



dispatch from
Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

April 2022 • Vol. 47 No. 2 • www.bridgesforpeace.com • Your Israel Connection®

Gardens
of Jerusalem

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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Subscription information

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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The hostage taking of Jews is nothing new. Demonized through conspiracy theory and learned hatred, crazed terrorists who want to have their demands met target Jews as their desired captives. What a sad state of the world where Jews are viewed as bargaining chips in the wicked plans of evil men.

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No Silver Platter

After the 1947 UN vote to partition Palestine into two independent states, Chaim Weitzman, Israel's first president, gave this assessment: "No state is handed to a nation on a silver platter... what the Partition Plan offers the Jews is merely a chance."

By Janet Aslin



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Gardens of Jerusalem

Not so long ago if you were to visit Jerusalem, it would have looked desolate. Today it is hard to envision the miracle that has happened, because everywhere you look, trees and greenery surround you. Explore a few of the parks and gardens that make Jerusalem such a special place.

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Victims into Perpetrators

The dictionary defines a conspiracy theory as an attempt to explain harmful or difficult events as the result of the actions or secret plots of a small, powerful group. Historically, no individual or group has suffered as frequently or profoundly at the hands of conspiracy theorists than the Jews.

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Lebanon SOS

Today, Lebanon is known as a failed state in the throes of one of the worst economic collapses in 150 years. But what caused the decline from what was once the pride of the region to international dystopia? Who's behind the dizzying descent? And what are the implications for Israel?

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Journey with us through the wonderfully peculiar culture, traditions, heritage and daily life of this singular nation as we unpack, introduce and celebrate the quirky aspects that make Israel so wonderfully unique.

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BFP in Action

Late 1930s

NOW

2022

Holocaust

Stalin

Syretsky concentration camp, Ukraine



The front page of the New York Evening Post



HAS GOD

FORGOTTEN?

For the Jewish elderly living in Ukraine, life has been harsh. Their lives have gone from the ghettos and concentration camps of the Holocaust era to the tyranny of Stalin and then to the crushing poverty of today. I've been in their ramshackle houses, smelled the odor of poverty, seen their despair and had my heart broken over their situations. I've opened kitchen cabinets to find bare shelves. Surely the prophet Isaiah accurately depicted their despair when he penned the words, "But Zion said, 'The LORD has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me'" (Isa. 49:14). Because of their harsh lives, their children and grandchildren are also caught up in the cycle of poverty and heart-breaking despair.

We started Project Tikvah (Hope) to help alleviate some of their suffering and to show them that God has not forgotten His people. Stanislaw, a Polish Christian living in Slovakia, heads up the work. He travels back and forth from Slovakia and Poland to Ukraine. Project Tikvah is able to reach out because of Ukrainian Christians who love the Jewish people. He describes his ministry with love and tears. He and the other workers are heroes reaching out in practical ways to suffering Jews whom most of the world has forgotten about.

Throughout the years, we have helped with food, heaters, medicine and warm clothing. Stanislaw described one family we helped in this way:

Olga, Ivan, a grandchild and daughter



“Father’s name is Ivan. He is 61 and his leg was amputated. It started two years previously with a small wound on his leg. The wound spread out very quickly, because he was diabetic and he lost his leg at the end. He has problems with his heart, lungs and kidneys as well. He gets [pension for invalids], which is only about US \$60 per month. We saw terrible conditions when we stepped into their house. Six people living in two rooms of a small house. Ivan is very unhappy that he is not able to provide for his family and that he and family need help of others.

His wife Olga is 55. She has been [an] invalid since her childhood. Their two daughters Natasha and Anna live together with them. Natasha has two [children], Misha (13) and Ivanka (5). Another child died at age 1 and her husband left.

None in this household works. Natasha and Anna look for short-term work opportunities, because it is very difficult to find a permanent job. However, it is not enough to survive, or live a normal life.

Olga cooks of what is available in the house: some soup, or pasta, made out of flour, which they receive from Project Tikvah.

They asked us to pray for them and we prayed for their bodies and souls when we visited them.

They receive two food parcels through Project Tikvah every month and it is main source of food provision for them. They would not survive without that help. Please pray for this family.

This situation is overwhelming, and unfortunately is not the only such case. Please join with us to show God’s love to the “forgotten” Jews of Ukraine. Help us show them that God has not forgotten them.

The prophet Isaiah went on to say, “*Can a woman forget her nursing child, and not have compassion on the son of her womb? Surely they may forget, yet I will not forget you. See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands...*” (Isa. 49:15–16). Further in the chapter we read of the Lord’s promise to the Jewish people. “*Behold, I will lift My hand in an oath to the nations, and set up My standard for the peoples; they shall bring your sons in their arms, and your daughters shall be carried on their shoulders*” (Isa. 49:22).

What a privilege to be those God has called to bring comfort to His people whom He has not forgotten and to practically meet their urgent needs. Your gift will show them He cares.

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



Report: 2021 the Most Anti-Semitic Year in a Decade

The year 2021 was the most anti-Semitic in the past decade, according to a report released in late January by the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization [WZO].

The average number of recorded incidents was more than 10 per day, though the organizations said that significantly more likely occurred but were not reported.

The main types of incidents were vandalism, destruction, graffiti, desecration of monuments and propaganda.

“Anti-Semitism is not a new term, but a term that reinvents itself. Jewish communities around the world face the challenges of a rising and ever-changing anti-Semitism,”

said Raheli Baratz-Rix, head of the Department for Combating Anti-Semitism and Enhancing Resilience at WZO.

Europe saw the highest number of incidents, with close to 50% of all reported anti-Semitic acts taking place on the continent. The United States was second with 30% of the year’s incidents, including a 100% increase in the number of anti-Semitic incidents in New York (503 in 2021, compared to 252 the year before) and a 59% increase in Los Angeles.

Canada and Australia also saw a spike compared to previous years.

Jewish News Syndicate

Iran, Iraq Threaten Israel, US

Chants of “Death to America.” US and Israeli flags trampled underfoot. Hacking the websites of two leading Israeli news outlets with a photo threatening destruction. This is how Iran and Iraq commemorated the second anniversary of the assassination of Iran’s top general and his Iraqi lieutenant in a US drone strike.

Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the notorious “shadow commander” of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards’ elite Quds Force, the unit responsible for Tehran’s proxy wars in the Middle East, died a fiery death in a US drone strike on Baghdad International Airport on January 2, 2020. He perished alongside Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy commander of Iran-backed militias in Iraq. While former US President Donald Trump gave the command to strike, Iran has accused Israel of “directing” the attack.

Their deaths—particularly that of Soleimani—brought the decades-old enemies Washington and Tehran to the brink of direct military confrontation, with tensions continuing to simmer some 24 months later.

Iranian officials have pledged repeatedly that the killing of the second most powerful figure in the Islamic Republic, Israel’s “most dangerous enemy” and the architect of Tehran’s regional security strategy will be avenged. To date, the threat remains unfulfilled, bar for Tehran firing missiles at two US targets in Iraq. While the strikes caused no casualties, some US troops reportedly suffered traumatic brain injuries.

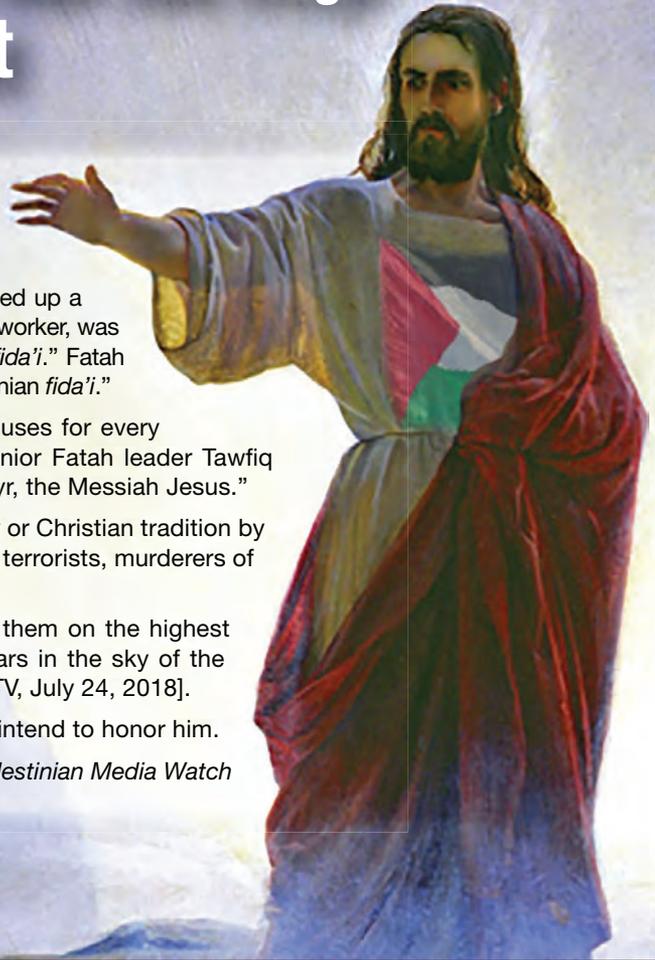
The anniversary of the strike—and the death of a national icon—is usually observed with more vows of revenge, a show of military might and some US and Israel bashing. This year was no different.

The Iraqis commemorated the two-year mark by busying thousands of Iran-aligned Shiite faction supporters from all over the country into Baghdad for a mass rally in the capital. Filling a Baghdad square, the crowd expressed its displeasure by chanting anti-America refrains, waving placards, stomping on US and Israeli flags and demanding the expulsion of the remaining US troops from Iraq.

Ilse Strauss, Bridges for Peace



Palestinians Reinvent Jesus in their Own Image as a Terrorist



The PA [Palestinian Authority] uses many euphemisms and terms to refer to terrorists, and they are applying two of them to Jesus [Yeshua]. The first is *fida'i*, literally “self-sacrificing fighter.”

For example, terrorist Ashraf Na’alwa, who brought a rifle to work, tied up a young mother of a 15-month-old, and then murdered her and another coworker, was called by Fatah [leading secular Palestinian political party]: “The heroic *fida'i*.” Fatah official Rawhi Fattouh applied this status to Jesus: “Jesus the first Palestinian *fida'i*.”

The second term is *shahid*—Islamic “martyr”—the word the PA uses for every terrorist killed during his/her attack, including suicide bombers. Senior Fatah leader Tawfiq Tirawi applied both terms to Jesus: “The first *fida'i* and the first martyr, the Messiah Jesus.”

Ironically, the PA and Fatah do not intend to insult Jesus’ memory or Christian tradition by turning Jesus into a terrorist. Palestinian leaders actually believe that terrorists, murderers of Israelis and Islamic “martyrs” are the “most honorable.”

PA President Mahmoud Abbas praises them regularly and puts them on the highest pedestal: “We view the martyrs and prisoners (i.e., terrorists) as stars in the sky of the Palestinian people, and they have priority in everything” [Official PA TV, July 24, 2018].

So, by calling Jesus a Palestinian terrorist, the PA/Fatah actually intend to honor him.

Itamar Marcus, *Palestinian Media Watch*

Iran Pushing to Increase Ballistic Missile Range to Cover Europe

Iran’s *Farhikhtegan* newspaper reported that Iran aspires to increase its ballistic missile range and that its development of a 5,000-kilometer-range [3,106-mi.-range] missile is “closer than ever.”

