

# dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

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## A Rabbi, an Imam and a Bishop Religious Pluralism in Israel





# BRIDGES FOR PEACE

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

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

## We are committed to the following goals:

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

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

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

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

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

## Dispatch from Jerusalem

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

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

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**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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## To Strike or Not to Strike

The rise in rhetoric regarding a military approach to Iran's nuclear ambitions raises crucial questions: Why the sudden focus on a military solution? Are the warnings merely psychological warfare? Does Israel have the capacity for military action? And if so, what would such action entail?

*By Ilse Strauss*

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## Capital Concern: US Palestinian Consulate in Jerusalem

For millennia, Jerusalem has been the capital of Israel—other nations just didn't always recognize it as such. In 2017, the United States changed its approach by acknowledging Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Now the Palestinians hope a new president in the White House will undo that historic move.

*By Joshua Spurlock*

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One of many African nations that is no stranger to a sordid history of violent coups, revolution and civil war is Ethiopia. There is a particular group whose fate always hangs in the balance as the winds of instability blow through this east African nation: the Jews of Ethiopia.

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## Keeping Jerusalem Green

Situated on a plateau in the Judean Mountains with an elevation of approximately 2,600 feet (792 m.), Jerusalem's arid climate and lack of a natural water supply are hardly the recipe for a lush landscape. The fact that Jerusalem is green at all is a tribute to Jewish tenacity.

*By Janet Aslin*

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## Beauty for Ashes

On November 16, 2021, Israel hosted a unique annual event that is a remarkable celebration of life—with just a touch of glam. The Miss Holocaust pageant is a rallying cry from every contestant calling on the world to remember, to never forget and to celebrate life.

*By Cheryl Hauer*

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## A Rabbi, an Imam and a Bishop

Israel was reborn just three years after World War II and the Holocaust. After that horrifying genocide, the Jewish people simply wanted a haven to live and practice their faith in safety. That's exactly what they got—and they have allowed it to be a safe place for other religions to worship freely as well.

*By Kate Norman*



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## Tracing the Palestinians

Israel's actions, decisions and even existence are habitually judged in the context of another people group: the Palestinians. In fact, Israel's position on the world stage cannot be fully comprehended without factoring in the Palestinians. But who exactly are the Palestinians?

*By Ilse Strauss*

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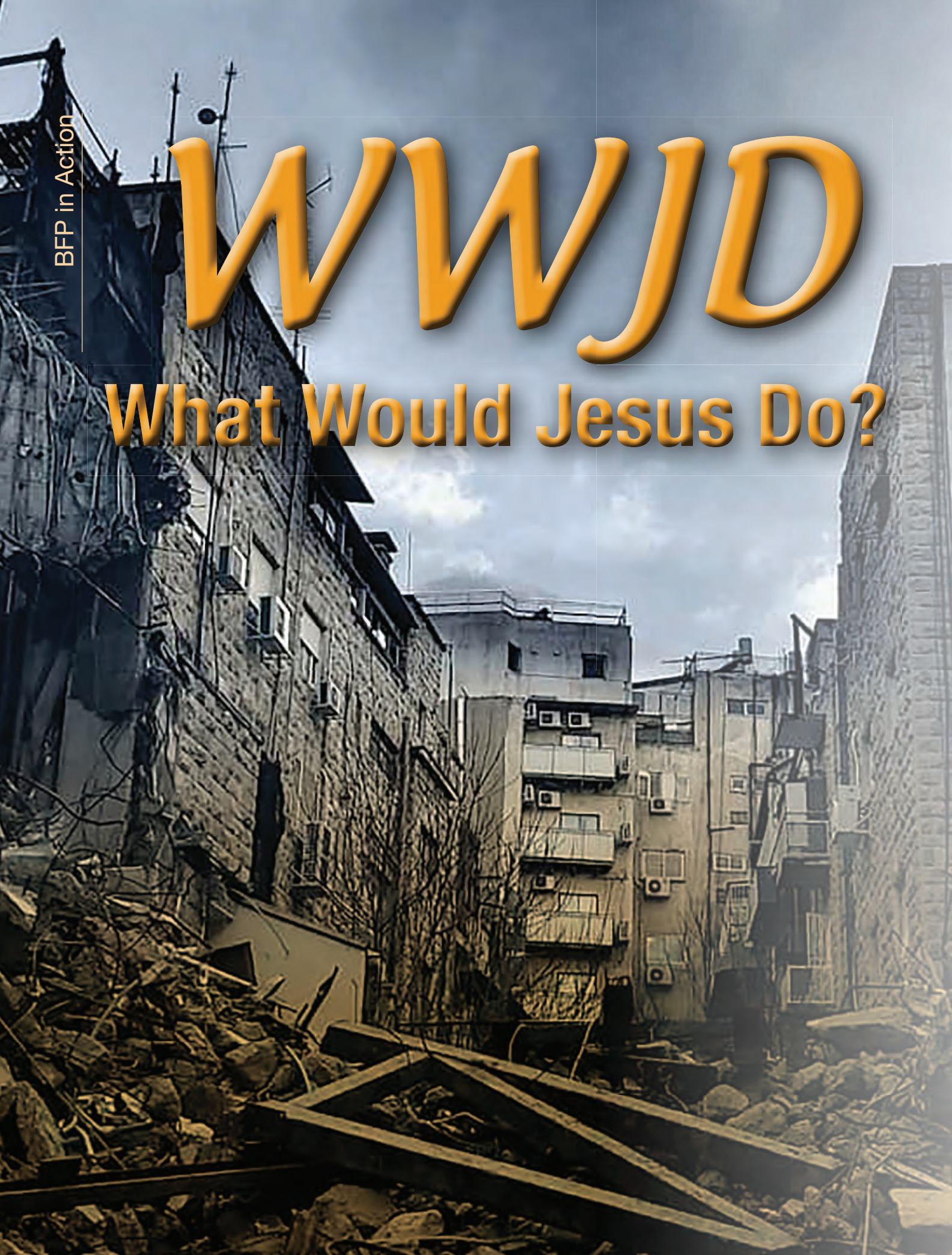
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BFP in Action

# WWJD

## What Would Jesus Do?





**Many voices** in the Christian world are speaking about the difficult days the world is facing and asking questions about the end of the age. I have heard Matthew 24 cited on many occasions. This chapter is the first part of the Olivet Discourse, when Jesus (Yeshua) answered similar questions from His disciples. They also lived in difficult times under Roman oppression, and it must have seemed like the end was near. I have another question: How does Jesus want us to act in the midst of troubling times like those described in Matthew 24? If we stop reading at the end of chapter 24, we have only received half of Jesus' message. Chapter 25 continues by telling us how we should behave.

### BE READY

First is the parable of the 10 virgins, five wise and five foolish (Matt. 25:1–13). The main point of this story is that we should be prepared. Certainly, the oil lamps represent the work of God's Spirit in our hearts, but could also refer to physical preparation. Jesus wants us to keep our lamps full of oil.

### USE RESOURCES WISELY

The parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14–30) is about money! A talent was a measure of currency. The master entrusted his wealth into the hands of his servants and expected them to use them to further his business. This parable shows us that God has entrusted us with finances that He expects us to use for Kingdom purposes. In the parable, the master praises those who used his funds wisely, saying, *"Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord"* (Matt. 25:21, 23).

### TAKE CARE OF THE NEEDY

Finally, we have the judgment of the nations (people groups) in Matthew 25:31–46. They will be judged by how they take care of the weak, those who are hungry and thirsty, prisoners, strangers and those who are sick. Jesus says, *"Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to Me"* (25:40b ESV).

### MATTHEW 25 MINISTRY

At Bridges for Peace, we take this to heart. We study the Word of God to be able to share spiritual understanding with Christians all over the world. It is our prayer that God will use our teaching materials, our Bible reading program and our prayer emphasis to help you keep your lamps full.



We value stewardship. We are audited annually. We are recognized as being fiscally responsible by organizations like the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability and Ministry Watch. It is in our heart to bless Israel and the Jewish people, so we do not spend God's resources frivolously.

We are feeding the hungry (over 23,000 each month). We are helping immigrants come to Israel, providing for elderly Holocaust survivors and providing for school children from needy homes. We comfort those who mourn.

I don't know where we are in God's timetable, but I do know that Jesus wants us to be ready—spiritually and materially, to use God's resources wisely and to minister to those in need. Will you join us today in reaching out to the Jewish people in Israel and to those in the Diaspora (the Jewish population outside Israel) who are waiting to come home? I pray that we will all hear the words *"Well done, good and faithful servant"* (Matt. 25:21a, 23a). Your year-end gift to Bridges for Peace will touch the recipients with Christian love and put a smile on Jesus' face.

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



# The War on Anti-Semitism is NEVER-ENDING

On January 27, the world remembers the Holocaust on International Holocaust Memorial Day. Over 75 years have passed since the Nazis tried to destroy all Jews. Today, it is more important than ever to stand up for the Jewish people in the light of ongoing anti-Semitism and attempts to destroy Israel and the Jewish people.

On October 26, a small demonstration was held outside the center of the Jewish community in San Antonio, Texas. The demonstrators, a group calling itself the Goyim Defense League, held a banner reading: "Honk if you know the Holocaust is fake." These anti-Semites did so in broad daylight for all to see. And the drivers? Some did honk alright. The identities of the group's members are known, and they frequently participate in anti-Semitic events and spread hate, but no one does anything about that. They're free to throw their slime everywhere.

This small group from Texas is not the problem. The problem is how countries make empty promises and issue well-worded statements while the war on anti-Semitism is clearly located very low on their priority list.

This indifference is the root of all evil. Adolf Hitler tested the world's response to systemic abuse of Jews on November 9, 1938. In this anti-Jewish pogrom—known as Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass—dozens of Jews were murdered, tens of thousands were arrested and shipped to concentration camps, and about 1,400 synagogues and Jewish businesses were burned to the ground. The world was indifferent to the horrors that began in Europe on Kristallnacht. Hitler realized he could harm and kill Jews unimpeded, and so began the greatest crime even though the writing was on the wall.

When discussing the lessons of the Holocaust, we must remember that it didn't come out of the blue. It was preceded by years of incitement and discrimination.

Holocaust education and the war on anti-Semitism go hand in hand and depend on each other. Without Holocaust education, anti-Semitism can't be stopped. We are a part of the last generation that can hear firsthand the stories from those who have gone through that hell, the ones who witnessed that anti-Semitism from the beginning to the very cruel end.

In 2021, anti-Semitism continued to run rampant unhindered the world over. A recent survey by the American Jewish Committee shows one in four American Jews has been victim of anti-Semitism in the past year; 40% of respondents testified that they felt the need to hide their Judaism or cut back on activities regarded as Jewish. A quarter moderated the content they published online so they wouldn't be identified as Jews, 22% changed their attire and 17% reconsidered going to certain places. In some European countries, such as Germany, France and Britain, the situation is similar or worse.

Anti-Semitism must be confronted anywhere and at any time it rears its ugly head, in the streets and virtual spaces. We can't stop fighting and think the threat is behind us. Racism, if left alone, metastasizes, and in time, it will spread to all parts of society.

The March of the Living will soon return to march on Polish soil, where millions of our people were murdered. We'll continue to remember, march and shine a light against anti-Semitism, racism and hatred wherever we can.

