



dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

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Your Israel Connection®

Fascinating Seas of Israel

BRIDGES FOR PEACE

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

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

We are committed to the following goals:

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

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

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

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

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

Dispatch from Jerusalem

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

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Partner with us to meet the food needs of 24,240 Israelis.

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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Israel's summer heat wave included a spike in tensions along its northern border. Hezbollah—an Iran-backed terror group based in Lebanon—took a number of provocative actions against Israel which prompts the question: Are Israel and Hezbollah headed for war?

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Over 50 years ago, Prime Minister Golda Meir stated, "Peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us." Meir's words still ring true today as Israel faces an ever-increasing threat of young jihadis, determined to eradicate "the Zionist enemy."

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The words of "Hatikvah" (The Hope), Israel's national anthem, have shaped the thinking of a nation and helped keep the Zionist dream alive for generations. The song itself has an interesting history. And as Israel's position among the nations changes, some say it's time for a reinterpretation.

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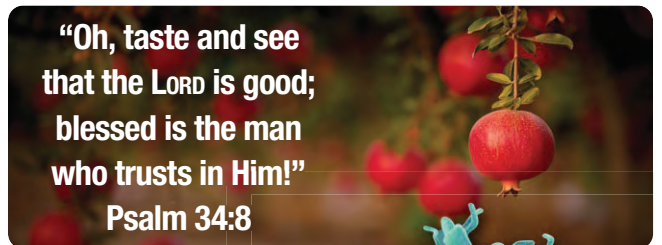
Israel's biblical heartland is facing a big problem. In the land of milk and honey, terrorists have established a hornet's nest from which springs a never-ending stream of violence.

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From the pen of Peter Fast, CEO of Bridges for Peace International, comes the ninth installment in this series. Join Peter on a journey through the wonderfully peculiar culture, traditions and daily life of this singular nation.

By Peter Fast



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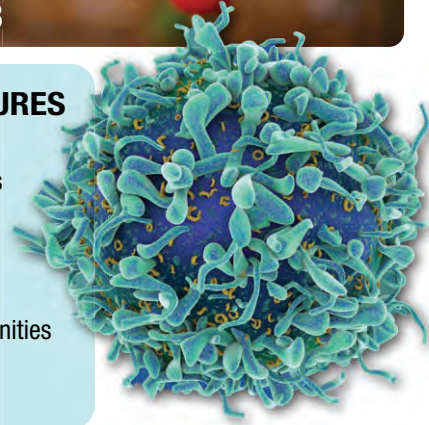


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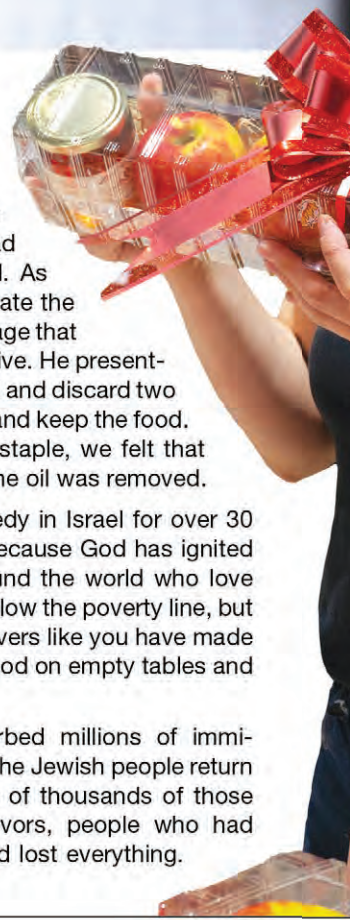


FIRM through the TRIALS

I WANT TO INVITE YOU TO STEP INSIDE the Bridges for Peace boardroom for our weekly Senior Leaders' meeting, where our team recently had to make some difficult decisions.

First up was the news that due to the incredible spike in food prices in Israel, we simply do not have the funds available to give the customary 7-ounce (200 ml.) jar of honey as a *Rosh HaShanah* (Jewish New Year) gift to the more than 24,000 needy Israelis we feed every month. We've blessed these precious Israelis with this sweet treat every year, and although it seems like a small item, it makes a huge difference. In Jewish tradition, honey is eaten during *Rosh HaShanah* to signify a sweet new year. But when you can't afford this holiday staple, receiving it as a gift—particularly from Christians as an outpouring of their love—makes all the difference.

Over the past year, the cost of honey has skyrocketed. As a result, the funds we have available would cover honey for the 1,027 Holocaust survivors on our program, but not for the rest. We had to make a tough choice. Because our recipients cherish this gift of honey as such a special blessing, we crafted a strategy to bless everyone with the special *Rosh HaShanah* treat—and committed to trusting the Lord to provide the funds we need.



The bad news was not finished. The head of the Assistance Center (Food Bank) informed us that the price of vegetable oil had risen above what we could afford. As a result, we would have to reevaluate the contents of the monthly food package that the recipients on our program receive. He presented us with two options: keep the oil and discard two tins of vital food, or remove the oil and keep the food. Although vegetable oil is a basic staple, we felt that the food was more important, so the oil was removed.

We have been feeding the needy in Israel for over 30 years. It has only been possible because God has ignited the hearts of Christians from around the world who love Israel. Some 25% of Israelis live below the poverty line, but for more than three decades, believers like you have made a difference by helping them put food on empty tables and feed their families.

Since 1948, Israel has absorbed millions of immigrants as prophecy is fulfilled and the Jewish people return from around the world. Hundreds of thousands of those immigrants were Holocaust survivors, people who had lived through the death camps and lost everything.

Together we can overcome this trial and fill the land of Israel with food for the poor!
Pray for Israel and consider making a generous donation to bolster our Food Project.



Hundreds of thousands more came as refugees with nothing. The Lord is faithful to His covenant. He is returning them home, but has also called Gentiles to be a part of this prophetic reality coming to fruition. You are called to be part of His glorious plan! And Bridges for Peace has been called to stand in the gap with you. Together, we are partnering with the word of the prophets—God’s revealed word—to live out His purposes in our time. *“Thus says the Lord God: “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).*

Our world is changing and getting more difficult every day. Thankfully, God does not change (James 1:17) and remains on the throne. The God of Israel is calling Christians from the four corners of the earth to stand with Israel and feed her hungry. We have done this as your hands and feet for decades. Hearing the dire report from our Food Bank leader highlighted two agonizing realities we may face as food

costs continue to rise. The first is the tragic possibility that we may have to cut the amount of food we provide to our recipients. The second is that by cutting the amount of food, it impacts all our faithful donors whose hearts’ desire for the Food Project is that impoverished Israelis would receive a nutritious and complete food package on a regular basis.

Each month, you and Bridges for Peace partner to meet the food needs of 24,240 Israelis who depend on us. That means a distribution of nearly 60 tons of food every month. The stark reality is that this vital gift of food, this blessing from Christians around the world, is being threatened. We know that God still wants us to comfort the people of this nation (Isa. 40:1), feed His earthly family and clothe the destitute (Matt. 25:37). I am appealing to you to seek the Lord, pray for Israel and consider making a generous donation to bolster our **Food Project**. Will you join in God’s plan to ensure that the monthly food parcels are not reduced? As we continue to serve the Lord in Israel and spread the love of God to the needy around us, I believe that together we will overcome this trial and fill the land of Israel with food for the poor! *“My brethren, count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience” (James 1:2–3).*

Blessings from Jerusalem,
Rev. Peter Fast
International CEO



Iran's Push to Take Over Syria Defense Industries

IRAN IS WORKING TO SEIZE control of an extensive network of Syrian military industry facilities, collectively known by their French acronym CERS, or the Scientific Studies and Research Center in English, according to a report released by the Alma Research and Education Center, a defense research group that specializes in security challenges faced by Israel in Lebanon and Syria.

The report also warned of the possibility that Hezbollah could take possession of chemical substances present as CERS, which are being stored by the Assad regime, and use them to produce chemical weapons for use against Israeli military forces or civilians in a future conflict.

According to the report, CERS, which employs some 20,000 people—Syrian researchers, engineers and military officers—is spread out across Syria, and produces advanced weapons such as the “Fateh 110” surface-to-surface missile. The “Fateh 110” is at the heart of the joint Iranian–Syrian and Hezbollah precision-missile project, the report noted.

“In addition, the CERS center is responsible for developing and manufacturing chemical, biological and potentially nuclear weapons,” it stated.

Iran views CERS as a “growth engine” for its own effort to develop and manufacture weapons on Syrian soil, based on Iranian technology. As such, CERS is an opportunity for Iran to bypass the logistics and risks involved in transferring some of its weapons into Syria from Iran by land, air or sea—efforts that are often targeted by Israel.

“We assess that the Syrian regime now possesses extensive chemical capabilities...Hezbollah’s use of chemical weapons in the next confrontation with Israel cannot be ruled out. It is conceivable that missiles or rockets armed with chemical weapons (such as Sarin nerve gas) are being stockpiled for use by Hezbollah in one of the CERS center’s sites,” the report cautioned.