Gen. Hajizadeh announced a “successful test” of a new Satellite Launch Vehicle (SLV) engine called the “Raafe.”

According to the *Farhikhtegan* newspaper, the test indicates significant progress in the missile field. The newspaper added that although Iran has announced that it does not want to build ballistic missiles with a range of more than 2,000 kilometers [1,242 mi.], the new engine could allow it to pass that range and even approach the 5,000-kilometer [3,106-mi.] range.

The United States considers Iran’s satellite launchers to be a violation of Security Council Resolution 2231, which was approved in July 2015. According to the resolution,

Iran was “called upon” not to take any action involving ballistic missiles “designed to be capable of delivering nuclear weapons.”

Iran’s space programs, which were “dormant” under Rouhani, were accelerated as part of the Iranian response to the US exit from the nuclear deal and now also serve as leverage for pressure on the West during the nuclear talks.

Farhikhtegan praised the [current] Raisi government, noting that “while there appears to have been some progress in the nuclear talks, the West has not stopped threatening Iran through escalating sanctions. Therefore, Tehran insists on the core issues to persuade the West to take clearer positions...Tehran’s strong emphasis on strengthening its military capability shows that as Western pressure intensifies, Iran will expand its military testing, in addition to increasing the scope of its regional campaign.”

Lt. Col. (ret.) Michael Segall, JCPA

Shema Yisrael Pendants

Discovered in Sobibor Extermination Camp



Front of pendant

Back of pendant

Over the past decade, archaeological excavations in the Sobibor extermination camp have uncovered three pendants bearing depictions of Moses and the tablets of the Law opposite the Hebrew prayer *Shema Yisrael* (“Hear O Israel”).

The metal pendants are different from one another, and they were inscribed by hand. Over the past year, researchers have identified their origin in Eastern Europe from Lviv in Ukraine, Poland and Czechoslovakia.

According to archaeologist Yoram Haimi of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA):

“Little is known about the stories behind the pendants, which is heartbreaking. It has been possible to identify a kind of tradition or fashion among the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe with pendants that were inscribed with *Shema Yisrael* on one side and a depiction of Moses and the tablets of the Law on the opposite side. But were they distributed in synagogues by local Jewish communities or possibly produced for individual orders? Research of the pendants is ongoing, and we invite the public to provide us with details concerning them.”

One of the three pendants was discovered in the archaeological excavations in the remains of the building where victims were undressed before being led to the gas chambers. Over the floor of the building were scattered dozens of women’s hairpins, jewelry and also a pendant. Another pendant, inscribed with Latin numbers on the tablets of the Law, was uncovered in the area where victims were undressed in Camp II. A third pendant—on which only the side with the inscribed prayer survived—was discovered next to a mass grave.

According to Eli Eskozido, director of the IAA:

“The personal and human aspect of the discovery of these pendants is chilling. They represent a thread running between generations of Jews—actually a thick thread, thousands of years old, of prayer and faith. This moving discovery reminds us once again of the importance of settlement in our Land and our obligation to reveal the past, to know it and to learn from it. I congratulate IAA archaeologist Yoram Haimi for his initiative in excavating the extermination camp and making the Holocaust tangible in the face of hatred and Holocaust denial.”

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA



Spectacular Ancient Treasure Discovered at Sea

A number of fascinating artifacts from the wrecks of two ships that foundered off the coast of Caesarea in the Roman and Mamluk periods (some 1,700 and 600 years ago respectively) have been discovered near Caesarea during an underwater survey conducted by the Marine Archaeology unit of the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA). The ships' cargoes and the remains of their wrecked hulls were found in shallow water at a depth of about 4 meters [13 ft.], scattered on the sea floor.

According to Jacob Sharvit and Dror Planer of the IAA's Marine Archaeology unit:

"The ships were probably anchored nearby and were wrecked by a storm. They may have been anchored offshore after getting into difficulty or fearing stormy weather, because sailors know well that mooring in shallow, open water outside of a port is dangerous and prone to disaster."

The marine treasure includes hundreds of silver and bronze Roman coins from the mid-third century AD and a large hoard of silver coins from the Mamluk period (14th century); a bronze figurine in the form of an eagle, symbolizing Roman rule; a figurine of a Roman pantomimus in a comic mask; numerous bronze bells intended, among other things, to ward off evil spirits; and pottery vessels. Multiple metal items from the hull of a wooden ship were also discovered, including dozens of large bronze nails, lead pipes from a bilge pump and a large iron anchor broken in pieces, attesting to the force it withstood until it finally snapped, probably in the storm.

The underwater remains include rare personal effects of the shipwreck victims. Among these was a beautiful red gemstone for setting in a ring. The carving of the gemstone shows a lyre. In Jewish tradition, the lyre it is called *kinor David* (David's harp). According to 1 Samuel 16:23, David played his harp for King Saul. The biblical *kinor* is generally equated with the instrument known as Apollo's Lyre in Greek mythology. In the Greek myth, the infant Hermes made the instrument, the lyre, out of the shell of a tortoise on the morning of his birth. In exchange for the instrument, the music lover Apollo agreed to make Hermes and his mother gods.

Another exquisite and rare find is a thick, octagonal gold ring set with a green gemstone carved with the figure of a young shepherd boy dressed in a tunic and bearing a ram or a sheep on his shoulders. The image, depicting the Good Shepherd, is one of the earliest and oldest images used in Christianity for symbolizing Jesus (Yeshua). It represents Jesus as humanity's compassionate shepherd, extending His benevolence to His flock of believers and all mankind. This unique gold ring bearing the figure of the Good Shepherd possibly gives us an indication of its owner, an early Christian.

The ring was discovered near the port of Caesarea, a site of great significance in Christian tradition. Caesarea was one of the earliest centers of Christianity and housed one of the first Christian communities. At first, only Jews belonged to this community. It was here that the apostle Peter baptized the Roman centurion Cornelius (Acts 10:10). "This was the first instance of a non-Jew being accepted into the Christian community," says Sharvit. "From here, the Christian religion began to be disseminated across the world."

According to Eli Eskozido, director of the IAA: "Israel's coasts are rich in sites and finds that are immensely important national and international cultural heritage assets. They are extremely vulnerable, which is why the IAA conducts underwater surveys to locate, monitor and salvage any antiquities."

Excerpt from a press release by the IAA



Iran's MARCH TOWARD the NUKE

Everything was supposed to be fine in 2015, when the P5+1 (China, France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom and the United States) reached a nuclear agreement with Iran, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). In exchange for sanctions relief for the financially crippled regime in Tehran, the 159-page document detailed restrictions to curb and monitor Iran's nuclear development program.

However, the US withdrew from the agreement in 2018 under then-President Donald Trump, who criticized the deal as flawed and reimposed sanctions against Iran. A year later, Tehran began openly and progressively defying its restrictions under the deal, beginning with stockpiling its uranium past the limit as well as enriching uranium to a much higher purity than allowed.

As talks in Vienna to revive the nuclear deal appear to be petering out at the time of writing, Iran continues its nuclear development. The Biden administration initially seemed keen to revive the JCPOA, but as the clock ticks and centrifuges continue spinning in Iran, more and more American and European officials are posturing that the talks are dragging on so slowly—while Iran continues upping the ante on its nuclear development—that soon, a revived nuclear deal might be a moot point.

HOW CLOSE IS IRAN TO NUCLEAR BREAKOUT?

In January, the Israel-based Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) published a report warning that Iran was just weeks away from achieving a nuclear bomb. But here we are, and Tehran has yet to



produce its impending boom. It seems like every few months, there is another report that Iran is a mere few months, or even weeks, away from a nuclear weapon. How close then is the Islamic regime to achieving nuclear breakout?

The reports vary, and it's difficult to say, as the answer depends on several factors. Yes, Iran is using more centrifuges than allowed at more operational nuclear plants than allowed to enrich more uranium than allowed at a higher purity than allowed. Though highly enriched uranium is a key ingredient for a nuclear weapon, more ingredients are needed to produce a working nuke. First, Iran has to manufacture enough enriched uranium for one nuclear bomb—though experts estimate the regime could clear that hurdle shortly. However, Iran also has to build a working nuclear warhead as well as a ballistic missile that can carry the payload in order to reach full nuclear-state status.

Experts say Iran received a leg up from Pakistan. Islamabad gifted Tehran with designs for a working nuclear weapon in the 1990s. Iran also has an advanced ballistic missile program, which includes the long-distance Ghadr-110 missile that could reach Tel Aviv, *Foreign Policy* reported in January. And with Iran barring international inspectors from visiting some of its nuclear development sites, it's hard to say where Tehran is in the process of building a working bomb.

“The real core truth is that simply no one, including those with access to more detailed intelligence on Iran's nuclear program, can be certain on any of these timelines, especially as we do not have a solid idea of what research and development Iran has been able to historically and currently work on,” Sahil Shah of the European Leadership Network told *Foreign Policy* in January. Russian nuclear negotiator Mikhail Ulyanov took it a step further when he told *Foreign Policy* that a significant stockpile of weapons-grade uranium “cannot be used without warheads, and the Iranians do not have warheads and will not get the relevant technologies for a long time.”

SCIENCE

To understand how close Iran is to weapons-grade uranium, it's important to understand the process. Natural uranium, which has a purity of 0.7%, is fed into centrifuges, machines that spin at high speeds (between 60,000–100,000 revolutions per minute), causing the lighter enriched uranium to rise to the top, while the heavier depleted gas sinks. In order to achieve nuclear capability, uranium must be enriched to 90% purity. The process of enriching uranium to a higher purity is relatively simple, though time-consuming.

Simon Henderson of the Energy Policy Program at the Washington Institute and Olli Heinonen, former director-general of the department of safeguards at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), wrote an in-depth glossary on nuclear Iran in 2015. According to their report, uranium hexafluoride is fed into 12 cascades of centrifuges, which enriches the uranium to a purity of 3.5%. The initial process of enriching uranium to 3.5% (or 3.67%, as allowed

under the JCPOA) purifies the uranium from the majority of excess atoms, *Foreign Policy* reported, after which enriching to higher purities becomes much easier. Next, the 3.5% uranium is fed through eight cascades to reach 20% purity. Then it is fed through another four cascades to reach 60%. Finally, the uranium is fed through another two cascades to achieve 90% purity—the quality necessary for a nuclear weapon.

CROSSING THE LINE

In November 2021—just before the nuclear talks resumed in Vienna—Iran announced it had achieved 60% enriched uranium—meaning the Islamic regime is just one technical step away from weapons-grade uranium. Under the JCPOA, Iran was not supposed to enrich higher than 3.67% purity. And the regime was supposed to have no more than 300 kilograms (661 lbs.) of that low-enriched uranium stockpiled. But as of November 2021, Iran has stockpiled 25 kilograms (55 lbs.) of 60% enriched uranium as well as 210 kilograms (463 lbs.) of 20%. The JCPOA also required Iran to convert or disable some of its nuclear sites and cap its working centrifuges at 6,104 and dismantle or store the rest. Iran officially has 6,000 centrifuges as of November 2021, according to the United States Institute of Peace. But how many more unofficial centrifuges continue to spin, driving the regime closer and closer to weapons-grade uranium?

