

# dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

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## JERUSALEM OF GOLD

# 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 bridge-builder and participating in fulfilling biblical prophecy through the following educational and humanitarian programs of Bridges for Peace.**

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

The Palestinian curriculum stands accused of educating Palestinian children to hate Israel. The system of indoctrination inculcates a false narrative and convinces children of the high honor of sacrificing themselves as martyrs. But what about the rest of the Arab world?

*By Cheryl Hauer*

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## Tzedakah

In a Jewish prayer service, there is a concluding prayer calling for perfecting the world under the sovereignty of God. One of the many ways to achieve this is through charitable giving or *tzedakah*. We all have a part to play in repairing the world.

*By Nathan Williams*

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## Ten Common Misconceptions about Israel

In conversations outside the Holy Land, we've found that much of what people assume about Israel is incorrect. Until tourism resumes and people can come experience this amazing country for themselves, we're here to set the record straight on a few misconceptions.

*By Kate Norman*



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## Jerusalem Stone

What comes to mind when visualizing the City of the Great King? No matter which images you envision, you will most assuredly see the ancient material that sets this city apart from all others: Jerusalem stone.

*By Sarah Yoder*

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## The "Political Wing" Myth

Despite Hamas and Hezbollah's blood-soaked hands, some in the West still cling to the idea that the "political wings" of the two terror groups are distinct from their terrorist activities. That misguided view may result in everyone involved missing the real hope for peace.

*By Joshua Spurlock*

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## Saying Goodbye to Ruvli

As Israel bids farewell—in an official capacity, at least—to Reuven Rivlin in July when his tenure as president ends, we pay tribute to the president whose legacy will continue to echo through Israeli society—and the formidable man behind the position.

*By Ilse Strauss*



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## Watering the World's Deserts, Drop by Drop

With much of Israel's land mass being desert, necessity has forced the Jewish state to find solutions to the water scarcity issue. Israel became a model to emulate, proving that a desert could become a veritable vegetable and fruit basket.

*By Kathy DeGagne*

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# Showing Love to Widows and Orphans

**MY MOTHER WAS A WIDOW** for 12 years before she joined my father in heaven in 2019. She would often tell us that God has a special heart for widows and that she trusted Him to care for her. When things were difficult, she would often say: “But God!” He was her source in every way. I am so blessed to have had a godly, praying mother. When she passed away, we established the Ramona Lewis Widows and Orphans Fund in her honor.

I love Scriptural passages that show the character of God. Consider this: *“For the LORD your God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who does not show partiality, nor take a bribe. He executes justice for the orphan and the widow, and shows His love for the stranger by giving him food and clothing”* (Deut. 10:17–18 NASB).

Most of the Holocaust survivors that we assist have lost their spouses. In fact, there are many elderly widows on our food programs who receive regular food assistance. It is our honor to help meet their physical needs, but our hearts break as we see their loneliness. Unfortunately, Israel also has many young widows struggling to raise families alone.

## A FAMILY IN NEED

In October, Li’s husband suddenly passed away, leaving her, a young mother, alone with four children to raise. The oldest child is eight and the youngest two (twins) are three. Heartbroken at the loss of her husband, she was also in severe financial distress.



Li, widowed mother of four

In the past, we had helped Li’s mother. With the family plunged into sorrow, she called us asking for help for her devastated daughter. During the first few months, we helped with emergency dental needs. Then her refrigerator broke, so we replaced it. Later she needed a bed, and we were able to assist again.

As Passover approached, realizing how many needs this family had, we mobilized to bless them in a significant fashion. We took new blankets, pots and pans, gifts for the children and grocery store food vouchers to enable them to host a wonderful Passover meal with their family. We knew we were acting with the heart of God, who clearly says in His Word that He will care for the widow. I am sure that Li and her children will always remember the Christians who came and showed love to their family. Dee, one of our volunteers, was there to help. She is the one who reached out to give Li a big hug. She told us how tightly Li hugged back. With tears of joy, Li gratefully received the gifts that Christians were bringing her and her fatherless children. Visit our YouTube channel and watch our video entitled “Comforting Widows and Orphans with Christian Love” to witness the touching encounter with this young widow.

## PRACTICAL DEEDS

The book of James is famous for its practical application of faith, saying: *“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world”* (James 1:27 NASB).

Every day the Christian team of Bridges for Peace reaches out in practical ways to exhibit the character of God and Christian love to the people of Israel. In this account, we helped a widow. We also reach out to new immigrants, children from families with socioeconomic difficulties, Holocaust survivors and more. In response to the increased needs brought on by the pandemic, we are in the process of adding hundreds more people to our regular Food Project to receive ongoing food parcels. Many of those we add to the list are widows or single mothers. Israel is an expensive place to live. Generally, families depend on two salaries to make ends meet. As a result, single parent households are often among the neediest in the society.

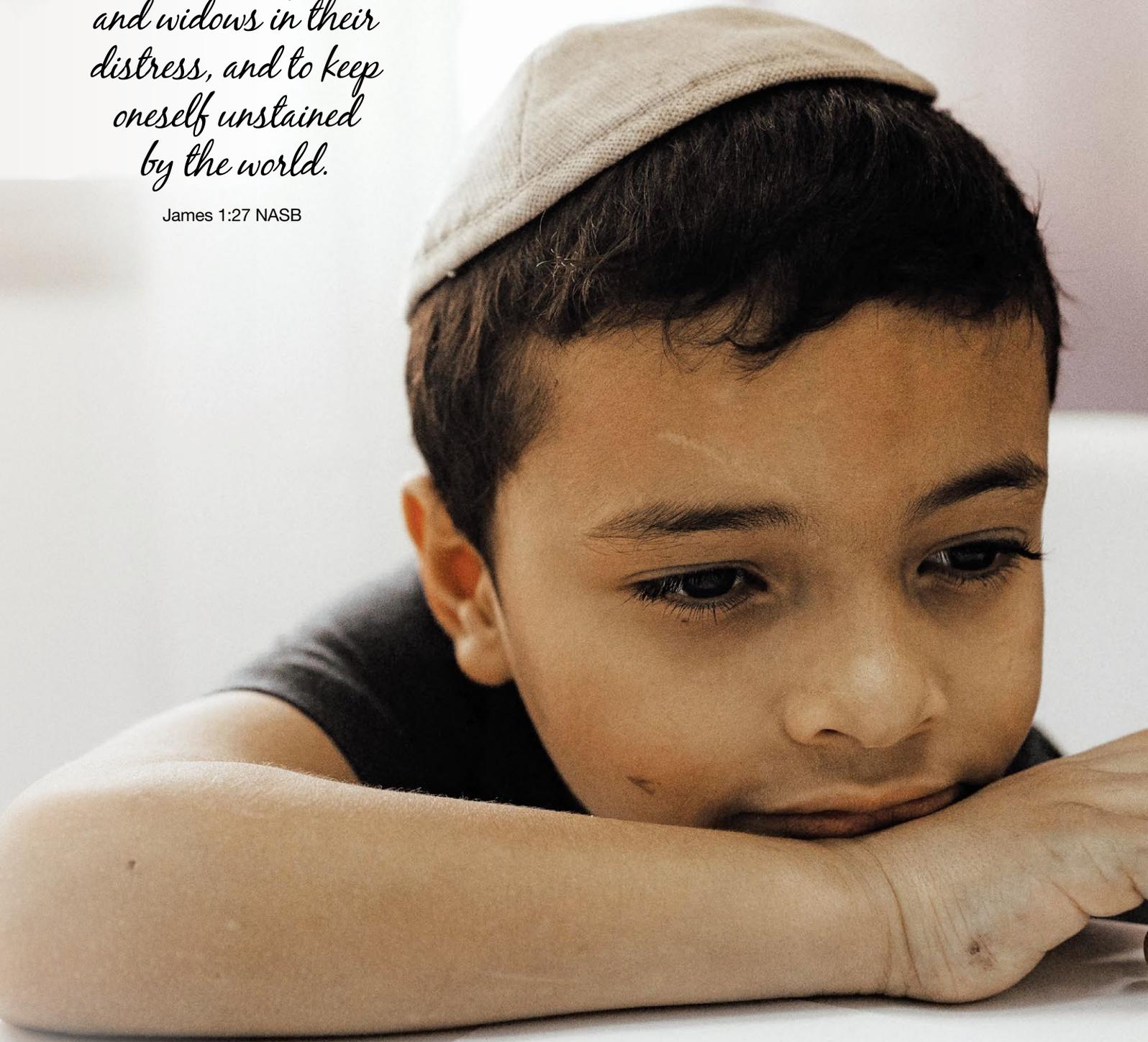
## THANK YOU

How thankful we are that Christians like you have been giving to our Widows and Orphans Fund. This has enabled us to bless Li and her precious children. It will enable us to reach out with love to others in need. The needs are great. Thankfully we serve a great God, who loves the widow, orphan and stranger. Does God want to use you today to show His love? Your generous gifts will enable us to reach more of those who are crying in despair, asking God to help them.

Blessings from Israel,  
Rebecca J Brimmer  
International President and CEO

*Pure and undefiled  
religion in the sight of  
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and widows in their  
distress, and to keep  
oneself unstained  
by the world.*

James 1:27 NASB



One of the needy Israeli children we support

# Iran Plays the CHINA CARD



**THE IRANIANS HAVE SIGNED** a [US] \$400 billion agreement with China that could decisively alter the correlation of forces in the Middle East.

The pact is a potential game changer that not only gives Iran a reliable market to sell its oil—albeit at a discounted price—but also involves massive Chinese investment in improving Iran’s infrastructure, military cooperation and intelligence sharing. In one bold stroke, China is seeking to undermine any effort to isolate Iran so as to pressure it to give up its nuclear option. The deepening relationship between Tehran and Beijing also means that China is backing the *ayatollahs* against any effort to restrain their missile building as well as their use of terrorism. In essence, China is taking a great leap forward toward asserting itself as an international superpower whose interests in the Middle East will be linked to those of the Islamist regime.

China’s main interest in propping up Iran is to undermine the United States. While many Americans have downplayed the notion of a superpower rivalry between the two nations..., this agreement is one more piece of evidence that the Chinese are deadly serious about

exerting their influence around the world in ways that hurt American interests and those of its allies. This blow to the security of both Israel and the Arab states in the region is simply collateral damage to a Chinese decision to embrace Iran as its Middle East proxy.

Iran is counting on its playing of the China card dealing a devastating blow to any hopes of forcing it to make concessions before returning to the dangerously weak terms of the 2015 nuclear deal. It is also likely assuming that the same collection of Obama administration alumni who bowed to Tehran’s every demand in the negotiations that took place between 2013 and 2015 will similarly give up any idea of strengthening that agreement because of Iran’s stated refusal to do so. It’s imperative that the sunset clauses that would allow the Islamic regime a legal path to a weapon by the end of the 2020s be removed. Still, the Iranians may be forgiven for thinking that with China now openly backing them and demanding that President Joe Biden end any effort to pressure them into compliance with the deal, the path to their nuclear ambition has just been cleared.

Excerpt from an article by Jonathan S. Tobin, *JNS*

# Biden's Plan to “RESET”

## Israeli–Palestinian Situation

“**THE US PALESTINIAN RESET** and the Path Forward,” a four-page US memo detailing President Joe Biden’s planned strategy for the Israeli–Palestinian situation, is the brainchild of Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Israeli–Palestinian Affairs Hady Amr and was reportedly presented to US Secretary of State Antony Blinken on March 1.

The document advocates reestablishing diplomatic relations with the Palestinians that broke down when Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas turned his back on the US after former President Donald Trump’s decision to acknowledge Jerusalem as the capital of Israel. The ties further disintegrated in the aftermath of the Trump administration’s peace plan, which the PA deemed “the slap of the century” and rejected out of hand.

According to the memo, the US “suffers from a lack of connective tissue” with the PA, which should be remedied by “reset[ing] US relations with the Palestinians.”

The future plans further include resuscitating the stalled peace process between Israel and the Palestinians, focusing on a two-state solution based on the pre-1967 borders with mutually agreed land swaps.

The pre-1967 borders refer to the lay of the land prior to the Six Day War, a defensive conflict in which Israel managed to beat back the invading Hashemite Kingdom and reclaim the eastern part of Jerusalem as well as Judea and Samaria, which had been under Jordanian occupation since the 1948 War of Independence. Notably, in the nearly 20 years that Jordan occupied the so-called West Bank, the Palestinians neither identified as a unique nation nor sought to establish a country of their own. In fact, with no record of Palestinian rule in either the eastern part of Jerusalem or Judea and Samaria, the question remains unanswered as to why Israel is required to hand over the biblical heartland—where more than 90% of the *Tanakh* (OT) played out and where generations of Jews lived and died—as a prerequisite to peace.