Jewish News Syndicate





'Bet On It': Netanyahu Certain Israel About to Make History with Saudis

PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu is confident his government can achieve some form of normalization with Saudi Arabia in the coming months, Netanyahu said in an interview with *Bloomberg Television*.

"I think that we are about to witness a pivot of history," he said. "First, there is an economic corridor of energy, transport and communications that naturally goes through our geography from Asia through the Arabian Peninsula to Europe.

"We are going to realize that," vowed the prime minister, adding, "Saudi Arabia is one of the exceptional things that tells you why I'm very optimistic about Israel."

Officials in Jerusalem and Washington have hinted at progress in normalizing relations between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

However, even without a formal agreement, Jerusalem can still develop an "economic corridor" with Riyadh, Netanyahu told *Bloomberg*.

"If there is a political will, there will be a political way to achieve normalization and formal peace between Israel and Saudi Arabia. That has enormous economic consequences for the investors and if they have to bet on it right now, I'd bet on it, but I can't guarantee it," he said.

Persian Gulf sources close to Saudi decision-makers and sources close to Netanyahu have voiced conflicting views regarding the Palestinian linkage. According to the sources in the Gulf, the Saudis are conditioning normalization with progress on the Palestinian front, but the Israeli sources say Riyadh has made no such stipulations.

Netanyahu downplayed claims that the Palestinian issue played a significant role in negotiations. Asked what concessions Israel would be willing to make to the Palestinians, the prime minister refused to give specific examples.

"I'll tell you what I'm not willing to give. I'm not willing to give anything that will endanger Israel's security. That I will not do," he said.

Jewish News Syndicate



Hamas's 'Multi-arena' Strategy Targets Israeli Stability

IN AN INTERVIEW with the Hamas-affiliated *Felesteen* newspaper, senior Hamas official Musa Abu Marzouk shed light on the group's "multi-arena campaign," revealing a vision that aims to put Israel in a state of constant instability and vulnerability to various threats.

The strategy involves active unification and participation in the Iranian "axis of resistance," and financial stabilization of Gaza through Arab aid.

The multi-arena operation, which requires extensive coordination, has been steadily gaining momentum since Hamas joined Iran's "Jerusalem axis" in 2021, an alliance that also includes Hezbollah, Palestinian Islamic Jihad [PIJ] and other proxy militias in Syria, Iraq and Yemen in 2021.

Hamas's renewal of relations with Syria marked a crucial turning point for the alliance, which serves as Iran's counterweight to the Abraham Accords.

"We aim for the enemy to live under instability when his interests are under constant threat," Abu Marzouk said.

The strategy seeks to create multiple fronts against Israel, and already, tensions are rising along the Lebanese border.

Iran plays a significant role in supporting Palestinian terrorist groups, providing generous support in terms of money, weapons and technology.

Hamas is also trying to strengthen its presence in Judea and Samaria, considering it the core of its strategy due to the concentration of Palestinian population and direct conflict with Israelis.

This has been complicated by its growing rivalry with PIJ inside the Strip and a Palestinian Authority crackdown on terrorist groups in Judea and Samaria.

Baruch Yedid,
Jewish News Syndicate

Israel's New Frontier: Archaeology under the Sea

Dor Beach

SCUBA-DIVING ARCHAEOLOGISTS in Israel are working to uncover a treasure trove of ancient findings along the coast of the Jewish state.

Archaeologists from the University of Haifa's Leon Recanati Institute for Maritime Studies are combing under the waters of Dor Beach, a popular swim spot between Caesarea and Haifa.

The underwater setting offers a whole new frontier for archaeology, according to Prof. Assaf Yasur-Landau, the director of the university program.

"After 120 years of scientific archaeology on land," Yasur-Landau told the *Times of Israel*, "we're in a situation where we know a lot about what happened on land, but we know very little about what's under the sea."

The professor oversaw underwater excavations in May of two ancient shipwrecks in the Dor lagoon, the *Times of Israel* reported. One shipwreck was from the Persian period, dated at around 550 BC, and the other shipwreck was dated around 1,000 BC, the Iron Age.

During the three-week dive, the archaeological team uncovered 3,000-year-old pottery pieces and either infrastructure from an ancient port or ancient shipwreck debris. Another three-week dive is scheduled for the fall to continue exploring the ruins.

"Every single thing that we excavate provides so much new information," Yasur-Landau noted. "Every ship is a time capsule. It's a capsule of our material culture, what was traded and the different commercial connections, and also what the environment was like back then."

The professor added that the team's main goal is "trying to understand the lives of people throughout history, and the different types of adaptations, the economic, the

social, the cultural ways they adapted to different environmental conditions."

"Why is this relevant?" Yasur-Landau asked. "Because we see processes that start in ancient times and continue to today."

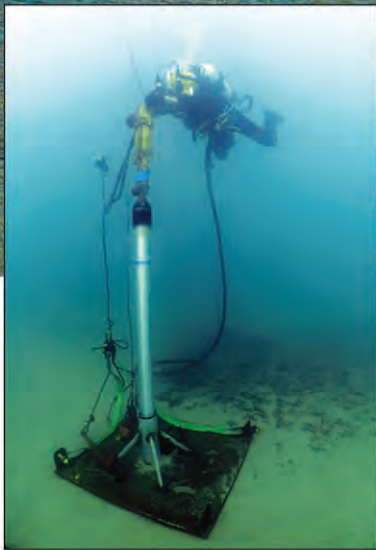
The process of underwater excavations is complex and expensive, as it requires extensive equipment and trained, specialized team members.

The University of Archaeology and Maritime Cultures is the only program in Israel for underwater archaeology certification. The program has been offered to international students in English since 2012, the *Times of Israel* reported, with some 20 students set to graduate from the program this summer.

But underwater archaeology, according to Yasur-Landau, is a largely-untapped market in the Jewish state. Israel, a land rich in archaeological excavations and findings that highlight its ancient, biblical history, has hundreds of archaeologists combing through the Land of the Bible. Meanwhile, there are only seven experts in underwater archaeology operating in Israel, Yasur-Landau noted. Five of the experts are from universities and the other two are at the Israel Antiquities Authority.

"Even with all of the costs of marine archaeology," the professor said, "it provides an incredible scientific yield, because there's so few people doing it."

Underwater excavations are a painstaking process, involving different types of equipment as well as expertise. Just like on land, archaeologists have to peel the underwater excavations back layer by layer, working meticulously to uncover ancient findings and keep them intact. This is all done while wearing scuba gear, working with currents and tides, as well as other factors.



Israel's Mediterranean coastline offers a promising potential for underwater archaeological finds, given the Jewish state's rich history of marine activity, including fishing villages, ancient Roman and other conqueror ports up until modern day.

The team has to go through 2 meters (6.6 ft.) of sand, using sand dredgers to suck it up and spit it out to another area, all while stacking sandbags around the edge of the excavation to keep more sand from moving into the area.

But the same conditions that complicate the underwater excavations are what have preserved the findings so well over the millennia. Objects buried in sand are exposed to little to no oxygen, meaning they are protected from decomposition.

The Dor Beach lagoon has been a hotspot for underwater archaeologists since the 1980s, with some 26 shipwrecks and cargo remnants having been discovered since then.

Thanks to the underwater conditions which preserve objects well, Yasur-Landau said his team has found a plethora of interesting finds, including straw mats from the Byzantine era, baskets and twined ropes dated to AD 300–600. If these objects had been on dry land, they would have been exposed to oxygen and decomposed millennia ago.

The underwater setting provides another layer of protection in that it guards the sites and objects from human contact, unlike Israel's land archaeological sites, which are exposed to looting.

"Here we have an archaeological record under the water...from the time people started to live in villages and in permanent settlements until yesterday," Yasur-Landau said. "So we can create a very long narrative of how people are living along the sea and how cultures are interacting with the sea."

The complex underwater excavations have a high educational payoff, as underwater photography can now be used to create 3D models, bringing the underwater findings to classrooms, labs and the rest of the world.

Israel is the Land of the Bible, and it has long been said that you can take a shovel, dig just about anywhere across the country and discover artifacts from the Land's rich biblical history. And thanks to Yasur-Landau and his team, there is a new frontier of archaeology in the Jewish state, taking the excavations from land to under the sea, where there is an untapped potential of preserved treasures from thousands of years of Israeli, biblical history.



Kate Norman,
Bridges for Peace

A STORM BREWING IN THE NORTH

ISRAEL EXPERIENCED A HEAT WAVE over the summer so extreme that one day in August, flights at Ben-Gurion airport were delayed because the heat was affecting technical systems and control units. But it wasn't just the temperature that spiked over the summer. Tensions in the north of Israel also spiked with Hezbollah—an Iran-backed terror group based in Lebanon—prompting the question: Are Israel and Hezbollah headed for war?

Hezbollah—designated as a terrorist group by the US, the UK, Germany, the Arab League and Israel—was born out of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 and the Lebanese Civil War. It is a Shiite Islamist group that almost since its birth has been funded, trained and armed by Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) as a way to extend Iran's reach further west. More than just a proxy for Iran, Hezbollah takes its orders directly from Tehran.

