

# dispatch from **JERUSALEM**

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

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# *Shuk* Culture



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



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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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## Introducing Bennett and Lapid

As part of a rotating leadership agreement, Naftali Bennett will serve as Israel's prime minister for two years, followed by coalition partner Yair Lapid. Let us introduce you to our new friends in Israel! One is a right-wing, religious Zionist; the other a centrist journalist-turned-politician.

By Kate Norman

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## Israel and Iran: Destination War?

Recent headlines have many speculating that the Middle East teeters on the brink of war, with Israel and Iran preparing to face each other on the battlefield. The evidence certainly seems to point in that direction. Are we seeing harbingers of an impending clash?

By Ilse Strauss

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## The Death of Sarah Halimi

This is the story of a woman murdered simply because she was Jewish. It is a story her family wants told as they seek justice, battling anti-Semitism at every turn. The story is difficult to read, but has a critical message. Increasingly, in many parts of the globe, this is what anti-Semitism looks like.

By Cheryl Hauer



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## Shuk Culture

One of the most delightful pillars of Israeli society is the *shuk*. Thriving under Israel's sunny skies, these outdoor markets offer everything from fresh goods to souvenirs and eateries. And just as in Bible times, they function as the food market and gathering place for locals and visitors alike.

By Sarah Yoder

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## The Road to Emmaus

It is a privilege for Bible-believers to visit Israel and watch the black and white pages of the Scripture transform into color as they see and experience the land for themselves. The newly minted Emmaus Trail is a wonderful opportunity for Christians to walk where Jesus (Yeshua) walked.

By Kate Norman

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## Iran's Black Gold

In 2019, Iran's oil industry experienced an upsurge that generated the equivalent of half a billion dollars—while Tehran was subject to devastating US sanctions on its oil industry. If that's what Iran can do when their oil trade is crippled and covert, what could they accomplish with no restrictions at all?

By Joshua Spurlock



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## Yemin Moshe: Outside the City Walls

Across the valley from Mount Zion lies one of Jerusalem's oldest residential neighborhoods: Yemin Moshe. Take a stroll along the cobbled alleyways and one is struck by the tranquil atmosphere that hints little at its tumultuous past as the first Jewish neighborhood outside Jerusalem's Old City walls.

By Kathy DeGagne

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# A Season for Everything

**BRIDGES FOR PEACE** continues to fulfill the mandate God has given us to support Israel and build relationships between Christians and Jews in Israel and around the world. Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we continued to deliver food to over 22,000 each month all over the Land of Israel. This year we are increasing the numbers we assist! For many years we have supported 18 towns on our Adopt an Israeli Town program. That is increasing to 22 towns. We continue to help Holocaust survivors, new immigrants (both before they arrive and after), children from families in economic distress, widows and orphans, and victims of terror. We recently provided bomb shelter protection for a school in Kiryat Ekron.

We continue to stand strong with Israel against anti-Semitism as it again rears its ugly head. Our prayer network is earnestly lifting Israel to the Lord in prayer during these stressful times. Our education emphasis remains strong through the written word, social media, books, seminars and teaching videos.

When I became international president and CEO in 2005, I made it a priority to empower others in the nations and on our team in Israel. I realized that a strong team was the key to future growth. Since then, the world experienced a financial collapse in 2008 and a worldwide pandemic in 2020–21. Yet, our network has remained strong, and we have experienced growth from US \$6.3 million in 2005 to



US \$11 million in 2020. We have extended our reach in Israel, adding programs like the Feed a Child program, Holocaust Survivors fund and the Widows and Orphans fund.

## Investing in the Future

We initiated the Zealous8:2 program for young adults, and the intensive Zealous Israel Project. Through discipleship and service-based volunteerism, coupled with adventure, we have seen young adults' hearts ignited with love for God and understanding of His commitment and love for Israel. We began mentoring young adults for leadership. Today there is a healthy age span in our directors in Israel and around the world with the youngest director being 34. We have young adults in deputy director and management positions.

## Season of Change

My husband and I have now realized that a season of change is coming for us. I am talking with the international board about a transition toward full retirement in 2025 at age 70. During the first phase in 2022, we will divide our time between Israel, the USA and the nations. We have purchased a home in Springfield, Missouri, where we will live part-time in 2022. In essence nearly half the year will be spent in Israel with the other half traveling while we establish our new home base. In June of 2023 I will step back from my role as CEO but will continue as international president until the end of 2025. I am excited for the future of Bridges for Peace. Just as God equipped, inspired and anointed me for the role, I am confident that my successor will also be led by the Lord in every way.

## Announcing the future CEO of Bridges for Peace: Rev. Peter Fast

Peter is currently the national director with Bridges for Peace Canada, one of our largest offices. In a year of pandemic, Peter initiated robust methods of keeping communication lines open, utilizing Zoom, telephone calls, video and teaching over the Internet. As a result of his activities, the Canadian operation became stronger than ever, surpassing their budget.

Peter first came to Bridges for Peace as a young adult volunteer and intern for eight months. He worked on our Home Repair team and was mentored by BFP leaders. I remember well his enthusiasm and love for Israel. Two years later he married Deanna and they chose to honeymoon in Israel. During the next four years, they worked in Canada, but, in Peter's words, "During this time my heart was firmly set on Israel and being faithful to that call of the Lord."

After much prayer and conversation with the international leadership of Bridges for Peace, Peter and Deanna moved to Israel in September 2010. Peter became the Zealous8:2 coordinator, the head of the Group and Guest Relations department and oversaw the Land of the Bible Experience while Deanna worked in the Staff Development department (she became the manager in 2012).

Peter and Deanna built deep relationships with the leadership team in Israel, national directors and team members in the nations. Peter led six Zealous8:2 tours, published articles in the *Dispatch from Jerusalem* and a Teaching Letter, preached numerous times at the Bridges for Peace joint devotions, and spoke to thousands of Christian tourists visiting Israel. Peter also built relationships in the Jewish and Arab communities. In 2011 Peter and Deanna attended and completed the Bridges for Peace Institute of Israel Studies. In 2013 they moved to Canada and became part of BFP Canada. Peter was mentored by the Canadian director and in 2019 became our youngest national director.

When the international board was praying about asking Peter to accept the role of CEO, Dr. Dennis Frey, president of Masters International University of Divinity (MIUD), told us, "Peter is a real scholar." Peter holds two BA degrees from Prairie College in Biblical Studies and in Intercultural Studies. He completed his MA in Judeo-Christian Studies from MIUD and is currently enrolled in a doctoral program of Biblical Studies in Biblical History from MIUD.

In 2019 Peter and Deanna were awarded the Distinguished Alumni award from Prairie College, recognizing their dedication and work in creating understanding between Israel and the Church.

Peter was ordained in 2010 by the Fellowship of Evangelical Bible Churches and is highly respected in both the Christian and Jewish communities in Canada.

Peter and Deanna are proud parents of three children: Judah (2014), Naomi (2017) and Meira (2021).

***The international board has recognized the call of God on Peter's life. He is the man that God is preparing for the next phase of Bridges for Peace. Please join us in rejoicing as we enthusiastically look forward to a strong future with Peter Fast in leadership.***

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



# The Truth

## about the Hamas Terrorist Organization

In 2007, Hamas violently seized control of the Gaza Strip, eliminating in the process hundreds of members of the rival Fatah [leading secular Palestinian political party] movement that is headed by Palestinian [Authority] President Mahmoud Abbas. Some were even murdered by being thrown off the roofs of tower blocks.

Hamas—an organization affiliated with the radical Muslim Brotherhood—has a senior spokesman who calls not only for the destruction of Israel and the Jewish people as a whole, but also seeks to conquer Rome and “the two Americas.”

Hamas also publicly and officially calls for the “extermination of Jews and Christians to the last” and teaches these destructive worldviews as early as kindergarten.

Despite this, the international community offered Hamas an outline that would allow it to receive large-scale aid.

In 2006, the Middle East Quartet (Russia, the US, the European Union [EU] and the United Nations [UN]) presented to Hamas the three preconditions for continued Western aid: the recognition of Israel, cessation of terrorism and recognition of previous agreements. These prerequisites were later made public in three separate statements.

The offer for Western aid, which included [US] \$600 million in assistance from the EU and another [US] \$400 million from the US, was quickly and summarily rejected by Hamas leader Khaled Mashaal, who claimed that “Hamas was impervious to bribery, intimidation and blackmail.”

The international community refused to throw in the towel, and in 2007, the offer to provide aid to the Palestinian people came up again.

This time it was Ismail Haniyeh, the Palestinian prime minister on behalf of Hamas at the time, who rejected the offer, arguing that “it is the right of the Palestinians to continue their resistance by all means.”

Hamas chose—and continues to choose to this day—terrorism over prosperity. In 2014, when Operation Protective Edge began, the ministers of the EU offered the Palestinians aid in exchange for “the demilitarization of all terrorist organizations.”

France, the United Kingdom and Germany presented a detailed plan. The EU made one more attempt to end the fighting in the Strip and again made an official offer for rehabilitating Gaza in return for demilitarization. And while Israel approved of the offer that would see the conflict promptly end, Hamas again refused.

In 2017, Yahya Sinwar, Hamas’s new leader in Gaza, reiterated again that “Hamas will never recognize Israel.”

In February 2018, when tensions between Israel and Hamas rose once again, the EU once again presented its aid offer to no avail.

In other words: Hamas does not want prosperity; it wants terrorism. Even so, again and again for humanitarian reasons, Israel allows the flow of hundreds of millions of dollars into the Strip along with hundreds of trucks carrying supplies into Gaza on a daily basis. It did not help. Hamas used the money to fund the terrorist tunnels that go beneath Gaza into Israeli territory.

One more thing to keep in mind: wherever the branches of political Islam rule, destruction, bloodshed and destruction prevail. After all, the large majority of Hamas’s victims are Muslims. Even Hamas rockets, which fall within the Gaza Strip itself once every six or seven times, have killed more Palestinians than Israelis.

Without the blockade, Iran would not be supplying medicine, it would be supplying rockets. Without the blockade, the Hamas regime would expand its industry of death. Without the blockade, [they] would not be building schools or industry that led to prosperity, Hamas would be building more tools of destruction meant for mass murder. This is not an opinion. This is what they are doing today. These are the facts.

# Operation Guardian of the Walls

According to one claim, even if Israel has the right to strike at Hamas, its response is disproportionate. This is a strange claim. No country has ever taken so many measures to prevent civilian casualties.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces], more than any other military in the world in similar operations, is making a supreme effort to reduce innocent casualties. This has been affirmed by world-renowned experts in military law.

One such expert, Prof. Wolff Heintschel, said, "The IDF takes many more precautions than are required, setting an unreasonable precedent."

Another is Prof. Michael Schmitt, who argued that, "The IDF's warnings [to avoid civilian casualties] certainly go beyond what the law requires, but they also sometimes go beyond what would be operational good sense elsewhere."

But who are they, these world-renowned experts, compared to nobodies in the global media who constantly criticize Israel without knowing what they are talking about?

When images of destruction are shown to the world, one can understand the demand for a cease-fire. But no one has the right to demand anything of Israel.

Background and facts are important. It is vital to know that Hamas is a radical jihadist organization that Israel has not only a right, but the obligation, to separate from its weaponry.