Dr. Samuel Rosenman, *Ynetnews*



# IDF Warns

## 2,500 Rockets per Day from Hezbollah in Future Conflict

**Israelis should brace** for a volley of up to 2,500 rockets raining down daily in the event of war between the Jewish state and the Lebanese terror group Hezbollah, according to a senior Israeli military official.

Speaking to *AFP*, Maj.-Gen. Uri Gordon, chief of Israel's Home Front Command, provided a chilling context for the estimation.

"Over the course of the 11-day conflict between Israel and Hamas in May, the Gaza-based terror group fired approximately 4,400 missiles towards the Jewish state..."

The Lebanese terror group, however, is expected to up the rocket ante significantly. In case of a future "conflict or a war with Hezbollah, we expect more than five times the number of rockets fired every day from Lebanon to Israel," Gordon held. "Basically, we are looking at between 1,500 and 2,500 rockets fired daily towards Israel."

During the conflict with Hamas in May, Israel's Iron Dome air defense system proved invaluable, shooting down nearly 90% of incoming rockets from the Gaza Strip heading for populated centers and saving countless lives. As a result, only 300 of the nearly 4,400 projectiles actually struck populated areas. However, Israel may not have a similar advantage when facing Hezbollah. A barrage of some 2,500 rockets per day—particularly when concentrated on a specific target—may prove a challenge for the Iron Dome.

Gordon stressed that Israel does not want war with Hezbollah. However, with an enemy committed to its destruction burrowed in on Israel's northern border, it pays to be ready.

"We are preparing for all options and scenarios, including military capabilities," a security source told *AFP*.

*Ilse Strauss, Bridges for Peace*

## Hamas Threatens Renewed Violence against Israel

**Hamas sources claim** that the Palestinian terror group is weighing escalating violence against Israel after weeks of relative calm while launching an unusual attack against Egypt for its mediation between the parties.

In an interview with *Al-Jazeera*, the source claimed that Cairo did not keep its promise to rehabilitate the Gaza Strip after the May war with Israel and ease the blockade on the Palestinian enclave, and continues to put hurdles for Gazans who wish to leave the territory through the Rafah border crossing [with Egypt].

"The Egyptian behavior violates its promises to oblige Israel to fulfill all its obligations in exchange for the opposition being bound to calm down," the source said. "We express great dissatisfaction with the conduct of the Egyptian mediators and their withdrawal from their promises to the Gaza Strip."

The threats come after long weeks of calm in the Gaza Strip, which stem from the progress in Egyptian-mediated negotiations between Israel and Gaza factions and the import of goods into the Gaza Strip through the Kerem Shalom border crossing.

*Elior Levy, Ynetnews*





# Girl Discovers 2,000-Year-Old COIN

**A SHEKEL MADE OF PURE SILVER** that was used for trade in Jerusalem about 2,000 years ago during the Second Temple period was discovered in Jerusalem by an 11-year-old girl.

The rare coin was discovered by the girl who came with her family to the “archeological experience” operated by the City of David together with the National Parks Authority in the Emek Tzurim Sifting Project in Jerusalem.

Scholars believe the coin unearthed was extracted from the many silver reserves kept in the Second Temple and was probably minted by one of the Temple priests, who joined forces with the Great Revolt of the Jews against the Romans shortly before the destruction of the Second Temple.

The coin weighs about 14 grams [0.5 oz.]. On one side is an inscription of a cup with the caption “Israeli shekel” and next to the cup are the letters ב”ש, shorthand for “second year,” thus the second year of the Great Revolt of the Jews

against the Romans (AD 67–68). On the other side of the coin is an inscription identified by scholars as the headquarters of the high priest, and next to it appears in ancient Hebrew script the words “Holy Jerusalem.”

According to Dr. Robert Kool, head of the Coin Department of the Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA]: “This is a rare find, since out of many thousands of coins discovered to date in archeological excavations, only about 30 coins are coins made of silver, [and hail] from the period of the Great Revolt.”

The coin was discovered in dirt that came from archeological excavations conducted by the IAA on the “Pilgrimage Road,” in the City of David National Park.

According to archaeologist Ari Levy, director of the excavation on behalf of the IAA: “This street, which connected the Siloam Pool in the south of the City of David to the Temple Mount in the north, was Jerusalem’s main street during the Second Temple period, where thousands of pilgrims marched on their way to the Temple. There is no doubt that there would have been extensive trading here. This is evidenced by the many weights and bronze coins we have found here. But to find a rebel coin made of pure silver is definitely very special and exciting.”

Dr. Kool theorizes that the silver from which the coin was made came from the plentiful silver reserves in the Temple and that it was minted on the Temple Mount plaza—possibly by one of the priests who worked in coordination with the rebel leaders and assisted them. “If so, we can say with caution that this coin is one of the only items we can hold today that originated on the Temple itself.

Everyone knows the Arch of Titus in Rome and the descriptions of loot taken from the Temple that appear on it, but not many are familiar with the huge silver reserves that were in the Temple.”

Dr. Amit Reem, Jerusalem District Archaeologist of the IAA, added: “This inscription revealed that the famous Colosseum in Rome was built by the Romans from the spoils of the Temple looted from Jerusalem. It reads: ‘Emperor Vespasian (who, along with his son Titus, suppressed the Jewish Revolt and destroyed the Temple) ordered the construction of this new theater amphitheater (the Colosseum) from his share of the spoils.’”

As part of the excavation, the archaeological earth was sent for wet sifting in the Emek Tzurim Sifting Project, and the person to discover the find was 11-year-old Liel Krutokop, who came with her parents and sister to do archeological sifting.



"We poured the bucket with the dirt on the strainer, and as we filtered the stones that were inside, I saw something round," she described the exciting moments of exposing the rare find. "At first, I did not know what it was, but it looked different from all the other stones. My father brought it to one of the assistants, and she showed it to an archaeologist. He looked at it and said it was a silver coin that needed to be cleaned. I was very excited."

According to Dr. Kool: "The inscription on the coin clearly expresses the rebels' aspirations. The choice to use ancient Hebrew script, which was no longer in use at the time, is not accidental. The use of this script came to express the longing of the people of the period for the days of David and Solomon and the days of a united Jewish kingdom, days when the people of Israel had full independence in the land."

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA



## WORLD'S LARGEST KNOWN WINEPRESS from Byzantine Period Uncovered

**YAVNE WAS A WORLD WINE POWERHOUSE** about 1,500 years ago. A huge and well-designed industrial estate from the Byzantine period with a very impressive wine production complex—the largest known in the world from this period—has been excavated in the city over the past two years. The site includes five magnificent wine presses, warehouses for aging and marketing the wine, kilns for firing the clay amphorae in which the wine was stored, tens of thousands of fragments and intact earthen amphorae (jars), well planned access between the facilities and more.

Each of the exposed winepresses covered an area of about 225 square meters [2,422 sq. ft.]. Around the treading floor, where the grapes were crushed barefoot to extract the liquid, compartments were built for fermenting the wine, and next to them, two huge octagonal-shaped vats for collecting the wine.

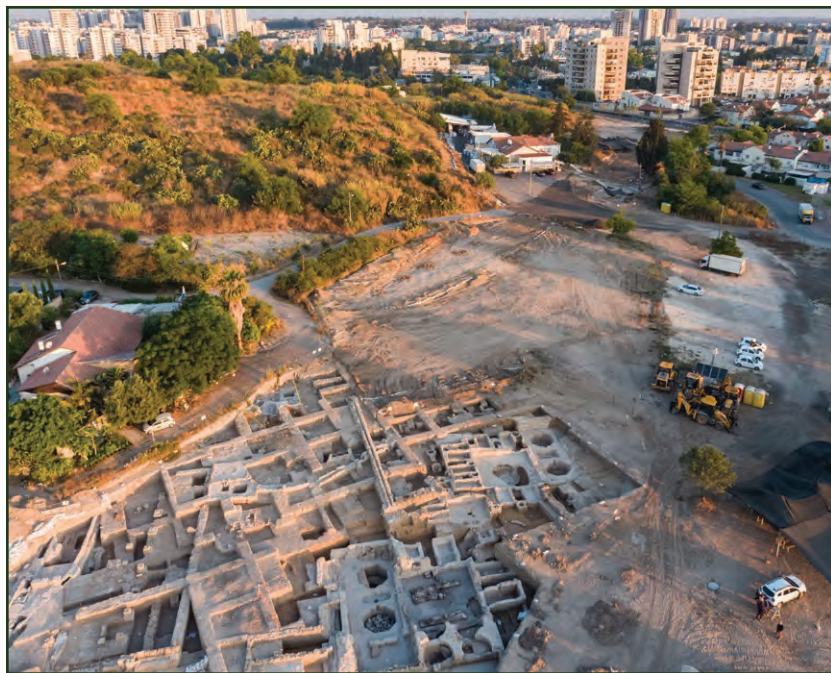
Dr. Elie Haddad, Liat Nadav-Ziv and Dr. Jon Seligman, the directors of the excavation on behalf of the Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA], noted: "We were surprised to discover a sophisticated factory here, which was used to produce wine in commercial quantities. Furthermore, decorative niches in the shape of a conch, which adorned the winepresses, indicate the great wealth of the factory owners. A calculation of the production capacity of these winepresses shows that approximately two million liters [528,344 gal.] of wine were marketed every year, while we should remember that the whole process was conducted manually."

Between the winepresses, four large warehouses were discovered, which formed the winery of the factory. The wine is aged in elongated amphorae, known as "Gaza jars." The jars themselves, some of which were discovered complete, together with hundreds of thousands of their fragments, were made at the site in large kilns.

"Gaza and Ashkelon wine was considered a quality wine brand of the ancient world, with a reputation that had spread far and wide, a bit like Jaffa oranges denote their origin and quality today from Israel," the archaeologists explained.

"Everyone knew that this was a product from the Holy Land, and everyone wanted more and more of this wine. The wine received its name as it was marketed through the ports of Gaza and Ashkelon. So far, other sites where wine was produced are known from the southern coastal plain, but now, we seem to have found the main production center of this prestigious wine. From here, commercial quantities were transported to the ports, and then throughout the Mediterranean basin."

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA







# To Strike or Not to Strike?

**Throughout 2021**, the powers-that-be in Jerusalem hammered a targeted message: Israel has lost faith in diplomatic endeavors and has reverted to exploring a military approach to block Iran's path to the nuclear bomb.

The year kicked off with Israel Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Aviv Kochavi instructing the military to develop operational strike plans. Nine months later, US \$1.6 billion was allocated for the necessary preparations. A week later came a report that the Israeli Air Force was set to start training for a strike. Then Kochavi warned that the IDF was fast-tracking Iran-related operational preparation.

The rapid rise in rhetoric raises crucial questions. Why the sudden focus on a military solution to the Iranian nuclear problem? Are the warnings sincere or simply cogs in a psychological warfare strategy? Does Israel even have the capacity to pursue military action? If so, what would such action entail?

## STRIKE IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Ten years ago, Israel was in a high state of readiness for a strike against Iran, explains Jonathan Spyer—author and director of the Middle East Center for Reporting and Analysis. Then came the 2015 Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and the military option moved to the back burner. So why the shift back?

Jerusalem's priorities changed when the US withdrawal from the deal in 2018 triggered gross Iranian violation of restrictions. Tehran has since made significant progress toward military-grade nuclear fuel and great strides in ballistic missile production and capacity. Israel advancing its military preparations is therefore a direct reflection of Iran advancing its nuclear ambitions.