The group's objective is to wipe Israel off the map and kill Jews.

The Blue Line

Hezbollah took increasingly bold steps over the past months, first by violating the Blue Line, the boundary between Israel and Lebanon. It cannot be defined as a technical border, as a border is an agreed-upon boundary by two parties. Lebanon, however, does not recognize Israel as a sovereign state.

In the 1970s and the 1980s, Palestinian terrorists used southern Lebanon as a launching pad to attack Israelis, prompting the Israeli military to establish a presence in the area to defend its citizens until the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) fully withdrew from southern Lebanon in 2000.

The Blue Line—named for the blue barrels that comprise the line—is monitored by the specially established United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

For an extra layer of security, Israel built a fence on the Israeli side of the Blue Line, ranging from a few meters away from the blue barrels to a few hundred meters, depending on the terrain.

Throughout the summer of 2006, Hezbollah continually launched cross-border attacks against Israeli civilians and soldiers, firing rockets that wounded and killed civilians, attacking IDF posts and kidnapping Israeli soldiers. Israel responded by striking Hezbollah terror targets, prompting back-and-forth attacks until the two reached a cease-fire after a month.



The fighting left 49 Israeli civilians and 121 IDF soldiers dead and 1,384 civilians and 1,244 soldiers wounded. The cease-fire was codified by UN Resolution 1701, the terms of which included Israeli troops withdrawing from Lebanon, the banning of militias in Lebanon from carrying arms and no armed troops except for UNIFIL.

Crossing the Line



But beginning this spring, Hezbollah took increasingly bold steps across the Blue Line. In March, a Hezbollah operative crossed the security barrier into Israel, traveled 57 kilometers (35 mi.) south and planted an explosive on a highway in Israel, which exploded and wounded an Arab Israeli civilian.

On the first day of Passover in April, Hamas, operating from southern Lebanon, fired 34 rockets into Israel, injuring three people and damaging buildings. Hezbollah was careful to note, however, that Hamas was behind the attack in order to avoid retaliatory strikes from Israel. However, the attack was likely given the green light by Hezbollah, as Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh was in Lebanon at the time.

Then when summer came, Hezbollah crossed the Blue Line and erected two tents on the Israeli side of the boundary in the highly contested Shebaa Farms area. Taking the diplomatic approach, Israel asked UNIFIL to pressure Hezbollah to take the tents down. The terror group took down one of the tents—but at the time of writing, the other remains, although it reportedly is no longer manned.

In addition, uniformed and armed soldiers crossed into the Israeli side of the Blue Line and damaged Israeli security cameras. Armed Hezbollah operatives are a violation of UN Resolution 1701.

And in August, a Hezbollah operative hurled a firebomb over the security barrier and damaged the water infrastructure near the northern Israeli town of Metulla, which is surrounded by Lebanon on three sides.

The Implications

Maj. Elliot Chodoff, a reservist and a military analyst, told the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem in an online seminar in August that these are low-level

provocations, but that he would respond in a strong manner in order to deter further escalations.

Rather than taking the diplomatic route, which is perceived as weak, Chodoff recommended a strong response. “Backing down very often is the surest way to gain an escalation, and standing up is very often the surest way to get a de-escalation,” the 35-year veteran said.

He noted that Iran likely does not want Hezbollah to go to war with Israel, as Tehran wants its terror puppet to maintain its foothold on Israel’s northern border.

And Israel’s top brass have all issued the same warning over the past few months: Israel’s next war with Hezbollah will be Hezbollah’s last war.

An IDF report warned in August that the probability of war in Israel’s north is the highest since the Second Lebanon War in 2006, and a Hezbollah chief warned a few weeks later that the next war between Israel and Hezbollah will take place in the Israeli Golan Heights.



“Our battle will be in the Galilee, and if the enemy and its tanks enter Lebanon, they will not be able to leave,” the Hezbollah commander told Hezbollah-affiliated *Al-Manar* TV network, as quoted by the *Jerusalem Post*.

His threat followed that of Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant, who warned Hezbollah chief Hassan Nasrallah “not to make a mistake.”

“If...an escalation or conflict develops here, we will return Lebanon to the Stone Age,” Gallant warned.

Whether the provocations and exchanges of threats continue their slow burn or whether the smoke sparks into a flame remains to be seen. Only time will tell whether Israel’s current conciliatory responses will maintain the much-needed calm on the Jewish state’s northern border—or whether it will embolden Hezbollah to continue escalating and leading up to a war.



Kate Norman, *BFP Staff Writer*



TURNING CHILDREN INTO TERRORISTS

OVER 50 YEARS AGO, Israel's first and only female Prime Minister Golda Meir famously stated, "Peace will come when the Arabs will love their children more than they hate us." More than half a century later, things have not changed. Meir's words still ring true today as Israel faces a persistent and ever-increasing threat of young jihadis, determined to eradicate "the Zionist enemy" by any means.

The Definition of a Child

A recent *BBC* interview with former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett went viral online. Speaking to the ongoing tensions and conflict in the terrorist hotspot Jenin, presenter Anjana Gadgil attempted to frame armed gunmen in their teens eliminated by Israel as "children." Gadgil doggedly pressed Bennett to confess that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) "are happy to kill children."

While the reporter tried to reframe the narrative against Israel by highlighting the detail that the terrorists were in their teens, Bennett was quick to underscore the fact that a 17-year-old brandishing an automatic assault rifle and using it against military forces is not a child but a combatant. Bennett stressed that these terrorists—whose purpose is to murder Jewish civilians—would be treated the same way in any other country of the world despite their age.

This interview highlighted a very troubling aspect of the ongoing Palestinian conflict: the intentional and tireless radicalization of Palestinian youth by the Palestinian Authority (PA). The PA then galvanizes Western media to publish skewed sensational headlines demonizing Israel as an effective means of narrative warfare.

According to Itamar Marcus, the founding director of media watchdog Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), the PA sends its children to be killed so that it can blame Israel before the international community. PMW compiled a special video report released in 2022 on UN World Children's Day that highlighted the ongoing brainwashing of Palestinian children and youth to commit terror attacks and confrontations with Israel in an attempt to seek martyrdom for their Islamic god and for Palestine. Equally vile is the conditioning of parents to applaud and praise their children who die in these martyrdom-seeking suicide missions.

Yet the Palestinian leaders and over-zealous parents are not the only ones to blame. "The UN and others who partner with the PA in blaming Israel for these PA-driven child-martyrdom deaths, are reinforcing the PA's use of the child "martyrdom" strategy, and are causing the deaths of additional Palestinian children," Marcus writes.

Taught to Hate

Psychologists have vigorously analyzed the subject of hate and prejudice, debating whether it is an inherent or learned behavior. Their conclusion is always the same: hate is taught and passed down through psychological conditioning. It is not the natural inclination of a child to hate a specific people or group, but when they are born into a culture that harbors attitudes and ideologies of hate, those learned behaviors seep into everything. If children are harboring hatred and prejudice, these behaviors are learned from their family, school, media and culture.

This begs the question: where do Palestinian children learn to hate? PMW has the proof. The fault unequivocally lies directly with the PA and the Palestinian terror groups



who ruthlessly idolize martyrdom and terrorist actions against Israel, even to the youngest children, through media, sermons, posters and education.

In an online webinar for the Middle East Forum, Marcus reiterated that the root of this hatred lies in what he terms “rejectionism” in Palestinian education. He summarized this ideology in five key propaganda messages wielded to indoctrinate Palestinian children:

1. Israel has no right to exist and will be destroyed.
2. All Jews will be expelled from “Palestine”.
3. Palestinians have the right to commit violent acts of terror against Israel.
4. Martyrdom is an ideal to be sought out.
5. Martyrs are rewarded for their sacrifice in the coming paradise.

Summer Time

Perhaps you can recall the summer camps you attended as a child. Perhaps you played tag and baseball or swam in a lake. Palestinian summer camps look vastly different.

This past summer, PMW exposed various summer camps in Palestinian-controlled areas of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip. Sixteen PA-run summer camps are named after terrorists who murdered Israelis, thus so-called martyrs. This tactic encourages children to envision themselves as martyrs and to emulate the actions of self-extermination. Arts and crafts activities often include producing images of “Palestine” covering the entire area currently recognized as the land of Israel, thus emphasizing that Israel has no right to exist. Forget the two-state solution! The message being implanted in the minds of these children is that there is only one state: Palestine—without any Jews and without a neighboring Israel.

This indoctrination is not limited to Palestinian-governed areas of Judea and Samaria. In the Gaza Strip,

we find even more radical programming. Palestinian Islamic Jihad-run camps are a military style affair where children wield and parade with automatic rifle replicas for an even harsher form of indoctrination to hate and kill.

A *Times of Israel* article put it this way: “Children were taught to stab and stone Israeli police...to liberate Al-Aqsa,” while instructors lionized those who fall as “martyrs” against the enemy.

Who is Accountable?

