

dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

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ISRAEL

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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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Jewish history is marked with suffering, pain and loss. The Jewish people often faced these ordeals alone, without comrade or champion. October 7 stands as the darkest day in Israel's modern history. This tragedy is different though. This time the Jewish people are not facing the ordeal alone.

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Hamas terrorists on the Gaza border



Rockets fired by Hamas light up the night sky.

Israel Has Changed Forever

ISRAEL HAS CHANGED FOREVER. This nation and her people will never be the same. Over 1,400 Israelis have been cruelly slaughtered and their blood soaks the ground. In all the chaos of war, pain, sorrow and grief, I hear the words of God to Cain in Genesis 4:10b, *“What have you done? The voice of your brother’s blood cries out to Me from the ground.”*

More than 200 civilians and soldiers have been kidnapped, dragged into Gaza to face absolute horror and imprisonment. In the midst of this tragic reality, I ponder Jeremiah 9:1 as my heart weeps, *“Oh, that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!”*

Hamas terrorists have fired thousands of rockets from Gaza. Like streaks of fire, they have brought death, destruction and terror to Israel’s cities and towns, causing millions to run to bomb shelters to huddle together, often for hours on end. With these sights imprinted on my mind and with the personal experience of running to my own shelter with my terrified children, I think

of Psalm 83:1–3: *“Do not keep silent, O God! Do not hold Your peace, and do not be still, O God! For behold, Your enemies make a tumult; and those who hate You have lifted up their head. They have taken crafty counsel against Your people, and consulted together against Your sheltered ones.”*

We know that the God of Israel is almighty and that He will give Israel the strength to weather this storm. We also know that the Lord is calling millions of Christians around the world to stand with, support and pray for Israel during these days. We further know that prayer is a powerful weapon and as Christians, we can meditate on powerful Scriptures of prayer like 2 Corinthians 10:3–5, *“For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war according to the flesh. For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal but mighty in God for pulling down strongholds, casting down arguments and every high thing that exists itself against the knowledge of God, bringing every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ.”* Prayer is indeed powerful and as Christians who stand with Israel, we cry



Israeli troops stationed near the Gaza border

out for the healing of this nation and against the forces of evil that ultimately come against the Lord God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob (Ps. 83).

But we must also take action. Israel desperately needs the tangible gifts that carry the power to transform lives in this moment, bringing restoration, comfort and healing with the love of God.

With one voice, Bridges for Peace cries out to you to make a difference. We implore you to rise up and take your place in the crucial task God has given the Church at this time. You are called to stand with Israel, comfort Zion and help offer the emergency aid for the shattered Israeli communities in the south.

Bridges for Peace has been working for years in communities like Netivot, Sderot, Ofakim and Kiryat Ekron. Before the dark dawn on October 7, these communities were filled with rejoicing Jewish families celebrating the end of *Sukkot* (Feast of Tabernacles) and looking forward to dancing with the *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.) scrolls on *Simchat Torah* (Rejoicing with the *Torah*). But sunrise on October 7 thrust these communities into what many described as a “hell” of bloodshed, slaughtered families, screaming children, people fleeing to rooftops and coming face-to-face with masked Hamas terrorists. A nightmare became reality.

Now, we as Christians must mobilize! Bridges for Peace must act! I pray that you will join us. In this grave hour, please consider sending a special donation to our Crisis Assistance Fund so that we may show the love of God to people we have been working with for years. For years, we have conveyed His tender care to these people.

And now, amid unimaginable pain, we have the opportunity to demonstrate that love in a tangible, real way. Join us in this hour! Pray and give!

With a heavy heart,
Rev. Peter Fast
International CEO



Scan to hear more

Bridges for Peace
volunteers delivering
supplies
to communities
in the south



Taking a Page from the Nazis' Playbook:

Hamas Planned to Deploy Chemical Weapons



ISRAELI SECURITY FORCES found instructions for producing cyanide gas on the body of one of the Hamas terrorists who participated in the October 7 attacks, Israeli President Isaac Herzog revealed.

Herzog said that troops found a USB flash drive with instructions for preparing a device to disperse the poisonous gas, once used for mass murder in Nazi gas chambers.

“This is material which was found on the body of one of those sadistic villains. It’s Al-Qaeda material, official Al-Qaeda material,” Herzog told *Sky News*.

“When dealing with ISIS, Al-Qaeda and Hamas, this is what we’re dealing with,” added the Israeli head of state.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry’s weapons of mass destruction non-proliferation department informed embassies around the world of “Hamas’s intention to use chemical weapons” in a classified cable, according to *Axios*.

The cable reportedly instructed ambassadors to share the file with their host governments privately. “This discovery indicates that Hamas intended to use chemical warfare agents as part of its series of terrorist operations against the civilian population,” read the missive.

Hamas terrorists killed 1,400 Israelis and wounded more than 5,400 in a massive offensive launched from the Gaza Strip on October 7, which included the firing of thousands of rockets at Israel and the infiltration of the Jewish state by terrorist forces.

Herzog first revealed a disturbing Hamas booklet found on a Palestinian terrorist’s corpse in one of the Gaza-area communities a week after the attack.

“This booklet is an operating manual, how to enter citizens’ yards, *kibbutz* (collective community), city, how to break in there, and what do you do when you find the citizens.