At the same time, "it has become clear that the US has no Plan B in the event that negotiations should fail," Spyer says. "There is every sense that the Iranian nuclear program is only a secondary interest for the US, and therefore, if Israel wants to stop Iran, it is probably on its own."

According to Spyer: "Israel wants to convey the message that even though it looks like America is not interested in a Plan B, it doesn't mean the program is safe. There is a powerful regional state working on the capacity and making the effort to develop that ability."

Jerusalem thus seeks to present a strong deterrent to dissuade the *mullahs* from rushing toward the nuclear finishing line. However, the insistent rhetoric and the increased efforts don't mean the Israeli warplanes will be taking off for Iran anytime soon—if at all.

## NEAR IMPOSSIBLE

Executing a successful strike that puts a long-term stop to Iran's nuclear ambitions is extremely complicated, if not borderline impossible at present. Israel has in the past reduced two neighboring countries' budding nuclear endeavors to ashes—Iraq in 1981 and Syria in 2017. The Iraqi and Syrian programs had much in common. Both



were concentrated in one location, and both were the fruit of foreign experts' labor, Spyer explains. The Iranian program is different. Facilities are spread out, well-fortified and in the case of the Fordow facility, embedded in a mountain. "It is not clear that Israel has the military capacity to deal all the main elements a fatal blow with a single action," he holds.

Moreover, the Iranian nuclear program is homegrown, the product of Iranian research, knowledge and ability, cultivated in Iranian laboratories and universities. "Even if Israel did inflict significant damage, the regime can reconstruct the program," Spyer concedes. "Successful military action may buy four or five years of respite before Iran could be back where they were."

The bottom line? "It is very complicated. It isn't something to be settled by a single knock-out blow."

## IRANIAN PAYBACK

Israeli military strategists must also take into account Iranian retribution. Reprisals, Spyer explains, would probably go well beyond a counterstrike and should be considered within a broad regional context. Iranian power and influence extend to various Middle Eastern countries as the regime seeks to surround Israel with terror armies.

In the aftermath of an Israeli attack, Iranian puppet masters may well activate their terror puppets: Hamas in Gaza, Shiite militias in Iraq and Hezbollah in Lebanon, unleashing their arsenal of 150,000 missiles on the Jewish state. Moreover, incitement may trigger an uprising among Arab Israelis, translating to Israel facing an onslaught both externally and on the home front.

"This is all part of a single picture, with the nuclear threat being one element embedded into a larger context," Spyer says.

"For an Israeli planner thinking about action against Iran, all these different pieces on the board must be taken into account."

## TOEING THE LINE

Despite the limitations and likely reprisals, Israel may still choose to act—if Iran crosses the line. Iran has stated its desire to destroy Israel, but lacks the capacity, Spyer explains. On the day Iran successfully tests a nuclear weapon, it officially becomes an existential threat to Israel. Jerusalem will not allow Tehran to cross that threshold without a fight. "If there was clear information that Iran was rushing forward to that point," he holds, "even with all the limitations, it will almost certainly trigger some kind of Israeli military action."

Iran knows that, and is unlikely to call Israel's bluff. According to Spyer, Tehran may rather continue moving forward at a steady pace—with Jerusalem working behind the scenes to block its efforts—until reaching a junction where it could test a nuclear weapon within a relatively short time, and then call halt. "At that stage, they may stop, having made their point, having become a nuclear threshold power. My sense is that Iran is moving toward that point but may choose not to make the final sprint, because if it does, Israel will act."

So, where does that leave Israel—and the rest of the world? With more of the same. Spyer explains: Iran will continue steadily building up its capacity, and Israel will continue watching very carefully, all the while making every effort to plan, strategize and prepare for military action, should it become necessary.

Will Israel be able to gain the capacity necessary to strike a fatal blow to an Iranian nuclear program that is fortified, embedded in rock and spread out across multiple locations? Perhaps it is enough of a deterrent for

Iran to know that there is someone watching, working, willing to strike as soon as the *mullahs* cross the red line. Israel has proven time and again that its bite equals its bark.



Ilse Strauss, *News Bureau Chief*





# Capital Concern

What a US Palestinian Consulate Says about Control of Jerusalem



Closed US consulate  
in Jerusalem

**For millennia, Jerusalem has been** the capital of Israel—it just wasn't always recognized as such by other nations. On December 6, 2017, the United States dramatically changed its approach by formally recognizing Jerusalem as the capital of the State of Israel. Just over four years later, the Palestinians are hoping a new president in the White House will undo that historic move.

The means for that revision appear innocuous—reopening a US consulate office in Jerusalem to serve Palestinians. So would a building make such a dramatic statement about who owns Jerusalem? And if the US wants to do this—and US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken told Israel as much in 2021—what can Israel do about it?

It turns out the answer to both questions is the same: a lot.



## THE SIGNIFICANCE

Former US President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital and move the US embassy there from Tel Aviv wasn't a new idea. The US had technically passed a law in 1995 laying out the change. However, that law had a loophole used by every US President until Trump: the embassy move could be delayed for security concerns. It turns out that those concerns were unfounded, and it wasn't the only loophole in play. President Trump effectively threaded the needle in international law by recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital. At the same time, restating the final borders of the capital would be decided in the future by Israel and the Palestinians, according to former Israeli Ambassador to Canada and international law expert Alan Baker.

"[The final status of Jerusalem] will be on the negotiating table," said Baker. "But in the meantime, the fact that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, this is not a negotiating issue...[Others, including the US] can't unilaterally determine what needs to be agreed upon."

Ambassador Baker, director of the Institute for Contemporary Affairs at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and the head of the Global Law Forum, said the US recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital had "nothing to do" with a final peace agreement. "[The outcome of talks] is without prejudice to the fact that the US formally, officially acknowledged the fact that Jerusalem is a sovereign part of Israel."

That decision had significant ramifications, as it gives Israel a stronger starting point on negotiations with the Palestinians. From the US viewpoint, Jerusalem was settled as Israel's capital, while the exact borders of Jerusalem are left to be negotiated. The decision also formalizes US recognition of Israel's legal sovereignty over Jerusalem.

However, setting up a separate consulate in Jerusalem to serve Palestinians and dividing the US diplomatic presence in the city would effectively undo the legal achievements for Israel. "What the Palestinians are trying to do is basically bring about the cancellation of the US proclamation," said Baker. "They want to redive Jerusalem, basically. They want some US acknowledgment that part of Jerusalem is potentially Palestinian." Thankfully for the Jewish state, Israel legally has the final say.

## THE LEGALITY

Regardless of what the US wants to do regarding re-opening a consulate to the Palestinians in Jerusalem, it is constrained by international law, according to Baker. "As soon as they recognized the fact that Israel had sovereignty over Jerusalem, that Israeli law applies in Jerusalem, then they can't now open a consulate against Israel's consent," said Baker, noting that according to the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, "a country can only open a diplomatic consular mission with the consent of the receiving state...and Israel won't give consent to the US opening a consular mission to a third entity, which basically is a Palestinian entity."

So why is the issue still controversial? In his JCPA article on the topic, "Refuting Palestinian Claims about the US Jerusalem Consulate," Ambassador Baker notes the Palestinians have tried to argue that the United Nations designated Jerusalem's status as international territory with the Partition Plan in 1948, and therefore the Israelis have no current claim. But Baker wrote that the UN resolution is merely a nonbinding recommendation, and in his comments to the *Mideast Update*, he dismissed the argument by noting that the Oslo Accords say the ultimate status of Jerusalem can only be determined by negotiation. He said the Trump declaration differed from addressing final status by just recognizing the preexisting fact of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, while also noting borders remain open to negotiation.

Furthermore, US congressional legislation requires recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, and the Oslo Accords, signed by the US, prohibit anyone from opening a consulate-level diplomatic mission to the Palestinians on territory controlled by the Palestinians. In other words, the US is not only restricted from setting up a consulate in Israeli territory in Jerusalem; it is limited to opening a representative office even in other land under the authority of the Palestinians. This would permit the US to open such an office in the outskirts of Jerusalem, but that's all for now.

## THE RESPONSE

Ambassador Baker noted the US could offer an incentive for Israel to permit a Palestinian-focused consulate in Jerusalem, but that not "even the most left-wing Israeli government" would ever agree "because the implication would be acknowledging the redivision of Jerusalem." Nonetheless, Baker said it's "difficult to say that the issue is settled, as long as this still remains some type of intention of the Biden administration." But that doesn't change what Baker expects to happen.

"I don't even raise any possibility of this being undone. The proclamation recognizing Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem after 70 years isn't something that in my view could be undone by a US administration. They can undo all sorts of other things, the agreement with Iran to renegotiate it, but this particular issue of Jerusalem, I can't see them undoing it," he said. "...Congressional legislation, international law regarding consular relations, and the Israeli-Palestinian agreements in the Oslo Accords—which the Americans are signatory to—these are three very important elements that would prevent the US from violating them."



So what's a building worth to the symbolism built into international law? Apparently, a lot. And what does that US embassy—and the declaration that set it in place—mean for Israeli sovereignty over Jerusalem? Apparently, just as much.

Joshua Spurlock,  
*The Mideast Update*



# The Plight of Ethiopian Jewry

**The continent of Africa** unfortunately has a sordid history of violent coups and revolutions. During these periods of political crisis that all too often lead to civil war, the persecution of minority groups is a common occurrence. One of many African nations that is no stranger to this ill-fated fortune is Ethiopia. In the past, revolution has thrown the nation from monarchical rule into the bonds of Marxism after which a coup finally freed Ethiopians into a fragile democracy. Today, the same rebels who once brought the nation freedom now seek to unsettle the democratic stability. There is a particular group whose fate always hangs in the balance as the winds of instability blow through this east African nation: the Jews of Ethiopia.

## History in Brief

There is evidence of a Jewish community being established in Ethiopia around the time of the destruction of the First Temple in 587 BC. Several theories exist about their exact origin. One theory claims them to be descendants of an affair between King Solomon and the Queen of Sheba, believed to be Makeda, Queen of Ethiopia, in the chronicles *The Glory of the Kings*. Other theories suggest that Ethiopian Jews are the lost Israelite tribe of Dan. In the 9th century AD, a merchant and traveler, Eldad Hadani, writes in his journal about an autonomous Jewish state in east Africa, where the descendants of the tribes of Dan, Naftali, Gad and Asher reside. The largest group of Ethiopian Jewish devotees is known as Beta Israel, who has maintained a deep connection to the *Torah* (Gen.-Deut.) and their faith. A lesser known group of Ethiopian Jews is the Falash Mura, who is also of Jewish descent but has

over time, by necessity or force, assimilated and lost their Jewish identity.

Throughout the modern history of the state of Israel, there have been significant efforts to recognize the legitimacy of Ethiopian Jewry. As instability has plagued Ethiopia, the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency have had to intervene with what have at times been extraordinary rescue operations. For example, in the decade between 1977–1987, when dictator Mengistu Haile Miriam came to power in a coup, his Marxist regime forbade the practice of Judaism and teaching of Hebrew. The resulting persecution led to the death of some 2,500 Ethiopian Jews. Jewish people fled the persecution, war and resulting famine. There are stories of some who walked to Israel, while others chose the three-week journey to refugee camps in neighboring Sudan. Many died en route or in the refugee camps.