Considering that the PA’s indoctrination permeates television, education, recreation and religious institutions, it comes as no surprise that Israel is faced with teenagers who desire with all their heart to die for the misguided belief that their “sacrifice” will change the plight of the Palestinian people. What choice remains for these children when all sectors of Palestinian society glorify the sacrificial death of a young “martyr,” and go so far as to encourage others to sacrifice themselves to achieve a sick kind of fame and glory in paradise?

The verdict is clear: the Palestinian leadership stands guilty of sacrificing their children for political gain. If the precondition for peace Meir offered was difficult to achieve some 50 years ago, the odds now are impossible. Israel is left with no choice but to face the brainwashed children who emerge from the culture of hate that the Palestinian culture advocates and promotes. It is nothing short of a travesty of justice that children are subjected to such abuse.



Nathan Williams,
Director of Marketing
and Communications

LEADERSHIP TRAINING—ISRAELI STYLE

IT'S FRIDAY AFTERNOON in Beit HaKerem, the Jerusalem neighborhood where I live. There are fewer and fewer cars on the road as a pre-*Shabbat* (Sabbath) hush begins to descend. However, it's a different story in the park on the other side of Herzl Boulevard, where an exuberantly noisy group of 20–30 young Israeli children are taking part in activities planned by teens only slightly older than they are. This is a gathering of Tzofim, or the Hebrew Scouts, and the activities are designed to develop responsible leaders with an unshakeable love for their country and its people.

Twice a week, approximately 90,000 young Israelis between the ages of 9 and 18 meet across the country in groups or tribes. Wearing khaki shirts with colorful neck scarves and led by the older teens of 15 to 18 years old, Tzofim is the nation's largest youth movement. Affiliated with the World Organization of the Scout Movement since 1951, Tzofim has put a uniquely Israeli spin on the scouting experience, producing many of the nation's leaders during its 100-year history.



EARLY BEGINNINGS

On Passover 1919, only ten years after a British army officer named Baden-Powell founded the world-wide scouting movement, a group of Jewish youth and sports associations in British Mandate Palestine held activities similar to those led by Baden-Powell, marking the start of the Hebrew Scouts. From the very beginning, Tzofim was uniquely Israeli, as it was the first movement to include both boys and girls, allowing equal participation.

The first official Tzofim “tribe” was founded at the Reali school in Haifa in 1925. During the stressful and often violent pre-statehood days of the 1940s, the movement sent its best scouts to the Palmach, the elite fighting force of Israel's underground army. Then, once the modern State of Israel was reborn in 1948, Tzofim graduates were sent to create new Jewish communities across the country, laboring to restore the land of their inheritance.

FROM KIRYAT SHMONA TO EILAT

Today there are over 200 Tzofim groups in 105 cities and towns from Kiryat Shmona along the Lebanon border in northern Israel to its southernmost city of Eilat on the Red Sea. Approximately 40% of these groups are located in cities and towns that are struggling economically and whose populations include a high number of “at risk” children.

Tzofim members reflect the diversity of their country. There are *sabras* (native-born Israelis) and new immigrants; secular and religious; young people with special needs and youth at risk. They all take part in the activities and educational programs designed to produce citizens who feel like they belong and are committed, contributing members of the communities in which they live.

Weekly activities stress the Hebrew Scouts' core values: positive young leadership; Jewish identity; and community building. Small groups, activities in nature, challenges and learning through experience are key to the process. Emphasis is placed on the importance of volunteering and improving the world in which they live.

NURTURING TIES IN THE DIASPORA

In the 1970s, the first Tzofim troop established for young Israeli children living abroad was formed in New York City. Known in the Diaspora (Jews living outside Israel) as Tzabar, activities follow the same model as its Israeli counterpart. Tzabar is now active across the US as well as Canada, Australia, Hong Kong, the Netherlands, UK and the former Soviet Union.

Designed to keep the children's ties with Israel strong, activities are held in Hebrew. It's also a two-way street. Each summer, a delegation of 10 Israeli scouts in their final year of Tzofim join the “Friendship Caravan.” These young Israelis travel across the US and Canada to bring a taste of their culture in the form of music and dance as well as a message of peace.



REACHING OUT TO LONE SOLDIERS

Tzofim is not limited to the under-18 age group though. Each year, young Jewish men and women leave the countries of their birth and come to serve in the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) as Lone Soldiers. In 1991, a special Israeli Scouts program, Garin Tzabar, was formed to provide a support system for some of these Lone Soldiers.

Remaining on base over the weekend is not always possible in the IDF, but soldiers who come from abroad and do not have family in Israel have limited options of where to spend their free time. This special Tzofim group adopts and places groups (*garin*) of Lone Soldiers in *kibbutzim* [collective communities] and cities where they are assigned to adoptive Israeli families. This gives them a “home away from home” where they can improve their Hebrew, be part of Israeli culture and get their laundry done! Having this family can make all the difference in the world.

FUTURE LEADERS

Approximately 400,000 Tzofim graduates live in Israel today. Some of them are well-known, such as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and IDF Chief of Staff Herzi Halevi. Not every graduate becomes a household name in Israel, but through Tzofim’s educational programs and core values instilled from a young age, they do become community-minded and responsible citizens. The list of the “Scout’s Ten Values” is a good summary of the character being built in the exuberantly noisy groups that meet each week across the Land of Israel.

THE SCOUT’S TEN VALUES

1. Scouts tell the truth
2. Scouts are loyal to their people, their country and their language
3. Scouts are useful members of society, embrace work and help others
4. Scouts are friends of all people and partners for all Scouts
5. Scouts are courteous
6. Scouts love and protect nature
7. Scouts are people of discipline
8. Scouts’ spirits remain strong, and they smile when in distress
9. Scouts are not wasteful
10. Scouts are pure of heart and in their actions



Janet Aslin,
BFP Staff Writer

Israeli Start-Up Uses Technology to Up Pollination

THE WORLD HAS SEEN a growing problem with a rapidly declining bee population, which could have serious repercussions as these insects pollinate the crops we cultivate for food.

An Israeli start-up company, BloomX, is working to solve the problem with technology that mimics bees.

As the world's population grows, so does the need for food. Honeybees play a vital role in food production and are transported around the world throughout the year to pollinate different crops. But many die during transportation, in addition to the huge numbers that die mysteriously each year. In fact, the *Associated Press* reported in June that American beekeepers lost almost half of their managed colonies over the past year, attributing the loss to multiple factors.

Agricultural land has expanded by 600% since 1961, BloomX vice president for marketing Emily Speiser told *Israel21c*. Meanwhile, managed honeybee hives have only expanded by 83%, she added. "So, we have a supply and demand problem."

Enter BloomX.

The start-up introduced Robee, mechanical arms mounted on an electric vehicle that mimics bees buzzing, which shakes pollen off flowers, thus achieving the process of pollinating.

BloomX currently focuses on pollinating blueberries and avocados, as these are "cash crops" Speiser said, "and we wanted to show a high ROI."

"We wanted to reach out to growers who will be able to immediately see the value we bring with high revenue coming from a significant yield increase and improved fruit quality," Speiser added.

The Robee can increase blueberry yield by up to 30%, BloomX asserts, and increase large-size fruit by 29%, allowing growers to charge more.

BloomX's second product, Crossbee, is specifically designed to pollinate avocados, as avocado trees' male and female flowers require cross-pollination and open at different times of the day.

The Crossbee mimics bees' electrostatic forces—which *Israel21c* described as what is produced when you rub a balloon on your head—to extract the pollen from the plant.

Following blueberries and avocados, the company is eyeing apples and mangos next, according to Speiser, in addition to more berry varieties and greenhouse tomatoes.

Farmers have already seen success using Crossbee, BloomX noted, with a 40% increase in medium-sized avocados.

This technology means using fewer bees and reducing the need to transfer hives around the world—and stands as yet another example of how Israeli innovation is changing the world.

Kate Norman, *Bridges for Peace*



The Robee (left) is designed to shake pollen off flowers to pollinate crops, while the Crossbee (above) assists in cross-pollination.

Laser Air Defense System Set to Revolutionize Security



WITHIN APPROXIMATELY 18 MONTHS, Israel is expected to deploy the world's first laser defense systems.

The Rafael Advanced Defense Systems Iron Beam will be integrated into the Rafael-made Iron Dome air defense batteries. Algorithms will determine when to activate the lasers and when to fire the kinetic Iron Dome interceptors. However, the laser system is designed to complement, not replace Iron Dome.

Iron Dome has intercepted around 95% of aerial threats from Gaza heading for built-up areas in Israel. Nevertheless, the laser system has several advantages.

The laser costs just a few dollars to fire, compared to the average cost of US \$50,000 per interceptor. In addition, Iron Beam does not need replenishment. Furthermore, the laser strikes its target within seconds, far faster than kinetic interceptors.

On the other hand, the 100-kilowatt laser has a range of about 8–10 kilometers (5–6 mi.), considerably shorter than Iron Dome, and each laser can engage a single threat at a time, unlike Iron Dome, which can intercept multiple threats simultaneously.