Israel and now the United States have been hinting at “other options” aside from the nuclear talks and diplomacy to hamper Iran's nuclear progress. Regardless of how long until Iran's nuclear breakout time and what research and technological hurdles the regime has yet to clear, the clock is ticking, and time is running out until tick, tick, boom.

TICK TICK BOOM!



Kate Norman, *BFP Staff Writer*



Bargaining Chips

Many a suspense-filled film features bank robbers and their failed attempts to escape with the loot before the police arrive. In desperation, the robbers take those unlucky individuals trapped in the bank as hostages. What ensues is usually a tension-filled negotiation as the criminals try to leverage the lives of their innocent captives to ensure their own escape. For the hostages, it is generally about being in the wrong place at the wrong time, a mere stroke of bad fortune. In real-life hostage situations, the selection of hostages is targeted, a premeditated plan to leverage the most valuable hostages to ensure that demands are met. The Jewish people are targeted for this exact purpose. Terrorists view Jews as valuable collateral, and their captors somehow believe that the Jewishness of their hostages will ensure a favorable outcome for their demands.

MUNICH, MA'ALOT AND MORE

Steven Spielberg immortalized in film the events and aftermath of the Munich Massacre at the 1972 Summer Olympics in Munich, Germany. Eight terrorists from the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) disguised themselves as athletes and gained access to the apartment complex where the Israeli Olympic athletes were staying. Two Israeli athletes were murdered immediately and nine others taken hostage. Demands were made for the release of 234 Arab prisoners from Israeli jails as well as two German terrorists. After a 23-hour standoff and a failed rescue attempt, all the Israeli hostages were killed.

Just two years later, on Israeli Independence Day 1974, three terrorists disguised as Israeli soldiers snuck over the border into Ma'alot, Israel, from Lebanon. Again they demanded the release of Palestinian prisoners. In the horrific unfolding of the drama, 25 hostages were killed, including 22 children, and a further 68 were injured.

Another two years later on June 27, 1976, Air France Flight 139 from Tel Aviv to Paris was hijacked. During a scheduled stopover in Athens, Greece, six hijackers boarded the plane, demanding that 40 Palestinian militants imprisoned in Israel and 13 prisoners in four other countries be released. The hijacked flight was redirected to Entebbe, Uganda, where then-dictator Idi Amin provided safe passage and refuge.

Upon arrival in Entebbe, Jewish and Israeli hostages were separated out from other captives. "It was a similar selection process the Nazis administered when selecting who would go work and who would be sent to the gas chambers," says Lt.-Col. (res.) Mor, the navigator of one of the Israeli rescue planes sent to Entebbe.

Shockingly, all other non-Jewish/Israeli hostages were released, while the 94 remaining Jewish/Israeli hostages as well as eight airline crew were threatened with death. Following a daring rescue operation, 102 hostages were rescued and two were killed.

The tragic events do not stop there. Daniel Pearl, a *Wall Street Journal* reporter, was kidnapped in Pakistan in 2002 and held as ransom by the National Movement for the Restoration of Pakistani Sovereignty. The video of his eventual execution was titled: "Slaughter of the Spy-Journalist, the Jew Daniel Pearl."

Gilad Shalit, a young Israeli soldier, was captured by Hamas during an attack near Gaza in 2006. Only in 2011, after years of negotiations and the release of 1,027 Hamas and Palestinian prisoners was Shalit finally released.

Sadly, it has become a reality in Israel and for the global Diaspora (Jewish population outside Israel) that hostage taking is a very real and present threat.

COLLEYVILLE, TEXAS

A homeless stranger knocked on the synagogue door of Congregation Beth Israel in Colleyville, Texas, on January 15, 2022. In an act of mercy, Rabbi Charlie Cytron-Walker invited him in out of the cold for tea and a warm place to shelter. It is, after all, a biblical mandate to care for those less fortunate. However, British Pakistani Malik Faisal Akram had ulterior motives. Moments after being shown warm hospitality, Akram revealed a weapon and took Rabbi Cytron-Walker and three congregants hostage. According to media reports, Akram demanded the release of an Al-Qaeda-linked terrorist, Aafia Siddiqui, currently serving an 86-year sentence in a Fort Worth prison for plotting terror attacks against US military targets and FBI agents.

An 11-hour standoff ensued, with Akram releasing one hostage after six hours. It was in the final hour that Akram became more aggressive and instructed the remaining three Jewish hostages to kneel down in the position commonly known as "execution style." Once this happened, Rabbi Cryton-Walker knew that they had to act.

Rabbi Cryton-Walker and the hostages positioned themselves close to an exit, distracted Akram and then threw a chair at their captor, allowing them to escape. As is common practice with Jewish community leaders around the world, Rabbi Cryton-Walker had participated in several security courses offered by the police, FBI and other organizations, which he credited with helping him identify the right moment to flee. The FBI stormed the synagogue, and Akram was shot multiple times, dying on scene.

While initially the investigators of the FBI Dallas field office stated that the hostage situation in Colleyville was not "specifically related to the Jewish community," statements made by Akram and captured on the livestream of the *Shabbat* (Sabbath) service from Congregation Beth Israel paints a different picture. In an interview with *CNN*, one of the hostages, Jeffrey Cohen, said that Akram had stated plainly that he had chosen their synagogue because "Jews control the world. Jews control the media. Jews control the banks." The FBI later revised its statement, labelling the events as "an act of terrorism targeting the Jewish community."

A SAD STATE

The hostage taking of Jews is nothing new. Demonized through conspiracy theory, learned hatred and bigotry, Jews are targeted as the desired captives of crazed terrorists who want to have their demands met. Perhaps it is the knowledge that in Judaism, life and preservation of life is such a vital concept. Perhaps terrorists expect that if their hostages are Jewish, even more effort will be made to meet their demands. Indeed, Jewish lives are valuable, but what a sad state of the world where Jews are viewed as bargaining chips in the wicked plans of evil men.



Nathan Williams, *Director of Marketing and Communications*



No Silver Platter

At less than 100 years old, the modern State of Israel is a relatively young nation. Moreover, 74 years ago, when David Ben-Gurion proclaimed the establishment of the state on May 14, 1948, its survival was not a given. After the 1947 UN vote to partition Palestine into two independent states, Chaim Weitzman, Israel's first president, gave this assessment: "No state is handed to a nation on a silver platter...and what the Partition Plan offers the Jews is merely a chance."

The Background to Be a Free Nation

World War II had ended, and Jewish survivors from the Holocaust were fleeing the horrors of Europe, many hoping to immigrate to Palestine, as the area was known under the British Mandate. Faced with a deteriorating situation in Palestine and a lack of support at home, the United Kingdom petitioned the UN for relief and a resolution to the growing crisis.

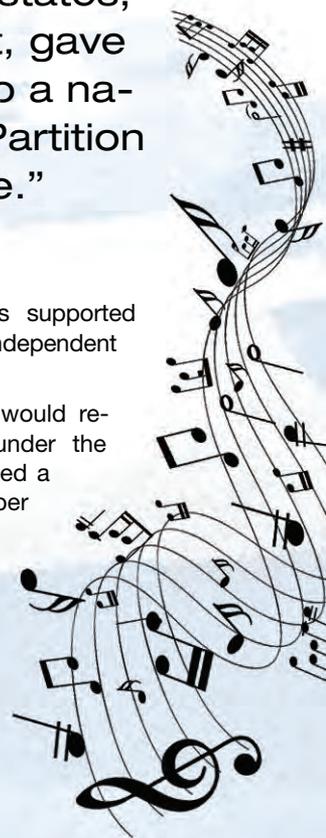
In response, on May 15, 1947, the UN Special Committee on Palestine (UNSCOP) was created to make a recommendation on its future government. The committee consisted of representatives from 11 neutral nations, excluding members of the UN Security Council and Britain.

After an intense, on-site investigation, a

majority of the UNSCOP delegates supported the partition of Palestine into two independent states—one Jewish and one Arab.

Although neither Jew nor Arab would receive everything they hoped for under the Partition Plan, for the Jews it provided a ray of hope. In 1878, Naftali Herz Imber penned the words to *HaTikvah* (the Hope), a poem that would later be put to song and adopted as Israel's national anthem. A literal translation of the second stanza expresses the deep Jewish longing to be restored to their ancient homeland:

"Our hope is not yet lost,
The hope of two thousand years,
To be a free nation in our land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem."



The Jews were willing to take the chance offered and accept the Partition Plan, while the Arabs vehemently rejected it. On November 29, 1947, the UN General Assembly adopted the UNSCOP majority plan as Resolution 181.

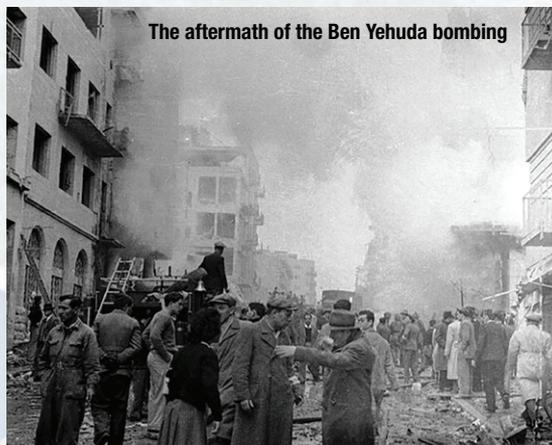
Civil War in Mandatory Palestine

On the night of the UN roll call vote, Jews gathered around their radios, and when the results were tallied—33 in favor, 13 opposed and 10 abstentions—they poured joyfully into the streets to celebrate. However, Arab rejection of the UN decision plunged the country into a period of on-and-off conflict that would last until March 10, 1949.

Violent Arab protests of the UN vote began immediately. On November 30, 1947, a Jewish bus traveling near Kfar Sirkin was attacked by Arabs and five passengers were killed. The violence increased during the next five-and-a-half months, until the end of the British Mandate on May 15, 1948.

This was a desperate period indeed for the Jewish community in Palestine. Three separate car bombings of the pro-Zionist *Palestine Post*, the Ben Yehuda street market and the Jewish Agency resulted in 88 Jewish deaths and hundreds of injuries. The city of Jerusalem with its 100,000 Jewish residents was in a state of siege, cut off by Arab forces and under bombardment from the eastern part of the city. Attempts to break the blockade of the city through the use of improvised armored vehicles brought the Jewish death toll even higher.

There are many stories of heroism, like that of the *Lamed Hey* (the 35), Palmach (the commando unit of the fighting forces who preceded the Israel Defense Forces) fighters who set out to bring ammunition and supplies over mountainous terrain to isolated Jewish communities in the Gush Etzion Bloc, just south of Jerusalem. Chosen for the difficult



mission from among the best, these 35 brave men were ambushed and all killed before they reached their destination. Twelve of the bodies were so mutilated that they could not be identified. Buried by the British in a common grave, their bodies were later buried at Mount Herzl, Israel's national cemetery.

The Silver Platter

From November 30, 1947 until Ben-Gurion's proclamation of the birth of the State of Israel on May 14, 1948, 1,303 Jewish lives were lost. Another 6,373—nearly 10% of the entire Jewish population—died during the War of Independence, which began immediately after the state was declared.

Natan Alterman, an Israeli poet, was celebrating the UN vote when he overheard two of his underground resistance friends discussing how many Jewish lives might be lost if the State of Israel were declared. Their estimate? Perhaps 10,000. His well-known poem, "The Silver Platter," was born from the realization that the Jewish community would have to fight and suffer for their nation.