You torture them. This is the booklet that says exactly how to torture them, how to kidnap them,” Herzog told *CNN’s* Wolf Blitzer.

A copy of the guide provided for the press—entitled “The Warrior’s Guide: *Jihadi* Version”—outlines tactics that include creating chaos, intimidating captives, applying electric shocks and carrying out executions.

The eight-page guide instructs the terrorists to use captives as human shields if attacked, regardless of their religion, race or gender. The hostages should be “killed when necessary,” especially if there is any sign of revolt among them, it says, while instructing terrorists to document their actions live.

“The story is not Israel versus the Palestinians or Judaism versus Islam. The story is about where humanity should stand: Are we with the good or the evil?” said Herzog.

Jewish News Syndicate



US Lawmaker Blames Christians for Fueling Palestinian–Israeli Conflict

WHILE MANY HAVE FOCUSED ON RADICAL, ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM following Hamas’s terrorist attacks on Israel on October 7, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez has decided to point fingers elsewhere: at Christian extremists. “The country that is Israel today is not the Israel of the Bible,” the politician, known as AOC, told the New York radio program *Hot 97/WQHT*.

“It’s not just Islamic. It’s not just Jewish. It is also Christian,” the congresswoman said on October 12 of the conflict. “In the United States of America, Christian fundamentalism and nationalism—which has also been extremely anti-Semitic—has also aligned itself with some of the most right-wing and authoritarian and inflammatory powers in the region.”

David Swindel, *Jewish News Syndicate*



A War for Peace



ON SEPTEMBER 15, Israel and America celebrated the third anniversary of the Abraham Accords.

The accords, which were brokered by the Trump administration, seemed to be spreading throughout the Middle East and the region. Sudan had signed on to the declarative portion of the Accords, Oman welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in 2018 and Saudi Arabia was close to joining the accords. On August 28, Saudi Arabia allowed an Air Seychelles plane carrying 128 passengers—many of them Israelis flying to Tel Aviv—to land in Jeddah because of an electrical issue. This had never happened before and was a strong indication of the positive direction in which the two countries were headed.

On September 26, Israeli Tourism Minister Haim Katz was the first Israeli cabinet member to visit Saudi Arabia. He was warmly received. “Normalization” talks were making real and significant progress. Arab leaders were beginning to realize that working with rather than against Israel would benefit Muslims worldwide and in their

respective countries. They felt that partnering with Israel, and especially its high-tech sector, would yield immediate dividends, and it was doing so.

The Gulf states in particular are extremely fearful of a nuclear Iran and have moved closer to Israel and the West as a direct result. Ties with Israel, they know, will not only provide technological development but military protection. They were and still are convinced that Israel will not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. Since Saudi Arabia has opened up its airspace for Israeli commercial flights, it has presumably given Israel the green light for military aircraft as well. This is crucial if Israel is planning to attack Iran’s nuclear infrastructure.

On October 7, with the Iran-directed massacre by its proxy Hamas of 1,400 Israelis (the number continues to rise) and the abduction of some 250 men, women and children, the world has forever changed. Civilization has been forever stained and degraded.

Israel was busy making peace and Hamas was plotting destruction. Millions of dollars that went to Gaza

for humanitarian purposes ended up being used for missiles, guns and cement for terror tunnels. Israel disengaged from Gaza in 2005 in order for the Arabs of Gaza to advance their lot in life. Millions of dollars poured in. Beautiful farms were handed over to them. Former synagogues were turned into horse stables. Farms were turned into launching pads for missiles. Instead of going forward, the Gazans went backwards.

Clearly, Iran and Hamas do not want peace with Israel. They seek only Israel’s ruin and annihilation.

Hamas’s rape of women, beheading of babies, kidnapping and murder of Holocaust survivors and all their other crimes against humanity demonstrate their utter and absolute evil. Civilization cannot and should not tolerate evil.

Ultimately, Iran will have to be dealt with. First, Hamas must be brought to justice. This will happen soon. Then Israel can continue the business of peace with its Arab neighbors.

Joseph Frager,
Jewish News Syndicate

Cave in Judean Desert Yields Cache of Roman Weapons



A CACHE OF FOUR 1,900-YEAR-OLD excellently preserved Roman swords and a shafted weapon were discovered in a crevice in a cave in the Ein Gedi Nature Reserve. It appears that the weapons were hidden by Judean rebels after they were seized from the Roman army as booty. “Finding a single sword is rare,” said the researchers. “So four? It’s a dream! We rubbed our eyes to believe it!”

The weapons were discovered in a small hidden cave located in an area of isolated and inaccessible cliffs north of Ein Gedi. Fifty years ago, a stalactite with a fragmentary ink inscription in ancient Hebrew characteristic of the First Temple period was found there.

Recently, a number of researchers and an Israel Antiquities Authority [IAA] photographer visited the cave. Their aim was to photograph the Paleo-Hebrew inscription written on the stalactite with multispectral photography that might be able to decipher additional parts of the inscription not visible to the naked eye. While on the upper level of the cave, one of the researchers spotted an extremely well-preserved, Roman *pilum*—a shafted weapon—in a deep, narrow crevice. He also found pieces of worked wood in an adjacent niche that turned out to be parts of the swords’ scabbards.