In 2020, the Israeli Defense Ministry announced three laser programs: A ground-based laser to supplement Iron Dome; a mobile system to protect military units during maneuvers; and an aerial system capable of downing threats from above.

The airborne laser interception range is approximately 20 kilometers (12 mi.). When combined, it is possible to envisage ground- and air-based lasers intercepting large numbers of projectiles at a fraction of the cost.

Israel's allies are closely monitoring the development of this revolutionary technology. Lockheed Martin announced a partnership agreement with Rafael to develop an export version of Iron Beam for the American defense market.

Yaakov Lappin, *Jewish News Syndicate*

Israeli Researchers Induce Cancer Cells to 'Commit Suicide'

RESEARCHERS AT TEL AVIV UNIVERSITY have developed a method to trick cancer cells into self-destructing.

The research team, led by Professor Dan Peer, encoded a toxin produced by bacteria into messenger RNA (mRNA) molecules. These particles were delivered to cancer cells, triggering the cells to produce the toxin, which led to their demise.

Unlike with chemotherapy treatment, the toxins did not harm nearby cells.

"Our idea was to deliver safe mRNA molecules encoded for a bacterial toxin directly to the cancer cells—inducing these cells to actually produce the toxic protein that would later kill them. It's like placing a Trojan horse inside the cancer cell," said Peer.

First, the research team encoded the genetic info of the toxic protein produced by bacteria of the *Pseudomonas* family into mRNA molecules, resembling the procedure in which genetic info of COVID-19's "spike" protein was encoded into mRNA molecules to create the coronavirus vaccine.

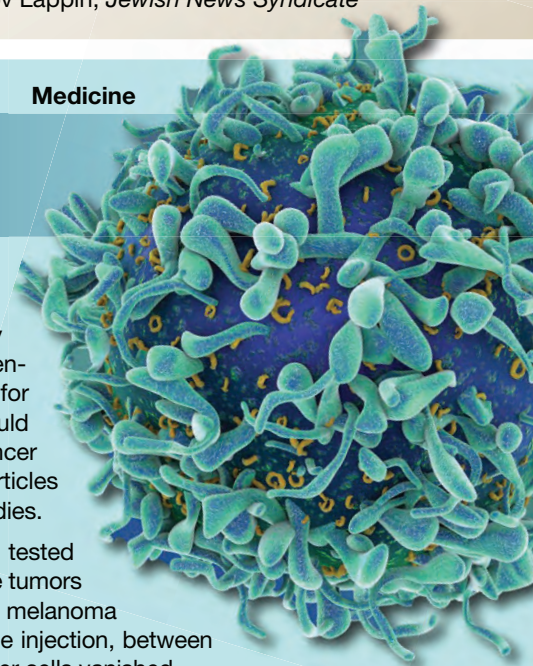
The molecules were then packaged in lipid nanoparticles for delivery to the cancer cells. To ensure that the instructions for producing the toxin would reach the targeted cancer cells, the lipid nanoparticles were coated with antibodies.

The molecules were tested by injecting them into the tumors of animal models with melanoma skin cancer. After a single injection, between 44% to 60% of the cancer cells vanished.

"When the cancer cell reads the 'recipe' at the other end, it starts to produce the toxin as if it were the bacteria itself, and this self-produced toxin eventually kills it. Thus, with a simple injection to the tumor bed, we can cause cancer cells to 'commit suicide' without damaging healthy cells," Peer explained.

Pesach Benson, *Jewish News Syndicate*

Medicine



The Four “Seas” of Israel



EVERY TOURIST SHOP in the Promised Land stocks a range of brightly colored t-shirts proclaiming that the wearer of the particular garment has dipped a toe in the four “seas” of Israel.

The claim is a bit of an overstatement, really. Only two of Israel’s famous waterbodies—the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea—meet the criteria to qualify as bona fide seas. The third—the Dead Sea—presents a bit of a quandary, with its official status depending on which expert you consult. Then there’s the fourth, final and arguably most famous waterbody—the Sea of Galilee—which, contrary to what its name implies, is not a sea at all.

Still, it’s a singular treat to explore the waterbodies that Scripture introduces as Israeli’s four “seas.”

The Mediterranean Sea

The word “Mediterranean” conjures up mental images of idyllic holidays on the French Riviera or the Greek Isles. Yet with nearly 124 miles (200 km.) of Mediterranean coastline, Israel boasts some of the most picturesque beaches in the world. From the northernmost tip near Rosh HaNikra spanning south to Ashkelon,

there are nearly 100 pristine beaches to choose from.

Many spots also come with a backstory of biblical events that played out where children now frolic in the surf and parents play *matkot* (a beach paddle game so popular that it’s called Israel’s national sport). The Bible calls the Mediterranean Sea the Great Sea, the Western Sea or simply “the sea.” Its shore witnessed Jonah’s ill-fated bid to escape God’s call, served as the stomping ground for the Philistines and in Christianity, saw Peter baptize Cornelius and Paul await passage to Rome.

The Mediterranean Sea also features as a boundary marker in God’s covenantal promise to Abraham’s posterity. In Deuteronomy 11:24, Moses reminds the Children of Israel that everywhere their soles tread will be theirs, “*from...the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea*” (see also Num. 34:6).

The Red Sea

Bab-el-Mandeb or the Gate of Grief—a narrow strait between the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa—connects the Red Sea to the Indian Ocean. The aquatic lifeline

makes for a paltry exchange of water, which, combined with the low precipitation and high temperatures, turns the Red Sea into a unique habitat. The result? The 9-mile (14-km.) swathe of coastline in Eilat, Israel’s southernmost city, serves as the gateway to an underwater paradise with 300 species of coral and 2,100 species of fish, many unique to the Red Sea. Add to that a laid-back atmosphere, the red Negev mountains rising on the horizon and clear waters lapping pebbled beaches, and you have the perfect spot to get away from it all.

Yet the Red Sea doesn’t owe its fame to snorkelers and scuba divers. God carved it into the pages of history when He parted the waters for the Israelites to pass through—while their Egyptian pursuers perished. Aside from the famous crossing, God also identified this waterbody as another stake marking the Promised Land’s boundary, “*And I will set your bounds from the Red Sea to the sea, Philistia*” (Exod. 23:31a).

The Dead Sea

The Dead Sea’s shores mark the lowest point on earth, while the high



salt content—nearly 10 times brinier than the ocean—qualifies it as the world’s fourth saltiest waterbody. This high salinity means dense water that keeps bathers buoyant and turns swimming into floating. Packed with 26 minerals, the briny waters are also renowned for its medicinal value, which beckons thousands to the Dead Sea shores for a beautifying, therapeutic mud bath.

The hypersalinity makes for a harsh habitat where life cannot flourish, hence the name. But it’s this barrenly beautiful landscape, dotted with stark salt formations against an azure expanse, that imbues the Dead Sea with an otherworldly allure.

The Bible calls this waterbody the Salt Sea, the Sea of the Arabah and the Eastern Sea. It features in biblical accounts dating back to the time of Abraham and stands as another beacon for the border of the Promised Land (Num. 34:3, 12; Deut. 3:17).

Yet the Dead Sea’s future is arguably more significant than its past or present. Both Ezekiel (47:18) and Zechariah (14:8) prophesied about a time when the briny Dead Sea will gush with sweet, fresh water teaming with life.

The Sea of Galilee

First-century historian Josephus Flavius extolled the beauty of the Galilee as the “ambition of Nature.” It’s easy to see why. The pastoral lake lies tucked into hazy heights. Sleepy villages, a sprawling city and bright mango groves spill side by side like strips of carpet from the slopes to trickle onto pebbled shores, while replicas of biblical fishing boats ferry tourists back and forth through the lapping waves. The Sea of Galilee exudes a serenity that you want to tuck into your heart and carry back into the chaos of life.

Israelis call the Sea of Galilee the Kinneret, supposedly from the Hebrew word *kinnor* (harp/lyre) for the lake’s harp-like shape. Fed and drained by the Jordan River, it’s Israel’s largest freshwater source, the lowest freshwater lake on Earth and the second-lowest lake in the world after the Dead Sea.

The *Tanakh* (Gen.–Mal.) calls it the Sea of Chinnereth (Num. 34:11; Deut. 3:17; Josh. 12:3, 13:27, 19:35), identifying the area as the heritage of Naphtali, Zebulun and Issachar. And Isaiah prophesied that the

Messiah would hail from this region (9:1–2, 6). In Christianity, the Sea of Galilee plays a pivotal role in the Gospels, with the shores and even the waves setting the stage for Jesus’ (Yeshua’s) miracles, encounters and preaching.

Today, a number of churches dot the shoreline, drawing scores of Christian pilgrims every year. And in the spring and summer, locals flock to the 35-mile (56-km.) lakeshore to enjoy the sunshine, splash in the waves or try their hand at watersports.

Been There, Done That

With all the aquatic fun within easy reach, why not set aside time during your next trip to Israel to earn one of those brightly colored t-shirts to proclaim proudly that you’ve sailed the Sea of Galilee, swam in the Mediterranean Sea, floated in the Dead Sea and snorkeled in the Red Sea?