Moreover, the memo suggests doing an about-face on some of former President Trump’s decisions that Amr believes would harm the possibility of a two-state solution. This refers in particular to the change in policy that allows US exports from Judea and Samaria to be labeled as “Made in Israel,” thus legitimizing the so-called settlements as part of Israel.

Another part of the plan entails the Biden administration padding the PA’s coffers with a US \$15 million aid package in COVID-19 assistance. Prior to 2018, the US was the Palestinians’ largest single donor. However, the streams of cash soon slowed to a trickle and then dried up when the PA failed to halt its “Pay-for-Slay” policy of rewarding terrorists and their families with monthly salaries for committing acts of terror against Jews.

Despite the focus on improving ties, aid and the future of the Palestinians, the memo also mentioned the Jewish state. The plan was, however, thin on details as to the benefits Israel can expect, merely stating that the US will “take a two-fold approach of maintaining and ideally improving the US relationship with Israel by deepening its integration into the region...”

Ilse Strauss, *Bridges for Peace*





Sifting sands at the Judean cave

## Dead Sea Scroll Fragments with Biblical Verses Discovered in Judean Cave

**ISRAELI ARCHAEOLOGISTS** announced that dozens of Dead Sea Scroll fragments bearing biblical verses were discovered during a national archaeological operation in the Judean Desert.

The scroll fragments are written in Greek and feature portions of the books of the Twelve Minor Prophets, including those of Zechariah and Nahum. It's the first time in almost 60 years that an archaeological excavation has uncovered fragments of a biblical scroll.

The parchment fragments were discovered as part of an operation launched by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) in 2017 to prevent looting in the Judean Desert.

In addition to the scroll fragments, archeologists also uncovered a cache of rare coins from the days of Simon Bar-Kokhba that bear Jewish symbols; a 6,000-year-old partially mummified skeleton of a child, wrapped in cloth; and a large complete basket dating back thousands of years—likely the oldest in the world.

IAA director Israel Hasson applauded the excavation team, saying, “The desert team showed exceptional courage, dedication and devotion to purpose, rappelling down to caves located between heaven and earth, digging and sifting through them, enduring thick and suffocating dust, and returning with gifts of immeasurable worth for mankind.”

The Dead Sea Scrolls include the earliest known copies of the biblical texts and are therefore considered the most important archaeological discovery of the 20th century.

Excerpt from an article by JNS



Fragments found in Judean cave

# Two 1,800-Year-Old Sarcophagi Discovered in Central Israel

**AN EXPANSIVE NEW FACILITY** currently being built at Ramat Gan Safari Park will be an important addition to its wildlife hospital. During its construction, an extraordinary discovery was made. Two unique sarcophagi—ancient stone coffins—were found in the earthworks.

Veteran safari workers present at the time said that the coffins had been found years ago in the area of the safari's parking lot. At the time, the sarcophagi were moved to a location near the veterinary clinic and the African savanna zone, but over the years they were forgotten and became buried under sand and thick vegetation.

When work on the new wildlife hospital began, the contractor working in the area began digging, and suddenly Rami Tam, the head of the African savanna zone, noticed the two coffins jutting out of the soil. He quickly called the animal health and management director, who came to see the find and contacted the Israel Antiquities Authority's (IAA's) Theft Prevention Unit. Hardly believing their eyes, the inspectors were astonished to see sarcophagi of this kind at the safari park. After a thorough examination, they excitedly confirmed the unique find's great age.

Based on the stones and their ornate decoration, the sarcophagi were intended for people of a high status who were evidently buried near the safari park.

According to IAA archaeologists, the sarcophagi are roughly 1,800 years old and date from the Roman period. They are ornamented with symbolic discs to protect and accompany the soul on its journey to the afterlife and flower garlands, often used to decorate sarcophagi in the Hellenistic period as well. Between the garlands are oval blanks, which the archaeologists believe were originally intended to be filled with a customary grape-cluster motif, but for some unknown reason the work remained unfinished.

The sarcophagi, made of local stone, are locally produced imitations of the prestigious sarcophagi made of Proconnesian marble from the Turkish island of Marmara. Found together, the two sarcophagi bear identical ornamentation and may have been made for a husband and wife or members of the same family. The exact provenance of the sarcophagi is unknown, but they were probably buried near the safari park, in the region of Messubim, the site of ancient Bnei Brak in the Roman period.

The wealthy owners of the sarcophagi, buried with their personal grave goods, had no idea that the coffins would find a place of honor alongside giraffes, elephants and a bird nursery. The sarcophagi were transferred to their rightful location in the Israeli National Treasures repositories.

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA

# Israeli Teenager Unearths Figurine from Biblical Times

**ELEVEN-YEAR-OLD** Zvi Ben-David from Beersheva was on a family trip when he caught sight of an unusual object. Picking it up, he saw it was a pottery figurine of a woman. His mother, a professional tour guide, realized it was an important ancient find and contacted Oren Shmueli, district archaeologist for the Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA] in the western Negev.

In compliance with COVID-19 restrictions, Shmueli met Zvi and his family in their garden, where they handed him the figurine, which will now be researched and kept in the National Treasures collection. Zvi was awarded a certificate of appreciation for good citizenship by the IAA.

According to Shmueli and Debbie Ben-Ami, curator of the Iron Age and Persian periods in the IAA, "The figurine that Zvi discovered is rare, and only one such example exists in the National Treasures collection. It was probably used in the sixth to fifth centuries BC, at the end of the Iron Age or in the Persian period (the late First Temple period or the return to Zion). The figurine...shows a woman with a scarf covering her head and neck, schematic facial features and a prominent nose."

Shmueli and Ben-Ami explain: "Pottery figurines of women are known from various periods in Israel, including the First Temple era. They were common in the home and in everyday life, and apparently served as amulets to ensure protection, good luck and prosperity. In antiquity, medical understanding was rudimentary. Infant mortality was very high and about a third of those born did not survive...In the absence of advanced medicine, amulets provided hope and an important way of appealing for aid."

The figurine was delivered to the National Treasures collection and is currently being studied by Shmueli and Ben-Ami in collaboration with Raz Kletter from the University of Helsinki in Finland.

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA



# Education is the Answer

**It's the rare parent** who doesn't long for their children to receive a good, solid education that will be their pathway to a brighter future. Martin Luther King Jr. said, "The function of education is to teach one to think intensively and critically. Intelligence plus character—that is the goal of true education." Ideally, those places where our children learn should be safe havens where curiosity is instilled and confidence and empowerment imparted, preparing them to do their part to make the world a better place for us all.

What happens, however, when those tasked with educating children cross the line between education and indoctrination? In the past, to indoctrinate simply meant to teach. But according to the *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary, since the 19th century, indoctrination has become synonymous with brainwashing. In that classroom, learning has ceased to be a window to the world and has become a door slammed shut to anything but the ideals and philosophies of the indoctrinator.

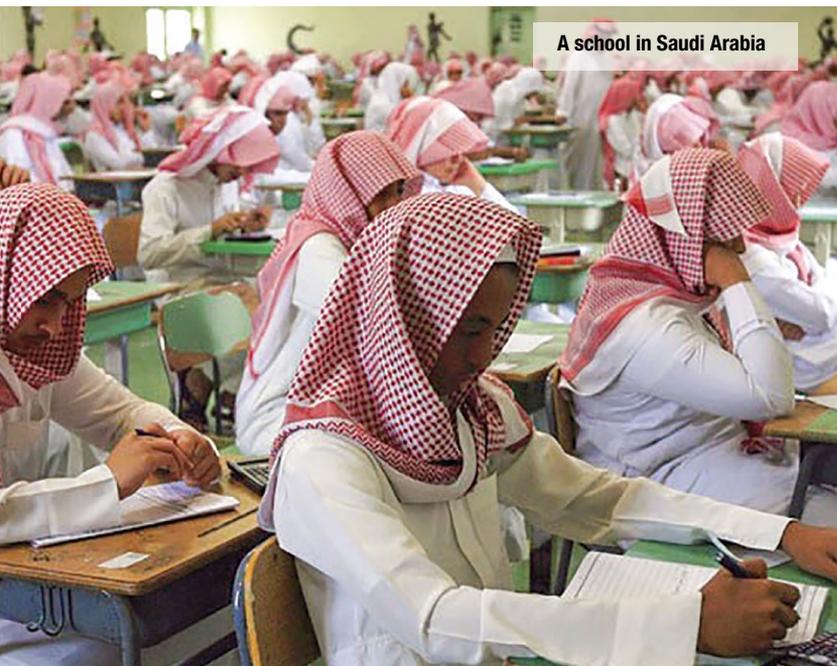
The US State Department, the Israeli government and several independent international organizations have accused the Palestinian "education" system—including in Gaza, east Jerusalem, the so-called West Bank (Judea and Samaria) and UNRWA (UN Relief and Works Agency) schools—of educating Palestinian children to hate Israel and support violence. It is, in fact, a system of indoctrination, inculcating a false narrative and convincing children that there is no higher honor than to sacrifice their lives in the process of killing Jews. Virtually no subject in the state curriculum is immune to the use of propaganda under the guise of education.

According to studies done by *Palestinian Media Watch*, Palestinian children are taught that Jews are subhuman, Israelis are murderous monsters who kill Arab children, the Land of Israel belongs to the Palestinians and killing the Jews is therefore justified, and Israel is intentionally infecting Palestinians with COVID-19. The

depth of the hatred being inculcated in children is unfathomable, and despite the efforts of many in the international community, the textbooks—and the brainwashing—remain. But what about the rest of the Arab world?

## SAUDI ARABIA

In 2019, a bill was introduced in the US Congress as a response to the systematic incitement to hatred and violence in the Saudi state curriculum. The kingdom's educational materials are rife with anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist propaganda, encouraging hatred or violence against Jews as well as Christians and certain sects of Islam. The conspiracy theory that Zionist Jews control the media, money



A school in Saudi Arabia

and politicians for global conquest has been taught as fact, as has the claim that the main goal of Jews today is to destroy the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Saudi's high school monotheism textbook teaches that Christians and Jews are the enemies of Islam and its people, and even enemies of God. Students are explicitly instructed to hate such infidels, even using violence against them in certain situations.

A report issued in December 2020 revealed that some changes have actually been made to the curriculum, although tolerance has not been added. The trope that Zionist forces are attempting to take over the world has been dropped, as has the religious prediction of a war in which Muslims kill all the Jews. References to *jihad* ("struggle," war with unbelievers in Islam) have been removed, unlike a decade ago when the focus of the curriculum was to prepare students for martyrdom.

Hatred of Jews is still present, however, including a reference to Jewish wrongdoers who are described as monkeys. The name "Israel" is repeatedly replaced with "Zionist enemy." Although major Jewish organizations were pleased with some progress, it remains clear that there is yet much work to be done.

## QATAR

The Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education recently issued an extensive study on Qatar's official school curriculum. Its findings indicate that Qatar's textbooks are on par with those issued by Iran, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority.

These books propagate virtually every imaginable anti-Semitic trope, describing the Jews as power hungry, disloyal, greedy and God killers, in addition to the accusation of blood libel and Holocaust denial. Muslims are called upon to liberate Palestine by any means necessary. And as is true throughout most of the Arab world, all of Israel is labeled "Palestine" on social studies maps. The only bright spot here is that Qatar has stopped its formal teaching of *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion*. However, evidence suggests that the underlying conspiracy theories are still being taught.

## TURKEY

A recent study of the Turkish school curriculum was equally as alarming, filled with anti-Semitic and anti-Christian propaganda. Zionism is defined as an imperialist ideal to amass all world Jewry in "Palestine," reconstruct Solomon's Temple and take over the world. All catastrophes in the Middle East, including conflicts in Syria, Iraq and Yemen, are directly attributed to Zionism. While Turkey's textbooks at one time referred to Jews as "People of the Book," they have been significantly radicalized in recent years and now refer to Jews and Christians as infidels. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is referred to as a religious war with Israel as the aggressor, attempting to rid the world of Muslims.



Girls in a primary school in Jordan

## JORDAN

Unfortunately, Jordanian high school textbooks are no exception, using hateful language about Israel and presenting Jews as evil, disloyal and imperialist Christ killers. Israel is blamed for all the ills of the Middle East—past and present—and Zionism is labeled racist and imperialist. A seventh grade textbook contains the question: "Among the characteristics of the Jews for which they are renowned are: (a) the breaking of pacts, (b) treachery and treason, (c) hating Muslims, or (d) all of the above."

