Public Refrigerators to Feed the Hungry

As Israel—like many other nations—deals with the coronavirus and its economic fallout, over a million Israelis have found themselves without work, and many are going hungry. Seeing the need and finding a creative solution, a few young Jerusalem residents started a new initiative that will help feed the hungry and reduce food waste.

"The Fridge" project has popped up in Jerusalem and other locations across the Jewish state in which vendors place their unused food into public outdoor refrigerators at the end of the day, making it available for people to take what they need. It's a win-win: the food doesn't go to waste, and people who find themselves struggling to make ends meet during the COVID-19 crisis receive desperately needed food.

The first photos of one of the outdoor refrigerators spread across social media in June, announcing the new initiative.

"We're not crying, you're crying," Israel announced on its Twitter page along with a photo of the fridge. The page is run by the Foreign Ministry's digital diplomacy team.

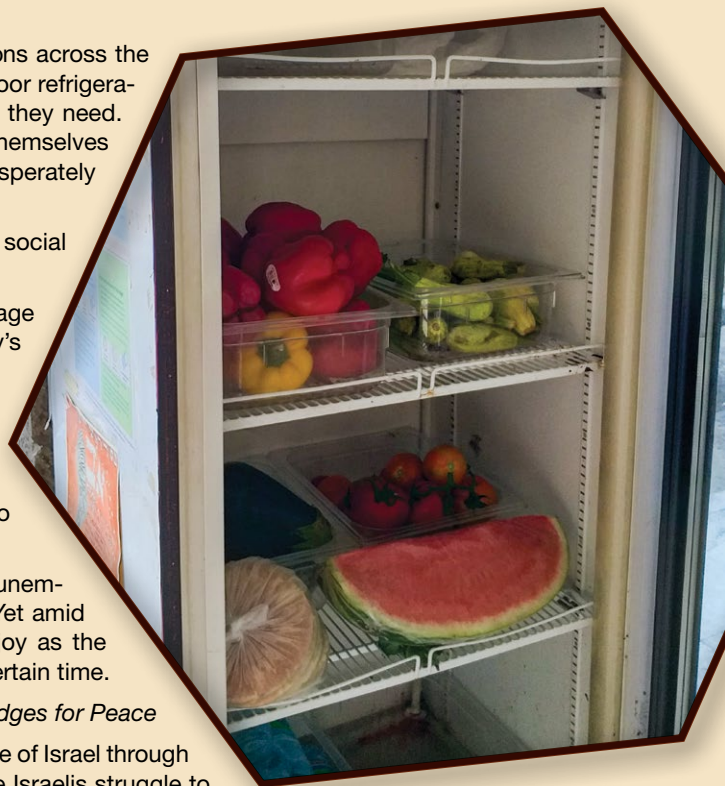
"We [love] this incredible initiative by Jerusalem's young residents to feed the needy and prevent food waste," the Israel Twitter post continued.

The project was applauded by people around the world—many who said their own cities should emulate "The Fridge" initiative.

Since the start of the pandemic, more than one million Israelis are unemployed—not including those who have been placed on unpaid leave. Yet amid the uncertainty, bright spots like The Fridge project bring hope and joy as the people of Israel go out of their way to help each other through this uncertain time.

Kate Norman, *Bridges for Peace*

Editor's Note: Bridges for Peace stands with and supports the people of Israel through this crisis. We have received numerous calls for help as more and more Israelis struggle to make ends meet and put food on the table, and we are striving to help as many as we can.



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.



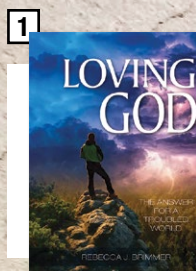
Welcoming new immigrants to Israel with a gift package



DONATE

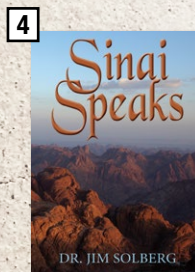
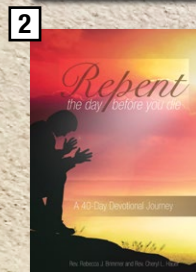
Recommended Reading

New!