Israel successfully orchestrated secret rescue efforts to save some 15,000 of Ethiopia's Jews in clandestine rescue operations during this time. In 1991, as the extended civil war was coming to an end and the Marxist regime was collapsing, rebels took hold of Ethiopia's capital, Addis Ababa. Fear for the safety of Ethiopia's Jews in the transitional period hastened the Israeli government to launch an extraordinary rescue operation. Over 36 hours—with the help of some 34 jumbo jets of El Al airlines and the Israel Air Force—14,324 Ethiopian Jews were brought to the Promised Land.

While Ethiopia actually flourished under the new democratic government, the ethnic lines of division would eventually prove to be its undoing.





## The Current Crisis

Constituting about 6.1% of the total population of Ethiopia, Tigrayans have long felt overlooked by the federal government of Ethiopia, despite dominating politics for the nearly three decades since the end of Marxist rule. The Tigray People's Liberation Front (TPLF) formed part of the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front (EPRDF), which was the alliance of military organizations which overthrew the Soviet Union-backed military dictatorship regime in 1991. In 2018, the coalition government started to fall apart as the country was rocked by anti-government protests from different ethnic groups. In 2019, Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed disbanded the ruling EPRDF coalition and was accused of introducing reforms which sidelined the Tigrayan political party. Dissatisfied with the new status quo, the TPLF retreated to their stronghold in northern Ethiopia as Tigrayan rebels began to attack and loot federal military bases in the region.

The Ethiopian federal government has consequently launched a military campaign against Tigrayan rebel forces and stands accused of besieging the northern territory, cutting off vital supplies and resulting in unprecedented famine. At this writing, the rebel Tigrayan forces are said to be advancing within 200 miles (321 km.) of the capital of Addis Ababa. All the while Prime Minister Ahmed is enforcing conscription of any military aged citizen, calling for the Ethiopian people to "bury this enemy with our blood and bones," as reported in the *Washington Post*.

## Fight or Flight?

In the midst of this constantly deteriorating civil conflict lie the remaining Jews of Ethiopia. Most have left their tribal homelands and now survive on meager rations near the Jewish community centers in Gondar and Addis Ababa. The Israeli government agreed in 2015 that 9,000 of them would be brought to Israel; however, plans never materialized. Current Minister of Immigration and Absorption Pnina Tamano-Shata, who is herself an immigrant from Ethiopia, has been in recent discussions with Interior Minister Ayelet Shaked to speed up the bureaucratic process. An agreement was reached for 5,000 individuals to be brought to Israel without delay.

According to recent reports in the *Times of Israel*, there are between 7,000–12,000 Ethiopian community members who are waiting to make *aliyah* (immigration to Israel). Many first-degree relatives of those who have been able to make *aliyah* over the past 50 years still remain in Ethiopia. Their future in that nation is becoming more uncertain with each passing day. The question on everybody's mind is whether the time has come to once again launch daring rescue operations for the last of Ethiopia's remaining Jews.

Thousands of Ethiopian Jews are frantically trying to make *aliyah*. Bridges for Peace and other Christian organizations have been asked to help. Join us in answering the call. Visit our website to donate to our New Immigrant Fund and help these at-risk families return to safety in their ancient homeland.



By Nathan Williams, Director of Marketing and Communications



# Israeli Firm Helps Refugees Convert Waste into Electricity

**The United Nations (UN)** has contracted Israeli start-up HomeBiogas to make the lives of refugees in several camps across Africa a little safer, easier and more hygienic. The renewable energy company produces small-scale, off-grid systems that turn organic waste, such as food scraps, animal manure and even human waste into clean, renewable energy, providing much-needed cooking fuel in conditions where electricity is an unheard-of luxury.

The HomeBiogas system comprises a “digester tank” containing bacteria that breaks down leftovers and toilet waste in a process known as anaerobic digestion. The result? Biogas such as methane that flows via a pipe to a kitchen stove, offering a clean, free way to cook food that requires minimal human intervention and no fossil fuels.

The system helps refugee camps solve more than one problem. According to *Israel21c*, the large quantities of organic waste produced in such camps pose both hygiene and environmental challenges. Moreover, disposing of the waste in a sustainable manner requires financial resources from a system that has no money to waste. The HomeBiogas not only takes care of the disposal issue without any financial implications, it also does so in a way that produces a renewable energy source.

The biogas also provides a safer way to cook by eliminating the need for cooking fires that have in the past resulted in runaway blazes racing through the close quarters.

The UN contract will see approximately a dozen HomeBiogas systems distributed to refugee camps in a number of African countries in the start of a new relationship with growth potential.

“We are proud that the UN selected HomeBiogas to take on this important project that will have an immense impact on the environment in the refugee camps,” *Israel21c* quoted HomeBiogas co-founder and CEO Oshik Efrati as saying.

“We are now an official supplier of the UN and believe that this tender is the first of many to come that will seek to treat waste in a sustainable way and improve the lives of hundreds of thousands of people living in refugee camps around the world.”

Ilse Strauss,  
*Bridges for Peace*





# Israeli Scientists ID Coronavirus Proteins that Harm Blood Vessels

**A team of Israeli experts** has solved the mystery of which proteins in the SARS-CoV-2 virus are responsible for causing the severe vascular damage seen in coronavirus patients.

The novel coronavirus is made up of 29 proteins. Five of those proteins were identified as damaging to blood vessels in a study led by Tel Aviv University researchers Ben Maoz (biomedical engineering and neuroscience), Professor Uri Ashery (life sciences and neuroscience) and Professor Roded Sharan (computer science).

"We see a very high incidence of vascular disease and blood clotting, for example, stroke and heart attack, among COVID-19 patients," said Maoz.

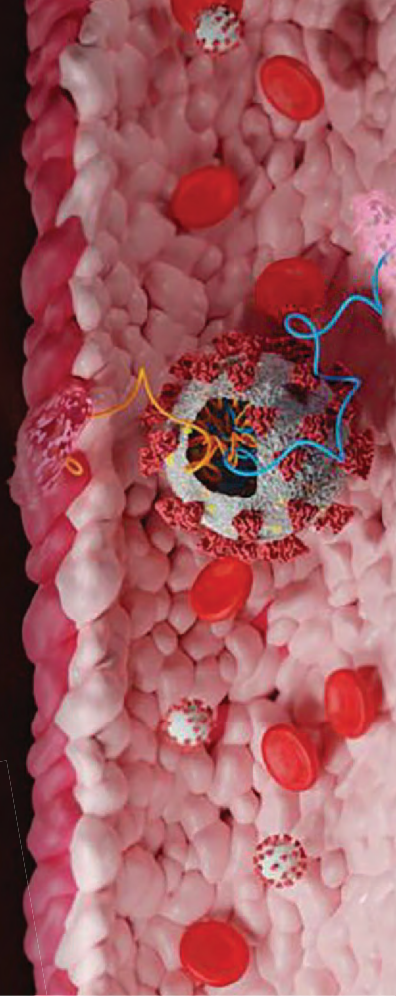
"We tend to think of COVID as primarily a respiratory disease, but the truth is that coronavirus patients are up to three times more likely to have a stroke or heart attack," he explained.

"All the evidence shows that the virus severely damages the blood vessels or the endothelial cells that line the blood vessels. We wanted to find out which proteins in the virus are responsible for this type of damage."

Also participating in the study were Rossana Rauti, Yael Bardoogo and Meishar Shahoah of Tel Aviv University and Professor Yaakov Nahmias of the Institute of Life Sciences at the Hebrew University. The results were published in the journal *eLife*.

"Our research could help find targets for a drug that will be used to stop the virus's activity, or at least minimize damage to blood vessels" in COVID-19 patients, said Maoz.

Abigail Klein Leichman, *JNS* via *Israel21c*



## Israeli Technology Makes the Internet a Safe Space for Families

**The Internet** is an invaluable resource for young minds. From homework assignments and research for school projects to staying in touch with friends and social media, the Internet plays an increasingly prominent role in the lives of our children and grandchildren. Yet the digital world is also fraught with lurking darkness, with pornography threatening to corrupt and enslave unsuspecting, innocent minds.

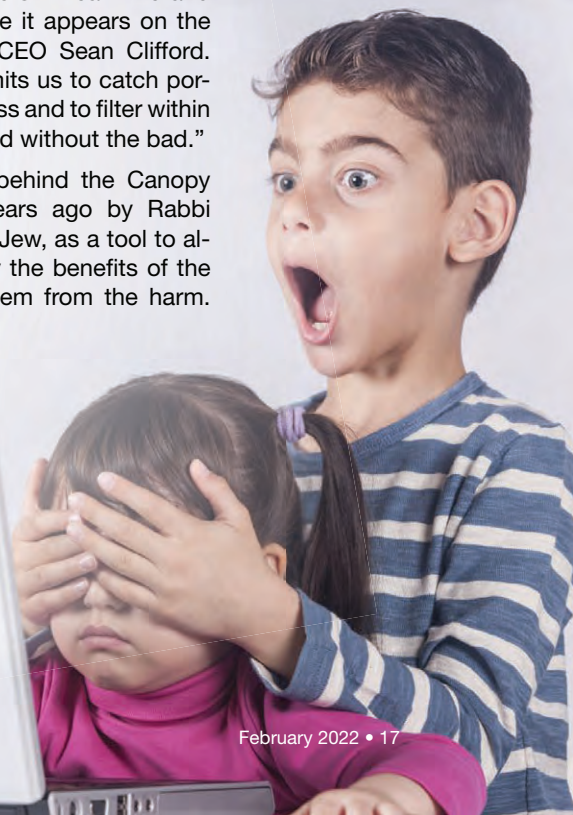
There's good news for parents facing the daunting task of guaranteeing a safe Internet experience for their families. Canopy, a Texas-based tech company, utilizes groundbreaking Israeli artificial intelligence to detect and block pornography, nudity and explicit content with a staggering 99.7% accuracy, insulating children from the harm while still allowing full access to safe content.

Many of the conventional protection apps on the market today may miss pornographic images posted on so-called safe websites or overlook new explicit sites that haven't been flagged yet. Others are not equipped to protect from websites that feature a mix of safe and toxic content. Canopy is the only tool of its kind that circumvents these dangerous loopholes.

"Thanks to cutting-edge technology developed in Israel, our software is able to scan Internet traffic within browsers in real-time and block explicit content before it appears on the screen," explains Canopy CEO Sean Clifford. "More specifically, this permits us to catch pornography that other tools miss and to filter within websites, delivering the good without the bad."

The Israeli technology behind the Canopy app was developed 13 years ago by Rabbi Moshe Weiss, an Orthodox Jew, as a tool to allow his community to enjoy the benefits of the Internet while protecting them from the harm. The technology has since been adapted for use in 90% of Israeli schools to protect two million smartphones, tablets and computers. Canopy was started two years ago to bring the Israeli technology to the US market.

Ilse Strauss,  
*Bridges for Peace*





# Keeping Jerusalem GREEN

*"He who plants a tree, plants hope." ~Lucy Larcom*

The overpowering, overwhelming "green" of Alaska never fails to catch me by surprise whenever I return for a visit in the summer. It always takes a day or two before my eyes adjust from the subtle, understated "green" of Jerusalem. The fact that Jerusalem is green at all is a tribute to Jewish tenacity.