The researchers reported the discovery to the IAA Archaeological Survey Team, who are conducting a

systematic scientific project in the Judean Desert caves. The team returned to the cave with two of the researchers and carried out a meticulous survey of all the crevices in the rock. They were astonished to find the four Roman swords in an almost inaccessible crevice on the upper level of the cave. The swords were exceptionally well preserved, and three were found with the iron blade inside the wooden scabbards. Leather strips and wooden and metal finds belonging to the weapons were also found in the crevice. The swords has well-fashioned handles made of wood or metal. The length of the blades of three swords are 60–65 centimeters [23.6–25.5 in.], their dimensions identifying them as Roman *spatha* swords. The fourth sword is shorter with a 45-centimeter-long [17.7 in.] blade, identifying it as a ring-pommel sword.

The swords were carefully removed from the crevice and transferred to the IAA climate-controlled laboratories for preservation and conservation. The initial examination of the assemblage confirmed that these were standard swords employed by the Roman soldiers stationed in Judea during the Roman period.

According to Amir Ganor, director of the Antiquities Looting Prevention Unit at the IAA and one of the directors of the Judean Desert Survey Project, “The Judean Desert doesn’t cease to surprise us. After six years of surveys and excavations...we still discover new treasures in the caves.



We unfortunately encountered tens of caves that have been plundered since 1947. I shudder to think how much historical knowledge would have been lost had the looters reached the amazing artifacts in this cave before the archaeologists. This time, we managed to get there before the looters, and to save these fascinating finds for the benefit of the public and researchers around the world.”

According to Rabbi Amichai Eliyahu, the Minister of Heritage, “We are once again presented with thrilling findings that offer a glimpse into the daily lives of our ancestors who resided in this area about 2,000 years ago. The discovery of these swords within a cave where a Hebrew inscription dating back to the time of the Temple was previously found, serves as further evidence of the enduring tradition of the people of Israel, emphasizing the significance of both the written word and the sword, symbolizing both our spiritual and physical heritage.”

Israel Antiquities Authority

Ancient Pool of Siloam Eight Steps Uncovered after 2,000 Years

STEPS TO THE ANCIENT POOL OF SILOAM, where the Gospel of John said Jesus (Yeshua) healed a man born blind, have been uncovered after 2,000 years within the City of David archaeological site in Jerusalem, *Fox News* reported.

Eight of the ancient steps have been unearthed so far, according to the report, and the goal is to uncover the entire pool, which is estimated to be the size of two Olympic-sized pools, international affairs director of the City of David Foundation Ze’ev Orenstein told *Fox News*.

The excavation is a joint project by the Israel Antiquities Authority, the Israel National Parks Authority and the City of David Foundation. The three organizations announced last December that they were beginning the project to uncover the ancient Pool of Siloam and keep it open to the public throughout the dig.

A small section of the pool has been open to the public for some years, but this excavation reveals a new section, with the goal of exposing it entirely and adding it to a route that the City of David Foundation is uncovering that extends from the ancient City of David to the Western Wall, including the Pilgrimage Road that ancient pilgrims traveled on their way to visit the Temple.

The Pool of Siloam has biblical significance for both Christians and Jews, as it is the pool mentioned in 2 Kings 20:20, part of King Hezekiah’s building project some 2,700 years ago to construct a tunnel and bring water into Jerusalem.

The pool was likely originally used to store the diverted water, and archaeologists believe it was also used by ancient pilgrims as a *mikveh* or ritual bath to cleanse themselves on their way to the Temple.

Nehemiah 3:15 also mentions it as one of the Jerusalem sites that was rebuilt following the return from Babylonian captivity.

The site is particularly dear to Christians, as it is mentioned in John 9 as the site where Jesus tells a blind man to go and wash his eyes and then receive his sight, ultimately healing him.

According to Orenstein, the excavation is “one of the greatest affirmations of that heritage and the millennia-old bond Jews and Christians have with Jerusalem.” Rev. Johnnie Moore, president of the Congress of Christian Leaders, told *Fox News* the Siloam excavation is evidence of biblical history.

“Theologically, it affirms Scripture,” the *Jerusalem Post* quoted Moore as saying. “Geographically, it affirms Scripture, and politically, it affirms Israel’s unquestionable and unrivaled link to Jerusalem.”

“Some discoveries are theoretical,” Moore added. “This one is undeniable. It is proof of the story of the Bible and its people, Israel.”

Kate Norman, Bridges for Peace





ISRAEL, YOU ARE NOT ALONE

SATURDAY MORNING, OCTOBER 7. It's Shabbat and the streets of Jerusalem are the kind of quiet you find only on Saturdays in the Promised Land. We are on our way out, heading to the Dead Sea to show a friend from Namibia the white desert of Judea. But then the air raid siren screams.

It's the first rocket attack since Lily's birth, which means that logistics in the Strauss house have changed somewhat. My husband grabs a protesting Lily and I tuck a dachshund under each arm, only to realize that there's another dachshund on the floor and no more Strauss arms. My friend sees the predicament and grabs hold of the little weiner. Within seconds, the seven of us are out the door and rushing to the bomb shelter.

The Cohens and Venturas from next door are already en route—both families clutching a confused dog. The siren caught the three Ventura teenagers still in bed and they peer at the early-morning chaos with bleary eyes. We cram into the tiny shelter and stand shoulder-to-shoulder in the late summer heat—giggling nervously—until we hear the dull thud of the Iron Dome shooting the missile meant for Jerusalem from the sky.