## MOROCCO

Morocco was once home to the largest Jewish community outside of Israel with a population of over 300,000. Today it sets an incredible example for all of the Arab world in terms of respect for the Jewish people and hatred of anti-Semitism. The country has instituted a Holocaust education course that was developed by Moroccan educators working together with the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington DC. This year, it also announced the addition of a course on Jewish history.

In introducing these changes, King Muhammad VI called anti-Semitism the antonym of freedom of expression and referred to the battle that must be waged against it. "It is fought neither with the military nor with money. This battle has a name: education. And in the interest of our children, it is important for us to win, because they will be the beneficiaries and our ambassadors in the future."

Years of indoctrination have filled generations with hate and brought untold violence and death to the nation of Israel. King Muhammad believes that education can turn the tables, creating an atmosphere of tolerance and coexistence. With Israel entering into various agreements and alliances across the region, there is hope that changes in curricula and in attitude will help to turn those tables and bring his hopes to reality. Let's pray they turn quickly.



Cheryl Hauer,  
International Vice President

# Tzedakah

IN THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY, there is a forewarning that there will always be poor people among us, a notion which is repeated in the Gospels. Christianity and Judaism share a common thread of generosity towards those who are less fortunate—and also a desire to see the world repaired through acts of justice, generosity and love.

## Pursue Justice

The Hebrew word most often used for charity is *tzedakah*, a very literal translation meaning righteous behavior, rooted in the biblical word for justice and righteousness, *tzedek*. The connection is very revealing about the nature of what *tzedakah* is. It is a duty which entails doing justice and being fair to those who are less fortunate than you. When done correctly, the act of *tzedakah* requires that the giver not only shares of his or her wealth or personal belongings with the poor, but also has an attitude of empathy and compassion towards those less fortunate. The righteous and just act of giving not only speaks of your physical possessions but of something deeper: giving of yourself to others. This is the important aspect of *tzedakah*.

While the pursuit of justice should be focused outwardly, there is a spiritual reward for righteous and just acts. During the Days of Awe between the Feast of Trumpets (*Rosh HaShanah*) and the Day of Atonement (*Yom Kippur*), God is said to be ascribing judgment to all who have sinned. The Jewish liturgy on these Holy Days declares that repentance (*teshuvah*), prayer (*tefillah*) and *tzedakah* can lift the decree of judgment. We find this same concept in the book of Acts when Peter says to the Roman centurion: "*Cornelius, your prayer has been heard and your charitable gifts have been remembered before God*" (Acts 10:31 NASB). The centurion's righteous and just action of *tzedakah* secured favor and remembrance before God.



## Teach Your Children

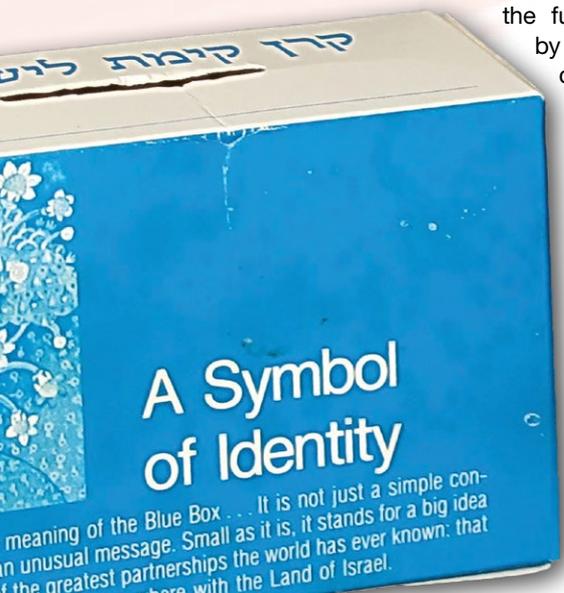
One of the first encounters a Jewish child might have with charitable giving is through the *tzedakah* box, which is kept in the home. The Yiddish word for this box is a *pushke* (pronounced PUSH-kee). Similar to a tithe or offering box, the *pushke* is a container used for collecting money that will be donated to charity. *Tzedakah* boxes come in many different designs and styles. From simple wooden boxes to those ornately decorated, a *tzedakah* box is a work of art which is meant to remind the giver that whenever possible, they should seek to carry out the commandment of *tzedakah* in joyful and beautiful ways.

Just prior to the start of *Shabbat* (Sabbath) or other holy days and special occasions, the family will place contributions into the collection box. Once the box is full, the funds will be donated to a recipient. The habitual action of collecting money for a charitable cause in one's home is an important step in developing a habit of giving regularly, regardless of the amount. Children are taught the practice and value of charitable giving through this simple addition to a Jewish home. The use of a *tzedakah* box is meant to further the spirit of philanthropy and righteousness, both in the home and by extension into the community.

## The Blue Box

The most iconic *tzedakah* box is the blue and white collection boxes issued by the Jewish National Fund (JNF) or Keren Kayemet Lelsrael. According to the JNF website, the first Blue Box was actually Theodore Herzl's upturned hat as he went around the Fifth Zionist Congress and asked for donations to purchase land to rebuild the Jewish homeland. Soon afterwards, the Blue Box *pushke* was born. It has served as a fundraising tool in the Diaspora (the Jewish population outside Israel) to support the work of the JNF to develop the Land of Israel by planting forests, creating parks and preparing soil for agriculture and settlement. By the start of World War II, there were over one million JNF *tzedakah* boxes issued.

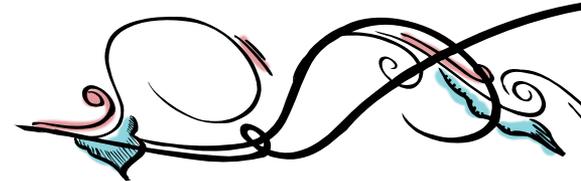
It is said that the State of Israel was built on these boxes, meaning that the funds collected by placing these charity boxes in almost every Jewish home and institution around the world were instrumental in establishing the modern State



of Israel. Connecting the biblical ideals of philanthropy with the Zionist ideals of redeeming the land and establishing a Jewish homeland was a perfect match.

The Blue Box also served as a conscious reminder to the Jewish people outside the Land of Israel of the establishment and rebuilding of their ancient homeland—and their obligation to bring it into reality. The action of regularly giving toward rebuilding the ancient homeland was etched into the childhood memories of many Jewish children, forging a lifelong bond with the people and land of Israel. While the JNF has since migrated to more modern fundraising initiatives, it was the foundation laid by these simple collection boxes that raised it up to be one of the most significant organizations in the history of modern Israel, owning 13% of the land and raising almost US \$3 billion each year.

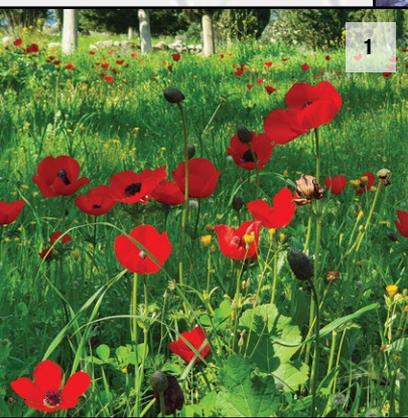
In a Jewish prayer service, there is a concluding prayer calling for perfecting the world under the sovereignty of God, a concept which is known in Judaism as *tikkun olam* (perfect the world). Each Jewish person is tasked with repairing the world through their lives, actions and words. One of the many ways to achieve *tikkun olam* is through charitable giving or *tzedakah*. Whether putting coins into the collection box, volunteering your time at a local soup kitchen or raising funds for your favorite charity, we all have a part to play in repairing the world.



Nathan Williams, *Director of Marketing and Communications*

# Ten Common Misconceptions about Israel

*In conversations outside the Holy Land, I've found that much of what people assume about Israel is incorrect, mostly because they have never had the opportunity to visit. Until tourism resumes and people can come experience this amazing country for themselves, I'm here to set the record straight on a few misconceptions.*



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## 1. ISRAEL IS A BARREN DESERT COVERED IN SAND DUNES

Sure, southern Israel boasts a desert with rich, red rock that resembles Mars, but this nation has so much more to offer. If you were properly motivated, you could go skiing and surfing in one day in Israel. For such a small nation, most people are blown away by the Jewish state's diverse climates and terrains: lush, green forests; pristine beaches with crystal clear water and palm trees; rolling pastoral hills, perfect pastureland for grazing flocks, and yes, even a ski resort on Mount Hermon near the northern border. This land really does have it all.

## 2. ISRAELIS ARE RUDE AND ARGUMENTATIVE

Israelis have an opinion and aren't afraid to let you know what they think—a simple fact that deferential Westerners often don't know what to make of at first. But their unabashed honesty comes from the best of intentions. In fact, native Israelis are nicknamed *sabras*: cacti that are prickly on the outside but sweet on the inside. If an Israeli is sharing an honest opinion with you, they are doing so for what they believe is your own good. On the flip side, most Israelis view the propensity in other cultures for tiptoeing around uncomfortable topics instead of sharing their true opinion as standoffish.

### 3. ISRAELIS TRAVEL AROUND ON CAMELS AND DONKEYS

Fun as that sounds, most Israelis travel in cars or using the nation's primo public transportation system, which includes buses, Jerusalem's light rail and several train lines that make inner and intercity travel quick and convenient. Tel Aviv also boasts a system that lets users rent electric scooters and bicycles by the hour to travel the city. Sure, you can visit Bedouin camps that offer camel rides to tourists, but most Israelis opt for modern motor travel.

### 4. EVERYONE IN ISRAEL LOOKS THE SAME

Blondes, brunettes, redheads, purpleheads, you'll see it all here: tall, Scandinavian-looking people with blonde hair and blue eyes; short people with olive skin and dark hair; and everything in between. After their ancient exile by the Roman empire and subsequent spread across the globe, these people are extremely diverse. And each day, more and more Jewish people around the world are making *aliyah* (immigrating to Israel), adding to its already colorful array of people and cultures.

### 5. ISRAEL IS A DANGEROUS PLACE TO VISIT

Despite the media portraying the Jewish state as a violent land plagued by rocket explosions and terror attacks, Israel boasts a crime rate lower than most Western nations. Don't be afraid to visit this land and see for yourself how safe and enjoyable it is. Hike through forests and camp on national trails, float in the Dead Sea, pray at the Western Wall, wander through the cobblestoned alleyways of Jerusalem's Old City, climb the red rocks of Israel's Timna Park. Experience and see everything, interact with the locals, and walk away with the experience of a lifetime.

### 6. ALL ARABS ARE MUSLIM AND ALL ISRAELIS ARE JEWS

Israel is diverse, with multiple cultures and people groups living and blending in a small nation. And if you ask Israelis their opinion about people of a different religion, you'll hear this popular answer: "Each person should live according to his own faith"—a paraphrase of Habakkuk 2:4. Israel's population reflects that. Yes, the Jewish state is predominantly Jewish, but of the over 9 million residents of Israel, 6.87 million (74%) are Jews and nearly 2 million (21%) are Arabs, according to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics. And not all Arabs are Muslim, either. There are significant minority populations of Christian Arabs, particularly in Bethlehem and Nazareth. The other 5% of the population includes minorities such as international Christians and Druze.

### 7. ALL ISRAELIS ARE ULTRA-ORTHODOX AND WEAR SIDE CURLS AND BLACK SUITS

Speaking of that Jewish 74% of the population—don't assume that means they all look and dress alike. Just as

there are hundreds of streams and denominations of Christianity, there are hundreds of streams of Judaism. That ranges from conservative, ultra-Orthodox Jews who sport modest, dark clothing, to Orthodox Jewish men who sport the *kippah* (skullcap) and *tzitzit* (tassels) and married women who wear headdresses, to secular—even agnostic or Atheist—people who do not practice the Jewish religion but are Jewish nonetheless.

### 8. PEOPLE IN ISRAEL LIVE IN MUD HUTS OR TENTS

The tent part is true only during *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles), the biblical feast in which the Jewish people erect tents for a week to commemorate their 40 years wandering the wilderness. But the modern-day Israelis have come a long way from their tent-dwelling roots, living in contemporary homes. In Jerusalem, people live in beautiful apartments tucked inside Jerusalem stone. In Tel Aviv, they live in modern, stylish apartments. In other parts of the country, they live in comfortable houses with stucco roofs. The housing is as varied as the country, but people here largely live in modest, contemporary dwellings.

### 9. JEWISH PEOPLE ONLY EAT GEFILTE FISH AND HUMMUS

Thankfully, no. After returning to their homeland from ancient exile around the globe, the Jewish people have brought with them a variety of delightful international dishes. Whatever cuisine you're hungry for, you'll find it here—except for a solid New York-style bagel (a very touchy subject here). Hummus is everywhere, yes—and Israel's hummus is amazing, but this country has so much more to offer: shawarma, falafel, Ethiopian fare, tacos, sushi, fresh-caught Mediterranean seafood, McDonalds, Chicago-style hotdogs, you name it. Trust us, you won't go hungry here or suffer from a lack of options.