When the first *olim* (immigrants to Israel) began returning in the late 1800s, they found a very barren land. From those early days, reforestation was a priority, and roughly 4.5 million trees were planted in the Land between 1901 and 1948. These efforts continued after statehood, making Israel one of the only countries in the world to begin the 21st century with an increase in trees over the previous century.

## BEAUTIFUL, GREEN JERUSALEM

Let's narrow the view a bit and let me tell you about the "green" in Jerusalem, the city I have come to love with all my heart. Situated on a plateau in the Judean Mountains with an elevation of approximately 2,600 feet (792 m.), the city's arid climate combined with its lack of a natural water supply dictates the type of trees that will thrive.

Some of Jerusalem's trees are showy, like the pink crape myrtle with its abundant blossoms that range in color from white to pink and even purple, while others are practical, like the olive or pomegranate

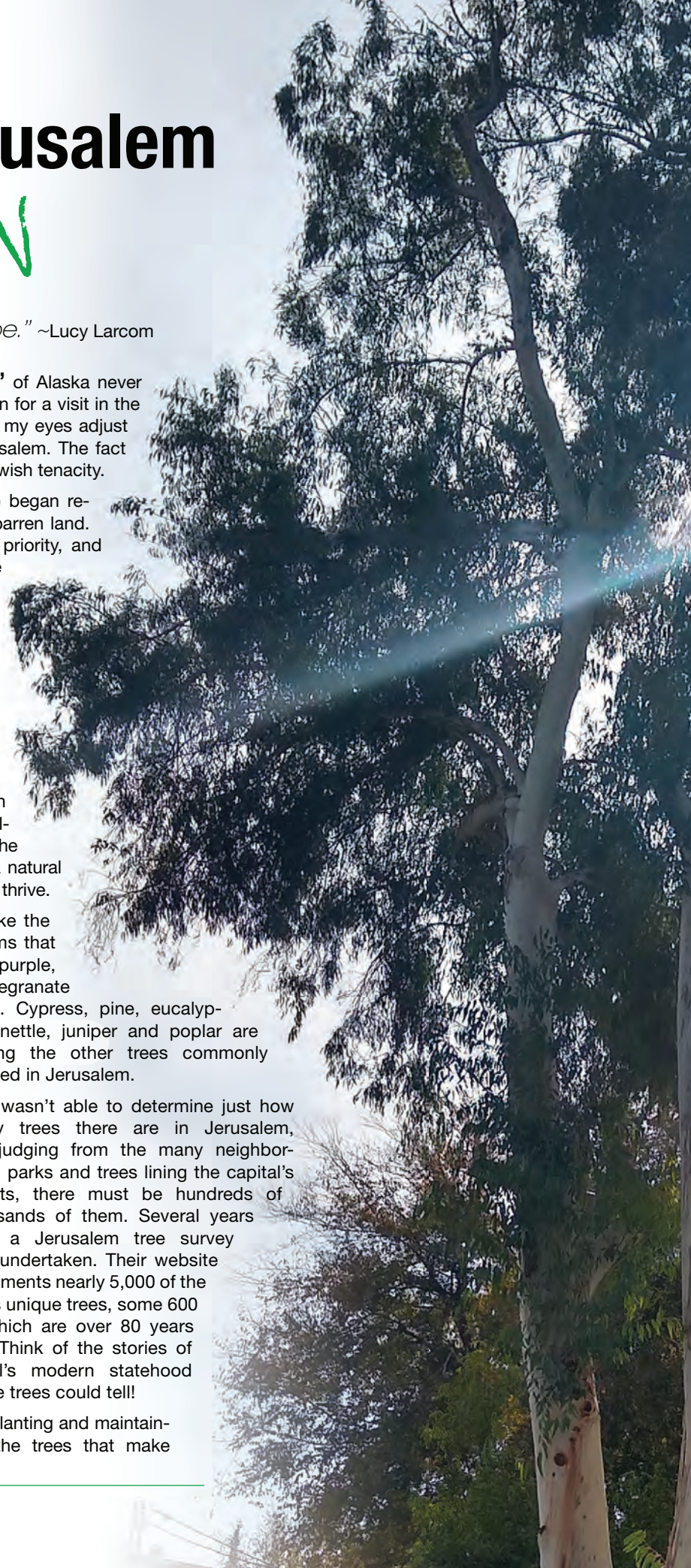
trees. Cypress, pine, eucalyptus, nettle, juniper and poplar are among the other trees commonly planted in Jerusalem.

I wasn't able to determine just how many trees there are in Jerusalem, but judging from the many neighborhood parks and trees lining the capital's streets, there must be hundreds of thousands of them. Several years ago, a Jerusalem tree survey was undertaken. Their website documents nearly 5,000 of the city's unique trees, some 600 of which are over 80 years old. Think of the stories of Israel's modern statehood those trees could tell!


Planting and maintaining the trees that make



Jerusalem  
city center







Jerusalem “green” is the responsibility of the municipality’s City Improvement Department, specifically the Horticulture Branch. This dedicated staff of over 100 cares for parks and playgrounds as well as beautifies the city’s streets and public areas.

## A YEAR OF REST

However, we are not in a normal year for the staff of the city’s Horticultural Branch. September 7, 2021, marked the start of a *shmitah*, or sabbatical year for the Land, which will continue until September 26, 2022. According to the instructions given in Exodus 23:10–11, every seventh year the land was to lie fallow. In addition to agricultural products, the vine and olive tree were included in the year of rest.

Last summer, in anticipation of this year of rest, Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion authorized a special project designed to plant “a lot of trees around Jerusalem before *Rosh HaShanah* [Jewish New Year],” according to the *Jerusalem Post*. Nearly 4,000 trees were planted during a three-month period. Some locations had been barren for years.

And it isn’t just Jerusalem that is affected by the moratorium on tree planting. *Tu BiShvat* (New Year for Trees), which occurred this year on January 17, was not observed with the planting of trees that normally marks this holiday. The only work permitted is that which “prevents damage and ensures their [the trees’] continued survival,” according to the Keren Kayemet L’Israel–Jewish National Fund website.

## IT IS A CHALLENGE

Among the various challenges in keeping Jerusalem green, one of the more basic is ensuring that the trees receive adequate water. Israel pioneered modern drip irrigation in the 1960s and has continued to develop efficient uses of limited water supplies. Nondescript brown tubes running to each tree or flowerbed in the city ensure their health during the months without rain.

This summer’s tree planting effort incorporated another Israeli innovation—green bags at the base of many newly planted trees. If there is no drip irrigation where the tree has been planted, the green bag takes its place. The slow-drip watering bags release precisely the amount of water needed for the tree to thrive. Municipal workers refill the bags every couple of days until a more permanent solution, such as drip irrigation, can be implemented.



## MY TREE

No matter where we are in the world, trees help determine our quality of life, and some have such character that they take on lives of their own. I live in Beit HaKerem, an older, historic neighborhood, and I have often wondered about a huge eucalyptus tree that stands near David Yellin teachers’ college, one of the earliest structures in the neighborhood. I was able to find “my” tree in the online survey and learned that it is in good condition, between 50–65 feet (15–20 m.) tall and approximately 80–100 years old. It stands as a silent sentinel, watching over the streets that have witnessed so much of Jerusalem’s modern history, doing its part to keep Jerusalem green.



Janet’s tree

Janet Aslin, *BFP Staff Writer*



# Beauty for Ashes

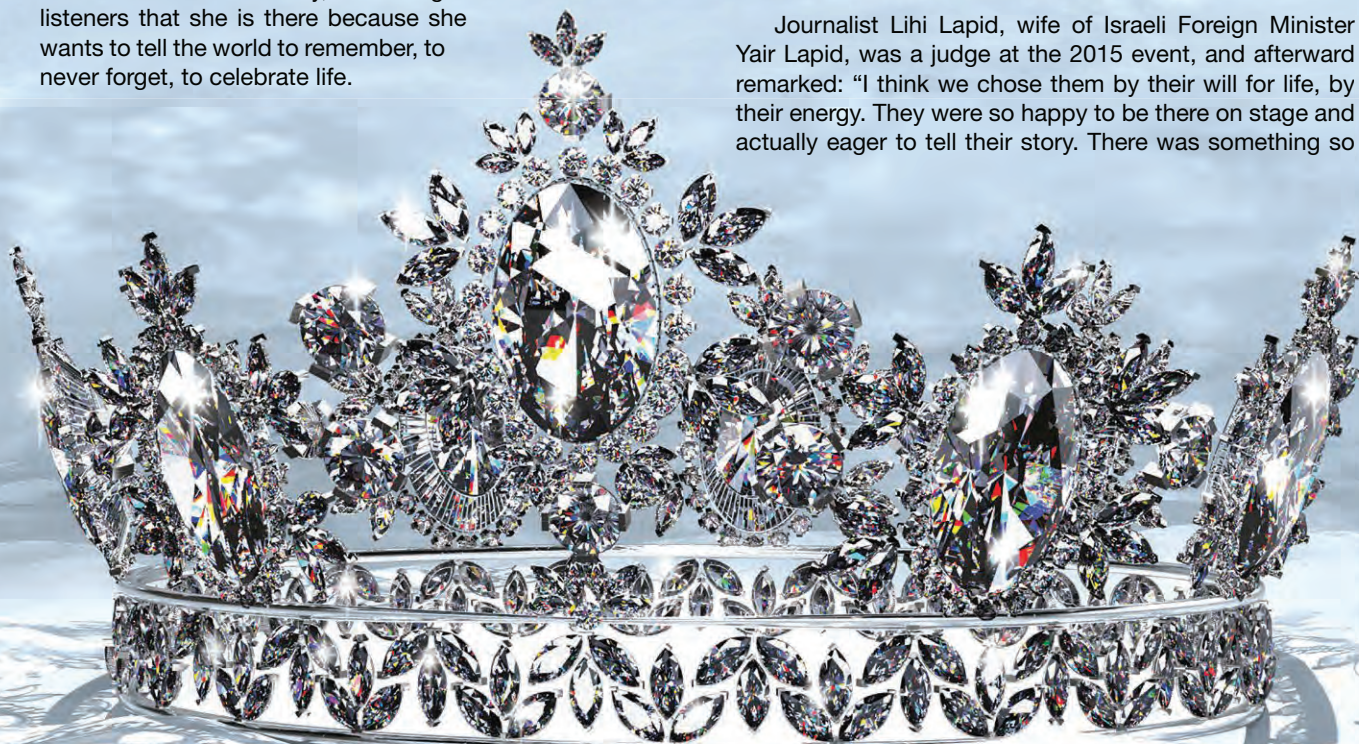
**On November 16, 2021,** Israel hosted a unique, annual event that is a remarkable celebration of life—with just a touch of glam. The Miss Holocaust pageant was held in Jerusalem, putting 10 contestants on stage to vie for the prestigious title. The event is the brainchild of Shimon Sabag, director of Yad Ezer L'Haver (Helping Hand to a Friend), an organization that cares for at-risk children and other needy in Israel, particularly Holocaust survivors. Sabag is convinced of the event's importance as he watches the contestants during rehearsals, having a good time being pampered while laughing and enjoying the company of those who have a shared painful history. Yet tears fill his eyes as each contestant recounts her story, reminding her listeners that she is there because she wants to tell the world to remember, to never forget, to celebrate life.