Ten minutes later, we're back in the kitchen. I brew a pot of coffee while assuring my friend that it was a once off. Jerusalem isn't usually in Hamas's crosshairs, I explain. The south of Israel on the Gaza border is a different kettle of fish entirely. And even when the rest of the country takes a beating, we only run for the shelter when Hamas is really angry, when the terrorists want to make a point.

Of course we're still going to the Dead Sea, I console her. But the words have scarcely left my mouth when the siren screams again. Strange, I think. That's a first.

This time, the Cohens and the Venturas are more subdued. I see Sarit sobbing quietly, but she doesn't want to talk in front of the children. There's no reception in the shelter, so it's only when we're back in the kitchen that the news breaks.

The reports come in via social media and WhatsApp groups for journalists. Thousands of missiles. A Hamas infiltration. It's bad, they say. Define bad, I wonder. Are we talking about a death toll of one or two? Or is it really, really bad with something like 20 Israelis killed? Impossible, I dismiss the notion.

But then comes the footage. A bomb shelter sprayed scarlet with the blood of a family—husband, wife and three children—who lie butchered where they hid from the missiles. A grandmother shot dead execution-style while her executioner broadcasts the murder live on her Facebook page. Terrorists in the streets. Children slaughtered on the sidewalk. Old people who went for a walk. Joggers. Cyclists. The faithful heading to synagogue. Everyone.

All the atrocities are filmed—complete with Hamas men proudly posing for the camera—and uploaded to social media. There's a gleeful arrogance about their grisly handiwork that says, "Look, world! Just look what we managed to do! And there's nothing you can do to stop us!"

At some point, I realize that I'm sitting on the kitchen floor, the world tilting on its axis. I hear Lily crying somewhere on the periphery, but her mom can't comfort her right now. And then the air raid siren screams again.

By noon, I'm with the Bridges for Peace team at the office. Many of the 24,000 plus needy Israelis we feed every month live close to the Gaza border in the communities Hamas targeted. And they are going to need our help now more than ever.

The office is quiet while we work. Besides, the reports keep pouring in. More than 100 dead, they say. I gasp audibly. There are hostages, they warn. And I shudder.

In the hours to come, the death toll soars as the army overwhelms terrorist forces and liberates communities. But the scale and magnitude of the attack only begins to dawn the next day. October 7 stands as one of the bloodiest human massacres in a single morning. The darkest day in the Jewish state's modern history; darker than the Yom Kippur War. More Jews slaughtered in 24 hours than on any day since the Holocaust. More than 1,300 dead; 3,300 injured and at least 210 hostages, including toddlers and children.

Hours later, our team is already on our way to the Gaza border, our delivery van packed with humanitarian aid, donated in love by Christians from around the world, destined for those who have been hiding in their bomb shelters for days.

Our first stop is Ofakim, a town with a little over 33,000 inhabitants nestled near the Gaza border. The traffic thins

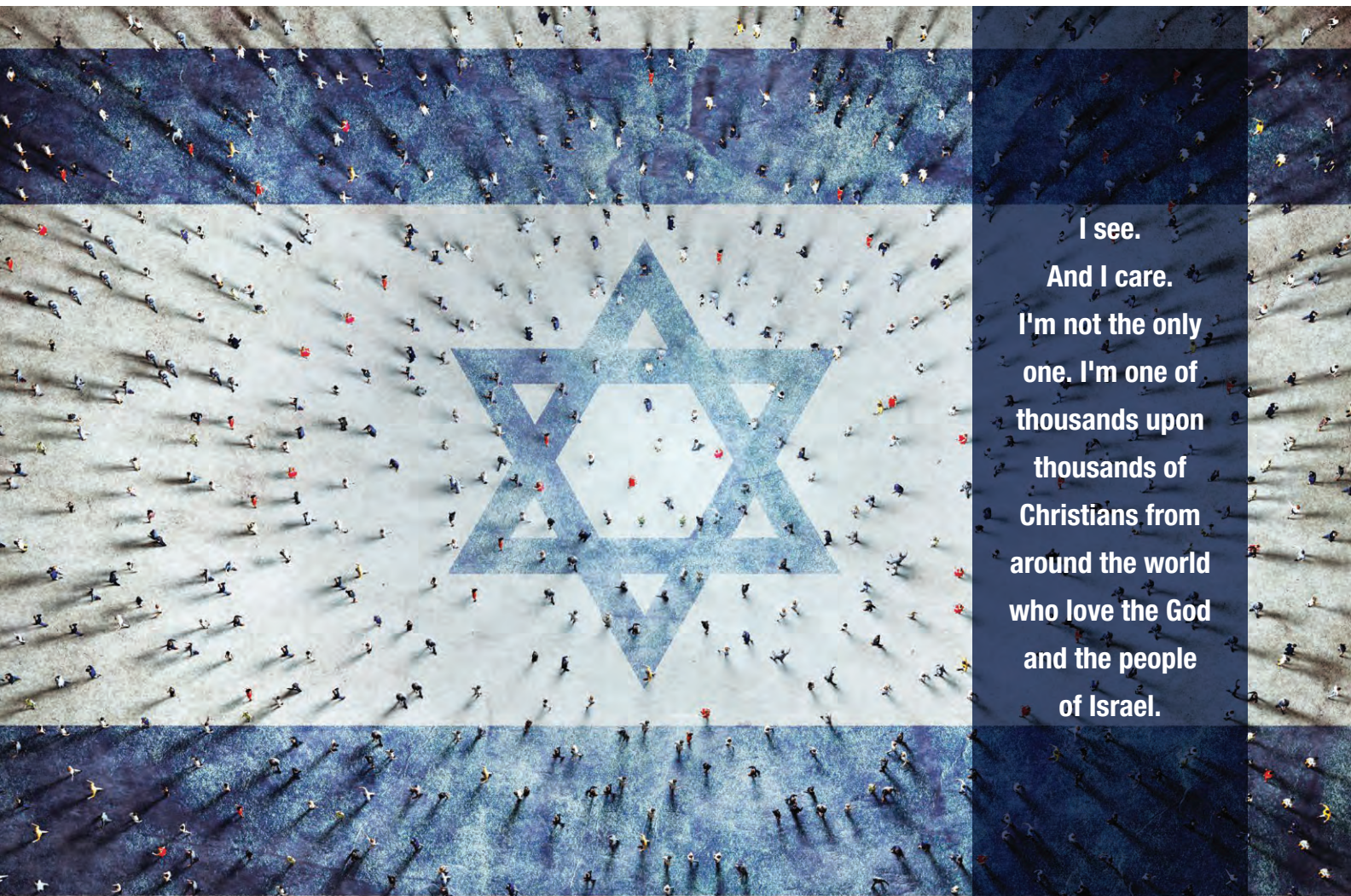
to a trickle as we drive south, and at one point, we feel like the lone civilian vehicle among fleets of military and police cars.