The poem describes two young people wearing "the dress of battle, the grime of aching day and fired night" approaching the waiting nation silently. The watching crowd wonders who they are—this boy and girl. Their reply, "We are the silver platter upon which the Jewish State was served to you."

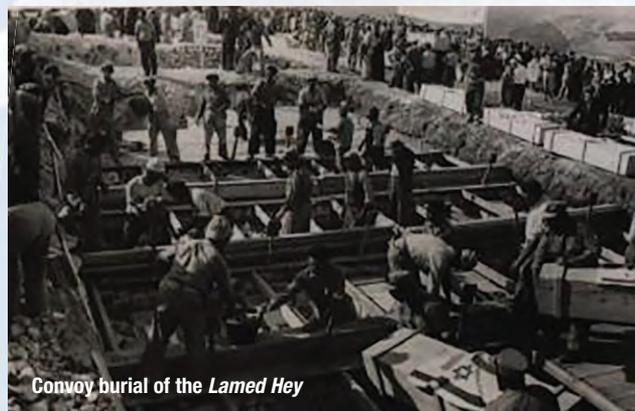
From Mourning to Dancing

Israel has chosen to observe *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day) immediately before *Yom HaAtzmaut* (Independence Day), this year on May 3 and May 4, respectively. In accordance with the Hebrew way of counting days, *Yom HaZikaron* begins after sunset and ends 24 hours later. Regular television broadcasting stops, and the names and ranks of every soldier who died for Israel are shown.

When the time of mourning has ended, the nation goes immediately into the joy of *Yom HaAtzmaut*—the day set apart to celebrate the rebirth of the nation of Israel after 2,000 years of exile. Given the threats Israel faces from Iran and global anti-Semitism, one might say its existence is still merely a chance. But that would negate the words God spoke to Abram, "Also I give to you and your descendants after you the land in which you are a stranger, all the land of Canaan, as an everlasting possession..." (Gen. 17:8).



Janet Aslin, BFP Staff Writer



Israeli Company Builds New Telescope to Research Deep Space

Israeli defense company

Elbit Systems announced that it had won a [US] \$16 million contract to supply a space telescope to the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot.

The telescope will be part of Israel's Ultraviolet Transient Astronomy Satellite ("ULTRASAT") program to observe and research deep space, said Elbit.

"The ULTRASAT program, jointly managed and funded by the Weizmann Institute of Science and the Israeli Space Agency, is carried out in association with the German DESY research center. The contract will be performed over a period of two years," it added.

"Elbit Systems will develop, manufacture and integrate a highly sensitive, wide field of view (200 square degrees) ultraviolet space telescope that is intended to help scientists in understanding the creation of heavy elements, black holes and gravitational waves, and to discover astronomical phenomena such as supernovas (star explosions)," said the company.

It noted its record of providing space cameras, satellites and other electronic instruments of its production to space programs [in] other areas of the world, such as the United States, Europe, South Korea and Brazil.

"We are proud to take part in this scientific endeavor, lending our capabilities and experience to the effort to better understand nature," stated Oren Sabag, general manager of Elbit Systems ISTAR EW (Intelligence Surveillance Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare) division.

The telescope is being designed for a three-year orbit at 36,000 kilometers [22,369 mi.] from Earth.

Excerpt from an article by the *Jewish News Syndicate*

Medical

Israeli Scientists Discover ALS Nerve-destruction Mechanism

An Israeli research group has discovered the biological mechanism causing nerve destruction in amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease.

The groundbreaking study suggests that the course of this fatal disease can be delayed and even reversed in its early stages.

The research was led by Tel Aviv University Prof. Eran Perlson and his doctoral students, Topaz Altman and Ariel Ionescu, and was conducted in collaboration with Dr. Amir Dori, director of the clinic for neuromuscular diseases at Sheba Medical Center.

ALS, the most common type of motor neuron disease, causes patients gradually to lose control over voluntary muscle movements, leading to paralysis and eventually the inability to breathe independently. The average life expectancy of ALS patients is about three years from diagnosis.

"The paralysis caused by the disease results from damage to the motor neurons, which leads to the degeneration [of] nerve endings and to the loss of muscle innervation," Perlson explained.

"This consequently leads to the degeneration of the nerve and the death of motor neurons in the spinal cord. Until now, we could not understand the basic biological mechanism causing the initial damage behind this vicious cascade."

To solve the mystery, the researchers focused on a protein called TDP-43, shown in earlier studies to accumulate in unusual amounts and localization in the brains of about 95% of all ALS patients.



They revealed a biological link between the protein's accumulation and the degeneration of the synapses between the motor neuron endings and the muscles, called neuromuscular junctions, which translate neural commands into physical movements.

In a series of experiments on cells of ALS patients and in genetically modified model animals, they discovered that the accumulation of TDP-43 in the neuromuscular junction inhibits protein synthesis in the mitochondria, which powers fundamental cellular processes.

The dysfunction of mitochondria leads to neuromuscular junction disruption and ultimately to the death of the motor neurons in the spinal cord.

Using an experimental molecule from a group of US researchers, they were able to disassemble the axonal TDP-43 protein condensates in cells from ALS patients. This process improved production of essential proteins, enhanced mitochondrial activity and prevented neuromuscular junction degeneration.

This means that motor nerves can regenerate and that patients can have hope, said Perlson.

"Our discovery can lead to the development of new therapies that could either dissolve the TDP-43 protein condensates or increase the production of proteins essential to mitochondrial function, and thereby heal the nerve cells before irreversible damage occurs in the spinal cord."

Abigail Klein Leichman, *JNS* via *Israel21c*

Environment

Israel Awards US \$3 Million in Grants for Food-security Innovation

Israel's Agriculture Ministry and the Israel Innovation Authority (IIA) have announced a joint program to assist in the development of advanced technologies to improve food security.

For the program's pilot, NIS 8.6 million (US \$2.7 million) in grants will be awarded to six Israeli agro-tech startups.

"Agro-tech is an important field and has a real impact on the future of the world through a variety of cross-sectors, such as climate, food security and sustainable agriculture that allows less use of pesticides and high nutritional values," said IIA CEO Dror Bin.

"The purpose of the program is twofold: To provide an opportunity for first implementation of advanced technologies for Israeli start-ups and to allow Israeli citizens to enjoy the innovation developed locally," he added.

Among the six companies selected for the pilot are BioFishency, which is developing an automated system for

the treatment of industrial fishing ponds; Agrint Sensing Solutions, which is using seismic sensors for early detection of caterpillar infestations in fruit trees; ALTA, a drone company that is working on a solution for precise spraying of plant products; and Salicrop, which is treating seeds to make them more resistant to extreme weather conditions.

"We are investing in this project while thinking about our future, and through agro-tech we will be able to overcome the challenges of tomorrow," said Agriculture Ministry Director-General Naama Kaufman-Pess. "Food security is our responsibility."

Excerpt from an article by the *Jewish News Syndicate*

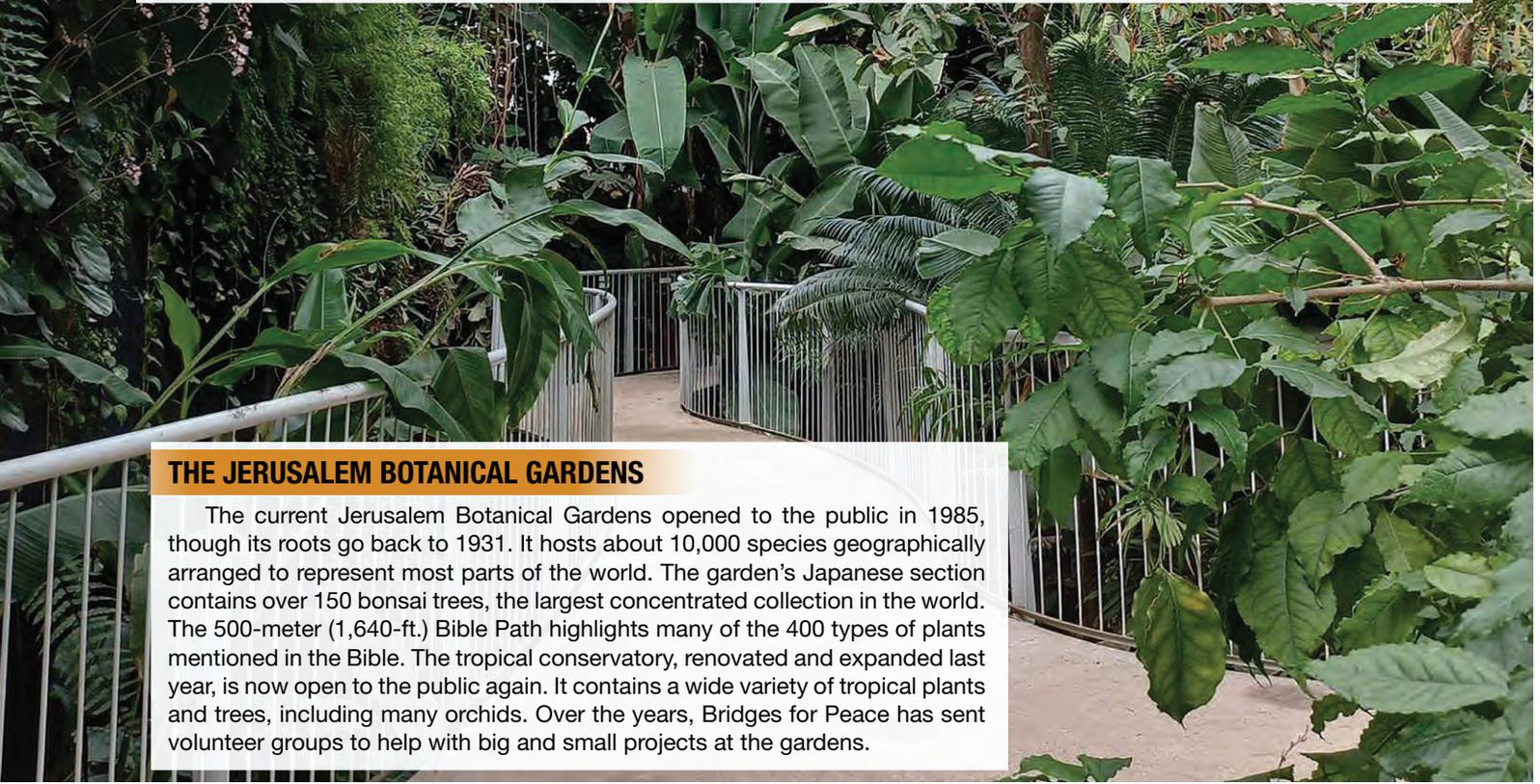


Gardens of Jerusalem

Jerusalem is Israel's largest city. King David's description thousands of year ago is still accurate today: *"Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together,* (Ps. 122:3). There is a perpetual housing shortage and people continue to flood into the capital. Thankfully, the parks and gardens of Jerusalem provide room for the bulging population to breathe and get outside. Its springtime in Israel, and just as the biblical prophets foretold thousands of years ago, the desert land is indeed blossoming! *"The wilderness and*

the wasteland shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, (Isa. 35:1).