Excerpt from an article by Ben-Dror Yemini, *Ynetnews*

Eleven days of nearly uninterrupted volleys of Hamas rockets raining down on Israeli civilians and the IDF's retaliatory efforts to protect its people from the deadly attack

## In Total



- 4,360+ projectiles fired on southern and central Israel from Gaza
- 13 rockets fired from Lebanon
- 3 missiles fired from Syria



- 1 IDF soldier killed
- 10 Israeli civilians killed
- 3 foreign workers killed
- 2 IDF soldiers wounded
- 1 Israeli civilian murdered by Arab rioters
- 1,900 Israeli civilians injured

## Iron Dome Intercepted 90% of rockets

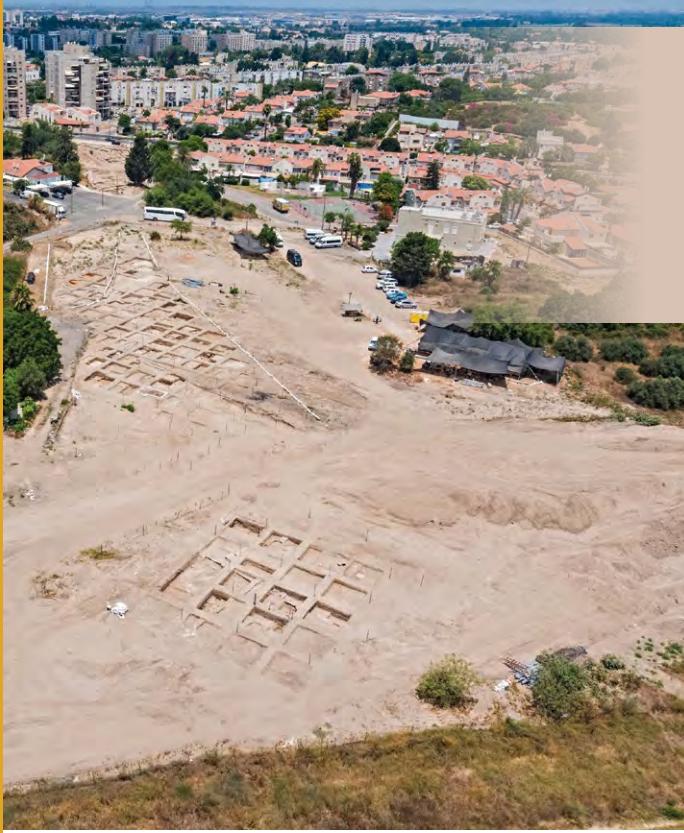
- Highest daily rate of rocket fire in Israel's history
- 15% or 680 of Hamas rockets misfired, striking densely populated areas and killing Gazan civilians, including children
- 1 in 7 rockets fired at its own people
- 5.5 million Israelis in Hamas's crosshairs
- 90% of rocket production expertise came from Iran

## IDF Response

- Struck over 1,500 terror targets: terror cells, rocket launching sites, weapons depots located in civilian homes, Hamas hideouts
- 225 terrorists, including 25 top terror chiefs, neutralized
- 60 miles (100 km.) of Hamas terror tunnels obliterated
- 675 rocket launchers—"armed and aimed at Israeli communities"—destroyed

## Who Emerged Victorious?

- Israel cited major military achievements, a "serious blow" to Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad and restoration of Israeli deterrence.
- "This is the euphoria of victory," said Khalil al-Hayya, a senior Hamas figure, addressing throngs streaming into the ravaged streets of Gaza to celebrate their "triumph" over Israel.



**An impressive 1,600-year-old** mosaic found during archaeological excavations in Yavne is to be placed on public display at the city's cultural center in a joint initiative launched by the Yavne municipality, the Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA] and the Israel Land Authority.

In recent years, the IAA has been conducting large-scale archaeological excavations to the southeast of Tel Yavne as part of the Israel Land Authority's city development program. The excavations, directed by Dr. Elie Haddad, Liat Nadav-Ziv and Dr. Jon Seligman, unearthed an extensive industrial zone that was in operation for several centuries.

According to the archaeologists, this is the first time such a pavement has been uncovered in Yavne, and its preservation is excellent. In their opinion, "The pavement may have been part of a splendid residential building in a wealthy neighborhood adjacent to the industrial zone."

The mayor of Yavne, Zvi Gur-Ari, states that "archaeological preservation and awareness of the past are important values in the life of the city of Yavne, which has a magnificent history. In an age of progress and accelerated development in all fields of life, future generations should also be able to see how the city has evolved throughout history. We will continue to work with the IAA to ensure public accessibility to the finds and continued research and understanding of the city's past and its historical importance."

The multicolored mosaic pavement, dated to the Byzantine period (4th–5th century [AD]) was unearthed in archaeological excavations directed by Avishag Reiss of the IAA. The floor is decorated with colorful geometric motifs and has a black rectangular frame.

"At first, we did not realize that the floor is multicolored," said Drs. Haddad and Torgö. "We assumed that it was simple white mosaic paving belonging to yet another

# Ancient Mosaic

## Goes on Display

industrial installation. But black patches dotted around the mosaic suggested that it was more than one color and prompted us to remove the whitish patina that had coated it for years.

"The conservation director went to work cleaning the mosaic with a special acid," they add, "and to our astonishment, a colorful mosaic carpet was revealed, ornamented with geometric motifs."

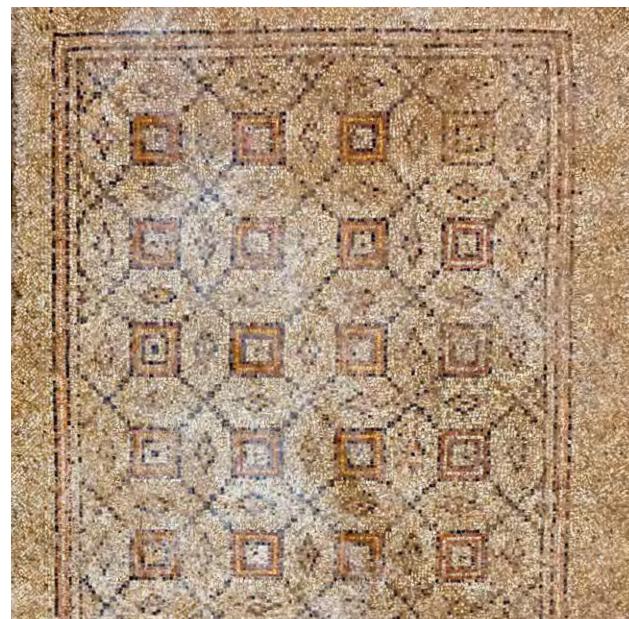
Once the mosaic had been documented, drawn and photographed in the field, it was removed and temporarily transferred to the IAA's mosaic workshop at the Rockefeller Museum, where it has been treated and preserved by the authority's conservation experts.

In cooperation between the IAA and Yavne municipality, which endeavors to make archeology accessible to the town's residents, and with the assistance of the Israel Land Authority, a suitable location has been found for the mosaic—in the plaza near Yavne's cultural center.

The municipality is currently preparing the infrastructure for the mosaic for the benefit of Yavne's citizens and the general public. The mosaic's relocation and preservation will be carried out using ancient technological methods and employing materials similar to those used in antiquity. During the work, the site will be open to the public, thus enabling everyone to see and enjoy the conservation process and the gradual uncovering of the mosaic.

Archaeologist Diego Barkan from the IAA's Tel Aviv District welcomes the fruitful cooperation between the Israel Land Authority and Yavne municipality. "I am happy that the mosaic will be displayed in a central location in the city, so that the values embodied in its heritage are preserved and made accessible to the general public."

Excerpt from a press release by IAA





# Two Halves of Ancient Lamp DISCOVERED

The Roman-era oil lamp recently unearthed in Jerusalem may be the missing half of a similar artifact found in Budapest nine years ago, the City of David Foundation announced.

Mere hours after publication of the discovery of the “lucky” lamp shaped like a grotesque half face, Hungarian archaeologist Gabor Lassanyi contacted Ari Levy, director of Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA] excavations at Jerusalem’s City of David National Park.

“Nine years ago, in an excavation we conducted at Aquincum (modern-day Budapest), we found a remarkably rare object. At the bottom of the building, we discovered a bronze half-lamp depicting the right half of a face shaped like a Roman theater mask,” Lassanyi wrote to Levy.

“Only a few known creations that resemble this exist from this time period, and they sit in museums and throughout private collections in the world, yet none of them are like these two halves,” he continued. “It is very difficult to craft in such an accurate way, and therefore, it is likely that the two halves of the lamps were created in the same artisan house and may even have served as a pair to one complete piece.”

Upon initial examination of the two lamps, Levy and Lassanyi discovered that not only do they have the exact same dimensions but that the Hungarian one is shaped in a way in which the connecting slot is depressed, while the Israeli one has a slot that sticks out, possibly indicating that the pair could be connected to form a whole.

The IAA is currently weighing various options to explore the issue more fully. Among these is for the Israeli team to print a three-dimensional model of the lamp and send it to Hungary to see if the two halves indeed can be connected.

Excerpt from an article by JNS

# Who Are Naftali Bennett and Yair Lapid?

To Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid,

Congratulations on forming a government. I want to assure you both that Bridges for Peace will pray for you daily, for wisdom, strength, courage and the ability to bring unity to a hurting nation.

As a Christian leader who has lived in Israel for more than 30 years, I have seen the leadership of many prime ministers: Shamir, Rabin, Peres, Netanyahu, Barak, Sharon, Olmert, Netanyahu again and now Bennett. I have lived through two *intifadas* (uprisings), Oslo, disengagement from Gaza, leaving Lebanon, Scud missiles from Saddam Hussein, suicide bombers, the Second Lebanon War and conflicts with Gaza.

While Christian supporters of Israel didn't wholly agree with all the decisions which were made by these leaders, they never stopped supporting Israel and the Jewish people. Bible-believing Christians support Israel unconditionally, because we love the God of Israel; we read the Bible and see Israel throughout. It isn't possible for us to love God and not love the Jewish people.

We will remain firm friends. We identify with the words of the Gentile Moabitess, Ruth, as she told Jewish Naomi, "*Your God will be my God.*" So I confidently say: Israel, you are not alone.

—Rebecca J. Brimmer  
International President and CEO

## *Let us introduce the rest of you to our new friends in Israel!*

As part of a rotating leadership agreement, Naftali Bennett will serve as Israel's prime minister for two years, followed by coalition partner Yair Lapid. Though Bennett's Yamina Party won only seven of the 120 Knesset (Parliament) seats after the last election, he became the kingmaker when he was courted by both Netanyahu and Lapid to join their coalitions. Bennett clasped Lapid's outstretched hand and joined the "change coalition," ousting Netanyahu from his record-breaking 12-year tenure and linking arms with right-wing, left-wing, centrist and an Arab party to form Israel's most diverse government.

## *Naftali Bennett*

Once an ally of former Prime Minister Netanyahu, Naftali Bennett describes himself as ideologically to the right of Netanyahu. Bennett is a hardline Zionist who opposes the two-state solution, advocates for Jewish communities in the biblical heartland of Judea and Samaria—the so-called "West Bank"—and pushes for firm responses to attacks on Israel's sovereignty. A high-tech millionaire, Bennett is also a religiously observant Orthodox Jew and the first prime minister to regularly don a *kippah* (skullcap).