The landscape is wholesomely beautiful. Wheat and barley fields roll into the horizon like strips of golden carpet. Coves of cypresses and stone pines flank the road like an honor guard. But villages and communities where children played in the streets just last week now lie deserted as mute witnesses to the cruelty inflicted there.

Setting out, we were warned that we might not be allowed to enter Ofakim. The bodies of the young people that Hamas butchered at the nearby Nova Music Festival are reportedly being processed in Ofakim. But someone clearly spoke to someone, because the army waves us through the checkpoint without asking too many questions.

Forty-eight hours after Hamas terrorists systematically crisscrossed these streets to mow down everything that moved, Ofakim is still a ghost town. Every shop, school and office is shut tight. Blinds hang low in front of windows to obscure inhabitants within. No pedestrians, no chatting mommies with toddlers in the park and no vehicles on the road except us. Residents were told to stay inside. But even without the lockdown, I wonder if anyone would have had the heart to venture outside. Stunned sorrow has wrapped around the town like a wet, woolen blanket.

We park next to Gabi, our contact's, house and proceed to pile 125 bags crammed with non-perishable food on his porch table. We have to sit and drink something,



**I see.
And I care.
I'm not the only
one. I'm one of
thousands upon
thousands of
Christians from
around the world
who love the God
and the people
of Israel.**



he insists, and promptly marches to the kitchen without checking whether we obey his order. Inside, Gabi points to the kitchen table, a sturdy, marble affair. Their house doesn't have a bomb shelter, he explains. So when the rockets rain down, this is where they hide.

That's where he and his wife were on that black Saturday morning—side-by-side as they waited for the end of the bombing to start their day—when the gunshots rang out, he says. His wife dismissed the sound as children playing, but Gabi was in the army. He knows what gunshots sound like. And so he opened the door to see if he could help.

The scene was like something out of a nightmare, he shudders. Terrorists armed with machine guns marched down the street in organized formation. He stood frozen in shock as they strode to the park bench in front of his house and shot his two friends who sit there every morning like clockwork. That's when he turned and fled into the house.

"In a war, it's one army against another," explains Gabi. "But this was not that. Hamas did not target the army. They came looking for old people, women and children. The world must know. This is who our enemy is."

The streets of Ofakim were a warzone for almost 24 hours with the Israeli army on the hunt for Hamas terrorists and Hamas terrorists on the hunt for Israelis. "It was like Russian roulette," a survivor who wishes to remain anonymous told me. "You didn't know who would find you first: the army or Hamas."

We say goodbye to Gabi an hour later. He gestures to the 125 bags of food on his patio table. "That helps us in two ways. The people must eat. Obviously. That's the physical. But then there's the heart," he says, his fist pressed against the left side of his chest.

Gabi stops, clears her throat, and then tries again. But as his voice breaks, the tears run down the deep grooves that the Israeli sun and time have carved into his face. "This shows us we are not alone."

Twenty minutes later, we are on the outskirts of Sderot. This town is less than 1 kilometer (0.6 mi.) from the Gaza border and was one of Hamas's first targets. While we were in Ofakim, Sderot came under yet another missile attack. Smoke and flames welcome us to the Bomb Shelter Capital of the World.

A military convoy stands idling next to the main road just beyond the turnoff to Sderot, where Hamas terrorists awaited unsuspecting motorists and slaughtered them one by one. On the spur of the moment, we pull over alongside the convoy, jump out and walk from vehicle to vehicle. "We are Christian volunteers from America, South Africa, Canada and Japan. We stand with you! We are praying for you! Thousands of Christians around the world are with you. You are not alone!"