## TO LIFE!

When the idea was first made public in 2012, 300 women applied to participate. The number was eventually narrowed to 14 contestants ranging in age from 74–97.

When those 14 took to the stage in 2012, they were greeted by over 600 spectators, there to honor women who personify the indomitable Israeli spirit. When the second pageant was held in 2013 at the Romema Sport Arena in Haifa, 2,500 attendees showed up to cheer for the 18 contestants aged 70–94. The 14 finalists in 2016's pageant were serenaded by the debut performance of a choir made up entirely of Holocaust survivors, a choir that has since gone on to gain international recognition.

Journalist Lihi Lapid, wife of Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid, was a judge at the 2015 event, and afterward remarked: "I think we chose them by their will for life, by their energy. They were so happy to be there on stage and actually eager to tell their story. There was something so





touching by the way they just wanted us to understand, that we need to celebrate life.”

Unfortunately, however, the celebration is not without its critics. Some have panned the event as an inappropriate way to remember the horrors of the Nazi genocide. Colette Avital, a former Israeli diplomat who runs a center that advocates for Holocaust survivors, feels it is improper to have beauty pageants for women who have experienced so much suffering. She has called the competition “ridiculous, grotesque, showing a lack of respect” for survivors.

Participants, of course, vehemently disagree. Although they enjoy the pageantry, the make-up and rhinestones, flowers and tiaras, they are grateful that the event does not avoid the seriousness of the issues, the pain and horror of the past. This year’s contestants discussed forced labor camps, pogroms and the ghastly experiments performed by Josef Mengele. Many trembled with emotion as they spoke, yet underlying every testimony was a conviction to live life to its very fullest, to be grateful for each breath and each blessing in life, to stand up for what is right and to overcome. As young women during the Holocaust, these individuals endured unspeakable pain and loss, and yet have rebuilt their lives, raised families, contributed to the building of the nation and want their voices heard.

## WOMEN IN THE HOLOCAUST

According to Judy Baumel-Schwartz, director of the Finkler Institute of Holocaust Research at Bar-Ilan University, scholars today acknowledge that for women in the Holocaust, the female collective experience was unique. At one time, many believed that separating the stories of Jewish men and women under the Nazi regime was a blow to their joint fate or to Jewish solidarity. Although male and female victims of Nazi cruelty were equally persecuted and faced the same ultimate fate, research on gender and the Holocaust is no longer viewed in a negative light. Today, it is recognized as critical to an in-depth understanding of the effects of the Holocaust on both genders.

The Nazi regime targeted all Jews for persecution, but women were frequently subjected to brutal acts that were unique to the gender of the victims. Jewish women accompanied by children were especially vulnerable and subject to sadistic behavior from guards. They were often included in the first groups to be sent to the gas chambers. In ghettos and concentration camps, authorities deployed women into forced labor that they were physically incapable of performing, which often led to their deaths. German medical researchers used Jewish

women as subjects of sterilization experiments and other horrific human experimentation. Women were particularly vulnerable to beatings and rape. Pregnant Jewish women were often forced to submit to abortions or sent to give birth in makeshift nurseries where conditions guaranteed the death of the infants.

## LIGHT, LOVE AND A FUTURE

Countless books and papers and decades of research have yet to uncover the totality of the horror experienced by these women. Sabag says his mission is to in some way give survivors “a piece of the youth that was stolen from them.” And he is succeeding. This year, 87-year-old Kuka Palmon gleefully declared she felt like “a teenage girl” after being pampered by a team of beauticians and dressed by professional stylists. “After what I went through in the Holocaust,” Palmon said, “I never dreamed that I could get to where I am, with a big family: two kids, four grandchildren and two great-grandchildren. And yet here I am, at this great age, 87. It’s a godly thing, it is indescribable.”

This year’s winner, Salina Steinfeld, 86, accepted her title dressed in gold and wearing pearls. She moved to Israel in 1948 after surviving Nazi attacks. She is now a great-grandmother herself and plans to use her title to “bring light to all Israel.”

The granddaughter of a 2021 contestant said people deserve to see “how much beauty there is in these women who went through such horror.” She believes the pageant is truly a way of honoring her grandmother and the other contestants. “We will show them how

much we love and appreciate them. Thanks to them, we have a country... we have a future.”



Cheryl Hauer,  
*International Vice President*



Salina Steinfeld



# A Rabbi, an Imam and a Bishop

## Religious Pluralism in Israel

**A rabbi, an imam and a bishop** bump into each other at the market. This isn't the beginning of a joke; it's life in Israel, home to the three Abrahamic religions. The Jewish state, while being majority Jewish, hosts churches, mosques and other places of worship alongside the abundant synagogues.

Naturally this brings tension. Last May in particular saw a spike in violence during Operation Guardian of the Walls. The Islamic holiday of Ramadan (one of the Five Pillars of Islam when stringent disciplines are observed) coincided with the Israeli celebration of Jerusalem Day, creating the perfect storm of tension and sparking a volatile 11 days in which terrorist groups in Gaza fired more than 4,000 rockets toward Israel, killing 11 civilians. Chaos ensued from all sides, as riots erupted in cities with mixed Jewish and Arab populations, such as Lod.

### Nonetheless

But amid the turmoil, a bright spot: Magen David Adom, Israel's ambulance service, posted a photo of two emergency medical volunteers praying together. The photo spread across social media, showing one of the men wearing a *tallit*, the prayer shawl that Jewish men wear, while facing left (toward the Western Wall, where the two Temples once stood). The other man, a Muslim, is shown kneeling on his prayer rug, praying in the opposite direction, toward Mecca. The picture of two Israelis, one Jewish and one Muslim, taking a short break from saving lives to pray, symbolizes the cohabitation that the news clips don't show of life in Israel. The Jewish state, the

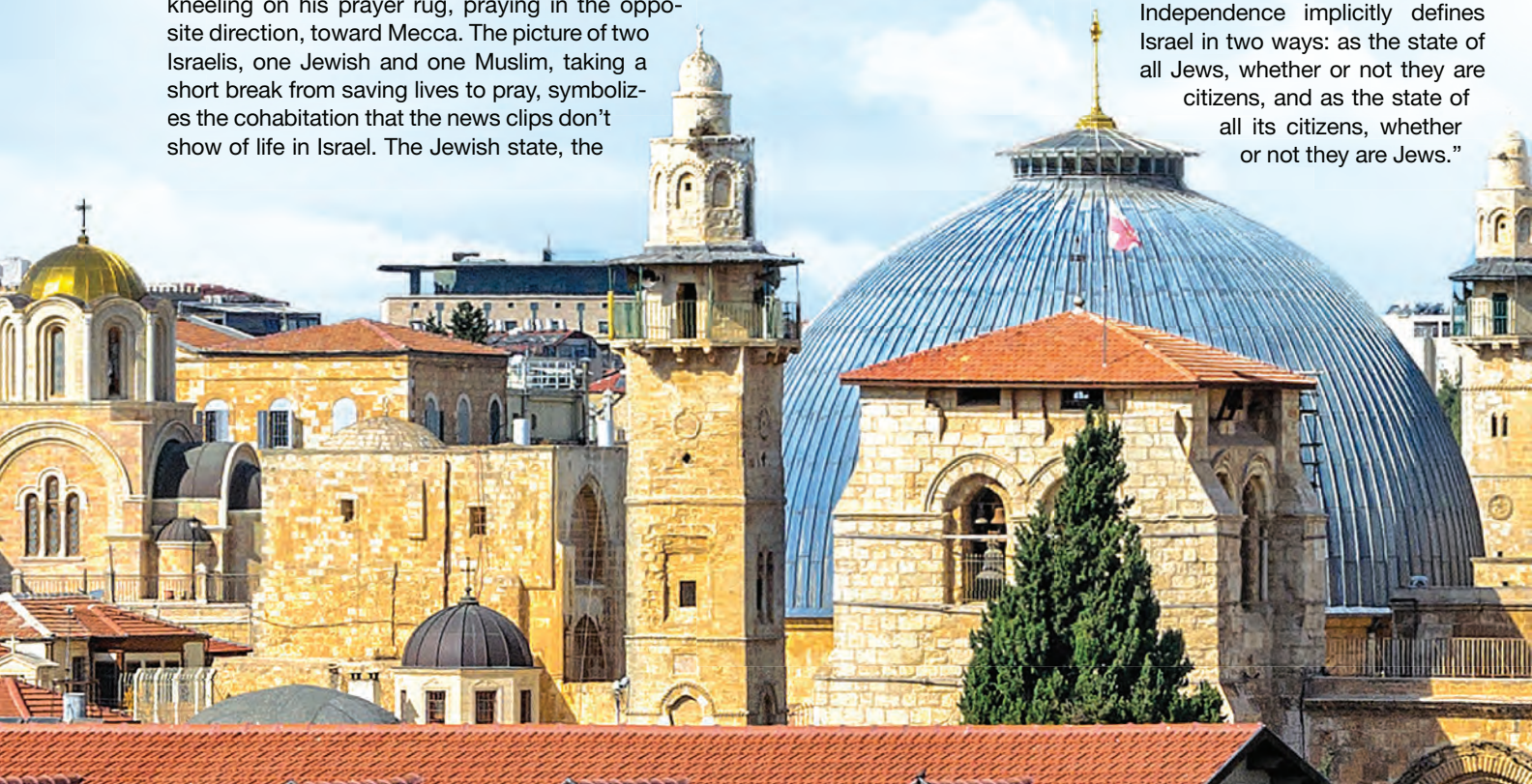
only nation in the world with a Jewish-majority population, is a haven in the Middle East for freedom of religion.

### Freedom for All

Israel's population stands at 9.29 million people as of December 2020, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. Of that total, 6.87 million (73.9%) are Jewish, and 1.96 million (21.1%) are Arab. The remaining 5%, or 456,000 people, comprises non-Arab Christians, Druze and others. And all those people, regardless of religion, race or ethnicity, are guaranteed freedom of religion in Israel's Declaration of Independence:

"The state of Israel will be open for Jewish immigration and for the ingathering of the exiles; it will foster the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; it will be based on freedom, justice and peace as envisaged by the prophets of Israel; it will ensure complete equality of social and political rights to all its inhabitants irrespective of religion, race or sex; it will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, language, education and culture; it will safeguard the holy places of all religions; and it will be faithful to the principles of the charter of the United Nations."

Author Yossi Klein Halevi wrote, "The Declaration of Independence implicitly defines Israel in two ways: as the state of all Jews, whether or not they are citizens, and as the state of all its citizens, whether or not they are Jews."





## Access for All

Notice the line in the Declaration of Independence that promised Israel “will safeguard the holy places of all religions.” After the Six Day War of 1967, Israel regained access to part of Jerusalem that had been under Jordanian control, restoring Jewish access to their holiest sites in Jerusalem after 2,000 years. But they weren’t going to ban non-Jewish visitors, as had been done to them. After the smoke cleared in 1967, then-Defense Minister Moshe Dayan declared: “...to the peoples of all faiths we guarantee full freedom of worship and religious rights. We have come not to conquer the holy places of others, nor to diminish their religious rights, but to ensure the unity of the city and to live in it with others in harmony.”