Not so long ago if you were to visit Jerusalem, it would have looked desolate. Today it is hard to envision the miracle that has happened, because everywhere you look, trees and greenery surround you. Green space is essential for quality of life. Here are a few of the parks and gardens that make Jerusalem such a special place.



THE JERUSALEM BOTANICAL GARDENS

The current Jerusalem Botanical Gardens opened to the public in 1985, though its roots go back to 1931. It hosts about 10,000 species geographically arranged to represent most parts of the world. The garden's Japanese section contains over 150 bonsai trees, the largest concentrated collection in the world. The 500-meter (1,640-ft.) Bible Path highlights many of the 400 types of plants mentioned in the Bible. The tropical conservatory, renovated and expanded last year, is now open to the public again. It contains a wide variety of tropical plants and trees, including many orchids. Over the years, Bridges for Peace has sent volunteer groups to help with big and small projects at the gardens.



WOHL ROSE GARDEN

Every week on *Shabbat* (Sabbath) afternoon, my wife, Robbie, and I go to the Wohl Rose Garden. If you are arriving from downwind, you know you are near the garden as the fragrant aroma of the thousands of roses fills the air. Covering 19 acres (7.6 ha.), it is the largest rose park in Israel.

The garden was established in 1981 by the Jerusalem Foundation and boasts 400 varieties of roses with over 15,000 rose bushes from around the world. Many of them are gifts from other countries. The Garden of the Nations was added in 1984. Each section contains indigenous species and landscaping styles characteristic of the country that donated it, namely Germany, Japan, Holland, Switzerland, Argentina, Canada, France, Austria, Spain and the UK. The rose park is located in between the Knesset (Parliament) and Israel's Supreme Court. The park also has many sculptures from a variety of international and Israeli artists.



SACHER PARK

In the center of West Jerusalem, Sacher Park is a central meeting place for people from all across the city. Created in 1963, it is the largest green space in Jerusalem at 40 acres (16 ha.). Major new upgrades to the park and its facilities include a huge play area for children with an 11-meter (36-ft.) high, 22-meter (72-ft.) long slide and a 9-meter (30-ft.) high skywalk.

On the southwest edge of the park you will find the Jerusalem Bird Observatory (JBO), where 223 bird species have been recorded to date. (A full article about the JBO can be found on pages 18–19 of the February 2021 edition of the *Dispatch from Jerusalem*).



DENIA PARK

In 1978, barren ground without a single tree in the valley slumped near what was then the southwest edge of the city. In 1987, olive trees were pulled up in Samaria to clear an area. The tops of the trees were cut off, and the stumps were dumped on the ground in the empty lot in the valley on the southwest edge of Jerusalem. The stumps laid on the ground, totally exposed and dry for three years. In 1990, the municipality got around to planting them. The following winter, there was a big snowfall with over 60 centimeters (2 ft.) on the ground. The snow melted into the soil and watered the dry roots of the trees. In the spring, signs of life started to show in the trees and almost all of them survived, putting out new shoots from the stumps. Today there must be over 100 beautiful olive trees in Denia Park. Families enjoy making picnics in their shade, especially on Israel's Independence Day.

Denia Park is a living example of the wisdom found in Job 14:7–9: *“For there is hope for a tree, if it is cut down, that it will sprout again, and that its tender shoots will not cease. Though its root may grow old in the earth, and its stump may die in the ground, yet at the scent of water it will bud and bring forth branches like a plant.,*

These are only a small sample of the green spaces one may enjoy in the capital. There are many more parks and gardens scattered throughout Jerusalem. We welcome you to come and explore them the next time you visit Israel.



By Terry Mason, *Director of International Development*



Victims into Perpetrators

The dictionary defines a conspiracy theory as an attempt to explain harmful or difficult events as being the result of the actions or secret plots of a small or powerful group. These wild theories tend to increase in number during periods of widespread anxiety, uncertainty or hardship, such as wars, economic depressions or often in the aftermath of natural disasters like tsunamis, earthquakes and pandemics. Today, we as a society can tick many of those boxes, from anxiety and uncertainty to economic depression and pandemic.



Add to that the ability of the Internet and social media to provide an instant audience ready to support whatever view one might espouse, and it is no wonder that our world is rife with such theories. And it seems no one is safe. The US government, we are told, faked the moon landing and is responsible for the attacks on 9/11. The British government, they say, is responsible for the death of Princess Diana. The famous Beatle Paul McCartney is, in fact, a look-alike who has replaced the real Paul after his beheading in 1966. And

then there is the zombie apocalypse lurking right around the corner. Many such theories seem ludicrous, and some are downright amusing. The pages of history, however, are filled with the often tragic consequences of the unfounded accusations that are the hallmark of the conspiracy theory. And historically, no individual or group has suffered as frequently or profoundly at the hands of conspiracy theorists than the Jews.

FROM BIBLICAL TIMES TO TODAY

Perhaps the first such theory to affect Jewish life is found in Exodus 1:8. A new Egyptian pharaoh who was unfamiliar with Joseph and his family posited that those Hebrews—who were living peaceful lives tending their flocks in Goshen—were, in fact, enemies in the making, a nation within the nation, ready to rise up and overthrow the government. In Esther 3:8, we find another theorist convincing the king that the Jews in his kingdom were disloyal and dangerous, a threat to his reign that must be eradicated.

The accusation of deicide, claiming the Jewish people alone are responsible for the death of Jesus (Yeshua), appeared on the scene in the third century AD and has

been responsible for the persecution and death of countless Jews throughout history. Similarly, the claim that Jewish people kill Christian children and use their blood to prepare Passover *matzot* (unleavened bread), called the blood libel, has haunted the Jews for centuries. Another such theory began in the medieval world, accusing the Jews of forming a powerful, secret international cabal that manipulates governmental institutions and whose goal is to rule the globe. In this theory, which is still popular today, we find Jews that control governments, the media, academia and financial institutions. They are blamed for virtually any contemporary catastrophe, including the attacks on the US in September 2011.

FROM BLAME TO GENOCIDE

None of these accusations, however, are as heinous as that of genocide. It has become an albatross, woven through millennia of anti-Semitic hatred and periodically raising its ghastly head to bring disaster to the Jewish people. From 1347–1351, for instance, the devastating Bubonic plague swept across Europe, killing somewhere between 75–200 million people. By 1348, the blame had been placed squarely on the Jews. They had poisoned the wells and the food supply, the story went, in their desire to exterminate the population of Europe. This conspiracy theory unleashed mass violence, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Jewish men, women and children, most of whom were burned to death. Hundreds of massacres took place, and over a thousand Jewish communities across a large swath of the European continent were completely eradicated. Historians today struggle to determine if more Jews died due to the plague or from the ensuing persecution against them.

In 1919, high-ranking German military leaders declared that the “supreme government” of the Jewish people was responsible for the German loss of World War I. It was not a stretch for people to believe just one year later that the Jews had again polluted water and food supplies, this time with influenza. In two years, the pandemic killed more than 50 million people.



By the dawn of the 19th century, tuberculosis— or consumption—had killed one in seven of the global population. From 1891 through the 1900s, millions more died across Europe and America. In the US, the pandemic coincided with an influx of immigrant Jewish people from Eastern Europe. It wasn’t long after their arrival that they were accused of causing the plague, so much so that it became known as the “Jewish disease.”

Today, the media is obsessed with another genocidal accusation: that Israel is an apartheid state, bent on the destruction of the Palestinian people. Never mind the fact that the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics states that the Palestinian population in Israel, Gaza and the West Bank (Judea and Samaria) has increased fourfold since the founding of the state. On top of that, Arab Israelis serve in virtually every area of life, including government as members of Knesset (Parliament) and the supreme court, education and the military. Regardless of how one might feel about Israel, this is clearly neither genocide nor apartheid.

In January 2022, a prominent Utah entrepreneur sent an email to his state’s political leaders, stating: “I believe there is a sadistic effort underway to euthanize the American people. I believe the Jews are behind this.” Called the “white genocide,” the conspiracy theory posits that Jews are conspiring to wipe out the white race through promotion of mass immigration, interracial marriage and other sinister social schemes, including the creation and spread of the COVID-19 virus.

In a recent article in the *Atlantic*, author Yair Rosenberg called the idea of accusing the Jews of genocide a “masterful maneuver of moral jujitsu.” Prior to the Holocaust, Rosenberg says, anti-Semites were secure in their position as superior to the Jews. But the Holocaust has robbed them of that position. The accusation of genocide turns the victims into perpetrators, restoring the anti-Semites to their vantage point, which makes it possible for such

things to happen again. After all, says Rosenberg, making the Jews guilty of genocide doesn’t just obviate non-Jewish guilt for permitting past genocide against the Jews. It also justifies the next one.



By Cheryl Hauer,
International Vice President



Lebanon



They once called it the Switzerland of the Middle East, an island of calm, cultured prosperity in a sea of chaos and cruelty. But those days are long gone. Today, Lebanon is known for something else: a failed state in the throes of what the World Bank calls one of the worst economic collapses in 150 years.

It was bound to happen. Decades of kleptocracy, corruption and a financial system described as a nationally regulated Ponzi scheme will take any country to the edge of the abyss. Add to that a paralyzed government and an Iranian-backed terror organization reigning as the strongest security and political power, and you have the perfect storm for an economic meltdown.

A SNAPSHOT OF DESPAIR

Lebanese describe this crisis as the worst in the nation's history, including the bloody 15-year civil war that claimed an estimated 120,000 lives. A brief overview of the horrors plaguing the Land of Cedars shows why.

The Lebanese pound has lost over 90% of its value. Banks are largely insolvent, unable to prop up the flailing currency. The economy has decreased by 40%. Inflation hovers around 200%. Prices have quadrupled, while the average monthly salary has shrunk from US \$500 to US \$25. Savings have been wiped out, tens of thousands have lost their jobs and three-quarters of the population live under the poverty line. A mass exodus of skilled workers has decimated the health care and education systems. A severe shortage of basic consumer goods has rendered

food, electricity, fuel, clean water and medicine scarce commodities. Electricity is a luxury. Malnutrition is the new normal.

Capable leadership might have halted the freefall into ruin, but Lebanon's government has been too deadlocked, absent, paralyzed or busy squabbling to deliver basic infrastructure or take the necessary action to deal with the crisis.

Unless there's a miracle, Lebanon will topple into the abyss, warns Col. (ret.) Dr. Jacques Neriah, special Middle East analyst at the Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs, former foreign-policy adviser to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and the deputy head for assessment of Israeli Military Intelligence.

But what caused the decline from regional pride to international dystopia? Who's behind the dizzying descent? And what are the implications for Israel?

THE DESCENT INTO RUIN

Lebanon's ruin was years in the making, explains Neriah. However, terror organization Hezbollah and its puppet master Iran were the straw that broke the camel's back.

The Lebanese banking system used to serve as a money laundering haven. Foreign nations—particularly Arab countries—jumped at the opportunity and invested heavily, earning spectacular interest. Yet the entire system was a Ponzi scheme sanctioned at the highest level, says Neriah.

At the same time, the Gulf nations acted as Beirut's economic patrons, with 76% of foreign investment between 2003–2015 coming from the Gulf States. Lebanon's survival hinged on the inflow of those funds when the cash coffers slammed shut—thanks to Hezbollah and Iran.