### Background

Born in Haifa in 1972 to immigrants from San Francisco, Bennett, like Netanyahu, speaks fluent American English. During his time in the military, Bennett served in the elite Sayeret Matkal reconnaissance unit—where former Prime Ministers Netanyahu and Ehud Barak also served. Bennett then studied law at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem before moving to New York to make his fortune in the high-tech world. He co-founded an anti-fraud

online company that was sold for US \$145 million in 2005 (and later served as CEO of an Israeli start-up that sold for somewhere between US \$100–130 million in 2013). After conquering business-tech, Bennett returned to his homeland a self-made success before diving into his next challenge: politics.

### Rise to the Top

Bennett began his political career in 2006 as Netanyahu's chief of staff and a member of the Likud Party. In 2010, he served as head of the Yesha Council, an organization that lobbies for Jewish settlement in Judea and Samaria.

Bennett left Likud in 2012 to join the religious Zionist Jewish Home Party before co-founding the New Right Party in 2018 (which allied with other right-wing parties to form the Yamina joint slate in 2020).

Bennett and Netanyahu remained political allies and sat together in coalitions. Netanyahu even appointed Bennett as defense minister in 2019. Having served in multiple cabinet roles, such as Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, Education, Economy and Trade, and Defense, Bennett now finds himself at the top—for the next two years.

## *Yair Lapid*

In 2023, Yesh Atid (There is a Future) Party leader Yair Lapid will assume the role of Israel's prime minister. The centrist TV-host-turned-politician is known for being moderate in his political leanings. Lapid, though ambitious, reportedly made few demands for himself or his allies while negotiating a coalition but quietly stuck to his guns while pursuing Bennett, who vacillated before finally joining the change coalition.

### Background

Born in Tel Aviv in 1963, Lapid is the son of Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, a secular journalist/commentator, and Shulamit Lapid, a well-known writer. Tommy Lapid later moved into politics, forming the centrist Shinui (Change) Party and served as deputy prime minister from 2003–2004.

Like his father, Lapid started as a journalist, working as a reporter during his military service and afterward writing newspaper columns. After dabbling as an actor, screenwriter and novelist, he became a news anchor in the 1990s.

### Political Rise

After a decade in the media, Lapid shifted into politics in 2012 and started his Yesh Atid Party, focusing on domestic issues, such as improving life for the middle class, anti-corruption and education reform.

In 2013, Yesh Atid stunned by winning 19 seats and becoming the second largest party in the Knesset. Lapid joined a coalition with Netanyahu and was awarded the position of finance minister, until Netanyahu dismissed him

in 2014. Afterward, he had varying success in election results but never lost his grip in the opposition.

When former Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff Benny Gantz entered politics in 2019, Lapid jumped to merge their parties and form the Blue and White joint list to challenge Netanyahu. Three inconclusive elections later, the nation found itself in a political stalemate amid a global pandemic. Desperate to break the gridlock, Gantz agreed to an emergency unity government with Netanyahu, angering Lapid, who parted ways with Blue and White. The unity government dissolved less than a year later.

Then the March 2021 elections came. Netanyahu's Likud won 30 seats, while Yesh Atid won 17. Netanyahu was unable to negotiate a majority coalition, and the mandate was passed to Lapid, who presented his broad coalition just 30 minutes before the deadline. Since its swearing in, Lapid has called for unity and finding common ground on which to move the country forward.

*Though Bennett and Lapid seem unlikely coalition partners, they have reportedly agreed to set aside their major differences and focus on domestic issues.*



Kate Norman, *BFP Staff Writer*

# Israel and Iran: Destination War?

**RECENT HEADLINES** have many speculating that the Middle East teeters on the brink of war as Israel and Iran prepare to face each other on the battlefield. The evidence seems to point in that direction. A mysterious explosion tearing through Iran's Natanz nuclear plant—the second such disaster in a year striking at the heart of Iran's nuclear program. The “father” of the Islamic Republic's nuclear ambitions assassinated on a Tehran street. Fingers pointed at Israel and vows of revenge. Tit-for-tat acts of sabotage on maritime vessels. Tehran entrenching in war-torn Syria and Israeli warplanes in Syrian skies targeting advanced weapons shipments to Iran's terror proxies. Are these harbingers of an impending clash?

Not likely, says Seth J. Frantzman, executive director of the Middle East Center for Reporting and Analysis and author of *Drone Wars: Pioneers, Killing Machines, Artificial Intelligence and the Battle for the Future*. What appears to be the opening salvos of war between the region's most formidable foes are actually strategic “chess moves” in an existing conflict as old as the Islamic Republic itself. Moreover, Iran can't afford all-out war and doesn't have the capacity for the fight, Frantzman explains. Israel, on the other hand, has the capacity and resources, yet doesn't want to be embroiled in a vast conventional clash.

But just because there's no near-future scenario with Israeli soldiers staring down their Iranian counterparts on a physical battlefield doesn't mean Jerusalem and Tehran aren't at war.

Iran considers Israel its greatest Mideast adversary. It's eager for Israel's destruction and willing to make every effort to fulfill that objective. And Israel is equally willing to make every effort to thwart that ambition.

This clash of wills partly drives Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missile initiative, encroachment in Mideast countries, investment in proxies and funneling advanced weapons to these terror armies. This, in turn, drives acts of sabotage, assassinations and strikes on proxies—allegedly with Israel as the architect. And this, in turn, drives vows of Iranian revenge, exacted in controlled acts causing enough damage to soothe a battered ego without eliciting further retribution.

In short, Jerusalem and Tehran have been at war for years, engaging in battle in the shadows, behind the scenes. Yet in recent years, that war has increasingly come out of the shadows and onto the battlefields of Syria, maritime shipping routes and the halls of the UN, Washington and Vienna. So what's behind the mounting tensions?

## Debunking the Headlines

According to Frantzman, the escalation in the shadow war has little to do with the change in guard at the White House, the Biden administration's push to resuscitate the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) or its intention to lift the sanctions crippling Tehran's economy.

“Most of Iran's dangerous weapons, like the precision-guided missiles [PGMs] and drones, were showcased at the end of the Obama administration and during the Trump years,” Frantzman explains. “The Trump administration was hard on Iran in terms of sanctions, but there's no real evidence that they slowed down the nuclear program's technological aspect.”

The sanctions were successful in cutting off the cash flowing to Hezbollah and the Iranian militias in Iraq, Frantzman concedes. But Tehran's goal is ultimately long-term entrenchment, not short-term proxy victories. “Iran is like a boa constrictor. It doesn't move quickly. They understand that



American presidents come and go. But Iran's regime doesn't. And neither does the militias it has recruited."

So if it's not the regime change in Washington to a more Iran-friendly administration, the prospect of a return to a flawed nuclear deal or the probability of a cash-flushed Tehran fanning the flames of the conflict, what is?

## From Virtually Nowhere to Regional Hegemony

The Iranian menace is often equated to its nuclear ambitions, but according to Frantzman, Tehran pursues its goal of destroying Israel through a number of other avenues, including advanced drone technology, ballistic missiles and terror armies—Hezbollah in Lebanon and Syria, Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad in Gaza, pro-Iranian militias in Iraq and the Houthis in Yemen. This makes for a "growing, octopus-like threat," he holds.

Until a decade ago, Iran faced an "uphill struggle" with its proxies, had no drone program to speak of and produced unstable ballistic missiles with an unimpressive reach. But the civil wars in Syria and Yemen and the battle against ISIS in Iraq proved watershed moments in Iran's success in the region, providing Tehran with the testing ground to develop and perfect drones and PGMs and whip its terror proxies and militias into shape. In fact, including its stranglehold on Lebanon through Hezbollah, the past decade has seen Iran grasping partial control of four Mideast countries, turning them into platforms for weapons and war.

2015 was a good year for Iran. Emboldened by the newly signed JCPOA and bolstered by the Assad regime—which Tehran had actively been supporting since 2012—gaining the upper hand in the civil war, Iran could shift its focus in Syria from helping the Butcher of Damascus fight for his life to establishing a military presence on Israel's northern border, Frantzman says.

By 2017, Iranian bases in the war-torn country testified of the growing Iranian footprint in Israel's backyard.

And once the Assad regime conquered southern Syria, the Islamic Republic finally had the ideal highway to funnel state-of-the-art weapons from Tehran to Hezbollah.

Iran's investment in the Houthis in Yemen bore more deadly fruit, offering the opportunity to test its drone and ballistic missile technology, which now have an accurate reach of up to 2,000 kilometers [1,243 mi.].

Gone are the days of Israelis facing salvos of inaccurate rockets launched at a general target in the hope of hitting something by chance. "Now you're talking about rockets that can be programmed using a gyroscope to all fall in a specific place. That is a big, strategic game changer."

Moreover, with established footholds in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Yemen and Iraq, Iran attempts to surround Israel with launching pads for the precision weapons that can strike anywhere in the Jewish state.

**The bottom line?  
The shadow war is  
escalating because  
Iran is increasingly  
getting better at  
developing the means  
to destroy Israel.**

The bottom line? The shadow war is escalating because Iran is increasingly getting better at developing the means to destroy Israel—and at roping in terror armies for assistance. And Israel is increasingly getting better at developing the means to sabotage Iran's destruction attempts.

So who's emerging from the shadows as the victor? "I don't think there's a clear winner," Frantzman says. Media headlines ascribe daring triumphs to Israel as acts of sabotage set back Tehran's nuclear ambitions and precision strikes obliterate caches of precision weapons. At the same time, "Iran continues to entrench, continues to build its weapons. And there's no evidence that these militias are being eroded."

So the decades-old war between the Middle East's two most formidable foes continues—often in the shadows, behind the scenes—perhaps until Iran acquires the capacity for the fight or Israel decides enough is enough.

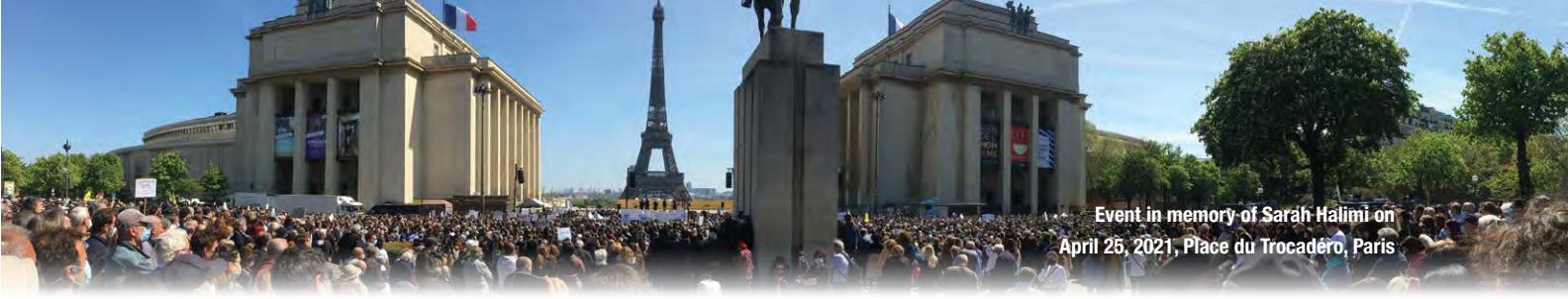
Ilse Strauss, *News Bureau Chief*



# The Death of Sarah Halimi



This is the story of a woman viciously murdered simply because she was Jewish. It is a story her family wants told as they seek justice, battling systemic anti-Semitism at every turn. It is a story that is difficult to read, but one with a critical message. Even for those of us who are committed to fighting this evil, anti-Semitism sometimes becomes more about numbers, statistics, graphs and political posturing than about people. Her family wants the world to know that increasingly in many parts of the globe, this is what anti-Semitism looks like.