### 10. ISRAEL IS OLD WORLD AND PROBABLY STILL LOOKS THE SAME AS IT DID DURING BIBLICAL TIMES

Wrong. Read a book called *The Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle*. Visit Tel Aviv, the main hub for Israel's start-up scene, where countless businesses and innovators are housed amid the urban skyline. Read about the amazing research and development being done in Israel's top-notch universities. See for yourself how this tech-savvy nation is booming for innovation in all areas, including defense, agricultural, medical and green technology.



Israel is a beautiful, diverse land filled with colorful people and cultures that defy expectations—and have a marvelous time doing it.

By Kate Norman, *BFP Staff Writer*

# Israeli and Emirati Companies Sign Greentech Innovation Deal

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS** of the Abraham Accords, a recently signed partnership between two Israeli and Emirati entities aims to bring greentech innovation to the Gulf region and to Israel.

The deal between Gulf-Israel Green Ventures (GIGV) and the UAE's [United Arab Emirates'] United Stars Group aims to expand people-to-people, business and economic cooperation through the exchange of green technologies—solutions that promote sustainability by mitigating the negative environmental impacts of development. These include reducing the use and depletion of resources through water recycling, energy efficient buildings and renewable energy.

Initial sustainable development projects, according to GIGV, will focus on reducing emissions while building more environmentally friendly economies and societies. In light of explosive growth in submarkets in the Gulf, the partners have already begun work on several large projects. The development of commercial and residential real estate on Sheikh Zayed Road in Dubai is but one project in progress for which the two companies are looking to integrate technologies that will make it more energy efficient, including through the use of renewable energy. The

companies are also examining projects in sectors as diverse as hotels and shipping to power plants.

“Israel is known for its cutting edge start-ups in many fields, including greentech,” United Stars Group founder and president Omar Al Suwaidi told *JNS*. “We have had our eye on Israeli greentech and cleantech technologies for quite some time and [were] looking for a partner with deep expertise in this sector in Israel,” he explained.

GIGV CEO Asher Fredman told *JNS* “while Israel is best known for its advances in water [drip irrigation, for example], Israeli companies are at the forefront of fields such as wastewater recycling, energy efficient heating and cooling and smart utility grids.”

He noted that is “partly due to Israel's semi-arid climate...and water and energy scarcity, and partly due to Israel's overall innovative start-up culture.”

Al Suwaidi said he looks forward to working with GIGV, noting “there is a tremendous opportunity presented before us to help promote environmentally friendly and sustainable projects that will stand to benefit future generations. This is the true spirit of the Abraham Accords.”

Excerpt from an article by *JNS*

Sheikh Zayed Road



## Israeli Nose Spray Capable of Killing Nearly All Viruses

**A NASAL SPRAY** that reportedly kills 99.9% of viruses rolled out production for sale in Israel and New Zealand.

Biotech company SaNOTize developed a nasal spray made with nitric oxide—a compound that occurs naturally in the body—and acts as a “hand sanitizer equivalent for the nose,” creating a physical “chemical barrier” that stops and kills viruses when sprayed into the nose, Dr. Gilly Regev, co-founder of SaNOTize told the *Times of Israel*.

“We are hoping that our nasal spray will now save many lives of people in countries that are waiting for the vaccine,” the *Times of Israel* quoted Regev as saying. “This will be affordable and can be used for prevention, to protect from any respiratory viral infection.”

The company’s goal, according to its website, is to harness the “unique antimicrobial and immunomodulating properties of [nitric oxide] to treat both dermatologic and respiratory disease.”

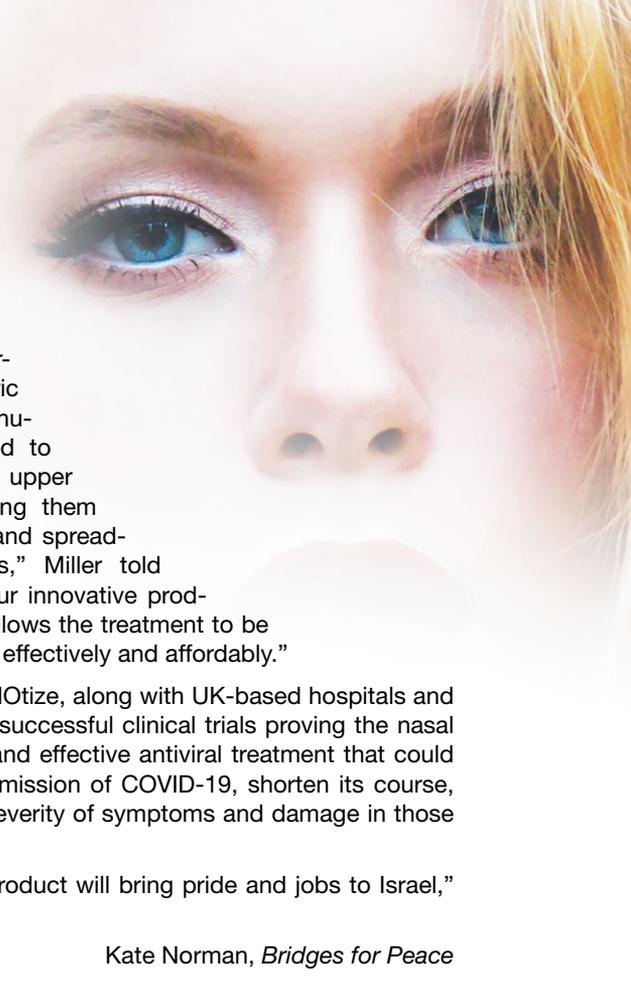
Dr. Chris Miller, the co-founder and chief science officer of SaNOTize, also praised the use of nitric oxide to protect against viruses.

“Our novel formulation of nitric oxide for use in humans is designed to kill viruses in the upper airways, preventing them from incubating and spreading to the lungs,” Miller told *Businesswire*. “Our innovative product design also allows the treatment to be self-administered effectively and affordably.”

In March, SaNOTize, along with UK-based hospitals and labs, announced successful clinical trials proving the nasal spray is a “safe and effective antiviral treatment that could prevent the transmission of COVID-19, shorten its course, and reduce the severity of symptoms and damage in those already infected.”

“I hope this product will bring pride and jobs to Israel,” Regev said.

Kate Norman, *Bridges for Peace*



Technology

## Israel Develops “Groundbreaking” Precision Mortar

**ISRAEL’S MINISTRY OF DEFENSE (MOD)** announced a “groundbreaking” new technology that protects civilians—including those of its enemies. The Iron Sting mortar uses laser and GPS-guidance to hit targets more accurately with technology previously only available for larger munitions such as missiles, thereby reducing collateral damage and civilian casualties.

The MOD said the Iron Sting “is designed to engage targets precisely, in both open terrains and urban environments, while reducing the possibility of collateral damage and preventing injury to noncombatants. Its operational use will revolutionize ground warfare and equip battalions with organic, accurate and effective firepower.”

A number of Israel’s enemies, such as terror groups Hamas and Hezbollah, often use their own people as human shields by attacking from or storing weapons in civilian areas. As a result, Israel has to avoid hitting innocent bystanders when striking back against terrorist targets.

The technological breakthrough follows 10 years of research and development, according to Brig. Gen. Yaniv Rotem, the head of Research and Development in the Directorate of Defense R&D. He noted this weapon capability is “made for the modern battlefield.”

“This laser and GPS-guided mortar munition provide troops with a precise firing capability that has only been



implemented in missiles and air munition thus far,” Rotem was quoted as saying.

The Iron Sting recently completed final testing in southern Israel and was developed in conjunction with Elbit Systems.

General Manager of Elbit Systems Land Division Yehuda (Udi) Vered was quoted as saying: “The introduction of this laser and GPS-guided munition transforms the mortar system from a statistical fire power into a precision fire system, thus delivering a significant change in fire capabilities at the tactical level.”

Israel, whose military technology research includes creating the Iron Dome missile defense system, has put together multiple developments aimed at reducing civilian casualties in conflict in recent years—and with the Iron Sting, even enemy civilians will benefit.

Excerpt from an article by Joshua Spurlock, *The Mideast Update*



# JERUSALEM STONE

**WHAT COMES TO MIND** when visualizing the City of the Great King? Do you see images of the iconic stones of the Western Wall that have withstood centuries of conflict? Do you see the narrow streets of the Old City zigzagging through a maze of diverse cultures? Or perhaps you see the upscale Mamilla Mall, infused with the energy of high-end shopping and fine dining. No matter which images you envision, you will most assuredly see the ancient material that sets this city apart from all others: Jerusalem stone.

## BUILT FROM ITS OWN STONES

I will never forget the first time I laid eyes on Jerusalem. As we drove into the city, the sea of buildings covered in white stone reflected the dazzling desert sun, casting an ineffable glow that left me speechless. Everywhere I looked I saw the same shade of stone, making it difficult for my untrained eye to tell the difference between something old and something new. Every structure I encountered in the city—from the Old City walls to the supermarkets on every corner—was faced with the same shade of luminous stone.

The appearance of Jerusalem’s architecture is uniquely uniform thanks to a municipal law enacted during the British Mandate that remains in effect to this day. This law requires that all structures in Jerusalem be faced in the same stone, preserving the archaic essence of the city and maintaining a legacy of stonework that has enabled so many ancient structures to survive.

Ever since its inception more than 3,000 years ago, Jerusalem has been built and rebuilt of its very own stone mined from deep beneath its hilltops, a practice that continues to provide the necessary stone for each new building raised in Jerusalem.

Ithamar Perath, a retired Israeli geologist and local Jerusalemite, explains that in ancient Jerusalem, it was a

sign of wealth that the builders were not forced to transport materials from far away, but could rather quarry from their own backyard. And because much of this quarrying took place underground, it left very few lasting marks on the overall landscape. There are, however, several ancient quarries that have been unearthed in and around Jerusalem, including a quarry from the Second Temple Period that was exposed in the Ramat Shlomo Quarter, a neighborhood in northeast Jerusalem.

## YERUSHALAYIM SHEL ZAHAV

Jerusalem stone has served to not only unify the appearance of the city but indeed the very heart of the nation. “Jerusalem of Gold” (*Yerushalayim Shel Zahav*)—one of Israel’s most beloved songs—was inspired by the golden glow cast by Jerusalem stone at sunset. And the song was written during one of the most critical moments in the history of the Jewish state.

The year was 1967. Jerusalem’s Old City remained under Jordanian occupation. As Israel approached its nineteenth Independence Day, the mayor of Jerusalem commissioned five songs about Jerusalem to be presented at the Voice of Israel Song Festival. Naomi Shemer, one of Israel’s most proficient songwriters, was more than qualified for the task. However, she struggled to adequately pen the profound importance of the city of Jerusalem. “Jerusalem was personal, beloved and important to me,” Shemer later recalled. “But when I tried to express this, I became terrified. I remembered everything that had been written about the city since ancient times...Who could add a single letter to that?!” The words that came were written through tears as she tenderly wove together biblical references and traditional Jewish poetry that was birthed in times of exile.