“When the Second Lebanon War ended, Hezbollah was the Arab champion,” Neriah explains. “But then Tehran asked Hezbollah to intervene in the Syrian civil war. So Hezbollah was no longer a resistance movement against Israel. It was fighting Arabs in Syria, Iraq and now Yemen,” effectively serving as the Iranian vanguard. Moreover, as animosity between the Gulf States and Iran increased, so did the Gulf States' scorn for the terror organization doing Tehran's bidding.

Disturbed by the growing influence of Hezbollah—and Tehran—in Beirut and the perception that Lebanon was morphing into an Iranian outpost, the Saudi-led Gulf States—the main investors in the Lebanese banking system—withdraw their funds. “They called Lebanon's bluff, and the Ponzi scheme collapsed, leaving Lebanon without money, while still owing high interest to investors.”

Moreover, the once-significant financial investments from the Gulf States slowed to a trickle, leaving Lebanon without the cash injection critical to its survival.

While some of Lebanon's leaders scrambled to mend the rift, Hezbollah seemed set on dealing the relationship a deathblow, Neriah says. Last year, a minister from the Hezbollah camp criticized the Saudis' war efforts against the Houthis in Yemen. Riyadh promptly severed ties with

Beirut, recalling its ambassador and ceasing all trade. Then, in January, Hezbollah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah called King Salman a terrorist. Riyadh labeled Hezbollah a threat to Arab security and called on Beirut to “give priority to the supreme interest of Lebanon...and end Hezbollah's terrorist hegemony...”

But Hezbollah isn't merely behind Lebanon's misfortunes; it's also the only party profiting, Neriah holds. While the Lebanese pound plummets, Hezbollah gets US \$500 million from Iran annually. Virtually untouched by the economic collapse, the terror organization has established its own infrastructure, with schools, supermarkets, hospitals and pharmacies offering products and medication courtesy of Tehran and Damascus. As local businesses fold, Hezbollah is there for the takeover, consuming the industry, devouring the nation from within and building a mini state within Lebanon.

ALL EYES ON LEBANON

Jerusalem has a vested interest in a strong, stable Lebanon. If the country collapses and the government disintegrates, the entire territory on Israel's northern border descends into chaos, with local militias ruling pockets of land, Neriah explains. Southern Lebanon will fall entirely to Hezbollah—and by implication, Tehran—opening yet another Iranian front on Israel's doorstep. The terror organization has a cache of 150,000 precision, long-range missiles and 2,000 attack drones—all trained on Israel. Until now, Hezbollah has largely kept its finger off the trigger, but southern Lebanon falling to the terror group changes the rules. If Hezbollah decides to strike—on Iran's say-so—that means a salvo of 1,500 missiles raining down on Israeli targets.

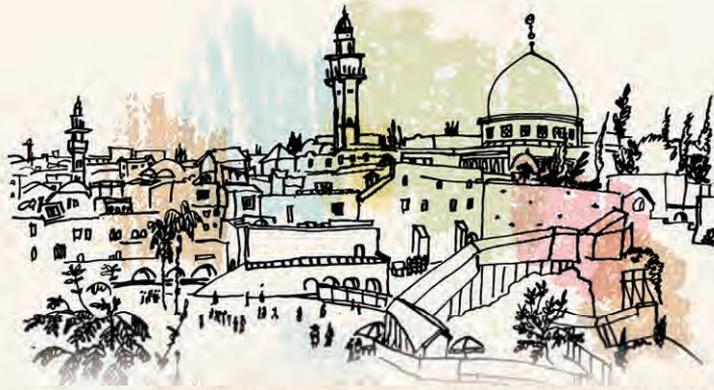
The bottom line? The ruin of Beirut will prop up the terror group and push Lebanon into Iran's outstretched arms, turning the Land of Cedars into another Iranian protectorate and bringing the *mullahs* another step closer to regional hegemony.

Israel is in a precarious position. Although it cannot sit idly on the sidelines while Iran enacts its takeover, Jerusalem's hands are tied. The two countries have no diplomatic relations. Jerusalem has reached out a helping hand to Beirut four times over the last year alone, only to be rebuffed. The Lebanese prime minister has stated he'll accept help from anywhere except Israel. And still Israel tries...

In January, the US convinced Lebanon to accept Israeli gas as a solution to its energy crisis, provided that gas flows via Egypt, Jordan and Syria. Perhaps what seems like a drop in an ocean of crises can help Lebanon lift its head just enough to stave off complete collapse. Perhaps total disintegration is inevitable and the death knell has already tolled. Regardless, Israel will be ready, watching and waiting for whatever may come in Lebanon.



Ilse Strauss, News Bureau Chief



T h e Quirks of Israel

From the pen of Peter Fast, national director of Canada and the future CEO of Bridges for Peace International, comes an exciting new series of articles entitled the *Quirks of Israel*. Join Peter on a journey through the wonderfully peculiar culture, traditions, heritage and daily life of this singular nation as he unpacks, introduces and celebrates the wonderfully quirky aspects that make Israel so wonderfully unique.

You are probably wondering: Why name this series the *Quirks of Israel*? The answer is simple. Every country, people group, culture, language and so on has quirks. These fascinating facets about a culture you will notice often only when you inject yourself into that culture. Israel is fraught with quirks because of its incredible makeup of diverse cultures.

The second reason that prompted me to lean in the direction of “quirks” is that when most people discuss Israel, they always talk about political issues, mull topics of security such as terrorism and Iran, or they regale you with matters of religious tension. But put yourself in the shoes of an Israeli. Would you want everyone in the world to think of your country purely in those terms? Do they even conjure up the essence of Israel? Not to disregard the frequently discussed issues, but there is much more to Israel than just conflict, tension, politics and religious expression. Israel is also quirky. It is a truly amazing, truly unique nation.

You have a mishmash of people from over 70 countries living in Israel, not to mention *sabra* Jews. *Sabras* are Jews who were born in the Land of Israel, and as of 2020, the number of *sabras* amounts to roughly 78% of the Israeli population. The word *sabra* refers to the spiny cactus fruit that is prickly on the outside but soft and flavorful on the inside. I’ve heard it said that this term describes Israelis well: forthright at first glance, but sweet once you get to know them. Apart from the *sabras*, Israel is also filled with

Jews who hail from the four corners of the globe, which sounds a bit like the prophetic words of Isaiah, Jeremiah and other Hebrew prophets in the Bible. Then there are Israeli Arabs, Armenians, Filipinos, Europeans, Circassians and a few others living in the land. Add to that the vast number of tourists—a whopping 4.55 million in 2019, before the onset of COVID—flocking to Israel during times of normalcy every year. The bottom line? This country is a beautiful hodgepodge of cultures, languages, traditions, beliefs and customs.

That brings us to the food. Imagine, for a moment, the most heavenly food from everywhere on earth converging on this little strip of land. The glorious fruit and vegetables that you buy from the market are probably freshly picked, and you can taste it. You haven’t tasted real fruit until you eat an orange, peach, banana or strawberry fresh from Israeli soil. Unlike in Monty Python’s epic sketch, in Israel you do not have to defend yourself against fresh fruit; you eat it. And you love it!

The composition of Israel presents the perfect recipe for quiriness. Jews have returned from Africa, Europe, Asia, North America, South America, Latin America, South Asia, and you even have Jewish people with Australian accents. Some wear Hasidic Jewish attire and frequent the Old City.



Picture this. You're on your first trip to Israel. You're in Jerusalem on your first day. You've climbed the steep hill from the Kidron Valley, the Valley of Jehoshaphat where the prophet Joel says the Messiah will one day sit and judge the nations for forcing Israel to divide the Land (Joel 3:1–3). You've peered at the Mount of Olives rising up from the Kidron Valley, the mountain that the prophet Zechariah says will split from north to south when the feet of Messiah touch it (Zech. 14:4). You've passed through the 500-year-old Dung Gate and then walked alongside the archaeological gardens to your right, which lead to the ancient southern steps to where the Temple once stood, the same steps where Jesus (Yeshua) taught, the same steps where Peter preached his sermon and the power of the Holy Spirit descended with fire and wind upon the early believers. Then you are funneled to a gate and pass through as you catch your first sight of the Kotel Plaza, the Western Wall. You see the Israeli flag flying and you feel your heart quicken. Jerusalem is united!

You see people of all ethnicities, cultures and creed going to and fro to pray at the wall. You hear people singing and see groups of Jewish youths dancing. You squint as you stare upward and catch a glimpse of the top of the golden Dome of the Rock. A dove flies by, and you imagine the site of Herod's temple and the thousands of pilgrims and sheep that would have crowded the area. You fumble in your pocket with a piece of tightly folded paper containing a special prayer you've been meditating on for months. Now is your chance to place it between the stones of the Western Wall. As you touch those ancient boulders, a sense of homecoming washes over you. You smile, quietly satisfied. You pass a group of Orthodox Jews, and you remember that although this is a place of prayer for all nations, it is also the holiest place in Judaism, the closest retaining wall to the ancient Temple, where day and night Jews pray and cry out for Messiah. Just then, one of the Orthodox Jews catches your eye, smiles and says, "G'day mate."

Israel is Quirky Indeed!

I invite you to join me on a quirky journey through this series of articles as we explore Israel. I want to impart to you the quirky, interesting things I have experienced in Israel, having lived there for four years and also piling on top of that a whole bunch of solo trips and tours. I have experienced the unique side of this glorious country, the reborn State of Israel, the only Jewish State in the world, the only democracy in the Middle East, and I want to share this all

with you. Join me as we journey into the heart of quirky Israel and explore ancient and modern, geography and people.



Scan the QR code to join Peter Fast for episode 1 of the video series the *Quirks of Israel*.

Peter Fast,
National Director of Canada





Jews and Arabs shop and walk on the same streets.



Where's the Apartheid, Amnesty International?

In February, Amnesty International, an NGO that prides itself on “campaigning for a world where human rights are enjoyed by all,” published a scathing report accusing the Jewish state of the crime of apartheid. The report, “Israel’s Apartheid against Palestinians: A Cruel System of Domination and Crime against Humanity,” waxes on for 200-odd pages, filling page after page with charges, slanders and slurs and passing it off as the so-called evidence of Israel’s “institutionalized and systematic discrimination against Palestinians within the framework of the definition of apartheid under international law.” Complete with maps and moving pictures, the report uses emotive language to tug at the heartstrings and rally a troop of outraged human rights advocates to take Israel to task over this gross injustice. There’s just one problem: there is no apartheid in Israel.

Taking a page from Amnesty International’s book, I could fill 200-odd pages with the evidence refuting the apartheid accusation against Israel. Yet I’ll leave the repudiation to those who know best: Africans who actually experienced apartheid or who saw the system unfold.

“I was born and lived under apartheid, and this [Amnesty International] report erases our experience—the denial of an adequate education; the restrictions on where we could live, who we could be with. It attempts to redefine what we went through, and so trivializes and negates it. It does a disservice to those who suffered and died so that black people could be treated equally.”