Event in memory of Sarah Halimi on  
April 25, 2021, Place du Trocadéro, Paris

## A Life Cut Short

Lucette Attal-Halimi was a 65-year-old French woman who was also an Orthodox Jew. Today, thanks to an ongoing global outcry for justice, the world knows her by her Hebrew name, Sarah. Her son describes her as a loving mother who studied medicine for seven years and became a family practitioner. Later, as she and her husband raised their three children, she gave up that profession and became the director of a government-funded preschool. Under Sarah's leadership, her son says proudly, that school became famous all across Paris.

On April 4, 2017, Sarah's life was violently cut short by a drug-crazed Muslim neighbor who lived one floor below her third-floor flat. In the early morning hours of that fateful day, Kobili Traore broke into a neighboring apartment whose residents huddled terrified in a locked bedroom as the intruder shouted prayers and verses from the Quran. Using their window, he accessed a balcony from which he was able to climb to Sarah's apartment. She was the only Jewish resident of the building.

After phoning the police, the residents of the first apartment waited in fear as they heard Sarah's screams and the voice of her attacker shouting "Allahu akbar," [Arabic for "Allah is greatest"] and "I killed the Satan." For thirty minutes, Sarah was beaten and tortured before her assailant threw her body out a third-floor window. Traore then returned to the first apartment where the residents—still hidden and waiting for the police—heard him shouting prayers and Quranic verses.

## A Travesty of Justice

The tragedy was compounded by the poor handling of the case on virtually every level. For nearly a year, authorities refused to admit the anti-Semitic nature of the crime, and though Traore was apprehended in July 2017, the case didn't reach the judiciary until July 2019. At that time, the court ruled that the crime was indeed motivated by anti-Semitism, but that Traore was not criminally responsible for his actions because his heavy use of marijuana had put him in a state of "temporary psychosis." What ensued was a four-year battle for Sarah's family as they sought to get the preposterous ruling overturned. Finally, in early 2021, the French Supreme Court heard the case. Unfortunately, they agreed with the lower courts. Traore would never be charged with Sarah's murder.

The global Jewish community was incensed. French Jews, leaders worried, have increasingly become targets of *jihadists* and other anti-Semitic groups. Many of the victims have received "partial justice at best—or no justice at worst" from the French legal system. Now, perpetrators would have an outrageous free pass for more anti-Semitic violence. They need only smoke some marijuana first.

## The Bitter Root

Others, however, believe the problem goes much deeper. The article of the French penal code that allowed the judges to render their verdict also gave them the discretion to find Traore responsible and punishable for Sarah's death, even if he was high on drugs. But they chose not to interpret the law in that manner. Author and journalist Ben Cohen points to the Dreyfus affair as the beginning of over a century of increasing victimization of French Jews with a consistently biased judicial system. Prior to the false accusations leveled against Alfred Dreyfus in 1894, anti-Semitism had existed primarily among the elite of France, but the very public Dreyfus trial changed all that. Although Dreyfus was eventually exonerated, it came too late. Anti-Semitism had gone mainstream, resulting in over 100 years of oppression, ghettoization, fear and uncertainty for the Jews of France.

Today, France is home to Europe's largest Jewish population, the third largest in the world after Israel and the United States. Although that is less than 1% of France's total population, over 51% of racially motivated crimes target Jews. In a recent article in *National Geographic*, France's interior minister warned that anti-Jewish sentiment is spreading like poison. President Emmanuel Macron declared that anti-Semitism is at its peak since World War II, while Prime Minister Edouard Philippe admitted that anti-Semitism is deeply rooted in French society.

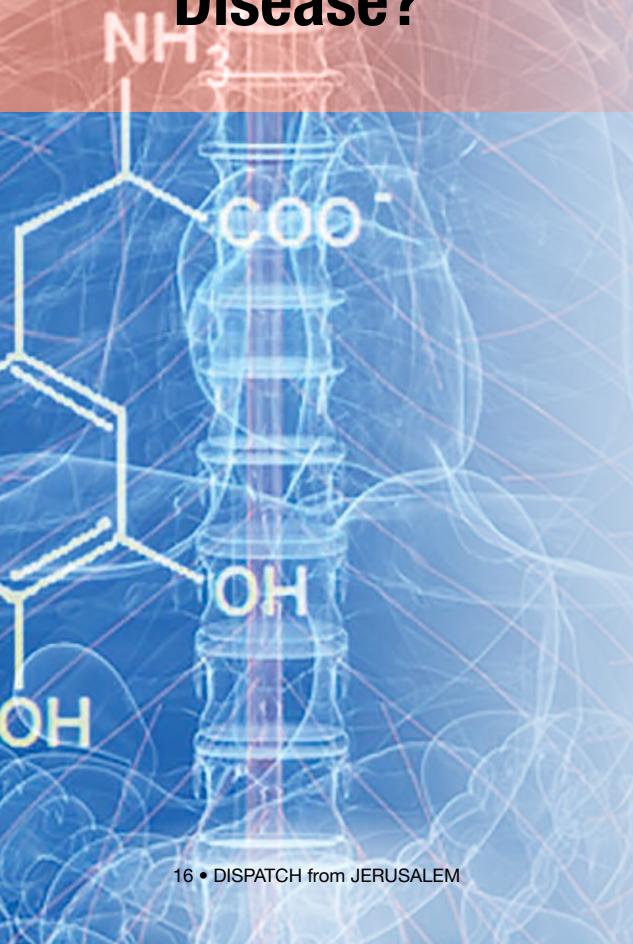
France is not alone in its systemic anti-Semitism. In a recent issue of the *Atlantic*, editor Jeffrey Goldberg reported that the statistics in other countries, including the UK, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Italy, Spain and Belgium, are equally dismal. Jews in Europe are murdered, raped, beaten, stalked, chased, harassed, spat on and insulted for being Jewish. "Dirty Jew" and "Death to the Jews" ring in the streets. Attacks from the far left and the far right, intermingled with a religious hatred due to the influx of Muslims—many of them young and radicalized—mean Europe's Jews have literally nowhere to turn. Many have chosen to remain in countries where for generations their families have lived but are increasingly uncomfortable with any outward expression of their Jewishness. Many others, however, have made *aliyah* (immigrated to Israel), recognizing Israel as their only safe haven. For Jews who would like to remain Jewish in any meaningful sort of way, says Goldberg, Europe is not the place to be.

After thousands of peaceful demonstrations around the world, it was announced on June 9 that a "parliamentary commission of inquiry will be formed to look into the deficiencies surrounding the case of Sarah Halimi." It remains to be seen if there will be justice for Sarah after all.

By Cheryl Hauer,  
*International Vice President*



## Delaying the Progression of Parkinson's Disease?



**Parkinson's disease** is the second most common neurodegenerative disease and affects more than 10 million people around the world. To better understand the origins of the disease, a team of researchers from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Penn State College of Medicine has developed an integrative approach, combining experimental and computational methods to understand how individual proteins may form harmful aggregates or groupings that are known to contribute to the development of the disease. They said their findings could guide the development of new therapeutics to delay or even halt the progression of neurodegenerative diseases.

Alpha-synuclein is a protein that helps regulate the release of neurotransmitters in the brain and is found in neurons. It exists as a single unit, but commonly joins together with other units to perform cellular functions. When too many units combine, it can lead to the formation of Lewy bodies, which are associated with neurodegenerative diseases like Parkinson's and dementia.

Although researchers know that aggregates of this protein cause disease, how they form is not well understood. Alpha-synuclein is highly disordered, meaning it exists as an ensemble of different conformations or shapes rather than a well-folded 3D structure. This characteristic makes the protein difficult to study using standard laboratory techniques, but the research team used computers together with leading-edge experiments to predict and study the different conformations it may fold into.

"Computational biology allows us to study how forces within and outside of a protein may act on it," said Nikolay Dokholyan, professor of pharmacology at the College of Medicine and Penn State Cancer Institute researcher. "Using experiments performed in Professor Eitan Lerner's laboratory at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Biological Chemistry department, a series of algorithms accounts for effective

forces acting in and upon a specific protein and can identify the various conformations it will take based on those forces. This allows us to study the conformations of alpha-synuclein in a way that is otherwise difficult to identify in experimental studies alone."

Using leading-edge experiments, the researchers found that some shapes of alpha-synuclein are surprisingly stable and last longer than milliseconds. They said this is much slower than estimates of a disordered protein that constantly changes conformations.

"Prior knowledge showed this spaghetti-like protein would undergo structure changes in microseconds," Lerner said. "Our results indicate that alpha-synuclein is stable in some conformations for milliseconds, slower than previously estimated."

"We believe that we've identified stable forms of alpha-synuclein that allow it to form complexes with itself and other biomolecules," said Jiaxing Chen, a graduate student at Penn State's College of Medicine. "This opens up possibilities for the development of drugs that can regulate the function of this protein."

Chen's lead co-author, Sofia Zaer, alongside colleagues at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, used a series of experimental techniques to verify that alpha-synuclein could fold into the stable forms the simulation predicted. The research team continues to study these stable conformations as well as the whole process of alpha-synuclein aggregation in the context of Parkinson's disease.

"The information from our study could be used to develop small molecule regulators of alpha-synuclein activity," Lerner said. "Drugs that prevent protein aggregation and enhance its normal neurophysiological function may interfere with the development and progression of neurodegenerative diseases."

Excerpt from a press release by  
Tali Aronsky, Hebrew University  
of Jerusalem

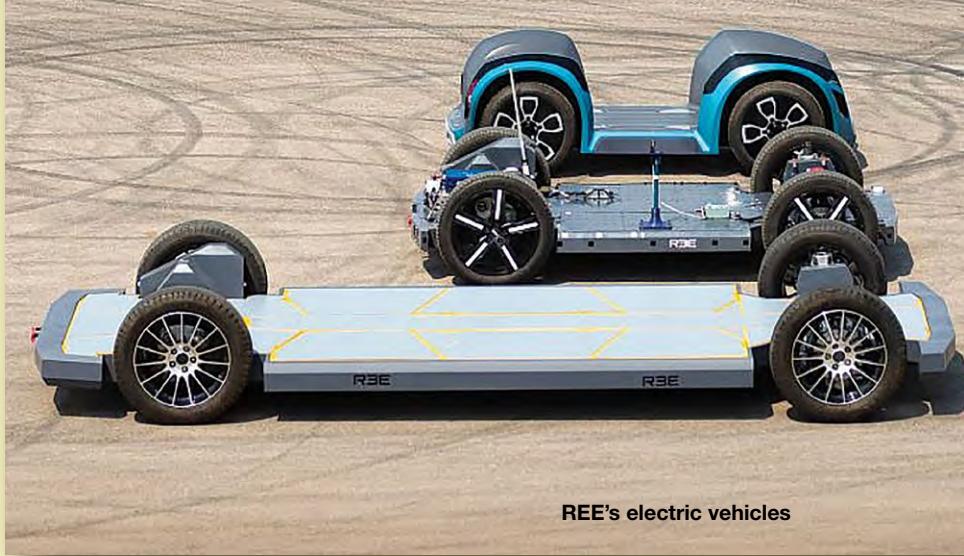
## Environment

# Toyota Teams Up with Israel to Develop Electric Commercial Vehicles

**Toyota subsidiary** Hino Motors Co. and the Israeli start-up REE Automotive announced their partnership to develop electric commercial vehicles to transport people and goods.

The companies said the signing of their business agreement shows their shared vision of “providing new value to society through next-generation commercial mobility” that is geared to “improve quality of life on a global scale by lowering carbon emissions, minimizing strain on infrastructure, reducing congestion and allowing companies to better allocate resources.”