And Israel has kept its word and maintained open access to its holy sites for people of all faiths. The Temple Mount, which officially remains under the custody of a Waqf (Muslim religious trust), is still under Israeli security and governmental control. Israel allows Christians, Jews and visitors of all faiths to ascend to where the two Temples once stood, the holiest site in Judaism. It’s where the Al-Aqsa mosque now stands, and under Muslim religious authority, non-Muslims are banned from prayer and worship at the site—a restriction never imposed at sites under full Israeli control.

## Safe Haven for Christians

The State of Israel was reborn just three years after World War II and the Holocaust, when six million Jews were slaughtered. After that horrifying genocide, the Jewish people simply wanted a homeland, a haven to live and practice their faith in safety. And that’s exactly what they got—and they have allowed it to be a safe place for other religions to worship freely as well. It’s particularly important for Christians, who have been persecuted throughout the rest of the Middle East.

Then-Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu famously declared in 2012

that “Israel’s Christian population will always be free to practice their faith. This is the only place in the Middle East where Christians are fully free to practice their faith. They don’t have to fear; they don’t have to flee. In a time where Christians are under siege in so many places, in so many lands in the Middle East, I’m proud that in Israel, Christians are free to practice their faith and that there’s a thriving Christian community in Israel.”

## Looking at the (Somewhat) Full Picture

This is not an attempt to discount or gloss over the violence in Israel. The Jewish state experiences an average of over 16 deaths due to terror attack per year (after 2015, when the Second Intifada ended and the number of terror killings was much higher). Of course there are clashes, tension and unrest in the Land.

But that’s not the only story of life here. Don’t discount the Jews, Muslims, Christians, Druze, etc. who live side by side harmoniously in Israel every day. This is the land where rabbis, imams and bishops rub elbows. Emergency volunteers of different religions pray next to each other and save all lives, regardless of who they are. Jews serve in the military alongside Muslims, Christian Arabs and Druze to defend the Jewish state—though the Jewish population is required to serve in the military, while Arabs and Druze serve on a volunteer basis. In December, nine-branched *hanukkiot* burn brightly next to Christmas trees. Muslim-owned shops sell Star of David necklaces, and Jewish shops sell olive wood carvings of Jesus (Yeshua) and Mary. In the Jewish state, many religions are thriving.



Kate Norman, BFP Staff Writer





# Tracing the Palestinians

**Israel often draws** a disproportionate share of media coverage and worldwide censure. The tide of attention—and criticism—rarely occurs in a vacuum. Israel's actions, decisions and even existence are habitually judged in the context of another people group: the Palestinians. In fact, Israel's position on the world stage cannot be fully comprehended without factoring in the Palestinians. But who exactly are the Palestinians? What are their origins? Are they, like Israel, an ancient people dating back to biblical days? And are their roots, like that of Israel, deep in the soil of the Promised Land?

## AN ANCIENT BATTLE CONTINUES?

Roughly 3,000 years ago, a shepherd armed with a slingshot faced a giant warrior. The clash between David and Goliath wasn't the first battle between Israel and the Philistines. Throughout the history of the kingdom, the Philistines often featured as one of Israel's archenemies. But do we see a continuation of that ancient enmity in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict? If modern-day Israelis are David's offspring, are the Palestinians Goliath's posterity?

Palestinian leaders routinely describe their people as descendants from the Canaanites who originally populated the land. The fable has been repeated so often and with such conviction that many accept it as fact. While the word Palestinian does derive from the word Philistine, don't let semantics fool you.

The Philistines weren't indigenous to Canaan, but rather seafaring invaders from southern Europe who conquered parts of Israel in the 12th century BC. The word Philistine derives from the Hebrew word *palash*, meaning invader.

After festering as a thorn in the Israelites' side, the Philistines were destroyed by King Nebuchadnezzar II and disappeared from history in the 5th century BC. The bottom line? The Philistines—and by implication their posterity—ceased to exist some 2,500 years ago. The fable of a connection between the biblical Philistines and the modern-day Palestinians therefore remains that: fictitious.

But if the Palestinians cannot trace their roots to the invading Philistines, where exactly did they originate?

## WHAT'S IN A NAME?

The journey of discovery dates back to AD 135—more than two millennia after God pledged the Promised Land to Abraham's posterity—and the failed Jewish revolt against the Romans. As punishment, the Roman Emperor Hadrian sought to erase Jewish history and strip the Land of its Jewish identity. He revived the name of Israel's ancient enemy, the Philistines, and renamed Judea, the Jewish homeland, Syria Palaestina. This is the first time in history the area carried that name, a name that over the next two millennia would be adapted into the modern word Palestine, perpetuating a denial of the Land's Jewish roots.

The conquering armies that came after Rome simply adopted the name, with some derivative of Palaestina carried from the Byzantines, Islamic dynasties, the Ottomans and finally to the British—to be picked up and misappropriated by the Palestinians in modern times.

## THE ARABS ARRIVE

During the 7th century AD, a new religion emerged in the Arabian Peninsula. Islam spread steadily to neighboring regions, courtesy of Arab Muslim invaders carrying their beliefs, culture and language with them and forcefully imposing it wherever they settled. The Promised Land was no different. In AD 638, Jerusalem fell to Islam for the first time. The Ottoman Empire was next in line to conquer, ruling the region from 1516 to the end of World War I in 1918.





Under these consecutive foreign rulers, the territory carrying the name of Israel's archenemy never had defined borders but remained an inexact geographic region. More importantly, for nearly 2,000 years, it was never an independent, sovereign entity but always part of larger empires. The takeaway? As Palestinian historian Muhammad Y. Muslih puts it, "There was no political unit known as Palestine." And if there was no sovereign Palestine, there could be no self-identifying Palestinian people.

The nearly 1,500 years of largely Islamic rule saw an influx and outflow of Muslims to and from the Promised Land. The descendants of those who stayed would one day refer to themselves as Palestinians. Then, as the 18th century turned into the 19th, the scattered Jews began returning to the Land of their promise. As the Land blossomed, the prospect of economic prosperity lured Arabs from across the region. Their descendants would also one day refer to themselves as Palestinians.

## THE PALESTINIANS ARE BORN

Until the early 19th century, the residents of the Middle East identified primarily in terms of tribe and religion. Politics were local; nationalism unheard of. Then came the rise of a collective Arab nationalism across the region, with residents still identifying tribally and according to religion but now also primarily as Arab, unified by language, culture and tradition. National identity emerged at the end of World War I with the carving out of individual countries in the vast swatch of land formerly under Ottoman rule. People no longer merely identified as part of one larger Arab nation, but also as Iraqi, Lebanese, Syrian and so forth.

The same holds true for the residents of British Mandate Palestine. For the first time in history, those living on the strip of land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea began referring to themselves as Palestinians. Yet the name applied to both Arabs and Jews. Former Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir famously called

herself a Palestinian, saying, "From 1921 to 1948, I carried a Palestinian passport. There were no such things...as Jews and Arabs and Palestinians. There were Jews and Arabs."

The crux? For Palestinians to claim self-identification as Palestinians, a national people group with a unique identity, for thousands or even hundreds of years is absurd because national identity did not exist in the Middle East until the end of World War I. Moreover, when national identity did emerge, the term Palestinian applied to both Jew and Arab. In fact, the entity we know today as the Palestinian people was solidified and then emerged as a self-identifying group around the time of the rebirth of the State of Israel and to a larger degree after Israel regained Judea and Samaria in the 1967 Six Day War.

## THE LATEST CHAPTER

Some argue that the Palestinians were born in response to Zionism. To a certain extent, that's true. Yet as with nearly everything in this troubled region, the question of the Palestinians, their origin and historic connection to the Land is complicated. Perhaps the fable of the Palestinian people is not so much their claim to self-identification as a nation, but rather the claim that they have done so for centuries. Maybe the fallacy is not so much their claim of roots in the Promised Land, but rather the claim that their roots go the deepest or are the only ones. Perhaps the delusion is not so much about a name, but rather about what that name means.



Israel is nearly as old as history itself, with the footsteps of the Jewish patriarchs crisscrossing the Land for nearly 4,000 years. In comparison, the Palestinians are virtually the new kids on the block, a modern role-player in the latest chapter of the chronicles of Israel.

*Ilse Strauss, News Bureau Chief*



# Only in Israel

**Calling Israel “no ordinary country”** is something of an understatement. Here, the miraculous serves as the building blocks of history, cemented by the Keeper of Israel’s faithfulness. Here, no day is mundane, no chain of events random and no news headline arbitrary. And here, in this remarkable little country, even everyday life becomes infused with the exceptional, the uncommon and sometimes the surprising. Extraordinary Israel is indeed filled with people, practices, experiences and incidents so delightfully unique to this country that all too often, you are left shaking your head with a brilliant smile, thinking, “Only in Israel.” Let’s take a look at some of the wonderful—and worrying—things that set this country apart.

## A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

*“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”*

—Genesis 22:18a, God’s promise to Abraham, the father of the Jews

*“The Land of Israel will be small, but the people of Israel will make it great. Not in opulence, but in eminence will their destiny be fulfilled, and the elixir of their pride will be distilled not out of dominion or far-flung borders, but out of the faithful and skillful building of the good society.”*

—Rabbi Abba Hillel Silver

*“The day will come, when the story of Israel in modern times will speak not just to Jews, but to all who believe in the power of the human spirit as it reaches out to God, as an everlasting symbol of the victory of life over death, hope over despair. Israel has achieved great things. It has taken a barren land and made it bloom again. It’s taken an ancient language, the Hebrew of the Bible, and made it speak again. It’s taken the West’s oldest faith and made it young again. Israel has taken a tattered, shattered nation and made it live again. Israel is the country whose national anthem, Hatikvah, means hope. Israel is the home of hope.”*

— Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

*“Some people like the Jews, and some do not. But no thoughtful man can deny the fact that they are, beyond any question, the most formidable and the most remarkable race which has appeared in the world.”*

—Winston Churchill, former British prime minister

## AGAINST ALL ODDS

*“Israel is the only country in the world all of whose neighbors proclaim night and day that they are determined to destroy it—and the early days of our renewed independence bear witness that these are not mere words. Hence our principal concern is security, although our daily efforts are dedicated to the ingathering of exiles, the absorption of the immigrants, the fructification and population of the wasteland, the development of agriculture, industry and transport, the fostering of education, science,*





*literature and art, and the creation of new social patterns founded on freedom, equality, tolerance, mutual aid and the love of our fellow men."*

—David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister

*"How is it that Israel—a country of 7.1 million, only 60 years old, surrounded by enemies, in a constant state of war since its founding, with no natural resources—produces more start-up companies than large, peaceful, and stable nations like Japan, China, India, Korea, Canada and the UK?"*

—Dan Senor and Saul Singer in "Start-up Nation: The Story of Israel's Economic Miracle"

*"We do not rejoice in victories. We rejoice when a new kind of cotton is grown and when strawberries bloom in Israel."*

—Golda Meir, Israel's first female prime minister

*"If statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one quarter of one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine and abstruse learning are also very out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvelous fight in this world in all ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him...All things are mortal but the Jews; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"*

—Mark Twain, author

*"The truth is that if Israel were to put down its arms, there would be no more Israel. If the Arabs were to put down their arms, there would be no more war."*

—Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli prime minister

*"When, during the Second World War, the island of Malta came through three terrible years of bombardment and destruction, it was rightly awarded the George Medal for bravery. Today, Israel should be awarded a similar decoration for defending democracy, tolerance and Western values against a murderous onslaught that has lasted twenty times as long."*

—Andrew Roberts, historian

## WHERE ANCIENT MEETS CUTTING-EDGE

*"This is a nation of museums and patents, timeless holy sites and ground-breaking innovation. Only in Israel could you see the Dead Sea Scrolls and the place where the technology on board the Mars Rover originated at the same time."*

—Barak Obama, former US president

*"The view of Jerusalem is the history of the world; it is more, it is the history of earth and of heaven."*

—Benjamin Disraeli, former British prime minister

## UNIQUELY REVILED

*"If they [the Jews] all gather in Israel, it will save us the trouble of going after them worldwide."*

—Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, secretary-general of Hezbollah, the Iran-backed Lebanese terror organization perched on Israel's northern border

*"If Algeria introduced a resolution declaring that the earth was flat and that Israel had flattened it, it would pass by a vote of 164 to 13 with 26 abstentions."*

—Abba Eban, Israeli diplomat and politician

*"Our stance against Israel is the same stance we have always taken. Israel is a malignant cancerous tumor...that has to be removed and eradicated: it is possible and it will happen."*

—Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Iranian supreme leader





# TOURS

## Australia

### ENCOUNTER ISRAEL TOUR 2022

Date: October 21–November 13, 2022

Hosted by: To be confirmed

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, including 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.