—Olga Meshoe Washington, a South African native and CEO of Defend Embrace Invest Support Israel International, in “Calls for Amnesty Charity Probe over Israel ‘Apartheid’ Smear”

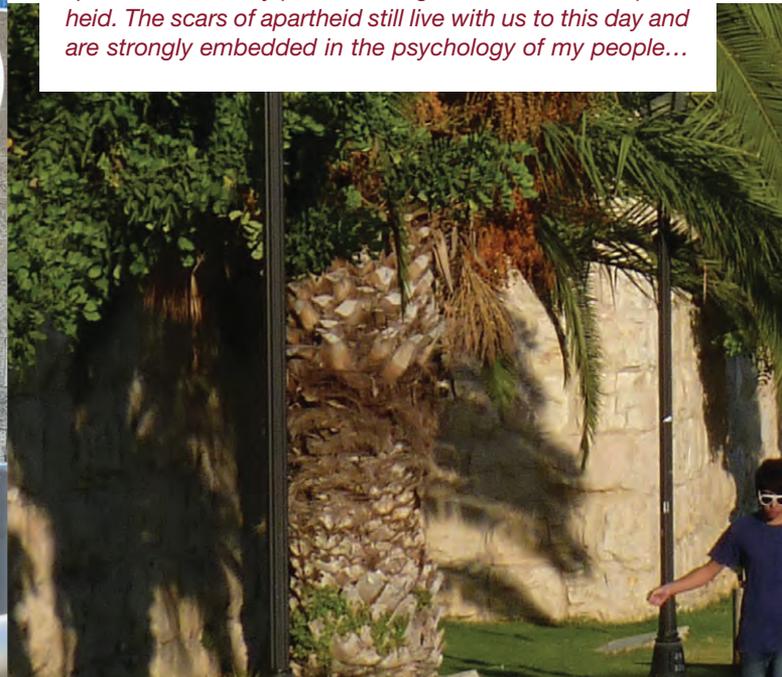
“In apartheid South Africa, blacks could not vote at all. They had no representation in government at all. In Israel, if you are an Israeli citizen, you can vote, whether you are white, black, brown, purple, olive, orange or yellow. If you are a citizen of Israel, you have representation. One vote, one person. If you are an Arab in Israel, if you are a citizen, you can vote. Doesn’t sound like apartheid to me.”

—Joshua Washington, director of the Institute for Black Solidarity with Israel

“As a black South African...I have often heard the accusation that Israel is an apartheid state...I recently made a trip to Israel and the West Bank [Judea and Samaria] to understand the issues and the prospects for resolving the conflict...My visit to the region confirmed for me that there is no meaningful comparison between Israel and the former apartheid regime in South Africa. I grew up under apartheid. I saw my parents being humiliated under apartheid. The scars of apartheid still live with us to this day and are strongly embedded in the psychology of my people...”



Jews and Arabs use the same roads.





Jews and Arabs travel on the same train.

Jews

Arabs

It appears that those who compare Israel to apartheid South Africa do not understand the fundamentals of apartheid, nor have they experienced it.”

—Tshediso Mangope, South African human rights activist and senior researcher at the ANC Parliamentary Caucus in “I’m a South African Activist Who Used to Fight Against Israel—Until I Went There”

“What South African freedom fighters laid down their lives for and went into exile, the Arabs in Israel already have. They can vote—and have their elected representatives in the Israeli government. Arabs can choose where to live, where and how to travel and where to get an education...For us, that would have been illegal. Where are the similarities? Where is the apartheid? Those who push this lie trivialize our pain. And that is insulting. They have every opportunity we did not have. They have rights and freedoms we could only dream of—and still want to say they suffer like black South Africans did? It reduces our painful past to something tedious.”

—Rev. Kenneth Meshoe, South African member of parliament

“I, personally, will no longer allow other people to use our tragedy, as the survivors of apartheid, for their own agenda. Your sense of solidarity should be informed. And the problems between Israel and Palestine should never be compared to South African apartheid; the current conflict is completely different...”

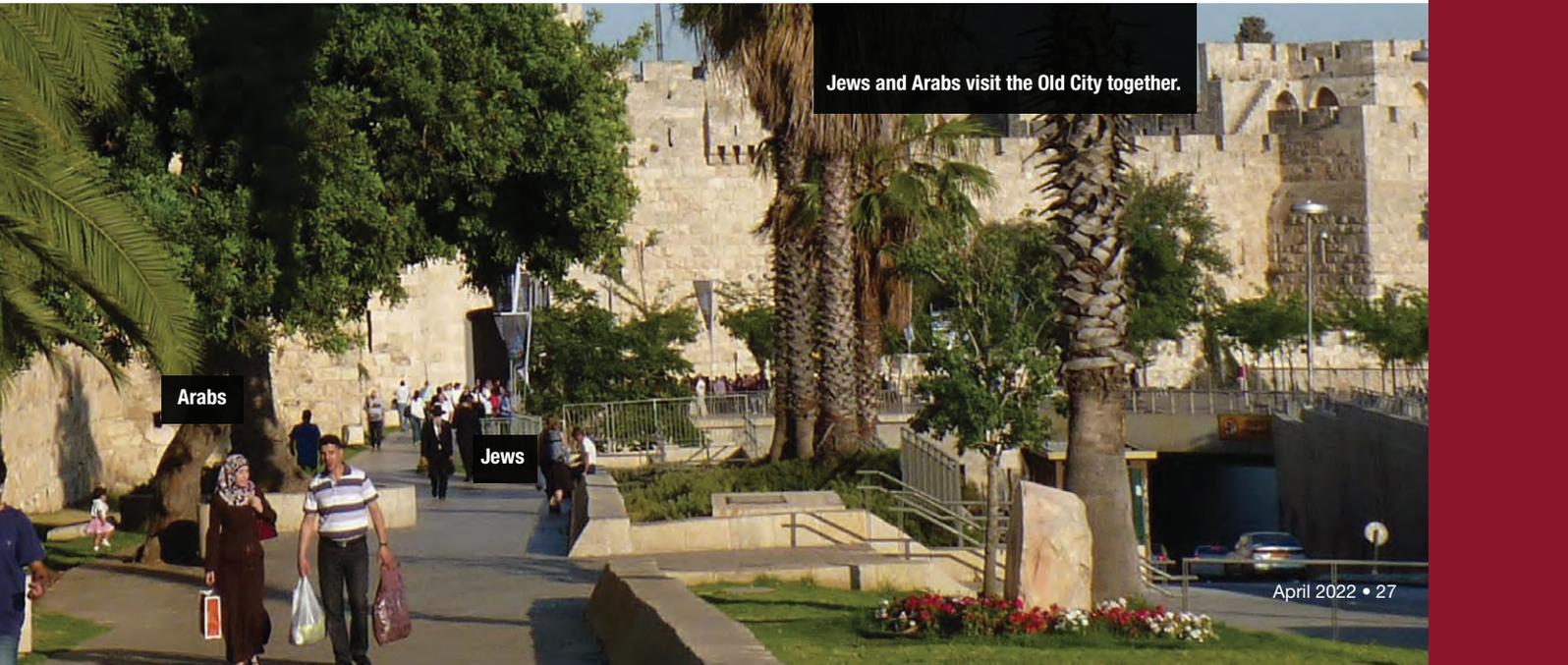
—Lesiba Bapela, South African social justice activist and All Faculty Council chairperson of the University of the Witwatersrand Student Representative Council in “Stop Using Apartheid for Your Own Agenda”

“As a Kenyan, I saw how the voices of Africans were exploited by the widespread and false comparison of Israel to apartheid South Africa. The unfortunate circumstances and struggles of the Palestinian people are largely perpetuated by their own leaders, whose political strategy determines that the worse things are for Palestinians on the ground, the more convincing their case against Israel. These are the same leaders who compare the Palestinian people’s situation to apartheid South Africa, robbing South Africans of their history and cheapening it, in order to gain sympathy and financing from the international community.”

—Zenobia Ravji, writer/journalist in “New African Perspectives on Israel and the Palestinians”

“Most American college students are not really familiar with what happened in South African apartheid and don’t know what they’re talking about when discussing it in relation to Israel. I come from a country whose people were the architects of apartheid. It’s easy for American college students to label Israel as an ‘apartheid state’ merely because they heard it from BDS activists. They don’t realize they are being lied to, and that’s what we are trying to stop.”

—Klaas Mokgomole, former member of BDS and current coordinator of Africans for Peace in “South Africans Denounce Anti-Israeli Activists for ‘Hijacking’ Apartheid”



Jews and Arabs visit the Old City together.

Arabs

Jews

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(Long-term)

Chinese Language Translator
(Long-term)

Driver
(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)

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

TOURS

Australia

ENCOUNTER ISRAEL TOUR 2022

Date: October 21–November 13, 2022
(subject to government travel and border regulations)

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 Jerusalem and Judea, the Dead Sea and Masada, the Sea of Galilee and the Golan Heights, Megiddo, Caesarea and much more.

Canada

FROM DARKNESS TO LIGHT: EUROPE & ISRAEL TOUR

Date: November 6–22, 2022

Hosted by: Rev. Peter Fast

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.





Matzah Lasagna

For the seven days of Passover, leaven is a big no-no in nearly every home in Israel. In the absence of everyday staples like pasta and bread, Jewish people have become quite creative at adjusting favorite recipes by substituting leaven with *matzah* (unleavened bread). This colorful vegetable lasagna does just that, forgoing the pasta in favor of *matzah* sheets, thus making it a light, hearty meal, perfect for Passover.

Ingredients

For the sauce:

4 tomatoes, peeled and cored
1/8 cup olive oil
1 garlic bulb
1 onion
1/4 tsp crushed red pepper
Salt to taste
Pepper to taste
6 fresh basil leaves

For the filling:

1 small butternut squash
3 large carrots
1 zucchini
1 bell pepper
6 mushrooms
3 cups spinach
3 cloves garlic (minced)
1/3 cup parmesan cheese
1 1/2 cups ricotta (or cottage cheese)
1 1/2 cups mozzarella
5 sheets of *matzah*
Olive oil for frying

Directions

For the sauce:

1. Preheat the oven to 390°F (200°C).
2. Peel and halve the onion. Cut the top off the garlic bulb.
3. Place the garlic bulb and onion halves on an oven pan, drizzle generously with olive oil and roast for 45 minutes until golden.
4. Remove the roasted garlic cloves from the bulb.
5. Combine all the sauce ingredients in a blender and blend until smooth.
6. Transfer the sauce to a small saucepan and simmer over low heat for 45 minutes while preparing the filling.

For the filling:

1. Peel and dice the vegetables into bite-sized chunks.
2. In a frying pan, sauté the carrots, squash and garlic for 10 minutes.
3. Add the zucchini and bell pepper and sauté for another 10 minutes.
4. Add the spinach and mushrooms and sauté for another 3 minutes.
5. Combine the parmesan, ricotta or cottage cheese and 1 cup mozzarella.

Assembling the lasagna:

1. In a greased 9 x 9 inch (23 x 23 cm.) pan, layer the sauce, vegetables, *matzah* and cheese mixture, starting and finishing with a layer of sauce.
2. Sprinkle the remaining mozzarella on top and bake at 425°F (210°C) for 30–35 minutes.

Serves 6



Laser-based Defense System Rolled out within a Year

Prime Minister Naftali Bennett said the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] will begin utilizing a high-end laser-based interception system within a year, despite defense officials previously predicting such a system would not become operational before 2025.

Speaking at the 15th annual conference of the Institute for National Security Studies, Bennett said the military will “bring the system into action first experimentally in the south, and later elsewhere in an operational capacity.”