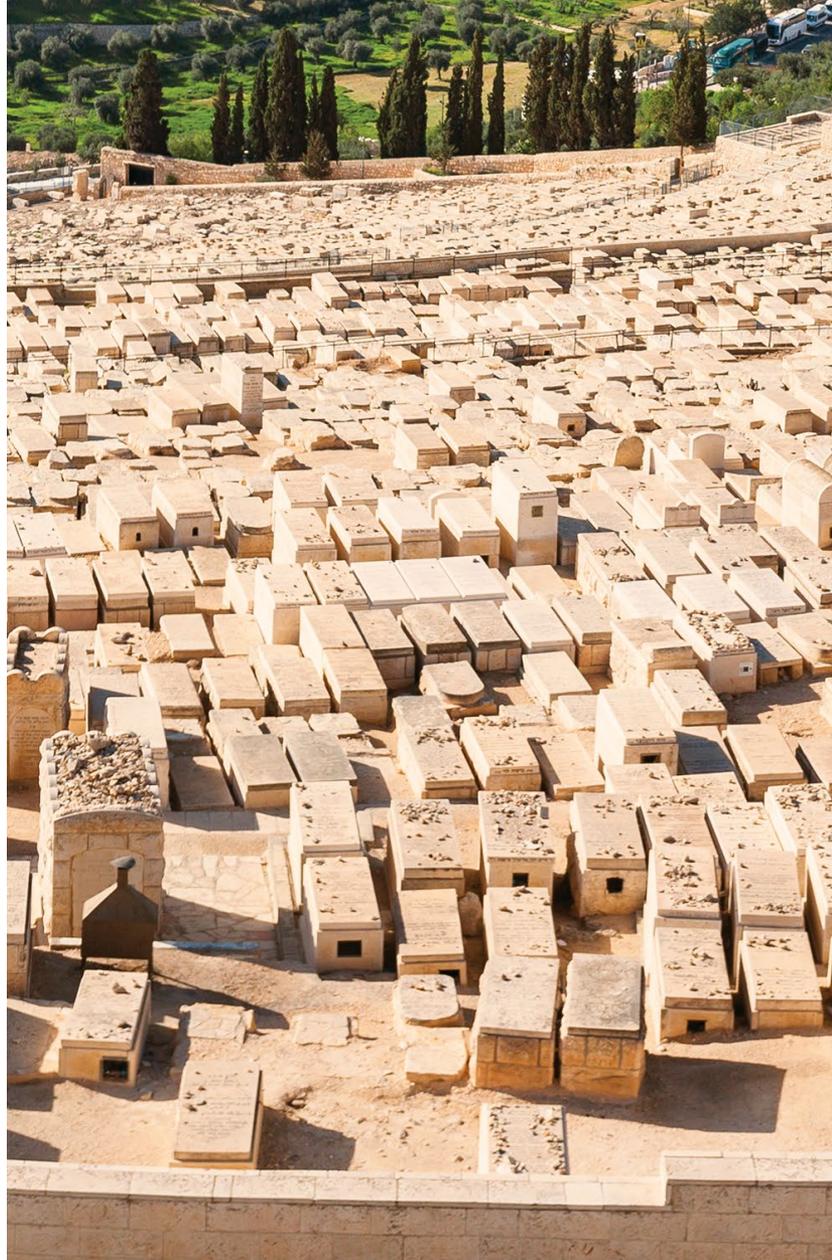
When “Jerusalem of Gold” debuted for the first time at the song festival, it was received with deafening applause and became a national favorite overnight, captivating the heart of the Jewish people as they yearned for access to their most beloved sites. Less than three weeks later, the Six Day War began. On June 7, Israel Defense Forces Paratroopers entered the Old City through the Lions’ Gate, advancing steadily towards the Temple Mount. Within mere minutes of penetrating the city, the radio cracked with the famous words of Commander Mordechai Gur: “The Temple Mount is in our hands.” As his battered troop of soldiers gazed upon the Western Wall for the first time, the words of Shemer’s song burst from their lips: “Oh, Jerusalem of gold, and of light and of bronze, I am the violin for all your songs.” I can only imagine the magnitude of that moment as these young soldiers gazed upon the ancient stones.

## A SURE FOUNDATION

In a city that has endured long and vicious cycles of destruction, siege, attack, capture and recapture, Jerusalem stone has firmly withstood the test of time, calling to mind the words of the prophet Isaiah: “Behold, I lay in Zion a stone for a foundation, a tried stone, a precious cornerstone, a sure foundation...” (Isa. 28:16) For me, this puts everything into perspective. No longer will I take for granted the need to shield my eyes from the glimmering glare of the sun reflecting off the Jerusalem stone all around me. Instead I will cherish every opportunity to bask in its glow and thank the Lord for His faithfulness to Zion.



Sarah Yoder, BFP Staff Writer



# THE “POLITICAL WING” MYTH

## Why Hamas and Hezbollah Change Strategy, Not Philosophy

**IN 2006**, hope reigned on the Palestinian streets. The populist Hamas movement had won legislative elections against their political rival Fatah (leading secular Palestinian political party), and some in the West wanted to believe that the victory could mold the terrorists into statesmen. In less than 18 months, that hope was dashed as Hamas waged a civil war to kick Fatah out of the Gaza Strip.

Terror group Hezbollah took a similar path to power in Lebanon, starting with a mini civil war and effectively taking power through political allies. Despite the groups' blood-soaked hands, there remain those in the West who cling to the idea that the “political wings” of Hezbollah and Hamas are distinct from their terrorism activities. Sadly, that misguided view may actually result in everyone involved missing the real hope for peace.

## Political Myth

Since Hamas violently took power in Gaza in 2007, the terror group has fought multiple wars with Israel, launched thousands of missiles at Israeli civilians and carried out other terror attacks. Hezbollah, meanwhile, has used the time to stockpile large amounts of weapons, launch small-scale attacks on Israel and fight extensively in support of brutal dictator Bashar al-Assad in Syria.

According to Dr. Jonathan Spyer, researcher at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security and a fellow at the Middle East Forum, those in Europe who think the two terror groups have a distinct “political wing” that can be engaged have a “fundamental misunderstanding” about the nature of the Middle East.

“I think they misunderstand the nature of political Islam to a great extent,” Spyer said. “I think they tend to not take ideas and religion seriously in a political context,” perhaps arguing that groups like Hamas and Hezbollah act like some in the West, separating politics from deeply held convictions like driving Israel out of alleged Muslim lands. Misguided Europeans then try to impose that perspective “on a very different Middle East reality where it just didn’t hold.”

Spyer, who grew up in the United Kingdom and later immigrated to Israel, explained that the British political class who made that failed judgment thought that the apparently successful peace process with Northern Ireland—where bombers finally made peace—could be replicated with the terror groups in the Middle East. While Spyer agrees that it can happen “if certain conditions apply,” those conditions aren’t there. Hamas’s foundational charter includes the aim to destroy Israel in its entirety, while Hezbollah is the primary proxy to Iran, whose leaders have openly talked of wiping Israel off the map.

Despite the similarity of seeking Israel’s demise, there are some key differences between Hamas and Hezbollah, differences that could mean hope for a better future. But first, the faux evolution of yet another Palestinian terror group might give a clearer picture of where the conflict could be heading.

## Political Calculus

The story of the Palestinian Fatah movement could be a tale of two leaders: infamous terrorist Yassir Arafat and his successor, Mahmoud Abbas. Arafat, despite faking the part of statesman, led Fatah as it sponsored vicious terrorist groups that murdered Israelis during the Second Intifada (uprising). Abbas, meanwhile, has participated in security coordination with Israel to round up Hamas terrorists and presided over a calmer period with the Jewish state. Nonetheless, Fatah still provides cash to families of terrorists in the disturbing “Pay-for-Slay” program, and the security cooperation with Israel is conveniently aimed primarily against Fatah’s rival Hamas. So don’t think Fatah has changed. In fact, according to Spyer, to reach a

Western-style peace agreement between Israel and Fatah “would require Fatah to be something other than Fatah.”

In the meantime, Spyer notes that Israel effectively defeated Fatah in the counterterrorism campaign that ended the Second Intifada terror war, deterring it from fighting again. Furthermore, Fatah knows that a futile fight isn’t worth it: old politicians like being in power, even while Fatah hates Israel. “Fatah is run by very old men who are deeply corrupt and enjoy the trappings of power very much, and on a strategic level they are committed to the destruction of Israel,” Spyer explained. At the same time, the current quasi-calm with Israel could continue “for some time” and may even be an early stage of some actual peace agreement similar to the Abraham Accords.

## Political Potential

Multiple Arab states, starting with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, made peace with Israel in 2020 without any territorial surrender by Israel. Spyer compared this to a rarely discussed conflict in North America. In its early years, the United States actually attempted to conquer Canada. The US failed and eventually the two sides decided “we’ve got other things to do” rather than wage war. “Pragmatically speaking, the two systems kind of accepted one another and eventually the notion of conflict became ludicrous,” Spyer holds. He believes a similar path may be emerging for the Arab states that tried and failed to destroy Israel and currently value partnership above conflict.

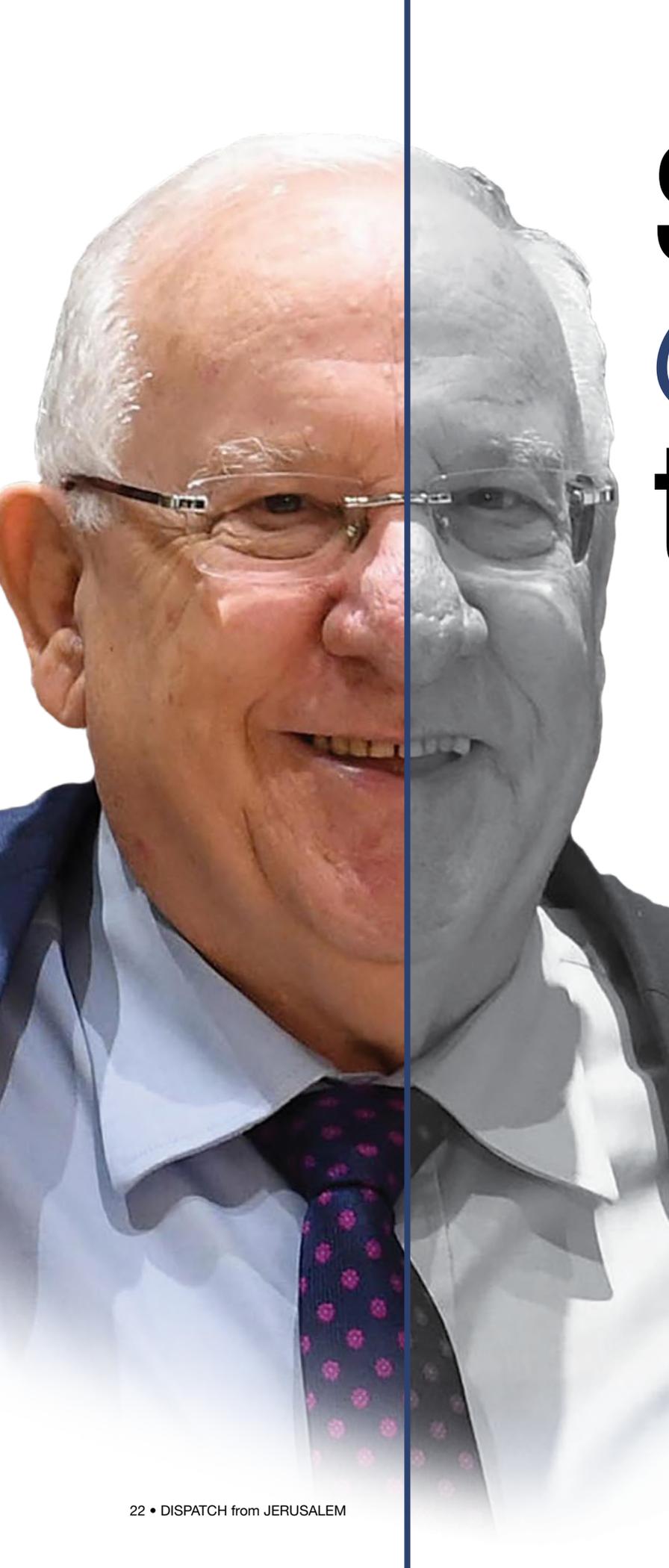
Spyer says “it’s not inconceivable” that this pattern could play out with groups like Hamas, which already has developed a corrupt ruling class that likes power. However, it takes time and decisive military deterrence. Spyer said he can see a scenario in which Islamists are deterred to the degree that while they hold to the principal that Israel should be destroyed, they effectively decide “we’ve got other things to do” instead.

While that offers some long-term hope for Fatah and Hamas, it’s not as possible for Hezbollah—given the key difference between Hezbollah and Hamas. Hamas is a militant terror group fighting for control over territory. Hezbollah is a proxy of Iran, which has its own broader, empire-building goals. That means the deterrence component of possible peace would have to entail deterrence of Iran—which Spyer describes as a much more challenging prospect.

Nonetheless, there is hope for Israel–Arab peace—through deterrence, time and having more to lose than gain by fighting. Sadly, accepting the “political wing” myth and trying to force European history upon the Middle East actually undermines that effort by missing the special dynamics of each unique conflict. There is hope, but as Spyer points out: “You have to look at every situation in terms of its own granular facts, so to say.”



Joshua Spurlock, *The Mideast Update*



# Saying *Goodbye* to Ruvi

**HIS GRANDDAUGHTER** calls him “Care Bear.” Israelis know him as Ruvi, their beloved national grandfather. Peers describe him as “honest and uncorrupted...standing like a solid rock in defense of democracy.” To world leaders, he’s President Reuven Rivlin, Israel’s tenth president, who’s earned the respect of influencers and ordinary people alike with his integrity, humility and genuine concern for those he pledged to serve.