Ilse Strauss,
News Bureau Chief



הַתִּקְוָה

“Hatikvah” The Hope

THERE IS SOMETHING wonderfully moving about standing among Israelis as their national anthem is sung. As you hear the passion in their voices and see the tears in many eyes, you realize how the words of the “Hatikvah” (The Hope) have shaped the thinking of a nation and helped keep the Zionist dream alive for generations. The song itself has an interesting history. And as Israel’s position among the nations changes, some say it’s time for a reinterpretation.

Throughout history, “Hatikvah” has caused numerous arguments and debates. Theodore Herzl hated it, religious Zionists and secular socialists fought over it, Israeli Arabs called it racist and international contests were held to find a replacement for it. But all efforts to remove it from its place of honor were unsuccessful. “Hatikvah” had worked its way into the hearts of Israelis, beginning with the earliest Zionist pioneers who found in it the expression of the centuries-old Jewish longing for their ancient homeland.



SCAN TO LISTEN

The Words

The history of both the melody and the lyrics of “Hatikvah” is, much like the State of Israel, fraught with controversy. The story begins with Jewish poet, Naftali Herz Imber, born in 1856 in what was then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Imber was raised in a religious home and revealed himself as a prodigy when he began his career as a poet aged 10. Not yet in his teens, he wrote prolifically and even received an award from the emperor.

At 25, Imber left his religious roots and moved to Israel where, in 1886, he published his first book of poems entitled *Barkai* (Morning Star). Among the collection of poems was a nine-stanza verse called “Tikvateynu” (Our Hope). Passionately Zionist, it touched the soul of the Jewish people. Sources say that Imber travelled across the Promised Land, sharing his poetry—and particularly “Tikvateynu”. Unfortunately, however, he developed a reputation as a drunkard and a womanizer. Imber died in New York in 1909 and was buried in a pauper’s grave. In 1953, he was reinterred at the Har HaMenuchot Cemetery in Jerusalem, the prodigal poet at last at rest in the Zion he loved.

The Music

By the time Imber moved to America, his poem had become a song. The early Jewish pioneers created a culture imbued with singing and dancing. Among those songs was “Hatikvah,” a song so beloved that it became the theme song of the Zionist movement. Its route from poem to song was somewhat circuitous, however.

Many believe that the melody goes back more than 500 years to a Sephardic prayer for dew called the “Birkat Ha’Tal”. The haunting melody then made its way to Italy, where it became a popular love song, and from there to Romania, where it became a Gypsy folk song. It also provided the melody for Polish, Ukrainian and Spanish folk songs, and was the basis of composer Bedrich Smetana’s symphonic poem celebrating “Bohemia.” Then, in 1888, 17-year-old Samuel Cohen arrived in the burgeoning Jewish homeland from Romania, bringing with him a folk song he remembered from his childhood, which he adapted to “Hatikvah.” The rest, as they say, is history.

The Past

As popular as “Hatikvah” was with the masses, not all Zionists favored it. Herzl objected to the song on several levels. He was troubled by Imber’s reputation as a “vagabond” and a “drunkard,” believing that the composer of the Jewish homeland’s anthem should be someone of higher moral standards. In 1897, he launched the first of several unsuccessful international competitions to find a more suitable replacement.

Israel Story podcaster Zev Levi recounts that at the Sixth Zionist Congress in 1903, the Uganda Proposal to

create a temporary Jewish State in Eastern Africa was discussed. The proposal passed with 295 in favor and 178 against. Its opponents got up and sang “Hatikvah,” stressing the lyrics “the eye looks toward Zion.” Thus, Levi observed, “a Hebrew poem penned by a misfit and stuck to a random Romanian Gypsy tune, became the unlikely political anthem of a country that did not yet exist.”

Religious Zionists objected to the absence of reference to God or the spiritual nature of Zionism in Imber’s verse. A secular song could hardly be the anthem for a nation founded on a belief in God and the fulfillment of His promises. Rabbi Abraham Isaac Kook actually penned a parallel poem called “The Faith,” stressing “the steadfast faith in the return to our holy land where we shall serve our God.” Socialist Zionists objected to both Imber and Kook’s works and suggested “Birkat Ha’Am” (The People’s Blessing) which reads, “Strengthen the hands of our brothers renewing the soil of our land.” And cultural Zionists objected to the minor key of “Hatikvah” which, they said, made the song “gloomy and depressing.”

Despite the objections, “Hatikvah” survived as a symbol of the Jewish spirit, nationhood and Israeli identity. It was sung every year at annual Zionist congresses, until it was adopted as the official anthem of the Zionist movement 1933. It wasn’t until 2004, however, that a Knesset (Parliament) vote officially designated the song as the Israeli national anthem. Yet even without that designation, the Jewish people sang “Hatikvah” in times of horror and joy.

The Future

Recently, *Times of Israel* blogger David Matlow has suggested another look at “Hatikvah.” Reporting on President Isaac Herzog’s speech to a Joint Session of the US Congress, he suggested that the president had challenged the Jewish people to redefine the notions of Zionism as expressed in the song. The president spoke of reinterpreting “Hatikvah” from “to be a free nation in our land” to “healing a fractured world.” Now that the impossible dream of independence has been realized, Matlow argues, it is time for a new hope and a new vision, not to replace the old but to build upon it. It is a demand for the Jewish nation to reach beyond its borders and do what it can to make the world a place of justice and compassion.

The original Imber poem read: “The ancient hope, To return to the land of our fathers, The city where David encamped.” In 1895, David Yellin, a scholar in the newly-reborn Hebrew language, changed the lyrics to the ones we sing today. Perhaps it is time, Matlow suggests, that they are changed again.



Cheryl Hauer,
International Vice President



Battling Terrorism in the Biblical Heartland

ISRAEL'S BIBLICAL HEARTLAND is facing a big problem. In the land of milk and honey, terrorists have established a hornet's nest from which springs a never-ending stream of violence.

The base is Jenin, a hotbed of terrorism in northern Samaria. Over the past year, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said in July, residents of Jenin and the surrounding area conducted some 50 shooting attacks against Israeli civilians and security personnel, while 19 terrorists on the run from security forces sought refuge in the nest.

A bloody terror wave began early in 2022, which saw 19 people across Israel killed between March and May of that year. Another surge of violence erupted early in 2023, and since the beginning of this year, terrorists have murdered two dozen Israelis.

Israeli security forces responded by conducting near-nightly counterterror raids—focusing on Jenin and Nablus—to combat terrorism at its source. But when the IDF soldiers arrived in these terror hotbeds, particularly in Jenin, they were often greeted by armed gunmen, ensuing in fierce shootouts.

Jenin is home to a horde of terror groups. These include Hamas, the Iran-backed terror group that reigns in the Gaza Strip; the Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ), the second-largest terror group in Gaza, also backed by Iran;

and a few smaller terror factions, including ones with ties to Fatah, the leading secular Palestinian political party that makes up a majority of the Palestinian Authority (PA). These three—Hamas, the PIJ and the PA—are the frontrunners in the power play for Palestinian authority.

The Operation

Determined to bring the hornet's nest under control, Israel launched a two-day operation in Jenin on July 3. Between 1,000 and 2,000 Israeli soldiers poured into the terror hotspot during the two days, according to differing reports, in addition to drones and aircraft. The military announced that during the 48-hour period, it had discovered and destroyed eight weapons storage sites—including one in a mosque—six explosive manufacturing sites, 11 improvised explosive devices, three war rooms used to spy on the IDF and an underground tunnel network.

The IDF focused mainly on a local branch of the PIJ, known as the Jenin Battalion, in addition to other terror groups operating in the area. Unlike the nightly counterterror raids, the Israeli forces were met with little resistance, the *Times of Israel* reported, as most terrorists had fled the area. This gave the Israeli forces space to find and neutralize the terror sites, crippling—though not completely eradicating—the terrorist presence in the city.

Israel's top brass hailed the operation as a success. Israeli Defense Minister Yoav Gallant declared that Israel "fully achieved" the goal of restoring freedom for Israeli forces to operate in Jenin. But he warned that the operation is "not the final word as far as we're concerned."

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu echoed this warning, adding that the operation was "not a one-time thing" and that the Jewish state will continue taking necessary action to ensure that Jenin does not become a "haven for terror."

The Same Old Story

An *Al Jazeera* columnist penned a diatribe on the IDF's two-day counterterror operation in Jenin, describing it as an Israeli attack to "terrorize and traumatize Palestinians in the occupied West Bank [Judea and Samaria] for two horrendous days." The columnist, Andrew Mitrovica, also berated the Western media, accusing them of lying "to defend Israel, no matter what it does."

Mitrovica then went on to paint a bloody picture of Israeli atrocities against innocent Palestinian refugees. Twelve Palestinians were killed during the operation—all confirmed by the IDF to be terrorist militants—and "scores more were hurt and damaged in mind and spirit," Mitrovica lamented.