Their electric commercial vehicles will be comprised of a modular platform (powered by REE) that will carry on top a customized Mobility Service Module [MSM], which will hold passengers and goods as well as deliver services. The MSM can also be detached from the electric vehicle platform and serve as an independent unit that can operate separately and continue to its next project.



REE's electric vehicles

Hino CEO Yoshio Shimo said, “REE is a visionary company, and I am confident that this business alliance will become a driving force as we take on the challenge of generating new value in commercial mobility to harmonize with future society.”

“We see this alliance as a unique opportunity to fulfill our shared mission of improving quality of life for people around the world by developing and bringing to market revolutionary next-generation electronic vehicles,” said Daniel Barel, co-founder and CEO of REE.

Excerpt from an article by JNS

## Technology

# Google, Tel Aviv University Launch Joint AI Program

**Google and Tel Aviv University** recently launched a program for promoting artificial intelligence [AI]-related multidisciplinary research for the benefit of society. The program aims to support research and collaborations in data science and artificial intelligence that can advance humanity by addressing social issues on a global agenda.

It started within the framework of TAD-TAU Center for Artificial Intelligence & Data Science, established in February and headed by Professor Meir Feder of the Iby and Aladar Fleischman Faculty of Engineering.

The three-year program was announced at a recent ceremony at the university, naming 10 winners out of 27 proposals submitted in response to the joint call. Seven of the winning projects are supported by Google.

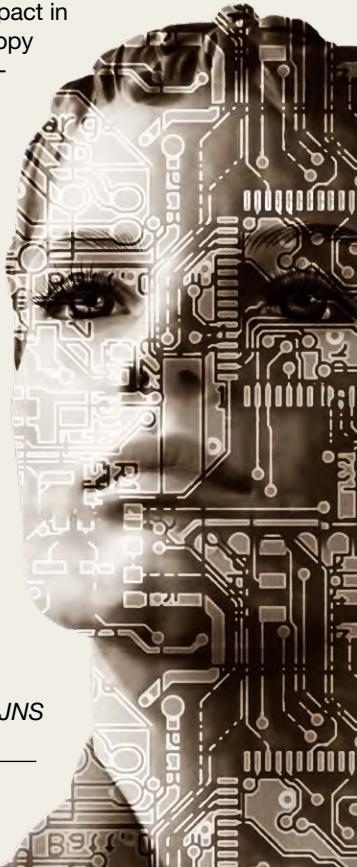
The grant winners, whose projects address aspects of “AI for Social Good,” include researchers from a wide range of disciplines, including zoology, electrical engineering, economics, statistics, communication disorders, biblical studies, earth sciences, computer science, sociology and anthropology.

Professor Yossi Matias, vice president of engineering at Google and the managing director of Google Center in Israel, spoke of AI technologies and how they

improve lives: “AI already has a great impact in various areas. Google is especially happy about its work on beneficial and even life-saving products, such as the worldwide project for accurate flood forecasting, technology enabling the hearing-impaired to conduct phone conversations and studies on the use of AI to enhance disease diagnosis.”

Professor and TAU president Ariel Porat, who aims to build “bridges” between different university disciplines, said at the ceremony: “I share a common vision with Professor Yossi Matias. We believe that AI researchers can benefit significantly from collaborations with researchers in the social sciences and humanities, just as the latter benefit from new developments in AI. I am very happy about our partnership with Google. I look forward to seeing its fruits and hope to expand it further in the future.”

Excerpt from an article by JNS





# Shuk Culture

ONE OF THE MOST DELIGHTFUL pillars of Israeli society is the concept of the *shuk* (marketplace). These vibrant outdoor markets thrive under Israel's sunny skies, offering everything from the freshest local goods to handmade souvenirs and eateries that delight foodies from all over the world. Vendors call on passers-by to sample their goods and haggle for the best price. And just as in Bible times, the *shuk* functions as both the food market and the gathering place for locals and visitors alike. A stroll through the *shuk* is as much a cultural experience as it is a shopping trip, because herein lies an ongoing celebration of the fruit of the land and a fresh lifestyle that influences everything else.

## Israel's Most Popular Markets

While you can find a *shuk* in cities all across Israel, there are a few that stand out in popularity. Arguably the most beloved *shuk* in all of Israel, the Machane Yehuda *shuk* in Jerusalem dates back to the days of the Ottoman Empire. Known simply as the *shuk* by Jerusalemites, Machane Yehuda offers an overwhelming plethora of aromas and colors within its crowded maze of shops. With more than 250 vendors to choose from, you will find everything from seasonal produce to locally sourced meat, cheese, nuts, baked goods and spices. And with the ever-increasing variety of top-chef restaurants, coffee shops, homegrown breweries and farm-to-table establishments, there is something here for everyone's taste buds.

Less than a 10-minute walk from the beach, Shuk Hacarmel (Carmel Market) is the largest and busiest market in Tel Aviv. In recent years, this *shuk* has evolved from its roots as a produce hub to one of the trendiest spots in Tel Aviv. The Carmel Market offers everything from local goods to electronics and is also a popular spot for clothing shopping. With its growing number of boutique stalls, this market feels much more contemporary than the *shuk* in Jerusalem, but nevertheless it offers the same stimulating blend of traditional marketplace and urban hub.

Perhaps the most antiquated of Israel's markets is the old city *shuk* in the city of Akko. This stunning port city is known for its ancient Crusader sites, and the architecture around its main marketplace tells of a rich history in the Middle East. Nestled right along the Mediterranean coast, the *shuk* in Akko is bursting with exotic smells such as rosewater and zaatar spices. In addition to offering the freshest produce and specialty herbs, it's also famous for its hummus eatery—Hummus Said—hotly debated by some as the best hummus in all of Israel.

## Every Day Fresh

The concept of a fresh air market is intrinsic to Israel because of the value it places on nurturing the fruit of the land. Thanks to greenhouses, advanced refrigeration techniques and the cultivation of different varieties, an incredible selection of fresh produce is available year-round in Israel. Staple produce such as lettuce, carrots, peppers, cabbage, onions, tomatoes, cucumbers, lemons and apples can always be found freshly stocked in every corner market throughout Israel. And because Israel imports a very small portion of produce, you can be sure that the majority of produce is grown locally. Consequently, each month brings a new variety of seasonal produce, making trips to a local *shuk* all the more exciting as the selection changes. Here is a quick (non-exhaustive) overview of the produce that is in season in Israel from month to month.

In 2020, Israel ranked 10th on the Bloomberg Global Health Index of the healthiest countries in the world. This comes as no surprise when you factor in the abundance of fresh foods available and the infusion of the Mediterranean diet, which consistently ranks as the healthiest diet, according to the *U.S. News & World Report*. Nutritionists around the world rave about the health benefits of the Mediterranean diet, and research shows that people living in Mediterranean regions are far less susceptible to heart disease, obesity and diabetes. This is primarily due to the plant-based nature of the Mediterranean diet, which puts precedence on fruits, vegetables and whole grains. This plant-based focus also makes the Mediterranean diet one of the most sustainable eating lifestyles that naturally cultivates a culture of fresh.

## Taste and See



I am continually inspired by the way that Israel stewards the fruit of its land and upholds a commitment to eating fresh and local. Every time I take a stroll through one of Israel's markets or enjoy a freshly chopped Israeli salad I am reminded of the words of the Psalmist: "Oh, taste and see that the *LORD* is good" (34:8a).

Sarah Yoder, BFP Staff Writer

## JANUARY

Mangold, Pomelo & Citrus Fruits



## FEBRUARY

Asparagus, Kumquat, Passion fruit & Rhubarb



## MARCH

Blood Orange, Chickpea & Fresh Garlic



## APRIL

Papaya, Cherry, Nectarine, Peach, Watermelon & Winter Squash



## MAY

Apricot, Okra, Pineapple & Plum



## JUNE

Fig & Lychee



## JULY

Blackberry, Mango & Raspberry



## AUGUST

Avocado, Dragon Fruit, Fresh Date & Sabra



## SEPTEMBER

Pomegranate, Banana, Lime & Pear



## OCTOBER

Star Fruit, Guava, Kiwi & Persimmon



## NOVEMBER

Strawberry & Baby Artichoke



## DECEMBER

Artichoke



# The Road to Emmaus

**It is a privilege** for Bible-believers to visit Israel, the Land of the Bible, and watch the black and white pages of their Holy Book transform into color before their very eyes. Not only are they reading the ancient accounts on the pages, they are now seeing the land and scenery up close, experiencing it for themselves.

The newly minted Emmaus Trail is a wonderful opportunity for Christians to walk where Jesus (Yeshua) walked, or simply for any hiker to experience the Holy Land up close and personal.

## The Biblical Account

*"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem"* (Luke 24:13).

This is the only time Emmaus is specifically mentioned in the Bible, but this site is significant because of what happened next. Luke's Gospel account says that Jesus (Yeshua) had just been crucified, but had already risen and appeared to a few of His followers.

Then He appeared to these two travelers, of whom the text tells very little, except that one was named Cleopas. When Jesus joined them on their journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus, Luke says they were prevented from recognizing Him.

Along the way, Cleopas and his companion discussed the previous events of Jesus' trial, execution and rumored resurrection, which had taken Jerusalem by storm—not knowing that they were speaking to the subject of all the excitement. Jesus then discussed Scripture with them until they reached Emmaus and the two travelers convinced Him to stay for the night and break bread with them.

*"Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight"* (Luke 24:30-31).

## Retracing the Ancient Path

This story is being brought back to life in Israel today, as a new hiking trail where modern-day pilgrims can follow in the ancient footsteps of Jesus (Yeshua) and the two travelers is sure to attract avid hikers and Christian wayfarers alike.

The trail begins at the Saxum Visitor Center in Abu Ghosh, just 9 miles (14 km.) outside Jerusalem. The visitor



Emmaus Trail

center, part of a nonprofit foundation based out of Italy, houses a courtyard surrounded by a wall with a timeline of biblical history in the Land, as well as a multimedia tour that includes interactive maps and models of Israel throughout history. After spending time in the center, the trailhead for the Emmaus Trail lies just nearby.



Emmaus Trail

The hike spans 11 miles (19 km.) from the visitor center through the Judean Hills, eventually spitting out into the Ayalon Canada Park. The Aijalon valley is mentioned several times throughout the *Tanakh* (Gen.–Mal.), most notably in the account of Joshua 10, when the Lord made the sun stand still over the battle of Gibeon in the Aijalon Valley. The modern-day Ayalon Canada Park includes a myriad of crisscrossing trails to enjoy, as well as the lush, tropical Ayalon Spring, where hikers can stop and rest.



Ayalon Spring

A quick crossing over a highway brings the pilgrims to the final stop: Emmaus Nicopolis. Run by the Catholic Beatitudes community, which has been taking care of the site since 1993, this site includes ruins of Byzantine mosaics, basilicas and apses as well as tombs and ancient baths from the Roman period. Nestled atop a nearby hill lies a monastery that houses a beautiful chapel as well as a museum that chronicles Emmaus's history over the centuries, including the *Tanakh* period and throughout the occupation of the Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders and Ottomans. Even the name Nicopolis hints at the site's history, as Emmaus was renamed Nicopolis by the Romans after they destroyed Jerusalem and conquered Judea.