On July 9, Israel bids farewell—in an official capacity at least—to Rivlin when his seven-year tenure as president ends. What better time to pay tribute to the president whose legacy will continue to shape Israeli society long after he leaves office—and the formidable man behind the position?

## *The Public Face of Israel*

The president of Israel largely fulfills a ceremonial role, serving as a symbol rather than a center of authority, with the real power resting with the prime minister. Yet the dearth of political power imbues the position with unique strength, Rivlin explained shortly after his inauguration.

As the “public face” of Israel, Rivlin vowed to steer clear of political embroilment. Rather, he sought to “serve as the social pulse,” keeping his finger on the heartbeat of the nation and then acting as go-between with the political powers-that-be, encouraging them to compromise and put their differences aside to solve the nation’s pressing problems. The people could only trust him if he was wholeheartedly committed to their well-being, he argued.

Rivlin further set out to inspire the people to fulfill their mandate as a “light to the nations”—even when facing a perpetual tide of criticism on the world stage. Defending the Jewish state is important, he held, but first and foremost, Israel had to take its place “in the historical chain that has seen the Jewish people as the consistent and un-failing provider of revolutionary and innovative ideas that benefit the world as a whole.”

Rivlin made good on his pledges. Once president, he hung up his politician hat and spent his term presiding over—and interceding for—the people of Israel, much like a shepherd guides its flock, with a vision for the future, compassion, concern for their well-being and a firm hand.

But there’s more to the man than the vision or the position.

## *En Route to the Presidency*

Vegetarian. Fluent Arabic speaker. Devoted husband. Grieving widower. Loving *abba* (father). Caring *sabba* (grandfather). Modest. Statesman-like. Down-to-earth and straight-talking. These are but some of the attributes and adjectives that describe Israel’s tenth president.

Rivlin was born in Jerusalem in 1939 into the Jewish state’s equivalent of the royal family. As the ninth generation of Rivlins to call Jerusalem home, the president often recounted how his ancestors settled in the City of the Great King in 1809 after deciding that the coming of Messiah was imminent and that they wanted to be onsite for His arrival. In the more than two centuries since, the president has been the latest in a long list of Rivlins to leave a notable mark on Israeli society.

Jerusalem holds a special place in Rivlin’s heart. He’s famous for starting his radio interviews with: “Greetings from Jerusalem, the capital of Israel,” and has proudly proclaimed united Jerusalem “the capital of the Jewish people”—past, present and future. It seems fitting then that Rivlin played a role in its reunification, fighting alongside the Jerusalem Brigade paratroopers who liberated the Old City of Jerusalem from Jordanian occupation during the 1967 Six Day War.

A law degree from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem followed his military service, after which Rivlin launched his career as the Beitar Jerusalem football club’s legal advisor, and then its team manager and chairman. Prior to his days as a politician, the president-to-be was also a member of the Jerusalem City Council, the El Al Executive Council and the Board of Trustees of the Israel Museum—to name but a few.

Rivlin’s first foray into politics came in 1988 when he was elected to the Knesset (Parliament) representing Likud,

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s political party. His political journey to the presidency included a stint as Minister of Communications and two terms as Speaker of the Knesset.

## *In Office*

Rivlin was elected president in 2014, attracting support from across Israel’s political spectrum. Even representatives from parties that traditionally take an anything-but-Likud stance casted their votes in his favor.

The new president had big shoes to fill, following former President Shimon Peres, an internationally acclaimed figure and Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Yet Rivlin was clearly the man for the job. An annual survey conducted by the Dialog Institute one year after his inauguration elected Rivlin as the Jewish state’s most beloved politician. He took the top spot with an overwhelming 72% satisfaction rating—only 5% shy of Peres’s score at the end of his tenure.

During his seven-year tenure, Rivlin saw Israel through various ups and downs. The biggest challenge was arguably the political deadlock that sent Israel to the polls for four consecutive national elections in two years with no conclusive results, no permanent government and no prime minister.

As Israel floundered politically, Rivlin came under pressure to untangle the gridlock. Yet the president remained resolute, guarding the integrity of the position and refusing to take sides. “The politicization of the presidency,” he warned, “would pose a real threat to the institution and its function.”

True to his pledge when taking office, Rivlin instead used his influence to assist the political powers-that-be to put their differences aside, compromise and move ahead for the good of the people.

It’s this—Rivlin’s concern and compassion for the people he pledged to serve—that runs like a golden thread through his presidency. Upon assuming office, he declared the President’s Residence the home of every Israeli and ordered that anyone be allowed to visit. And during the coronavirus lockdown, Rivlin took to social media with an initiative called “Story Time with President Rivlin,” reading a storybook to the nation’s children to give frazzled parents a much needed brake.

In turn, the nation reveres him as their beloved “national grandfather.” When Nechama, his wife of 50 years, passed away in 2019, more than 4,000 Israelis from across the country flocked to the President’s Residence to console their beloved Ruvli.

So what’s next for Israel’s soon-to-be former president? Rivlin has put some thought into what the future holds, but his plans are contingent on the approval of a group of important advisors. “The young man that I am, I will have to consult with my grandchildren...,” said Rivlin.



Ilse Strauss, *News Bureau Chief*

# Watering the World's Deserts

## DROP BY DROP

**IN 2000, THE NORTHERN COASTAL VALLEY** of Peru was a barren desert where farmers could grow little. For many years, their hope of turning the desert green seemed like a pipe dream. Peru rivaled Haiti as one of the poorest nations in the western hemisphere, with many of the Peruvian people lacking food and basic necessities.

### Transforming a Nation

Then came an economic miracle. In 20 years, the extreme poverty rate plummeted from 90 to 2.5%. Peru became one of the fastest growing economies in South America. What was once a desert turned into a land flowing with milk and honey.

The land was transformed into such a fertile vineyard that in a very short time, Peru was exporting much of its grape harvest to the US. In addition, other exotic crops such as blueberries, asparagus, avocados and citrus were exported to over 150 markets worldwide.

How did it happen? When transformation occurs with such astounding speed, we know that God has shown up and touched a nation in miraculous and practical ways. One of those ways was through an Israeli agricultural innovation called drip irrigation.

### An Irrigation Revolution

Drip irrigation is the process of watering crops through a hose perforated by small holes or emitters that deliver water to a plant's roots evenly and consistently. It uses a fraction of the water used in traditional irrigation methods and the production rates are 25 to 50% higher.

Very little water is wasted through evaporation, and in areas of the world where water is scarce, drip irrigation has made a tremendous impact.

Ancient irrigation methods traditionally involved flooding or transporting water via canals and ditches. Those methods are still used today in large parts of the developing world. However, flooding fields for growing rice meant half the water would be lost due to evaporation and absorption. The use of porous canals also meant leakage and evaporation loss. The world needed a revolutionary way to irrigate crops as a burgeoning food crisis demanded that production double rapidly to meet the need.

Enter Israel. Because much of Israel's land mass is desert, necessity has forced the Jewish state to find solutions to the issue of water scarcity by developing an irrigation system that is water efficient. Israel became a model for the world, proving that a desert could



The desert in Peru was transformed into a fertile vineyard.



Crops grown in the Israeli desert using drip irrigation



become a veritable vegetable and fruit basket. The Arabah Desert, Israel's most arid region, now exports 60% of its produce worldwide.

## Saving Water, Boosting Yields

Drip irrigation was developed in 1959 by Simcha Blass and his son, Yeshayahu, on Kibbutz Hatzerim. The method has been recognized internationally as the most effective way to irrigate crops while minimizing water usage. Blass and Kibbutz Hatzerim formed a company called Netafim in 1965, which is now the world's leading micro-irrigation developer and marketer.

A study by MIT found that drip irrigation had 90% field application efficiency compared with surface or sprinkler irrigation. *National Geographic* reports that crop yields made a massive jump under drip irrigation, yielding 20 to 90% more than other irrigation methods. Drip irrigation has, in effect, saved massive amounts of the world's water as well as rescued the land from soil erosion and nutrient loss.

Innovations in drip irrigation have continued to develop. Most recently, plant sensors attached to the plant's stem, leaves or roots can now relay to farmers via their smartphones how much water the plant needs. It enables them to evaluate the plant's health, adjusting the water and fertilizer flow accordingly. Another Israeli, Leon Slavkin, developed this irrigation technology at an irrigation company called SupPlant.

## Irrigating Rice Fields

Netafim built its largest drip irrigation project in India and is revolutionizing the way India's farmers grow their crops. More than 5 million acres (2 million hectares) of India's farmland is irrigated using this technology, and the growth of rice crops—a foodstuff that feeds most of

the world—is experiencing a transformation. Traditional irrigation of rice fields by flooding massively depleted India's water resources and aquifers, but the introduction of drip-irrigated rice promises to increase yield by more than 20%, using a third less water.

## Greening the Deserts of Africa

Water scarcity has reached a crisis point in the Sahel region of Africa, located south of the Sahara Desert. In Niger, a country on the edge of the Sahel, farmers have had to depend on the Niger River for irrigating their crops. Scant rainfall and devastating drought have diminished the Niger River to the point where it is possible to walk across the river in some months of the year. The World Bank Group reports that temperatures in the Sahel are rising 1.5 times faster than the rest of the world, with temperatures consistently above 45°C (113°F). Sahel's extreme heat and drought conditions have caused much of the arable land to be lost to desert.

In a desperate effort to restore the land, farmers in Niger were given access to solar-powered drip irrigation systems through a program called the Niger Irrigation Program in association with several private sector organizations and Netafim. The program has reportedly reduced water usage by up to 50%, provided replacement parts for irrigation equipment and education for its use. The farmers, mostly women, formerly had to drill wells and carry buckets of water to irrigate their crops. They have now left behind the backbreaking work and have time to plant, rotate and harvest crops on a schedule that produces the best results.

Thanks to Israeli ingenuity, many nations of the world are experiencing prosperity beyond their wildest dreams. Incomes are improving using less energy and water yielding more crops. To nations so often broken by poverty, Israel has once again offered hope and healing.

Kathy DeGagne, *BFP Staff Writer*



An African woman irrigating crops by bucket.



# "PAY-FOR-SLAY"

**ACCORDING TO PALESTINIAN LAW**, every Palestinian convicted of an attack against Israelis is eligible for lavish financial payments doled out in “monthly salaries” to both the terrorist and his or her family from the moment of arrest—with the bonus of additional cash grants and priority civil service job opportunities upon release. The deadlier and bloodier the crime, the higher the payload. The Palestinians call it the “Martyrs Fund.” Israel refers to it as “Pay-for-Slay.”

Semantics aside, one would be hard pressed to interpret dangling a generous, long-term financial reward in front of potential “martyrs” and “heroes” as anything other than a powerful incentive to terror.

Former US President Donald Trump recognized the lunacy of the policy and repeatedly called on Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas to put a halt to it. The appeal fell on deaf ears. Abbas continued to funnel hundreds of millions of aid dollars to pay the 30,000 people on the “Pay-for-Slay” payroll. The US—the PA’s principal aid donor with more than US \$5 billion contributed since the PA’s formation in 1994—put its foot down with the 2018 Taylor Force Act, effectively suspending US aid to the PA as long as it continues payments to terrorists and their families. The US–Palestinian relationship deteriorated quickly, reducing the association to stony silences and bitter accusations.

Israel followed suit with a “Pay-for-Slay” act of its own. Then

the Dutch, Australia and the EU decided to cut funding too. Yet even with its cash coffers bare, the PA stuck to its guns, transferring at least US \$159 million to terrorists and their families in 2020.

The inauguration of President Joe Biden may, however, usher in a new era for US–Palestinian relations—and a new lease on funding for the PA. While the PA steadfastly forges ahead with its “Pay-for-Slay” policy, Biden has restored US funding, allocating nearly US \$100 million for Palestinian aid, thus removing the main financial deterrent standing in the PA’s “Pay-for-Slay” path.

Does the PA interpret this as a green light to incentivize terror against Israelis? Perhaps. As with everything in the volatile region, this too remains a watching and waiting game.