The operation was, the columnist insisted, "further evidence of the policy of apartheid pursued by a succession of Israeli governments designed...to impose ethnic supremacy in occupied Palestine and to crush Palestinians into ghettos with grinding, inhuman efficiency."

Yet Mitrovica failed to address the purpose behind Israel's operation. And it wasn't to impose ethnic supremacy over innocent Palestinians. This wild accusation glosses over the reality of Jenin as host to a multitude of terrorist activity, a haven for terrorists and a launching pad for attacks against Israelis.

The Aftermath

But Jenin has become a power vacuum of sorts for the Palestinian people. A month after the operation, a gunfight broke out between the Palestinian factions in the streets of the hornet's nest, as the PA tried to quell rioting by PIJ- and Hamas-affiliated crowds protesting the PA's arrest of a Jenin Battalion member.

The PA traded slurs with the PIJ and Hamas, with the PA accusing its two rivals of stirring up trouble in Israel on behalf of Iran, and the PIJ and Hamas accusing the PA of acting on Israel's behalf.

This unrest came just a few days after a meeting in Egypt of Palestinian factions to settle on a unified response to Israel's operation in Jenin. The meeting, however, was boycotted by the PIJ and other small factions, the *Jerusalem Post* noted, in protest of the PA arresting terrorists in Jenin.

Though the PA incites violence against Israel and financially rewards terrorists and their families in its "Pay-for-Slay" policy, the organization also coordinates with Israel on certain matters, including security.

Perhaps Jenin will always be the Wild West of the biblical heartland. The July operation was a decisive victory in Israel's battle against terrorism in the biblical heartland, but the threat is not completely eradicated. Jenin continues to be a lightning rod for Israeli-Palestinian clashes as well as Palestinian against Palestinian clashes amid the Palestinian power play. But as the operation proved, Israel will not allow the hornet's nest to get out of hand, especially when the hornets are out to spill Jewish blood.



Kate Norman, *BFP Staff Writer*



A weapons cache found in Jenin during the July operation



The Quirks of Israel

Life is a Song

From the pen of International CEO Peter Fast comes the ninth installment of 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 quirky aspects that make Israel so wonderfully unique.

JERUSALEM IS A CITY RESOUNDING with music. What started with King David strumming his harp has now morphed into the sounds of Israeli pop music, cantors singing as they go about their day, street performers, the odd guy belting out a song off key, professional musicians playing their violins, guitars or flutes on public squares and a host of other melodies. I would say that Israelis in general are very musical. Music is, after all, part of the Jewish DNA. From the Levitical choirs of the Temple periods to *Fiddler on the Roof*, Barbara Streisand and the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, the Jewish state is a melodic gem in the Middle East. You literally hear music everywhere.

I once stepped onto Jaffa Street to catch the light rail, and out-of-the-blue, a man strolling by burst into the most beautiful, operatic song, his baritone voice soaring over the rooftops. I also have fond memories of walking along Ben Yehuda Street and hearing tunes with a Russian flair, or listening to a busker expertly strumming his guitar while crooning in French. This busy thoroughfare in downtown Jerusalem also always resounds with the sound of amateur rappers, patriotic Israelis belting out Simon and Garfunkel-style folk songs and cringe-worthy techno jazz blasting from a hastily set up keyboard.

I vividly remember once making my way down Ben Yehuda Street to buy a cup of coffee when I walked past a musician serenading pedestrians with the most haunting Hebrew love song (or what I assumed was a love song). Ten minutes later—and cup of coffee in hand—I passed

the same musician again. This time he was loudly belting out the famous Neil Young song, “Old Man.” I smiled to myself, thinking that Neil Young is famous even in Israel, when the musician changed his tune yet again, this time launching into Robin Mark’s “These Are the Days of Elijah.”

The Old City is the heart of Jerusalem and thus often a hub of music, singing and dance. The Municipality of Jerusalem once hosted an amazing event called, *Sounds of the Old City*, setting up stations throughout the Old City with professional musicians—both local and international—playing a different type of music. It was a free event, and thousands came to enjoy the tunes. The diversity was amazing. At the Tower of David Museum you had a Motown gospel jazz band. A little further, traditional Yemenite Jewish melodies filled the air. The Christian Quarter featured a phenomenal jazz soul singer, while eight musicians playing Moroccan instrumental music stood in the Cardo.

Hurva Square in the heart of the Old City is always filled with melody. I remember once passing the Hurva Synagogue on my way to the Western Wall when I noticed a Jewish gentleman sporting a lavish full beard streaked with grey. I thought to myself that he looked like a philosopher, an artist with an incredible life story, someone who had stepped straight from the Broadway set of *Fiddler on the Roof*.

My thoughts had barely formed when the man took hold of a violin in his one hand, steadied the bow in his other, and proceeded to play *If I Were a Rich Man*—straight from *Fiddler on the Roof*. Many people, myself included, crowded around him to soak up every note of the melody. It was a magical moment, as this distinctly Jewish tune floated over the ancient white stones of the Jewish Quarter, passed the iconic Hurva Synagogue and on to the Western Wall.



Speaking of the Western Wall...The area surrounding the holiest spot in Judaism is a whole different ball game. This is the big-leagues; the blow-your-mind, life-changing stuff. Here, anything can happen. When it comes to the beauty of the music to be heard here, there are no rules. If you think you've heard incredible music, witnessed impassioned dancing or family, friends and perfect strangers joining hands to bounce up and down to the rhythm of a lively tune, think again. It is at the Western Wall where music and dancing are made. You have to keep in mind though that it's a different type of music. You won't get rock bands or secular groups belting out their creations there. But you'll see thousands of people knitted together as a family singing and praying in choruses that stir the soul.

On a High Holy Day or a Sabbath, your heart will come alive with emotions as the most beautiful songs resound from the crowd. The highlight probably comes right after the end of *Yom Kippur* (Day of Atonement), when 25 hours of fasting and repentance culminates in the most joyous dancing and singing you have ever seen. It doesn't matter who you are, you will literally be pulled into a massive mass of spinning, rejoicing Israelis. I know I have—and it was amazing!

Be at the Western Wall during a *bar or bat mitzvah* (religious coming-of-age ceremony for young Israelis) as a casual observer and you'll hear the most beautiful Scriptures and prayers set to melody. Or take the time to linger at the Western Wall during Passover to hear an unrehearsed choir of thousands singing the *Hallel* (Psalms 113–118). The music that resounds in praises and petitions to God at the Western Wall are simply beyond words.

So, when you travel to Israel, make sure to pay attention to the music. Stop, listen and soak it all in. You will hear it everywhere, especially in Jerusalem. And if you do, I can promise you that it will bring a smile to your face, warm your heart and feed your soul.

Israel is indeed beautifully and melodiously quirky.



Peter Fast,
International CEO

A New Page for Israel



THE NEW YEAR IS TRADITIONALLY rung in to the soundtrack of well-wishes. In the days, hours and minutes before bidding farewell to the old year and stepping into the new, friends, family and perfect strangers typically greet each other with words of hope for peace, love, joy and everything precious and beautiful in the year to come.

In Israel, things follow the same pattern—with a difference here and there. For one thing, the new year doesn't roll around come January. The Jewish New Year is traditionally celebrated on *Rosh HaShanah*, Hebrew for "head of the year."

The State of Israel recognizes the Gregorian calendar, but the biblical feasts and year numbering are taken from the calendar the ancient Israelites used in the Scriptures. The two-day feast of *Rosh HaShanah* is celebrated on the first and second day of the seventh month, the month of *Tishrei*, which falls in September or October. This year, Israel ushered out the year 5783 and welcomed 5784 at sunset on September 15 and observed the feast until dusk on September 17.

Although New Year's Day celebrations on December 31 in the secular West are often marked by lavish parties and merriment, the Hebrew New Year is slightly different. The atmosphere of *Rosh HaShanah* is one of reverence and devotion, which some describe as "subdued joyousness."

Regardless of the differences, there is a common element that *Rosh HaShanah* shares with other New Year's celebrations: well-wishes. In the days, hours and minutes before bidding farewell to the old year and stepping into the new, friends, family and perfect strangers in Israel also greet each other with words of hope for peace, love, joy and everything precious and beautiful in the year to come.

So as Israel takes its first few steps into the new year, we asked a few Israeli friends to share the hope they cherish for their country and people in 5784.



"May Israel be blessed with internal peace and peace with its neighbors in the coming year so that it cannot only take care of its own people but also perform a key role as a global leader in helping the citizens of the world fight illness, poverty, hunger and drought."

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

"Does my wish even matter? Is my view of what Eretz Yisrael [the Land of Israel] should look like superior to others? Does any person have more of a right to imagine this place, to construct it, to carry a 4,000-year-old dream on their bare backs, in the way they see fit? My wish is for everyone to understand we are all on this little piece of land together. Only then could there be a true Israel."