## United Kingdom

### DISCOVERING ISRAEL

Date: June 8–15, 2022

Hosted by: Michael Treharne

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

## Canada

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

Fall 2022 (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.*

### EXPERIENCE ISRAEL DISCIPLESHIP TOUR

January 29–February 9, 2023

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.*

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. Join our team of volunteers in Israel to make a difference in the lives of the Israeli people. Please note that ever-changing travel restrictions require flexibility. For more information, visit [www.bridgesforpeace.com/get-involved](http://www.bridgesforpeace.com/get-involved)

**Administrative Assistant** (Long-term) • **Chinese Language Translator** (Long-term)

**Food Bank Floor Workers** (Short-term) • **Graphic Designer** (Long-term)

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

**Proofreader** (Long-term) • **Web Developer** (Long-term)





# Sticky Date Baklava

**The buttery crush of rich pastry**, combined with the syrupy sweetness of honey and the earthy balance of cinnamon and nuts make baklava a firm favorite throughout the Middle East and the Mediterranean. Israel is no different. You'll find tempting mounds of this sweet treat for sale in every market, bakery and coffee shop across the Jewish state. This recipe uses date honey for a unique Israeli flavor, but it is equally scrumptious when using regular honey.

## Ingredients

### *For the baklava:*

- 2 cups almonds, chopped
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 5 Tbsp butter
- $\frac{1}{8}$  cup date honey
- 22 sheets phyllo dough (cut to fit pan)

### *For the sauce:*

- 1 cup date honey
- 3 Tbsp butter
- $\frac{1}{3}$  cup water

## Directions

### *Making the baklava*

1. Toss the almonds and cinnamon and set aside.
2. In a small saucepan, melt the butter and mix in the date honey. Stir over medium heat until the date honey has dissolved.
3. Grease an 8 x 8 inch (20 x 20 cm.) pan.
4. Place 5 sheets of phyllo dough in the pan one by one, brushing each sheet with the butter and date honey mixture before adding the next.

5. Sprinkle  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup of almonds over the buttered phyllo layer.
6. Top with 4 more sheets of the phyllo dough, brushing each sheet with the butter and date honey mixture.
7. Repeat the process until you have 4 layers of almonds.
8. Finish with the remaining 5 sheets of buttered phyllo dough.
9. Cut into diamonds or squares.
10. Bake for 50 minutes at 350°F (180°C) until golden brown.
11. Set aside to cool for 20 minutes before adding the sauce.

### *Making the sauce*

1. In a small saucepan, combine the date honey, butter and water.
2. Bring to a boil for a minute and then let simmer for 20 minutes on low heat.
3. Pour the hot sauce over the cooled baklava.

Set the finished baklava aside to cool to room temperature or for 2 hours before serving for the best flavor.

Makes 16 pieces



## Israel Announces Completion of Security Barrier with Gaza Strip

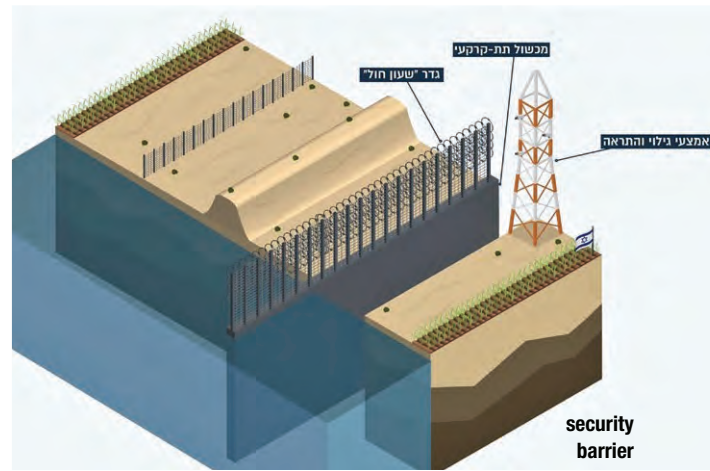
**After three-and-a-half years** of construction, the Israeli Ministry of Defense announced the completion of a 65-kilometer (40-mi.) underground and overground border barrier with the Gaza Strip.

The barrier “includes an underground component with sensors, an above-ground fence, a naval barrier, radar systems and command-and-control rooms to prevent infiltrations from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory,” the Defense Ministry said in a statement.

Needless to say, it also features advanced cameras for security purposes.

Israeli Defense Minister Benny Gantz said: “The barrier, which is an innovative and technologically advanced project, deprives Hamas of one of the capabilities it tried to develop and places an ‘iron wall,’ sensors and concrete between the terror organization and the residents of Israel’s south. This barrier will provide Israeli citizens a sense of security and will enable this beautiful region to continue developing and flourishing.”

He described routine life in southern Israel as “our victory,” calling such routine “the greatest threat to terrorist organizations.”



“We will continue to maintain our readiness to thwart any attempt to harm Israeli citizens with an emphasis on rocket attacks from Gaza. We will also prevent the transfer of Iranian know-how and technology to Gaza, and will continue thwarting any attempt by Hamas to operate its affiliates in Judea and Samaria or anywhere in Israel,” he said. “Their attempts have failed time and again.”

It took more than 1,200 workers to build the barrier, in addition to six concrete-producing plants that were established along the border with Gaza.

Some 220,000 trucks-worth of concrete went into the building work, as well as 140,000 tons of iron and steel.

The Defense Ministry and the Israel Defense Forces planned and built the barrier together.

*Jewish News Syndicate*

## Israel to Build US \$7-million High-tech Park for Arab Sector

**The Israeli government** is planning to build the first high-tech park for the country’s Arab sector in the predominantly Arab city of Nazareth.

The 10-acre [4-hectare] park will cost around US \$7 million, and the Economy Ministry projects it will provide 200 jobs in high-tech, according to *i24 News*.

“We hope that this new high-tech park...will give us another opportunity to bring more companies and more

high-tech engineers, Arab and Jewish, together, in Nazareth,” Sami Saadi, co-CEO of Tsafen, told *i24 News*.

Tsafen is a nonprofit that works with the Nazareth municipality and seeks to increase the number of high-tech opportunities in Israel’s Arab sector.

*Jewish News Syndicate*

**Nazareth**





# Christian Allies of Israel Are “Iron Dome of Truth” for Jewish State

**Israeli Ambassador** to the United Nations Gilad Erdan and former Vice President Mike Pence addressed hundreds of Christian supporters of Israel at the Israel Allies Foundation Gala Awards in Texas in October.

“The BDS [Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions] movement which seeks to demonize Israel is actively fanning the flames of anti-Semitism with the help of its supporters in Congress and European parliaments. In the face of the lies that some spread about Israel on Capitol Hill, I know that we can count on you to be our Iron Dome of truth,” Erdan told the gathering.

Erdan, who was deputy chair of the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus when he served in the Knesset [Parliament], said Christian support for Israel and the Israel Allies Foundation around the world creates a “lasting impact of immense proportions.”

“For that, the State of Israel could not be more grateful,” he added.

Pence spoke about the Trump administration’s accomplishments regarding Israel and the Middle East, including moving the US embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and helping to broker the Abraham Accords.

Josh Reinstein, president of the Israel Allies Foundation, said Pence and Erdan “spoke beautifully about the importance of faith-based diplomacy.”

“All over the world, millions of Christians are standing with Israel, and they are bringing the countries with them,” he said.

*Jewish News Syndicate*



**A Palestinian baby** was saved by the quick response of an IDF [Israel Defense Forces] medic on duty at the Zeitim border crossing in Jerusalem.

The incident took place when two Palestinian women arrived at the border crossing carrying the baby, who was ill and was breathing with an oxygen tank, and called for help.

Nineteen-year-old Corporal Adam, who was stationed at the crossing as a combat medic, rushed to the infant’s help as he struggled to breathe and was unresponsive.

The quick-witted soldier noticed that the child’s oxygen tank was poorly connected and began performing CPR on the child as they waited for an ambulance.

As time passed, Adam feared that first responders may not arrive on time. That is when he asked a police officer to flag down a taxi and take the child and the women to a nearby hospital.

“When the taxi arrived, I told the driver what to do as I continued performing CPR on the child. The taxi drove away, and I carried on with my work at the crossing as usual,” Adam said. “A few hours later, I saw this family coming back to the checkpoint. They came to thank me and tell me that the baby was fine. It’s a great feeling to save a baby. I’m glad I could help him.”

Elisha Ben Kimon, *Ynetnews*

## IDF Medic Saving Palestinian Baby





# BRIDGES FOR PEACE

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

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

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

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

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

**ADOPT AN ISRAELI TOWN:** Show compassion to needy families by supporting one of 20 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 83,000 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.



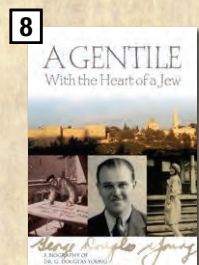
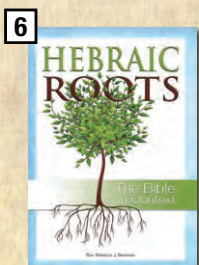
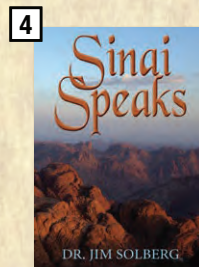
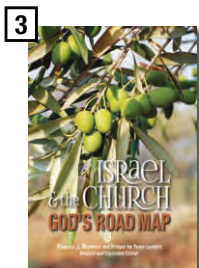
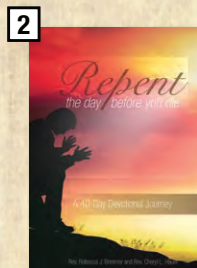


*You will arise  
and have mercy on Zion;  
for the time to favor her,  
yes, the set time, has come.*

Psalm 102:13

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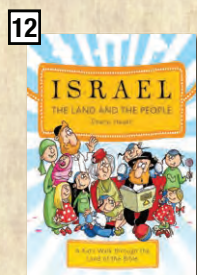
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