## SETTING THE SCENE

*“President Trump raised his concerns about payments to Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails who have committed terrorist acts, and to their families, and emphasized the need to resolve this issue.”*

—A White House readout stipulates former President Trump’s stance on “Pay-for-Slay”

*"I affirm to you that we are raising our youth...on a culture of peace. And we are endeavoring to bring about security, freedom and peace for our children... along with the Israeli children."*

—Abbas's empty promise to former President Trump, vowing that the PA keeps its slate clean when it comes to incitement to terror

*"You tricked me in DC! You talked there about your commitment to peace, but the Israelis showed me your involvement in incitement [against Israel]."*

—Former President Trump upon catching Abbas in his bald-faced lie

## INTERNATIONAL CONCERN

*"We urge you to raise this matter with President Abbas...and to make clear to him that the PA's practice of diverting aid money to terrorists and their families must end. Morally it must end because the United States cannot be complicit in incentivizing terror, and strategically it must end because the PA will never convince Americans, the Congress or Israel that it is serious about peace while it is still funding terror."*

—Three senators call on former President Trump to push Abbas on the PA's cash payments to terrorists

*"The bill is not a result of animosity toward the Palestinian people. It is a pushback against state-sponsored terrorism. You will never achieve peace when you pay one of your young men to kill someone like Taylor Force."*

— Senator Lindsey Graham addresses the PA in his presentation of the Taylor Force bill

*"The first test of peace is to say to them [the Palestinians]: 'Hey, you want peace? Prove it. Confront terrorism, stop rewarding terrorism, stop paying terrorists...' I think the only chance that this will change is if there's pressure brought to them to make this real change...That could make for a turning point."*

—Benjamin Netanyahu, Israeli prime minister

*"We are all aware of the fiscal crisis the PA is facing and of the potential human, social and security consequences...At the same time, we do not support the system of Palestinian payments to 'prisoners and martyrs.'"*

—Johannes Hahn, EU commissioner for European Neighborhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations

## THE PA'S RESPONSE

*"By Allah, even if we have only a penny left it will only be spent on the families of the martyrs and prisoners and only afterward will it be spent on the rest of the people."*

—Abbas digs in his heels regarding "Pay-for-Slay"

*"Even if only one shekel remains, we will give it to the families of martyrs."*

—Qadri Abu Bakr, commission of Prisoners and Released Prisoners' Affairs, echoes his president's sentiments regardless of the PA's empty coffers

*"The salaries of the families of the martyrs and the prisoners will be paid regardless of the cost...Non-payment of the public employees' salaries...is less significant than subtracting one penny from the family of a martyr or prisoner..."*

— Nabil Abu Rudeina, PA deputy prime minister, explains the decision to slash law-abiding civil servants' salaries to avoid cutting payments to terrorists and their families

## A NEW ERA OF PALESTINIAN AID UNDER BIDEN

*"The US is pleased to announce that we can resume economic, humanitarian and development assistance to the Palestinians."*

—Anthony Blinken, US secretary of state

*"We continue to believe that American support for the Palestinian people, including financial support, is consistent with our values. It is consistent with our interests."*

—Ned Price, US State Department spokesman, comments on the resumption of US aid to the Palestinians

## THE BOTTOM LINE

*"In a nutshell...the PA has chosen terror over the well-being of its own civilian population. All it would take for it to avert the crisis is to do what should be expected of any political enterprise with a serious aspiration to build its own nation: renounce terror. Often, Israel is told that it must make sacrifices for peace. In this instance, the PA is making a sacrifice so that it doesn't have to make peace. Understanding the PA's decision makes clear on whom the onus falls for the failure to give peace a chance."*

—Josh Block in "To Its Detriment, the PA Spurns US Financial Assistance"



# TOURS

## Australia

### ENCOUNTER ISRAEL TOUR

October 27–November 13, 2021 (subject to government travel and border regulations)

**Hosted by: Matthew Chivers**

Join us for a life-changing experience as we take you on a journey through the Land of the Bible and stand with Israel for “*such a time as this*” (Esther 4:14). The tour includes many biblical sites like Jerusalem, Judea and Samaria, the Galilee, Nazareth and the Dead Sea. We will also participate in the anniversary of the Battle of Beersheba and the heroic charge of the Australian Light Horse Brigade, a special *Shabbat* (Sabbath) of a Lifetime dinner and a Bridges for Peace community project.

## Canada

### EXPERIENCE ISRAEL DISCIPLESHIP TOUR

January 30–February 10, 2022

**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.*

### FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: EUROPE & ISRAEL TOUR

Fall 2022 (exact dates to be determined)

**Hosted by: BFP 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

### 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.

### ISRAEL STUDY TOUR 2021

October 16–28, 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.

### JOURNEY TO ISRAEL

November 2–12, 2021

**Hosted by: Rev. Lennie Allen and Pastor Steve Baccus**

Embark on this 10-day journey through Israel with us for the experience of a lifetime. We'll explore the Land of the Bible and marvel at the Scripture coming to life.

### THE LIFE AND LAND OF JESUS CHRIST ISRAEL STUDY TOUR 2022

February 23–March 5, 2022

**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.

### 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.**



# Malabi Pudding

By Sarah Yoder, *BFP Staff Writer*

**THIS CREAMY, MILK-BASED PUDDING** is infused with the distinct floral flavor of rosewater and topped with blueberry rose syrup and slivered almonds. Rosewater was a beloved flavoring in the ancient world, particularly in the Levant, North Africa, Persia and India. While this floral essence has long since lost traction among North American and European cultures, it remains a common flavor in Middle Eastern cuisine. Malabi pudding is especially popular among Sephardic (mainly Jews from Spain and Portugal) and Mizrahi (communities from Middle Eastern and North African descent) Jewish circles and serves as a unique summer treat.

## Ingredients

### *Pudding:*

4 cups whole milk  
⅓ cup cornstarch  
1.5 Tbsp rosewater  
½ cup sugar  
½ cup heavy cream

### *Blueberry Rose Syrup:*

½ cup water  
⅓ cup blueberry jam  
1 teaspoon rosewater  
Slivered almonds for garnish

## Directions

### *Pudding:*

- In a small bowl, combine ½ cup of milk with cornstarch and rosewater. Blend well until the mixture is smooth and free of lumps. Set aside.
- In a saucepan, combine the remaining milk and sugar. Bring to a boil and cook over a medium-high heat until thickened, stirring constantly for 1 to 2 minutes until the pudding is thick enough to coat the back of the spoon.
- Add the cornstarch mixture and whisk well.
- Remove from heat and whisk in heavy cream. Allow the pudding to cool for 20 to 30 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- Spoon the malabi into eight serving dishes and refrigerate for at least three hours.

### *Blueberry Rose Syrup:*

- Combine water and jam in a small saucepan. Bring to a simmer over medium-high heat, stirring until the mixture is smooth and thickened.
- Remove from heat and stir in rosewater.
- To serve the malabi, spoon a little syrup over the top of each dish and garnish with almonds.

Serves 8



## Israel, Cyprus, Greece to Link Power Grids via Undersea Cable

**ISRAEL, CYPRUS AND GREECE** signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in March regarding a project to link their power grids via the construction of the world's longest and deepest undersea power cable.

The project, called the "Euro-Asia Interconnector," will help Israel build on more options for renewable energy, contribute to energy security and reduce energy prices, said Israeli Energy Minister Yuval Steinitz at the signing ceremony in Nicosia.

Steinitz called the MoU "great news for the citizens of Israel," according to a ministry statement.

"The Euro-Asia Interconnector underwater power cable will allow us to receive electricity backing from the power grids of the European continent in times of emergency,

and more importantly, will also support our ability to significantly increase reliance on solar power generation and help us meet the government's 2030 solar energy targets," he said.

Once completed, the undersea power cable will be the longest and deepest in the world, according to the ministry. The cable, which will be laid at a maximum depth of 2,700 meters (nearly 9,000 ft.), will have a capacity of 1,000 to 2,000 megawatts.

According to the ministry, the project is expected to cost a bit more than [US] \$9 billion, part of which is to be provided by the European Union, which has recognized the undertaking as a Project of Common Interest.

Excerpt from an article *JNS*

## Israel Ranks Seventh among World's Most Innovative Countries



**ISRAEL WAS RANKED** seventh among the world's 60 most innovative economies, according to the *Bloomberg Innovation Index* published in February.

The Jewish state went down one spot from its standing in 2020 and two places from 2019, when it came in fifth place.

Those ranked as more innovative are South Korea, Singapore, Switzerland, Germany, Sweden and Denmark. Israel is seventh, with Finland, the Netherlands, Austria and the USA following.

The *Bloomberg Innovation Index* ranks the 60 most innovative economies in the world and "analyzes dozens of criteria using seven equally weighted metrics, including research and development spending, manufacturing capability and concentration of high-tech public companies."

Excerpt from an article by *JNS*

# Kosovo Becomes First Muslim Nation to Open Embassy in Jerusalem

**JERUSALEM AS THE CAPITAL** of Israel received two significant nods of acceptance from Europe in March with the Czech Republic and Kosovo shunning international ire to open diplomatic offices in Jerusalem rather than Tel Aviv.

Kosovo took the biggest step, making history as the first European and first Muslim-majority nation to establish an embassy in Jerusalem. The Eastern European nation follows in the footsteps of the US and Guatemala as the third country to turn its back on international propaganda, opting to open its embassy in Jerusalem.

“A truly proud and historic moment for Kosovo–Israel relations,” Kosovar Ambassador Ines Demiri tweeted following the opening. “The greatest honor of my life is to have this opportunity to open the embassy and proudly serve my country in Israel.”

For its part, the Israeli Foreign Ministry said it “warmly welcomes the opening of the Embassy of Kosovo in Jerusalem today, a natural development of the relations and a realization of the Washington agreement.”

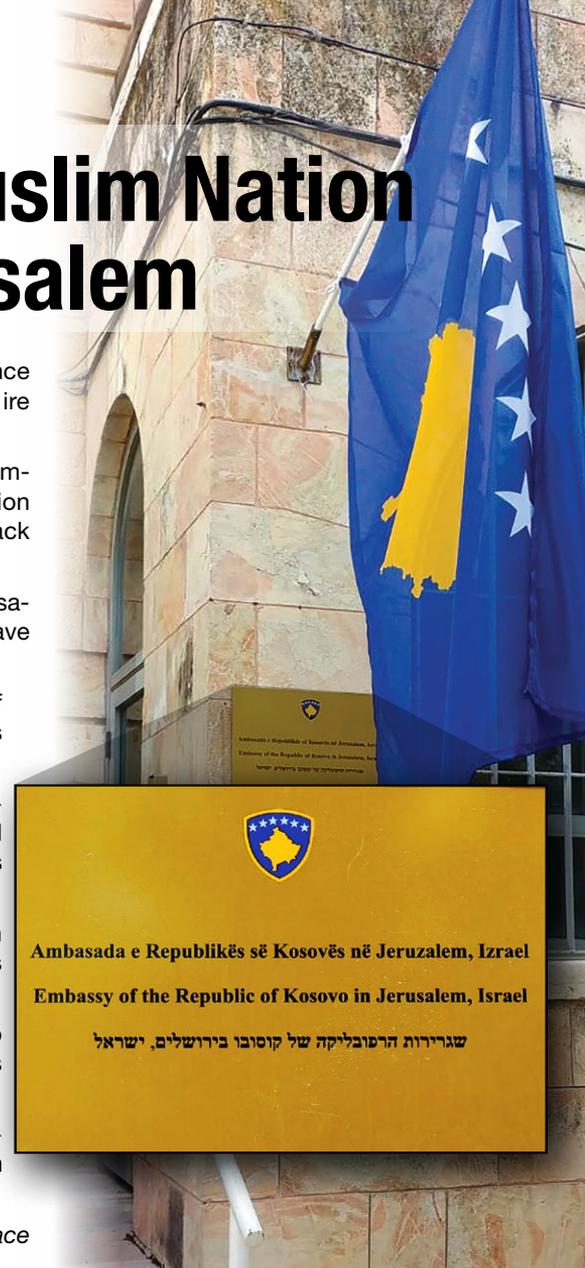
The move comes half a year after a US-orchestrated Kosovo–Serbia summit hosted at the White House where the establishment of diplomatic ties between Israel and Kosovo was announced, and just over a month after the newly forged relationship was made official during a virtual ceremony.

The Kosovar Foreign Ministry announced during that ceremony that the Eastern European nation had chosen Jerusalem as the spot where its embassy would open its doors—and submitted a formal request to do so shortly after.

The Czech Republic’s step was slightly less committed, with Prague opting to establish a branch of its Israel office in Jerusalem while its official embassy remains headquartered in Tel Aviv.

Speaking at the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babiš assured his audience that the move communicates Prague’s tacit approval of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital, the *Times of Israel* reported.