—Liam Forberg, writer and photographer

"Israeli society has always been diverse in a cultural, ethnic and also political sense. In many ways, the reality of Israel's social and political life has always been an example of how a society has managed to accommodate extreme differences and strongly conflicting perspectives without breaking apart. But as we enter the Jewish year 5784, many feel that the unity of Israeli society is seriously being challenged... I just returned from a trip to Europe where, once more, I saw the remnants of a once so rich Jewish life that has largely been destroyed. This renders the State of Israel one of the very few places in the world where Jewish society can thrive and continue to evolve naturally in all its diverse manifestations...My hope for the coming year therefore is that Israeli

society will retain its unity without forfeiting its diversity and retain its diversity without forfeiting its unity."

—Dr. Marc Neugröschel, writer and educator

"After a year of turmoil, I wish the State of Israel is able to find peace and that the political situation stabilizes. Israel has too many outside threats and can't afford such infighting between ourselves."

—Noa Amouyal, PR specialist and journalist

"As Israel enters a new year, my prayer is that it be one of healing from civil strife that has marked the previous year, and much needed unity among all Israelis. I pray for the constant building—and reinforcing—of bridges between Jews and Christians toward our ultimate redemption. And I pray for peace, whether through defeating our enemies' evil intention, or God changing their heart. Please join me in your continued prayers for Israel."

—Jonathan Feldstein, president, Genesis 123 Foundation

"This past and coming year were and most probably will be filled for Israelis with discord and uncertainty. I pray for more harmony and certainty. This past and probably the next year will be filled with wishing there was more—not less—compassion in the world. So, what I do and will pray and aim for is that we all 'find grace in the eyes of God and man' (Prov. 3:4)."

—Mara Schecter, social worker, resource development writer and consultant



IDF Soldiers with Disabilities *Earn Special Berets*



ELEVEN YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN with various disabilities joined an unforgettable Israel Defense Forces [IDF] "Beret March," marking their induction as full-fledged soldiers.

These new soldiers are proud members of Special in Uniform, a revolutionary project of the IDF. The program incorporates young people with physical and mental disabilities such as Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy and autism into Israel's military. During their service, they receive training and skills that empower them to integrate long-term into Israeli society and the workforce.

For most soldiers, basic training in the IDF culminates with a "Beret March" of 30 kilometers (18.6 mi.), followed by an official ceremony in which the soldiers receive their berets. For the Special in Uniform soldiers, it meant a 1 kilometer (0.6 mi.) march. Afterwards, they received the orange berets of the IDF's Home Front Command.

"Volunteering with the IDF has changed my life, and the life of my friends," said 19-year-old Snir Jamil. "Each and every one of us is a warrior who found a way to contribute his skills and talents to our country. The IDF gives us all a chance to be our very best and give our all. They taught me to believe in myself."

Close to 1,000 Special in Uniform soldiers from communities across Israel serve in 45 bases in all branches of the IDF. The program includes Bedouin, Druze and Arabs.

Jamil's father, Itamar, said, "This organization offers kids like Snir the chance not just to feel like an equal, but to really be an equal. They invite every individual, regardless of ability or disability, to maximize his or her potential and give whatever he can to benefit our nation."

Pesach Benson, *Jewish News Syndicate*

Israel Saves Palestinian Boy's Life with Miraculous Surgery

SULEIMAN HASSAN was riding his bike near his home in the Jordan Valley when tragedy struck. The 12-year-old he was hit by a car and suffered a spinal injury that could have resulted in immediate death. Thanks to the quick determination of the medics at the scene of the accident to airlift the young Palestinian boy to Hadassah Ein Kerem Hospital, he received a life-saving operation.

The spine acts as a two-way "communication highway" between the brain and the body as it sends and receives messages that control how our bodies function. The particular spinal injury Suleiman suffered is called Atlanto-Occipital Dislocation (AOD) also known as internal or orthopedic decapitation. Ligaments which attach the base of the skull to the spinal cord are severed, which results in immediate death in over 50% of those who suffer this injury.

Dr. Zvi Asa and Dr. Ohad Einav from Hadassah Ein Kerem performed the hours-long, complex operation to save Hassan's life. "The head [was] almost completely detached from the base of the neck," Dr. Einav told *Arutz Sheva*.

The team was able to reattach Suleiman's skull to his spinal cord with plates and a cervical splint. "The fact that such a child has no neurological deficits or sensory or motor dysfunction, and that he is functioning normally and walking without an aid

after such a long process, is no small thing," Dr. Einav said.

This story is another testimony to the dedication and commitment of Israel's physicians and hospitals. Young Suleiman lives in the Jordan Valley, in what the world calls territory occupied by Israel. Yet he received the best that Israeli medicine has to offer.

Suleiman's story is not the exception but the norm. There are countless stories of lives changed for the better because Israel chooses to save lives whenever possible.

The *Talmud* (rabbinic commentary on Jewish tradition and the Hebrew Scriptures) teaches that, "Whoever saves a single life is considered by scripture to have saved the whole world."

Suleiman's father said it this way, "I will thank you for the rest of my life for saving my dear only son."

Janet Aslin, *Bridges for Peace*



Anti-Israeli Content Removed from Saudi Textbooks



A SIGN OF THINGS TO COME? The revolution being carried out by Saudi crown prince Mohammed bin Salman is reflected in a reform of the country's textbooks. References to Jews as monkeys and pigs who worship the devil and descriptions of them as traitors by nature and sworn enemies of Islam have been removed.

Research carried out by the international research and policy institute IMPACT-se, which investigates and analyzes the contents of textbooks in the world to encourage contents of peace and tolerance, included an analysis of 301 textbooks published in the last five years by the Saudi Ministry of Education.

The most significant change that has been made is in the negative attitude toward Jews, with almost all the anti-Semitic examples in the books removed. For example, a song about the opposition to "Jewish settlements in Palestine" was deleted. A task that asked students to refute Zionist claims about their connection to "Palestine" was also removed. A high school history book no longer includes a lesson on the positive results of the First *Intifada* [uprising] or references to Israel as a "fraudulent democracy." A blood libel accusing Israel of setting fire to

the Al-Aqsa Mosque in 1969 was also removed, as well as a claim that Israel started the Six Day War to take control of the Muslim and Christian holy sites in Jerusalem and oil wells in the Sinai Peninsula.

The terminology toward Israel was moderated and references to "the Zionist enemy" and "the Israeli occupation" were removed. However, the textbooks still do not recognize Israel and do not teach about the Holocaust. The maps completely ignore the existence of Israel and do not mention its name. Zionism is still described as a European colonial and racist movement, and there are still places where it is described as the "Zionist entity."

"Although every textbook reform is important, the textbooks of Saudi Arabia have a special significance as the leader of the Sunni current in Islam," said Marcus Sheff, CEO of IMPACT-se.

Eric Agassi, IMPACT-se vice president, added: "Saudi Arabia is no longer just a country. Her textbooks are distributed to Muslim communities around the world and are studied by tens of millions of students in mosques and other educational settings."

Itamar Eichner, *Ynetnews*



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 24,000 needy Israelis in 40 communities every month by supporting our food bank in Jerusalem.

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 23 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 100,000 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.

INTERNATIONAL STRATEGIC PROJECTS FUND: This fund enables us to invest in projects which will significantly improve our ability to fulfill our mission.

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.

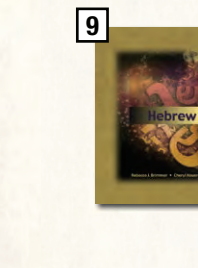
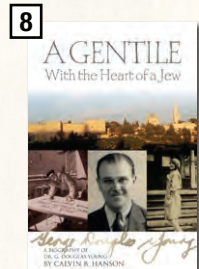
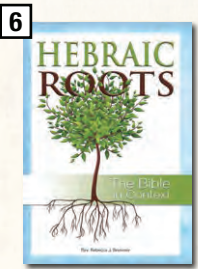
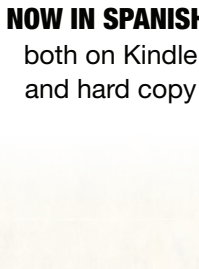
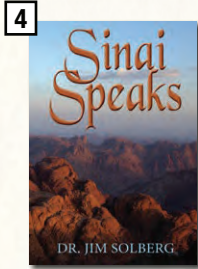
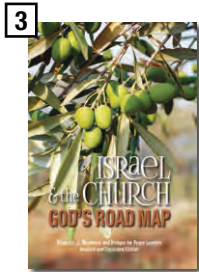
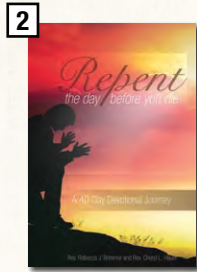
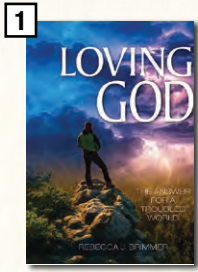


**“Oh, taste and see that the LORD
is good; blessed is the man who
trusts in Him!”**

Psalm 34:8

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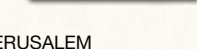
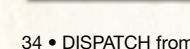
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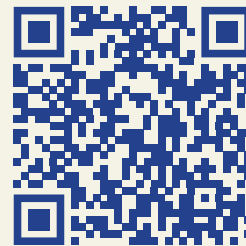
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