“The system will allow Israel to be surrounded by a laser wall that will protect it from missiles, rockets, drones and other threats.”

According to the premier, the new system will eventually replace the highly reliable Iron Dome air defense system currently utilized in all parts of the country and effectively eliminate the high costs incurred by operating it.

“If we can intercept a missile or rocket with an electric pulse that costs only a few dollars, we will by all accounts neutralize the ring of fire Iran has set up around our borders,” Bennett said.

“This new generation of Israeli air defenses will also serve our friends in the region who are also exposed to severe threats from Iran and its proxies.”

The prime minister also condemned the ongoing aggressions perpetrated by the Islamic Republic and its proxies across the Middle East as Tehran tries to negotiate the revitalization of the tattered 2015 nuclear agreement with world powers in Vienna.

“While the Iranian foreign ministry is sitting in Vienna with world superpowers, Tehran’s Revolutionary Guard is busy acting like the neighborhood bully by attacking the Emirates and elsewhere. That is the definition of negotiations under fire,” he said.

“We will continue to stand up to them in any way. No agreement will bind our hands from acting for our protection.”

“The Israeli strategy remains the same in the case of an agreement, which in any case buys very little time, as well as in the event the agreement falls through. In both cases, our campaign continues.”

Itamar Eichner, *Ynetnews*

Israel Launches US \$70 Million to Help Propel More Arabs into Tech Industry

Israel launched a [US] \$70 million plan to promote the Arab sector in the high-tech industry.

“We see a change in Arab employment in high-tech in the past years, but it’s not enough,” Karina Rubinstein, director of business development for the Start-up Division of the Israel Innovation Authority, told *i24News*.

“[Arab Israelis] have to compete with other workers, and they sometimes lack the knowledge of how to pass an interview or how to have these ‘soft skills,’” she said.

To that end, innovation centers will be established in Israeli Arab communities to foster communication and consultation, including “investors clubs” to encourage funding for Arab start-ups, said Rubinstein.

Arab Israelis make up about 20% of the population, though only 3.5% of workers in high-tech.

Jewish News Syndicate





Israeli Population Reaches 9,449,000 at Start of 2022

Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) estimates Israel's population at 9,449,000 as of December 31, 2021.

Of that number, 6,982,000 are Jewish (73.9% of the total population), 1,995,000 are Arab (21.1%) and 472,000 identify as "other" (5%).

Approximately 184,000 infants were born, 73.8% to Jewish mothers and 23.4% to Arab mothers in 2021. The most popular names for new babies (as of 2020) are David for Jewish boys and Tamar for girls, and Mohammed and Maryam for Arab boys and girls.

Approximately 51,000 Israeli residents died in 2021, more than in 2020 (48,788).

Overall, approximately 160,000 people were added to the Israeli population, an increase of 1.7%. Most of the increase (83%) was due to natural growth and the rest (17%) to the international migration balance.

Some 25,000 new immigrants arrived in Israel during 2021—30% from Russia and 14.6% from France—as well as approximately 9,000 other migrants, including returning citizens. That number increased from 2020, when 20,000 immigrants arrived.

The CBS also estimated that 7,500 Israelis are residing abroad for more than a year.

Abigail Klein Leichman, *Israel21c* via *Jewish News Syndicate*

Israeli Lawmakers Herald Launch of Abraham Accords Caucus in Congress

Israeli lawmakers welcomed the launch of the Abraham Accords Caucus in Congress in January.

The new caucus on Capitol Hill in Washington will be launched as a bipartisan initiative by Democrats and Republicans in both the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Both caucuses will work with associated countries to advance the agreements in various fields, while also pushing to achieve additional peace agreements.

Israel signed the Abraham Accords with the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain in September 2020, with Morocco joining later that year. Sudan also announced that it was joining in January 2021, but that relationship has been hobbled by internal strife within the Sudanese government.

The Biden administration has signaled that it is working to expand the circle with countries like Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, the Maldives, Comoros, Kuwait and Qatar as possible Muslim-majority countries interested in establishing ties with Israel.

"The caucus we launched several months ago in the Knesset [Parliament] created a huge momentum among legislators in parliaments around the world," stated Likud Party Knesset member Ofir Akunis, who co-chairs the Abraham Accords Caucus in the Knesset. "They are looking very closely at the accords and want to help take part in their implementation and expansion."

Jewish News Syndicate





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.

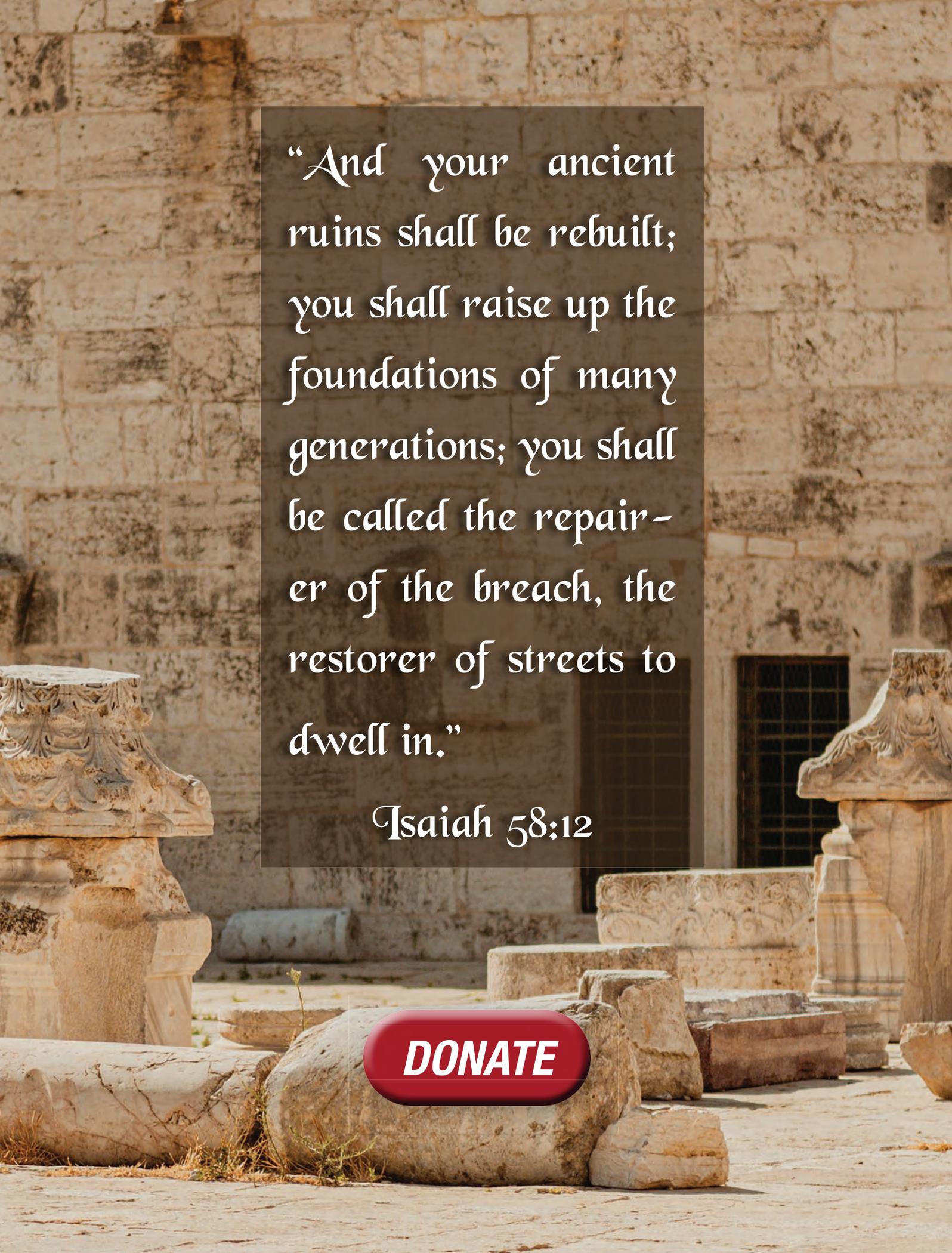
CRISIS ASSISTANCE FUND: Your gifts enable us to respond quickly to crisis situations. These may include critical needs, such as bomb shelters, ambulances or help for emergency situations, such as terror-motivated arson attacks and more.

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.

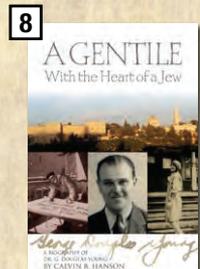
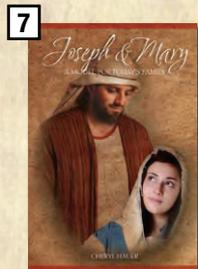
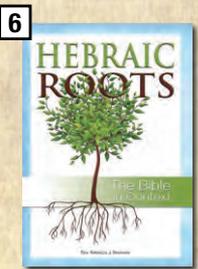
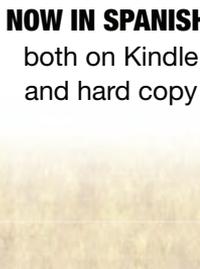
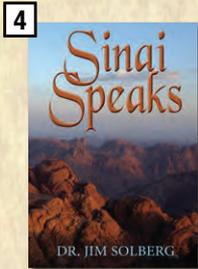
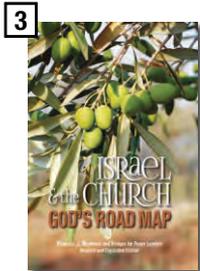
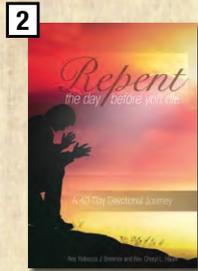
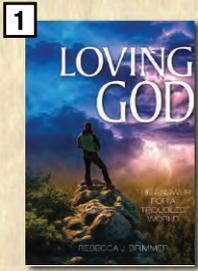


The background of the image shows ancient stone ruins. In the foreground, there are several large, weathered stone blocks and columns. Some columns have ornate, carved capitals. The ground is a mix of dirt and stone. In the background, there is a wall made of large, rectangular stone blocks. A dark, rectangular opening, possibly a doorway or window, is visible in the wall. The overall scene is one of historical decay and ruins.

*“And your ancient
ruins shall be rebuilt;
you shall raise up the
foundations of many
generations; you shall
be called the repair-
er of the breach, the
restorer of streets to
dwell in.”*

Isaiah 58:12

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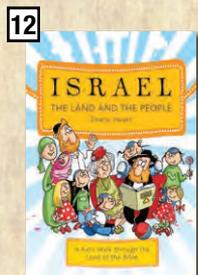
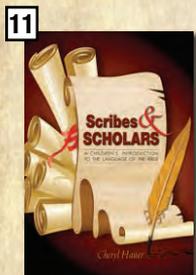
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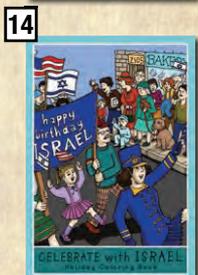
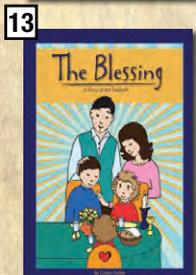
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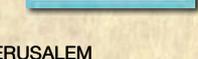
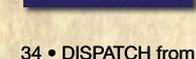
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