"South Africa!" calls one of the soldiers in the front vehicle. "My aunt lives in Cape Town." And so it goes. Each of the men in khaki has family, friends or at least an acquaintance in Washington, Pretoria, Ottawa or Tokyo.

Suddenly, a missile whistles over our heads from Gaza en route to Sderot. The dull thud of the Iron Dome comes a split second before the missile disintegrates in a brilliant ball of fire. "Did you see that?" I shout involuntarily, at which the entire convoy bursts out laughing. "Old news," chuckles one, his teeth flashing white against black stubble. "You're brave," he tries to console. But I'm not. My friend who had to stand on tiptoes to kiss her husband goodbye over her almost nine-months-pregnant belly when he was drafted to war is brave. My friend who was part of the unit that uncovered the gruesome find of 40 children's corpses is brave.

The scene that awaits us in the Bomb Shelter Capital of the World is surreal. It's as if the city's 30,000 inhabitants disappeared overnight to make way for an army base. Military vehicles zoom past eerily quiet apartment blocks. Soldiers patrol the streets, looking for Hamas terrorists still lying low somewhere. Every minute or two a dull thud of counterattacks on the Gaza strip resounds in the distance.

**ISRAEL,
you will never
BE ALONE
on our watch.
NEVER AGAIN.**



Smoke clings to the horizon in gray columns. Just like in Ofakim, everything is closed. International media in bulletproof vests huddle around bomb shelters. Synagogues, parks with swings and slides and modern supermarkets serve as witnesses that there was once life here, that believers prayed, children played and families shopped. But it's hard to imagine.

Sderot's community center currently serves as the central point from which humanitarian aid is distributed. Hundreds of liters of water are piled up next to baby diapers and formula. Biscuits, cans of food and protein bars are portioned, packaged and then distributed door-to-door.

While our team empties the delivery van, I take a seat next to a group of soldiers. It's dinner time and most are more interested in pita and *hummus* than conversation. Yet one of them leans shyly in my direction.

Ofer (Hebrew for deer) is shockingly young. Teenage acne still cling stubbornly to his cheeks, but is starting to give way to the downy beard of a young man. Was I also still so much child at 18, I wonder.

Between his broken English and my broken Hebrew, the story comes out piecemeal. Ofer's best friend died in the attack on Saturday. His aunt too. He shakes his head.

"Did you see what they did?" he asks, his voice hoarse.

For a moment, I mull the strangeness of the question. Of course I saw. The whole world did. That's why we're there, after all.

"And what did you think about it?" he pushes. An even stranger question, I ponder. I think what every other right-minded person thinks about murder, rape and torture. What else would I think about it? And then the real question in the soldier boy's heart hits me.

A rabbi friend of ours often says that there are no young Jews. "All of us carry 2,000 years of death, genocide, persecution and sorrow in our DNA," he explains. Our rabbi friend is right. From the church fathers and

the Crusades through the Spanish Inquisition, pogroms in Europe and Russia to the Holocaust, Jewish history is marked with suffering, pain and loss. Moreover, the Jews often stood alone in the ordeal, without comrade or champion. For generations, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had to learn the hard way that the world was blind, dumb and mute when it came to their anguish—until they came to the conclusion that no one sees and no one cares; until they accepted that they would always be on their own.

And that's what Ofer wanted to know. "Is it different this time? Do you see now? And if you see, do you care?"

I'm writing this article on day 10 of Operation Swords of Iron. Currently, there hundreds of thousands of soldiers—a civilian army who were bus drivers, lawyers and programmers last week—on the Gaza border, waiting for the order to start the ground offensive. I know how Hamas wages war. After October 7, everyone knows. But the world is prone to forget. And that's why I write. For Ofer, for Gabi, for the soldier with the black stubble who thinks I'm brave. For the children that the Hamas terrorists took back to Gaza and now only smile in photographs. I see. And I care. I'm not the only one. In fact, I'm one of thousands upon thousands of Christians from around the world who you might never meet in person. That matters little though. What matters is this. **Israel, you are not alone. You will never be alone on our watch. Never again.**



Ilse Strauss,
News Bureau Chief



Jewish-Christian Relations in Israel: Reason for Concern?

CHRISTIANS AROUND THE WORLD have been alarmed at news of recent anti-Christian actions in Israel. A number of incidents are at the heart of the concerns. In September last year, Jordanian King Abdullah II bin Al-Hussein stood in the United Nations General Assembly and said that Christianity is under attack in Jerusalem. In March, Knesset (Parliament) Member (MK) Moshe Gafni of United Torah Judaism (an ultra-Orthodox party) presented a bill that would make proselytization in Israel illegal and punishable by jail time. The bill never advanced beyond the first reading (three readings are required before it becomes law). In May, a group of extremist religious Jews led by Jerusalem Deputy Mayor Arie King assaulted a group of Christians participating in the Isaiah 62 Fast as they were having a prayer meeting during the Christian holiday of Pentecost near the Western Wall. In June, Christians attending a concert in the heart of Jerusalem were subjected to religious Jews rioting against the event. In August, the International Christian Embassy in Jerusalem (ICEJ) was quoted in the news as saying they

were denied the visas necessary for the continuation of their pro-Israel work. It is of note that the Ministry of Interior that grants these visas is under the leadership of Shas, an ultra-Orthodox religious party. Then, in October, Christians reported ultra-Orthodox Jews spitting at them, and another conference was marred by demonstrations.