Emmaus–Nicopolis site

## One Glaring Question

Luke's account says the journey from Jerusalem to Emmaus is seven miles (11 km.), though the original Greek actually says threescore furlongs (60 stadia), the common unit of measurement at the time. So why is the distance from Jerusalem to the modern-day site of Emmaus Nicopolis longer, at (18.6 mi./30 km.)? The short answer, scholars argue, is textual discrepancies. Some versions of the original manuscripts said 160 stadia instead of 60 stadia, which matches the 18-mile (30 km.) distance from the capital city to Emmaus Nicopolis.

## Walking in Ancient Shoes, Getting Perspective

No matter which way you measure it, it's a relatively long distance to walk. And bear in mind, the Gospels say that Jesus (Yeshua) was crucified at the time of Passover, which typically takes place during March or April. It's not the worst time of year for a hike in Israel, but it likely wasn't a cool, easy or comfortable walk for Jesus and His companions.

The hike from the Saxum Visitor Center in Abu Ghosh to Emmaus Nicopolis takes about five hours, though it is possible to break the hike into smaller segments, depending on time limitations and preferences. Nonetheless, hiking even a small part of this trail—walking where Jesus likely walked—is filled with beauty and meaning. The journeys we read about in the Scriptures are something we often skim over and take for granted—until we actually find ourselves hiking in Jesus' footsteps. Suddenly, a simple passage casually mentioning three people traveling seven miles (11 km.) takes on a new meaning.

Despite the heat, the sand between your toes and the sweat rolling down your back, you can't help but feel privileged to have the opportunity to walk these ancient paths and get a small taste of biblical life. Nonetheless, I can't help but wonder along the way whether Jesus would have just driven a van if He had the option.



Kate Norman, BFP Staff Writer

# Iran's Black Gold

## How Oil Fuels Terror

**IN THE SPRING OF 2019,** the Quds Force—the terror-sponsoring wing of Iran's powerful paramilitary Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC)—used an oil shipment scheme in Syria to transport almost 10 million barrels of crude oil, which sold for the equivalent of more than US \$500 million, a United States Treasury Department press release said. The profits Iran generated through those and other oil transactions had an ominous destination.

In October 2020, then-US Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin made it clear who was benefitting from Iran's oil sales. "The regime in Iran uses the petroleum sector to fund the destabilizing activities of the [Quds Force]," he said in a Treasury Department press release. "The Iranian regime continues to prioritize its support for terrorist entities and its nuclear program over the needs of the Iranian people."

That support for terror is massive. US Treasury Under Secretary Sigal Mandelker said in 2019 that Iran has provided billions of dollars for terror groups such as Hezbollah and Hamas. Moreover, in 2018, Mandelker said that Iran was providing "upwards" of US \$700 million per year to Hezbollah alone.

So if Iran is using oil to fund terrorism, how much chaos could the Islamic Republic buy? A lot. With sanctions lifted under the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, the US Energy Information Administration (EIA) estimated

that Iran's oil exports in 2017 totaled US \$55 billion, although that money has more uses than terror. Nonetheless, from Israel to Lebanon to Syria and beyond, much blood has no doubt been shed thanks to the profits from Iran's "black gold" oil industry.

### Power of Petrol

Due to the amount of money Iran can generate via oil, the impact of oil sanctions on Tehran

in recent years can be seen in more than one way.

Dr. Tomer Fadlon, a research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) and a lecturer at Tel Aviv University, noted that sanctions—which attempt to stop countries from buying Iranian oil—drive down the demand for Iranian oil and therefore its price, although cutting Iran out of the picture causes the overall oil price to go up. So even when Iran can sell the oil, it tends to be at a discount from the benchmark price.

Fadlon noted that when taken as a whole, the sanctions relief under the 2015 nuclear deal—known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)—and the subsequent renewal of sanctions in 2018 by the Trump administration caused economic whiplash in the Islamic Republic. In 2016, with sanctions lifted, Iran's economy exploded, growing by 12.5% in terms of gross domestic product (GDP), a common measure of overall economic success. In 2017, the GDP growth slowed but still increased by 4.3%. During that period, oil production increased as well to about double what Iran produces today. In 2018, when sanctions were renewed—including oil sanctions starting in November—the economy dropped more than 3%. 2019 was even worse. "We have to remember 2019 was a good year for economic growth all around the world [at around 3%]...and we saw the Iranian economy decline by 7%, which is major damage to Iran's economy," Fadlon explained.

While oil is the "most important sector" of Iran's economy, Fadlon noted that sanctions hit across the Iranian economy. Furthermore, Iran has been diversifying its economy with other industries, such as manufacturing goods, agriculture and mining. In fact, according to Fadlon, Iran's non-oil GDP has surpassed its oil GDP in recent years.

"[Oil is] very important to Iran's economy. However, every single time when we're discussing Iran and sanctions and Iran and the oil industry, we have to take into account that Iran is more prepared than ever for sanctions [with a lot of experience adjusting to them since 1979] and as a result developed other industries as well," Fadlon explained. He added that greater support from China also enhances Iran's ability to handle sanctions. Furthermore, Fadlon noted that while Iran wants to achieve an agreement with the world powers while its economy is under sanctions pressure, there is no guarantee that an agreement will lead to a change of behavior. Iran's support for terror after signing the JCPOA is a good example of that.

## Power of Pain

While sanctions—including oil sanctions—haven't stopped Iran's terror-wielding ways, the state of its economy seems to be impacting its behavior. Dr. Ephraim Kam, a senior research fellow at INSS, said that Iran has taken a more cautious approach to terrorist activities—and money is one reason why.

According to Kam, millions of Iranians are poor, and "the regime is concerned about the possibility that these poor people will try to undermine the regime. We hear from time to time demonstrations in Iranian cities shouting: 'Why is Iran spending money in Syria? Why is Iran spending money in Lebanon, in other countries? We need this money for the poor people of Iran.'"

Kam added that the assassination of spymaster Maj. Gen. Qassem Soleimani and nuclear scientist Dr. Mohsen Fakhrizadeh were devastating and a serious warning to discourage terrorist activities, as is the general global view opposing terrorism.

As for the impact of Iran's economic success, Kam noted that "one of the most important things in the Middle East" for Iran was keeping the Bashar al-Assad regime in power in Syria. Iran had to "spend a lot of money in order to make sure that this regime will survive, and they have been successful so far."

Aside from covert Iranian military expenses, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute reported in its Military Expenditure Database that Iranian military expenditure in 2017 was at its highest since 2010 as the economy grew quickly. Yet in 2019 and 2020, when sanctions were reinstated, military expenditure dropped significantly, with those years showing an almost 50% cut in military spending from 2017. Iran also spent big in 2016, which is before the JCPOA sanctions were fully lifted. While there is no clear cause and effect, it's still noteworthy.

Perhaps the truly terrifying potential of Iran's oil industry is the 2019 upsurge that generated the equivalent of half a billion dollars while Iran was subject to devastating US sanctions on its oil industry. If that's what Iran can do when their oil trade is crippled and covert, what could they accomplish with no restrictions at all?



Joshua Spurlock,  
*The Mideast Update*

# Yemin Moshe Outside the City Walls



## Crowning the ridge

overlooking the Hinnom Valley is a white-sailed windmill

called the Montefiore windmill, a seemingly out-of-place landmark near Jerusalem's center and directly across the valley from the Old City and Mount Zion.

At its base lies one of the oldest and loveliest residential neighborhoods in the city: Yemin Moshe. Next door and considered part of Yemin Moshe is the neighborhood of Mishkenot Sha'ananim. Take a stroll along the cobblestoned alleyways and one is struck by the tranquil atmosphere that hints little at Yemin Moshe's tumultuous past as the first Jewish neighborhood built outside Jerusalem's Old City walls.

## Escaping the Squalor

In the mid-19th century, the Old City was a dismal place. Small, filthy houses were inhabited by several Jewish families at one time, and the rampant overcrowding meant the city was a prime breeding ground for disease. Yet for most residents, the safety within the walls of the Old City far outweighed the squalor they had to endure. The fortress-like walls offered protection from bandits that preyed upon those unfortunate enough to be caught outside the city walls at night.

In 1857, British Jewish philanthropist Moses (Moshe) Montefiore determined to use his fortune to help the impoverished people of Jerusalem. Montefiore was the executor of US \$60,000 bequeathed to Jews in the Holy Land by an American Jew, Judah Touro. With it, Montefiore purchased some acres of land across the valley from Mount Zion to establish a hospital. Though the hospital never came to fruition, he decided to use the land to alleviate the housing crisis facing the poor Jewish population in the Old City. On the hillside, he built a long building which housed 28 two-bedroom apartments. To reassure prospective



residents of its safety, Montefiore built the houses of limestone with crenellated rooflines to mimic the Old City walls and enclosed the area with its own high stone wall. Six years later, he built a second building on the hillside above the first. He also built a windmill for milling flour, a textile factory and a printing press, intending to provide employment opportunities for the residents.

## Outside the Walls

Montefiore called this first neighborhood Mishkenot Sha'ananim, which means "Dwellings of Tranquility." He drew the name from Isaiah 32:18: "*My people will dwell in a peaceful habitation, in secure dwellings, and in quiet resting places...*"

But neither the high stone wall nor the peaceful name nor even the offer of payment to live in the new neighborhood was enough to convince the inhabitants of the Old City to leave its safety. It took a cholera epidemic inside the walls to eventually persuade families to venture out and take up residence. Even then, some of the inhabitants moved back into the Old City every night, too frightened to face the hostile bandits roaming the area.

## Turbulent History

By 1892, Mishkenot Sha'ananim was well established, and more homes were added in an extension of the neighborhood called Yemin Moshe (The Right Hand of Moses). The neighborhood was named in honor of Montefiore, who died in 1885 at 101 years of age and did not live to see the development of Yemin Moshe.

Yet even with its growing population of 900 people by 1920, Yemin Moshe was a dangerous place to live. The residents were targeted during the Arab riots in the 1920s and were in the sights of Arab snipers perched on the Old City walls during the uprisings in the 1930s. During the War of Independence in 1948, Yemin Moshe had to defend against violent Arab and Jordanian assaults. The area just below the neighborhood delineated the border between Israeli and Jordanian forces, and the residents, having

already endured so much, decided to abandon their homes and move out. For 19 long years, Yemin Moshe and Mishkenot Sha'ananim lay moldering in squalor, serving as a shelter for destitute Turkish and Iraqi immigrants.

Then in 1967, Israeli troops reunited Jerusalem in the Six Day War. Yemin Moshe was no longer on the border separating Israel and Jordan, but the conflict had left it in tatters. Plans for its rehabilitation included having the Turkish and Iraqi immigrants moved to other parts of the city while well-heeled residents moved in with money enough to renovate the neighborhood to its current glory.

## Yemin Moshe Today

Yemin Moshe's quiet, pedestrian streets (there are no cars allowed) echo with the sounds of birdlife, the footfalls of walkers and the laughter of families enjoying its serene gardens. The original limestone homes gated with colorful wrought iron and draped with bougainvillea are located on multiple levels as the neighborhood climbs gracefully up the hill. The narrow alleyways are a popular place for those who want to get away from the bustle of central Jerusalem and take in the views across the valley to the Old City. A short walk down into the valley and up the steep path to Mount Zion will put you in the Old City in a matter of minutes.

The restored buildings of Mishkenot Sha'ananim have been transformed into a cultural center, providing accommodation for visiting artists, authors and musicians, and a home for the prestigious Jerusalem Music Center.