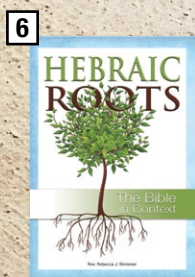
- 1 LOVING GOD: THE ANSWER FOR A TROUBLED WORLD**
Rebecca J. Brimmer
Jesus taught that the greatest commandment was to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. Knowing and loving God enables us to love others, the second greatest commandment. This book explores how Jesus' truth provides the answers our troubled world needs.

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A 40-DAY DEVOTIONAL JOURNEY
Rebecca J. Brimmer & Cheryl Hauer
• Suggested homework activities to enhance the journey
• Daily Scripture readings and accompanying prayer points
• Spiral bound journal



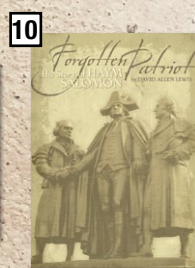
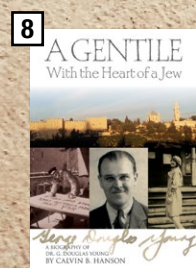
- 3 ISRAEL & THE CHURCH: GOD'S ROAD MAP**
Rebecca J. Brimmer & BFP Leaders
Revised edition introduces the Hebraic roots of Christianity and tells the story of God's covenant relationship with Israel. Includes study questions. Excellent for small group or personal study. **Also on Kindle.**

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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.**



- 5 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.

- 6 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.**



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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.**

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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.**

- 9 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.**

- 10 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.

Children's Books



- 11 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)



- 12 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)

- 13 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)

- 14 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.

- 15 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)

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LOVING GOD

THE ANSWER
FOR A
TROUBLED
WORLD

REBECCA J. BRIMMER

Recalibrating the Focus to God

We are indeed living in troubled times, and the world has become a frightening and uncertain place. Self-help books abound that purport to have all the answers I need, telling me all about myself, who I am, what I can do and that the sky is the limit if I can just learn to love myself. The Christian aisle isn't much different, with the occasional admonition to "just believe."

That's what sets *Loving God: The Answer for a Troubled World* apart. It is refreshingly not about me. It is actually a beautifully written book about God Himself. With skill and sensitivity, Rebecca J. Brimmer helps us take our eyes off ourselves and peer with expectation into the very heart of the Lord who loves us. Through her lifelong journey with the Lord, Brimmer leads us on an exploration of His character and His expectations, while her more than 30 years in Israel provide a deep and immovable foundation based on the truths of both the Old and New Testaments.

Plumbing the depths of the Scriptures, Brimmer explores the questions few ask: what does God *really* love? How does He reveal Himself? And what should my love for Him look like? It is a book you will read more than once, and certainly one you will want to share. Don't miss it.

By Cheryl Hauer, *Bridges for Peace*

Book Review

From the Author's Heart

For a number of years, I have been drawn over and over again to the words of Jesus (Yeshua) concerning the greatest commandments. I have written repeatedly on the subject. This year, I felt an urgency from the Lord to compile these writings into a book. At the time, we had no idea that the world would be plunged into a time of crisis and trouble sparked by a worldwide pandemic—but God was not surprised. I truly believe that the truths contained in this book are what our world needs to overcome in the midst of trouble. Even if you have read the original teaching letters, I encourage you to get a copy of the book for your library and a second copy for a friend. Now, more than ever, we need to love God and love our neighbor.

dispatch from Jerusalem

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Winter is always tough for our Holocaust survivors. Many are unable to pay for heating and spend the days shivering. This year, winter will be even harder. The threat of infection has many confined to their apartments without the comfort of companionship. Will you help us brighten their winter with light, warmth and love? Your donation will pay utility bills to keep the heat on and purchase blankets to fend off the cold.

Donate Now!