A review of all of these incidents highlights an important truth: the actions against Christians are coming from a portion of society, not the entire Israeli society.

What Is the Truth?

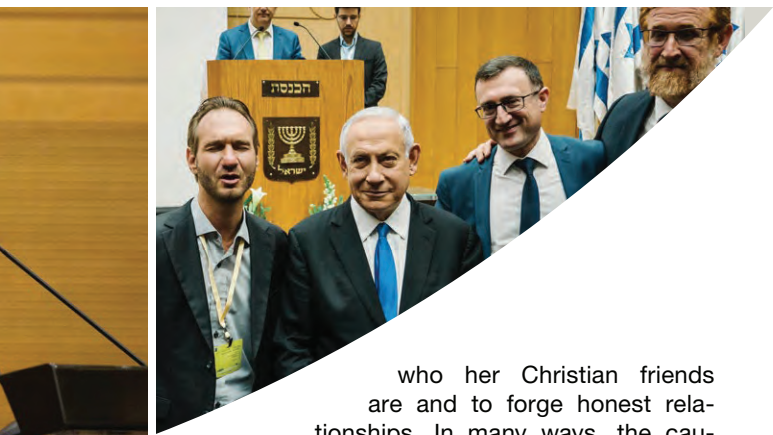
For 1,700 years, Christianity and Judaism have been at odds. Many historic actions against the Jewish people have had tacit or implicit support from the organized Church, both Catholic and Protestant. Shockingly, many Jewish people think the Nazis were Christians and view the murder of six million Jews as a Christian action. Indeed, the Nazis were often members of the Church and were not excommunicated. They wore crosses, celebrated Christian holidays and called themselves Christians. This historic pain lingers in the Jewish soul. Organizations like Bridges for Peace, Christian Friends of Israel, Christians for Israel, the ICEJ and others are working to heal these ancient wounds. We did not personally cause the wounds, but we can be part of the healing.

In 2004, the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus was formed with support from Bridges for Peace and other Christian organizations. Its purpose is to help Israel understand



“
A review of all of these incidents
highlights an important truth:
the actions against Christians are
coming from a portion of society,
not the entire Israeli society.

”



who her Christian friends are and to forge honest relationships. In many ways, the caucus has been more successful than Israel expected. MKs from across the political spec-

trum are members and have forged true friendships with many Christian leaders. Government leaders often meet with Christian groups visiting Israel. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu often addresses Christian gatherings, like the Annual Christian Media Summit and the Israel Allies Foundation’s Chairmen’s Conference that gathers Christian politicians from around the world to Israel. There is a genuine effort to reach out to the Christian world in friendship.

In response to the event during Pentecost, the Israeli government spoke out against the actions of the Jewish protestors, and did so again in response to the riot at the Christian concert. The proposed anti-Proselytization law was squashed. The visa issue is being addressed as well. It is clear that there is no official Israeli anti-Christian program.

Orthodox Jews Discuss the Issues

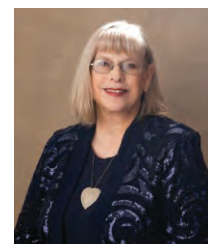
It is important to realize that not all Orthodox Jews are alike. Some are anti-Christian, while others are reaching out to Christians in friendship. Some are fearful, some are angry, some are wary and some are hopeful for a better relationship. After the Pentecost event, two Orthodox Jews did a series of videos to discuss the issues. David Nekrutman, executive director and co-founder of the Isaiah Projects, has devoted his life to building relationships with Christians, while Adam Eliyahu Berkowitz is a senior reporter for *Israel365 News*. These two discussed their impressions and feelings in front of a global virtual audience. This would not have happened 30 years ago. While they weren’t in total agreement with each

other, their conversation reflected their honest appreciation for Christian friends, their fears and also the things they find distasteful. Both condemned the actions of their co-religionists against the Christian prayer meeting, with Nekrutman calling it a “de-sanctification of God’s name in the world.” He described their actions as intimidation and shared his opinion that the incident reinforced the idea some Christians hold that Jews hate them. He also defended Christians and our mandate to be a witness, saying, “I want a Christian to be a Jesus-centered Christian.”

In my conversations with other Orthodox Jews, there is a general feeling of awe about the fact that Christians and Jews are building relationships. More than one has expressed to me that this is a step toward the final redemption.

Now What?

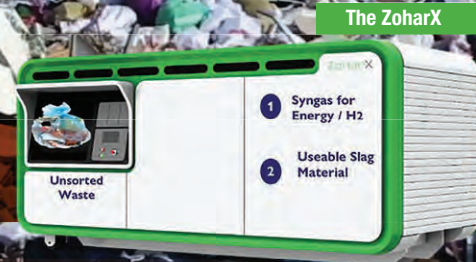
Today, Christians—especially Evangelicals—are some of the best friends Israel and the Jewish people have. More and more Jewish people are coming to realize this as Christians treat them with respect, help with their practical needs, pay for Jewish people to come home from war-torn Ukraine and other former Soviet nations, feed them and speak out on Israel’s behalf in the world. While it is disturbing to see negative incidents, it is important to look at the individual actions in the context of the history of Jewish-Christian relations. From where I sit, we are progressing. The relationship between the Christian and Jewish world is better now than at any other time in our checkered history.