Today, Yemin Moshe's windmill also stands restored and is a striking testament to Montefiore's efforts to build up Zion. He chose to be the "right hand" of the Lord, and the biblical vision for a prosperous, restored Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6–9) has borne fruit in the beautiful neighborhood he inspired.

Kathy DeGagne, BFP Staff Writer





# WHO'S IN THE CROSSHAIRS?

**THROUGHOUT THE 11-DAY CONFLICT** in May when Hamas fired more than 4,300 rockets in nearly uninterrupted volleys on Israeli civilians, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) retaliated to protect its people from the deadly attack. Like nearly all military operations in its 73-year history, Operation Guardian of the Walls unleashed a floodgate of condemnation, accusation and slanders against Israel. The plot was nothing new, casting Israel in the role of oppressive aggressor, instigating a one-sided fight against the hapless Palestinians and using its superior power to target innocent civilians with impunity. As charges, denunciations and outrages resounded across traditional and social media, whipping a generation obsessed with social justice into a frenzy, the truth of the conflict fell by the wayside. Israel did not start the fight. The conflict was not between Israel and Palestinians but rather between the only democracy in the Middle East and a terror organization ready to wipe Israel from the map. But perhaps more importantly, Israel wasn't the one targeting innocent civilians. In fact, throughout the 11 days of rockets and retaliatory air strikes, Israel went to every length to safeguard the lives of Gazan civilians. The same cannot be said for Hamas.



*"The IDF does more to safeguard the rights of civilians in a combat zone than any other army in the history of warfare. The IDF took extraordinary measures to give Gaza civilians notice of targeted areas, dropping millions of leaflets, broadcasting radio messages, sending texts and making tens of thousands of phone calls. Many IDF missions that could have taken out Hamas military capabilities were aborted to prevent civilian casualties. Hamas, on the other hand, committed war crimes as official government policy, positioning its military assets among the civilian population, hiding weapons in schools and hospitals and placing rocket launchers alongside apartment buildings, then forced those civilians to stay in areas they knew would be attacked."*

—Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander of the British Forces in Afghanistan

*"We are targeting a terror organization that is targeting our civilians and hiding behind their civilians, using them as human shields. We are doing everything we can to hit the terrorists themselves, their rockets, their rocket caches, their arms, but we're not going to let them get away with it—and neither would you. Just imagine what would have happened if you had 2,900 rockets fired on Washington and New York."*

—Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

*"Hamas killed them [the civilians who perished in Gaza]. If you are hiding your rockets behind women and children, you are effectively murdering your own people. Make no mistake, we will defend ourselves. And if Hamas decides to turn schools and hospitals into terror bases in a cowardly manner, they are responsible for murdering their own people...Hamas, instead of taking their money and investing in building hospitals and schools, in building a future for its people, is spending all its money on terror, on trying to kill Israelis."*

—Naftali Bennett, former defense minister and opposition party leader

*"This was not a war against the Palestinians. It was an operation of self-defense against Hamas and related terror organizations. Unfortunately, this task was made extremely difficult by Hamas, as they made the choice to use civilians as human shields. Thus, protecting civilians was almost impossible, but I am proud of the way that we did it—our own forces took safety risks in order to protect Palestinians."*

—Senior IDF officer in the aftermath of Operation Cast Lead in 2009

*"Hamas committed internationally recognized war crimes and made it impossible for the IDF to avoid collateral damage to civilians and civilian objectives in pursuit of legitimate military objectives during the operation."*

—Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Command control: *"Check if there are any children there. There are probably children there. We are stopping everything."*

Pilot: *"That's right. There is a big one and a few smaller ones."*

Command control: *"We can't continue given the possibility that there are children."*

—The IDF calls off an air strike on a known Hamas target after spotting children in the area

*"It was abundantly clear that IDF commanders had gone beyond any mandates that international law requires to avoid civilian casualties. Hamas's playbook calls for helping to kill its own civilians, while the IDF's playbook goes to extreme—some say inappropriate—lengths to protect innocent life in war."*

—Willy Stern, veteran journalist and law professor at Vanderbilt Law School

The IDF *"is setting an unreasonable precedent for other democratic countries of the world who may also be fighting in asymmetric wars against brutal non-state actors who abuse these laws."*

—Wolff Heintschel von Heinegg, military law expert at European University Viadrina Frankfurt

*"Hamas can invest in bunkers and sirens for civilians. It doesn't. In no other conflict is one side told it has to provide air defense to the other side."*

—Seth J. Frantzman, author and journalist, exposing the hypocrisy of the accusations

*"Today, I read a vile comment that Israel's goal is 'dead Palestinians and bombed out buildings.' If that were the case, rather than only 69 casualties, there would be 6,900, or 69,000 deaths. Israel has the firepower, but Israel tactically is careful to warn and evacuate civilians from areas in which terrorists are hiding, even if that means that terrorists get away. Israel is not a country celebrating death, on their side or ours."*

—Jonathan Feldstein, a resident of central Israel, sums up the situation

*"Ironically enough, it is the leaders of Hamas themselves who best understand the extraordinary measures the IDF will take to protect innocent civilians. They take full advantage of Israel's decency and adherence to the law of war. No army takes such risks in order to protect civilians as the Israeli army does. I say this as a professional soldier. I say it because it is true. And people who care about truth should know it."*

—Colonel Richard Kemp, former commander of the British Forces in Afghanistan



# TOURS

## Australia

### ENCOUNTER ISRAEL TOUR

October 2022 (exact dates to be determined)

**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

### ISRAEL AND JORDAN—GTI SIGNATURE TOUR

September 25–October 7, 2021

**Hosted by: Randy Alonso**

A GTI Signature Tour creates a unique context in which you can see Scripture in a new light while enjoying the rich joys of international travel within a like-minded community. Aside from going with your own church, a GTI Signature Tour is the best way to experience the land and lessons of the Bible. Contact info: <https://gtitours.org/trip/signature-israel>

### 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 “FOLLOWING JESUS” ISRAEL TOUR 2021

March 7–18, 2022

**Hosted by: Bill & Liz Adams**

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

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

# VOLUNTEER WITH US

The pandemic has left us short-staffed and in need of both long- and short-term volunteers to fill the gap. Now that the world's borders are reopening, join our team of volunteers in Israel to make a difference in the lives of the Israeli people.

**Administrative Assistant**  
(Long-term)



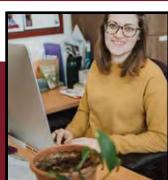
**Food Bank Floor Workers**  
(Short-term)



**Graphic Designer**  
(Long-term)



**Home Repair Team**  
(Long-term)



**Business Services Supervisor**  
(Long-term)

**Web Developer**  
(Long-term)

# Baba Ganoush



By Sarah Yoder, *BFP Staff Writer*

**THIS CLASSIC** Mediterranean dip is a great addition for any party. We're including a basic recipe as well as a few zesty variations!

## Ingredients

- |                           |                               |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1 large eggplant          | Salt to taste                 |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced   | 2 Tbsp. olive oil for garnish |
| 1/4 cup tahini            | Fresh pita, flatbread or      |
| 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice | crackers for dipping          |

## Directions

1. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Cut eggplant in half and pierce in several places with a fork to vent.
3. Place halves on a baking sheet and roast for 40–50 minutes, turning the eggplant every 10 minutes until it is soft. Allow to cool.
4. Peel off and discard the skin, keeping only the flesh.
5. Place the eggplant flesh in a food processor. Add the garlic, tahini, lemon juice and salt and blend until the mixture is smooth and creamy.
6. Garnish with olive oil.

## Variations

### Pomegranate & Parsley

- Add a handful of fresh parsley to the eggplant flesh mixture before blending.
- Garnish with olive oil, fresh parsley and pomegranate arils.

### Zaatar & Labneh

- Substitute labneh in place of tahini.
- Add 2 teaspoons of zaatar seasoning to eggplant flesh mixture before blending.
- Garnish with olive oil and zaatar.

### Chilli & Lime

- Substitute lime juice in place of lemon.
- Add 2 teaspoons of chilli powder and 1 teaspoon of cumin to eggplant flesh mixture before blending.
- Garnish with olive oil, chilli powder and red pepper flakes.

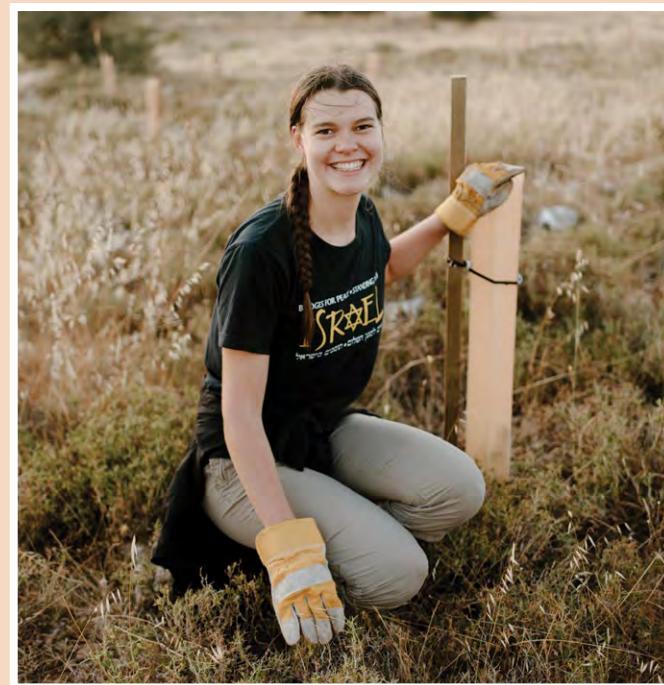
# 73 Fun Facts about Israel

**Check out a list** of 73 weird, wacky and remarkable things about this tiny country in the Middle East.

1. Israel has the highest number of altruistic kidney donations per capita in the world: 1,005 in the past 11 years.
2. The oldest tree in Israel is a jujube tree, thought to be between 1,500–2,000 years old.
3. Scientists in Israel managed to grow fresh dates from sixth-century seeds.
4. The Israel postal service has a Letters to God department for letters arriving from around the world addressed to God. They are placed into the cracks of the Western Wall.
5. About 1 million notes are left in the Western Wall every year.
6. At the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, an old wooden ladder has been propped up against a window since the 18th century. No one can move it because the building is managed by six different churches and none can agree on who owns the ladder.
7. Israel is the only country to have revived a dead language and made it the national language.
8. The hottest temperature ever recorded in Israel was 54°C (129.2°F) in the northern Jordan Valley.
9. While Jerusalem has snowstorms every few years, Tel Aviv has only had one snowstorm in its history. In 1950, it snowed 12 to 18 centimeters (4.7 to 7 in.).
10. More than half the landmass of Israel is desert, but it still has an Olympic bobsled and skeleton team.
11. Israel leads the world in a share of the total population that received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine and in the number of vaccination doses administered per 100 people in the total population.
12. Israel is a global leader in medical clowning and was the first country to send medical clowns into COVID-19 wards.
13. In 2007, Israeli businesswoman Shari Arison initiated Good Deeds Day to encourage people to help each other. That year, 7,000 people took part in Israel. In 2019, 3.9 million people from 108 countries took part.
14. Israel is bordered by snowy peaks at one end and a desert beach on the other.
15. Israel has 137 beautiful beaches.
16. Israel is piloting a locally developed AI system to help lifeguards protect swimmers and give real-time data on possible hazards.
17. Israel recycles 90% of wastewater, making it the leading nation for water recycling.
18. A group of artists in Netanya created the world's largest mosaic made of socks, using 12,000 in total.
19. Cows in Israel produce more milk on average than cows in other countries.
20. An Israeli company has developed a revolutionary spray-on skin made of nanofiber to help heal wounds.
21. Israelis love kids. With an average of three children per woman, Israel has the highest fertility rate among the 37 countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.
22. Israel performs more in-vitro fertilization per capita than any other country, and it's free for the first two babies.
23. Babies in Israel are 10 times less likely to be allergic to peanuts than in other countries. Studies suggest it's because they eat Bamba peanut snacks from an early age.
24. According to Wikipedia, there are seven ways to eat a Krembo, one of Israel's favorite snacks.
25. Members of a voluntary organization called Trail Angels open their homes to hikers on the 1,025-kilometer (637-mile) Israel Trail, offering free beds and showers.
26. Israel is roughly half the size of Lake Michigan.
27. The glue on Israel's postage stamps is kosher.
28. Israel has more than 50 alternative meat start-ups. Perhaps it's no surprise, given that the country has more vegans per capita than other countries.
29. Researchers in Israel have grown mouse embryos in bottles in a revolutionary way to observe the first stages of mammalian embryonic development.
30. In 2020, Israel was the eighth most expensive country to live in the world.
31. Israelis eat some 24 million *sufganiyot* (doughnuts) during *Hanukkah* [Festival of Lights].
32. In 2020, Tel Aviv was named the fifth most expensive city to live in the world.
33. An Israeli company has developed a paint that uses sunlight to activate a cooling mechanism on cars, buildings, planes and clothing, providing air conditioning without electricity.
34. Israel takes in more immigrants per capita than any other country in the world.
35. In 2020, the most popular baby names in Israel were Mohammad for boys and Miriam for girls.
36. Syrian hamsters were first domesticated as pets by a zoologist at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