Ilse Strauss, *Bridges for Peace*



# Egypt Introduces Judaism into Curriculum for First Time

**THE EGYPTIAN MINISTRY** of Education recently updated its school curriculum with a new subject that will allow Egyptian students to study verses from Judaism for the first time in the country’s history, *Al-Monitor* reported

The new subject is aimed at instilling in students the importance of shared values by studying the touching points and commonalities—particularly religious tenets and verses—between the three Abrahamic religions: Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

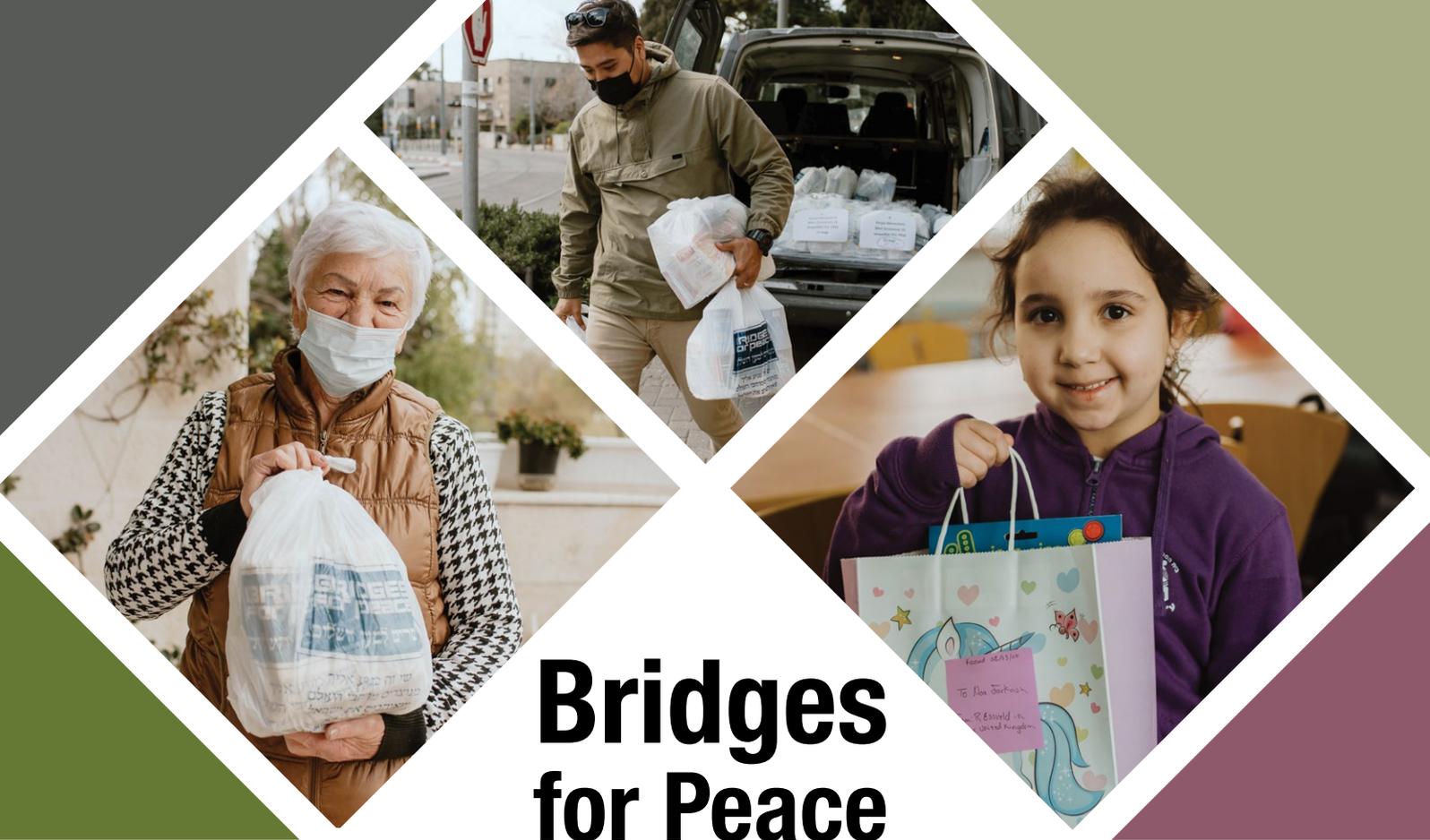
The Egyptian Parliament commended the decision. “The Ministry of Education’s approval of the subject of religious values shared between the divine religions expresses the state’s keenness to spread the values of tolerance and fraternity,” *Al-Monitor* quoted Kamal Amer, the head of the parliamentary defense and the National Security Committee in the Egyptian Parliament, as saying.

According to Amer, the three Abrahamic faiths “include common values that students must study to be able to confront the extremist...ideas that backward groups are working to spread in society. President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi is keen to teach the youth the values of respect for others, tolerance and rejection of fanaticism and extremism.”

After more than 30 years of vowing to annihilate the Jewish state—and facing Israel on the battlefield numerous times as one of its most formidable foes—Egypt was the first Arab nation to officially recognize Israel in a peace treaty signed in 1979. Egyptian students being exposed to the values and key verses in Judaism—the religion of its former arch foe—and that in a positive light, is certainly a step toward a warmer peace.

Ilse Strauss, *Bridges for Peace*





# Bridges for Peace

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**IMMIGRANT WELCOME GIFTS:** Welcome new immigrants to Israel with a large gift package that includes a kitchen set of pans and utensils, blankets, school kits for children and a 1-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.

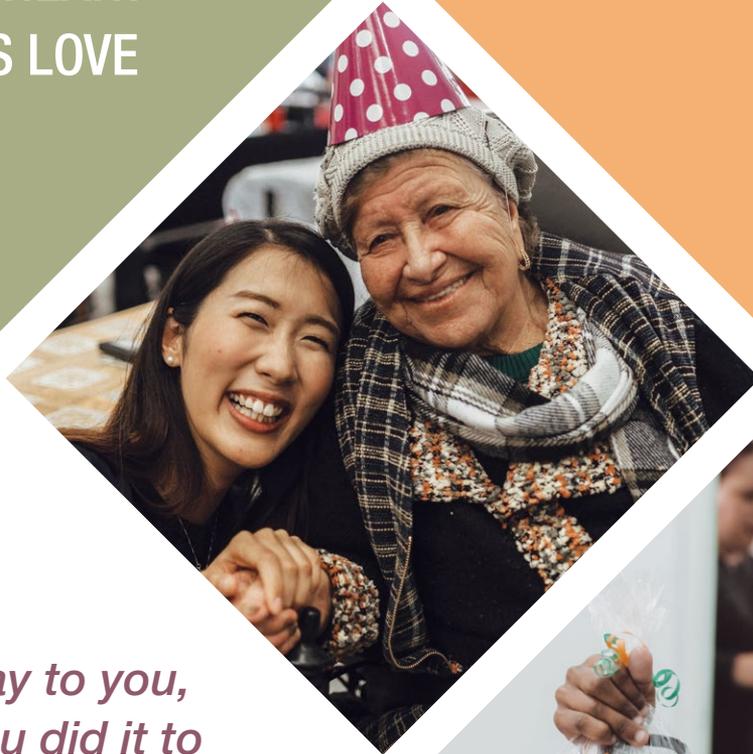
**VICTIMS OF TERROR:** We deliver special cheer baskets to anyone touched by terrorism. Special needs, such as wheelchairs, food vouchers and financial assistance for medical bills are provided for those in long-term rehabilitation.

**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.

EVERYTHING YOU

GIVE

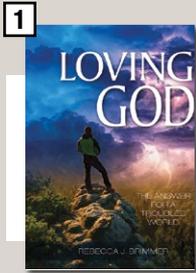
TOUCHES A HEART  
WITH GOD'S LOVE



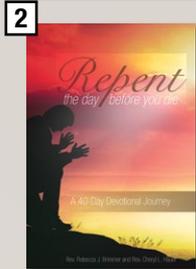
*“Assuredly, I say to you,  
inasmuch as you did it to  
one of the least of these My  
brethren, you did it to Me.”*

Matthew 25:40

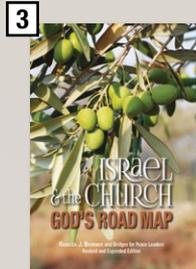
**New!**



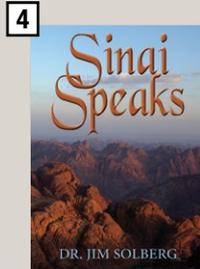
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 Rebecca J. Brimmer  
 Jesus taught that the greatest commandment was to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. Knowing and loving God enables us to love others, the second greatest commandment. This book explores how Jesus' truth provides the answers our troubled world needs.



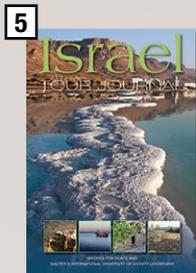
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 A 40-DAY DEVOTIONAL JOURNEY  
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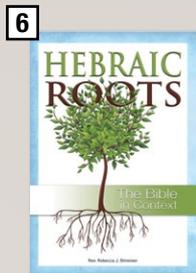
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 Rebecca J. Brimmer & BFP Leaders  
 The revised edition introduces the Hebrew roots of Christianity and tells the story of God's covenant relationship with Israel. Includes study questions. Excellent for small group or personal study. **Also on Kindle.**



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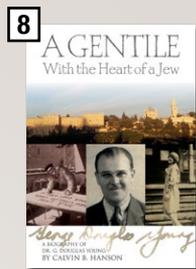
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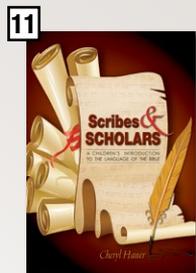


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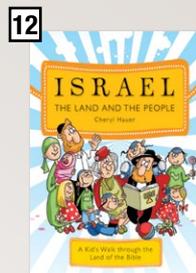


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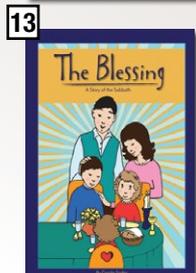


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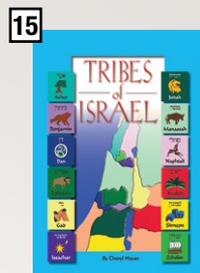
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# ***VOLUNTEER WITH US***

*Join our team of volunteers, using your skill, talents and passion to make a difference in the lives of the people of Israel.*

The COVID-19 pandemic has let 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.

## **ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

The position requires someone skilled in administration and organization. Experience with Microsoft Office Suite will be helpful.



## **FOOD BANK FLOOR WORKERS**

Be part of our team that packs food for deliveries. Position requires a strong back, as it involves semi-strenuous lifting (33 lb. or 15 kg.) and can include standing for long periods.



## **HOME REPAIR TEAM**

Position requires the ability to do general repairs and maintenance in BFP facilities as well as home repairs in the Jewish community. We are looking for people with general handyman skills.



## **WEB DEVELOPER**

Experienced WordPress web developer to provide front-end and back-end programming concepts and concerns, including security and structure.



Sept. 2021–Dec. 2022

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OCTOBER 2021  
Tishrei–Cheshvan 5782

- 13 scenes depicting life in Israel
- Each page suitable for framing
- Notation area for each day
- All Jewish holidays and BFP events marked
- Weekly Torah, Haftarah and New Testament readings
- Hebrew calendar explanations

**PROJECT TIKVAH (HOPE)**  
Bridges for Peace helps Jewish people in the former Soviet Union who cannot immigrate to Israel because they are elderly or in poor health. Through Project Tikvah, we provide a hot meal every day, heaters to warm homes in winter, emergency medical care and more.

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
NOVEMBER 2021 Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30						<p>BERESHEET Torah: Gen. 1:1–6:8 Haftarah: Isa. 42:5–43:10 Mitz. 1–5</p>
					25 Tishrei	1 26 Tishrei 2
						<p>NOACH Torah: Gen. 6:8–11:32 Haftarah: Isa. 54:1–55:5 Mitz. 6–10</p>
27 Tishrei	3 28 Tishrei	4 29 Tishrei	5 30 Tishrei	6 1 Cheshvan	7 2 Cheshvan	8 3 Cheshvan 9
						<p>LECH LEOVA Torah: Gen. 12:1–17:27 Haftarah: Isa. 49:27–41:16 Mitz. 11–14</p>
10 4 Cheshvan	11 5 Cheshvan	12 6 Cheshvan	13 7 Cheshvan	14 8 Cheshvan	15 9 Cheshvan	16 10 Cheshvan
						<p>WRETA Torah: Gen. 21:1–25:18 Haftarah: 2 Kings 4:1–37 Mitz. 15–19</p>
17 11 Cheshvan	18 12 Cheshvan	19 13 Cheshvan	20 14 Cheshvan	21 15 Cheshvan	22 16 Cheshvan	23 17 Cheshvan
						<p>DAVEID GARAN Torah: Gen. 21:1–25:18 Haftarah: 1 Kings 1:1–31 Mitz. 20–24</p>
24 18 Cheshvan	25 19 Cheshvan	26 20 Cheshvan	27 21 Cheshvan	28 22 Cheshvan	29 23 Cheshvan	30 24 Cheshvan