- 
37. Israel has more museums per capita than any other country in the world.
38. Israel has its very own Stonehenge, an ancient stone circle with rock walls that jut 243.84 centimeters [8 ft.] into the sky. The stone structure is around 5,000 years old.
39. The Mount of Olives is the oldest continuously used cemetery in the world.
40. Israel is home to the largest known dog cemetery of the ancient world.
41. Israeli students won an international award for producing real honey without bees, using a bacterium programmed to “learn” how to make honey.
42. An Israeli company has developed an atmospheric water generator that can create clean drinking water from the air.
43. Israel has the largest underground hospital in the world: the 2,000-bed Sammy Ofer Fortified Underground Emergency Hospital at Rambam Health Care Campus.
44. In Israel, it is legal to write the Jewish calendar date on all official documents instead of the Gregorian date.
45. A Tel Aviv company has invented a folding car that can retract its wheels for snug spots, but still can reach speeds of 55 miles [88 km.] per hour.
46. An Israeli company provides off-grid, solar-powered, automatic handwashing stations to developing countries to fight the spread of life-threatening infections.
47. Hebrew University’s revolutionary “human on a chip” aims to replace animal testing for new pharmaceuticals.
48. When Israel was founded in 1948, there were only 806,000 residents. The population reached 2 million in 1958 and is expected to reach 10 million in 2024.
49. In 2020, 28% of Israel’s population was under the age of 14, and only 12% older than 65.
50. In Israel, people stumble on amazing ancient finds while out hiking.
51. Archeologists discovered the world’s oldest woven basket in the Judean Desert.
52. The oldest-ever cave tool was found in Israel.
53. The field of video therapy was invented at Jerusalem’s Ma’aleh School of Television, Film and the Arts.
54. In a tech-first, Israeli scientists made a robot using a dead locust’s ear to hear.
55. People are taught from an early age to turn off the tap while brushing their teeth to save water.
56. A meal without a salad is not a meal. Even breakfast.
57. Tel Aviv has more than 4,000 Bauhaus buildings, the largest concentration of any city.
58. An Israeli company has developed the world’s first autonomous beehive. It can house up to 40 bee colonies and take care of their health and upkeep with an app.
59. Israel was the first country to ban underweight models from fashion shows.
60. During Passover, supermarkets are not allowed to sell *chametz* [leaven]. Large sections of the shops are covered in plastic sheets.
61. In Hebrew, Happy Christmas is *Chag Molad Sameach*, which means Happy Festival of the Birth.
62. In Israel, the most common way to mop the floor is by flooding the floor with water and using a long-handled squeegee to push the dirty water outside or down the nearest drain.
63. Israeli toilets have two handles: A smaller one that releases less water to flush down #1, and a larger one that elicits more water to get rid of #2.
64. Israel’s Parliament, the Knesset, has 120 seats because it’s modeled after the Second Temple-era *Knesset HaGedolah* (the Great Assembly), a leadership body of 120 sages, prophets and scribes.
65. In Israel, there’s hardly such thing as a gift registry for weddings. Instead, people come bearing envelopes full of cash.
66. Matzot Aviv in Bnei Brak baked the world’s largest *matzah* [unleavened bread] this year.
67. The Israel Start-Up Nation cycling team’s roster for the 2021 season includes 32 riders from Israel and 16 other countries.
68. Tel Aviv University launched the world’s only Center for Combating Pandemics, aiming to create best practices for infection containment, vaccine and treatment development and social and economic resilience.
69. Israeli companies raised a record-breaking [US] \$10 billion in investments during 2020, despite the uncertainty caused by the worldwide pandemic.
70. 85% of Israeli households get hot water from rooftop solar heaters.
71. An Israeli scientist’s invention to turn dog droppings into odorless, sterile fertilizer powder instantly is starting to revolutionize how animal and human waste is disposed of.
72. Israel has more than 300 wineries.
73. Israel is the 12th happiest nation on earth, according to the UN World Happiness Report.

Excerpt from an article by Nicky Blackburn,  
Israel/21c via JNS



**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.

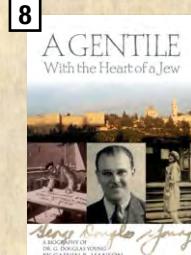
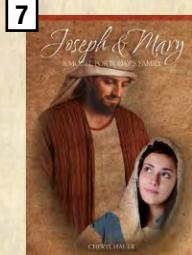
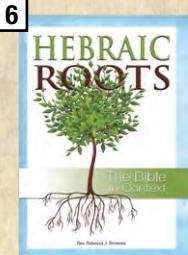
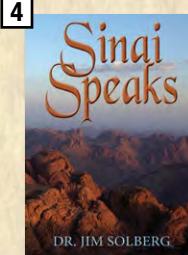
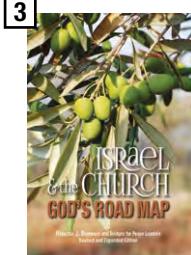
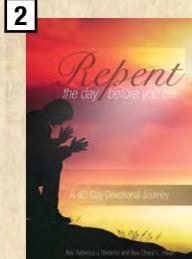


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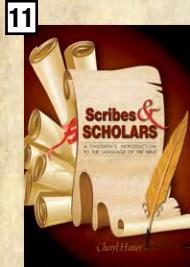
**“Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good;  
Blessed is the man who trusts in Him!”**

**Psalm 34:8**





## Children's Books

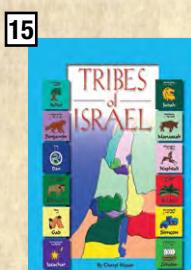
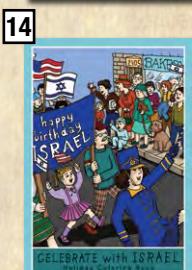
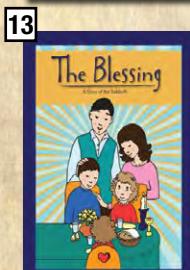


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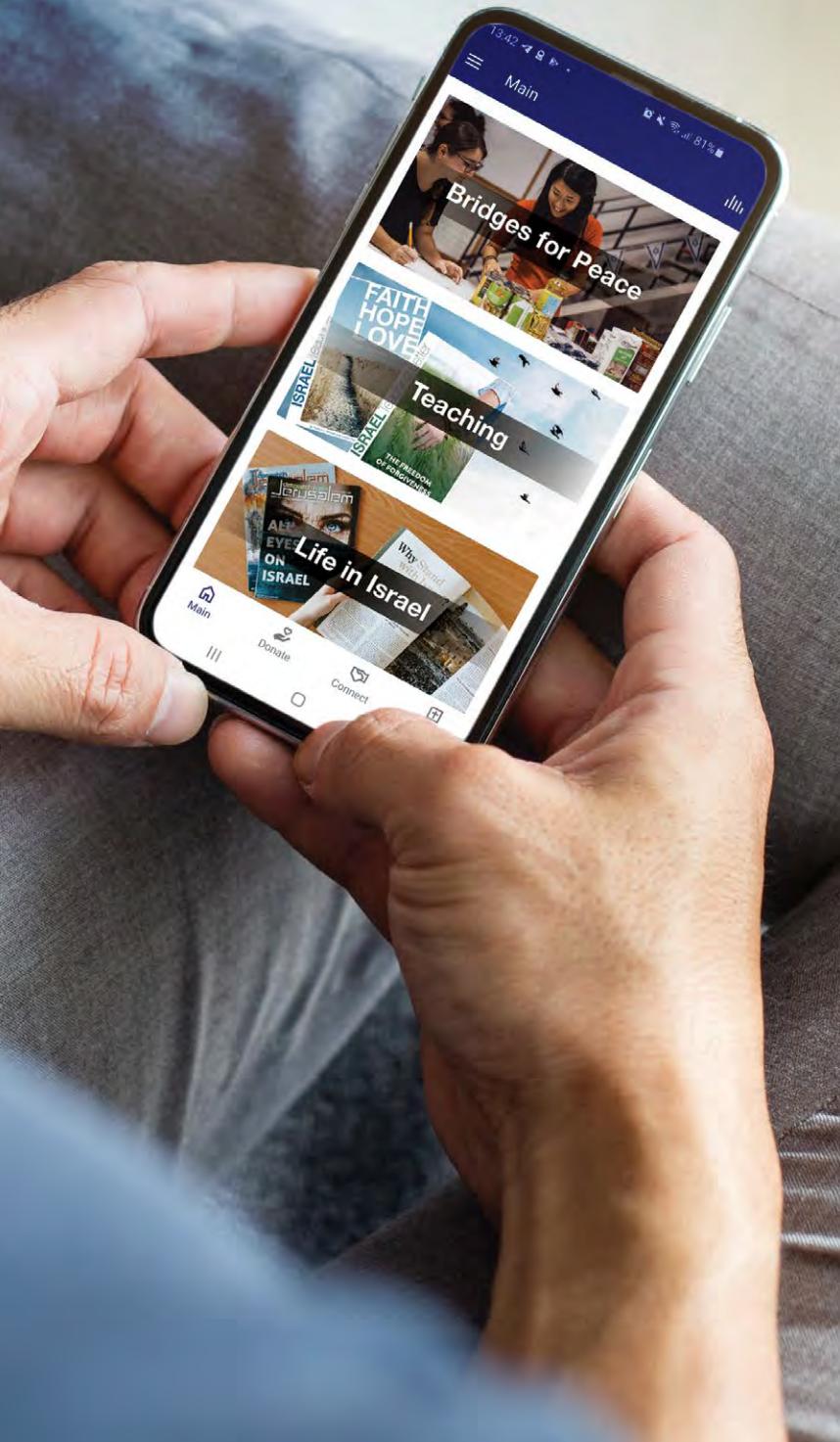
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