Rebecca J. Brimmer,
International President

Environment

Israeli Start-up Converts Trash into Energy



ISRAELI START-UP ZOHAR CLEANTECH is seeking to tackle one of modern society’s biggest challenges by finding an environmentally friendly—and even beneficial—solution for municipal solid waste.

By 2025, the global expense for waste treatment will reach an estimated US \$375 billion per year, according to the Zohar Cleantech website, and some 70% of those expenses will stem from urban areas.

The Israeli start-up offers a solution in the form of the ZoharX, which the website describes as an “all in one box” that treats unsorted waste on-site, without the need to expand or build new waste disposal sites.

The ZoharX uses thermal gasification technology to consume the waste. By heating municipal solid waste to 1,000°C (1,832°F) with a controlled amount of oxygen, it breaks down to produce carbon monoxide, hydrogen and carbon monoxide. It also produces a byproduct called slag, an environmentally friendly, reusable material.

This technology eliminates all the waste that would normally be transported to a landfill, Zohar Cleantech asserts.

It can also convert household waste into energy, all on site. The result? A reduction in the volume of urban waste.

This innovative system is just one of the many ways in which Israel, nicknamed the Start-up Nation, is blessing the world in line with God’s promise to Abraham in Genesis 23:3, “*In you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.*”

Providing a simple and effective solution to a growing problem like urban municipal waste is indeed a blessing for future generations and nations the world over.

According to Zohar Cleantech, the average person produces an estimated 1.5 to 2 kilograms (3.3 to 4.4 lbs.) of waste per day. With more than 8.1 billion people in the world, that adds up to a staggering amount of garbage. Not only does the ZoharX solve the ever-growing problem of how to dispose of the world’s increasing waste, but it also turns that waste into energy.

With its widespread, simple use, ZoharX is one of the many fruits of God’s blessing over Abraham’s seed thousands of years ago.

Kate Norman, *Bridges for Peace*



Professor Yaakov Nahmias
Hebrew University of Jerusalem

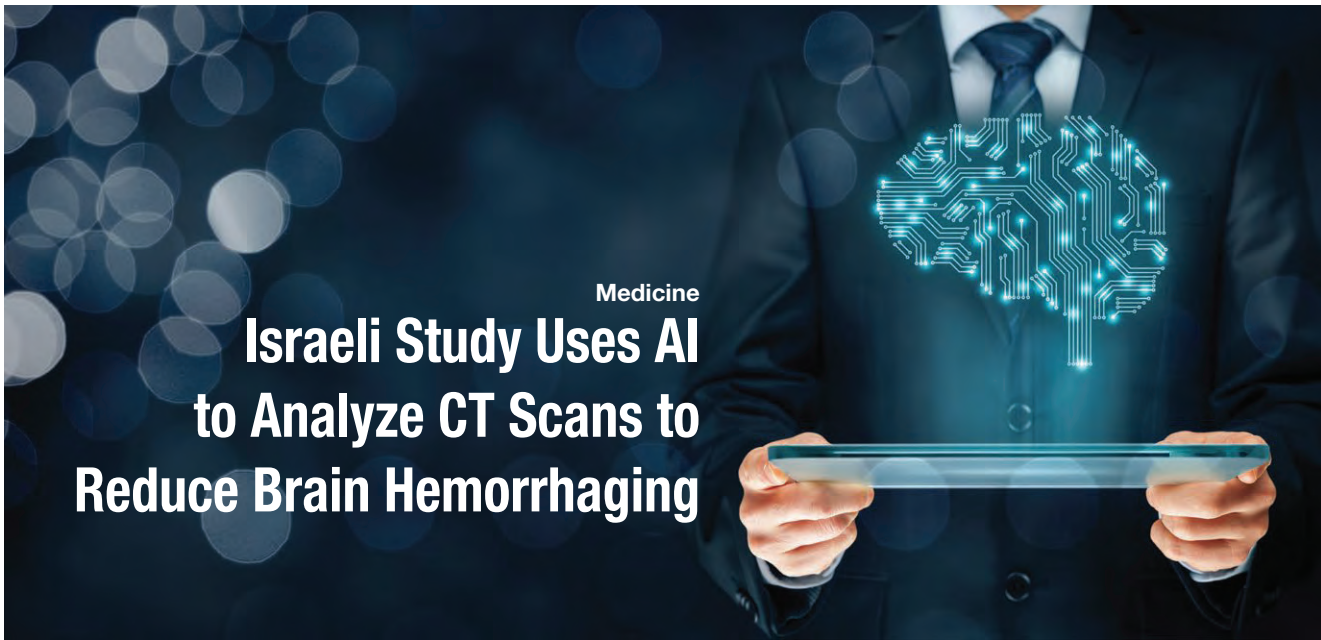
Technology

A Tiny Heart Model with Huge Implications



IN A REMARKABLE BREAKTHROUGH, a collaborative team of researchers led by Professor Yaakov Nahmias from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Technion–Israel Institute of Technology and Tissue Dynamics Ltd., has unveiled a miniature human heart model that could potentially transform drug testing and cardiovascular research. This study introduces a self-paced multi-chambered human heart model—no larger than a grain of rice—which promises to revolutionize the way we study the heart and its functions.

Cardiovascular diseases remain the leading cause of global mortality, underscoring the critical importance of this



Medicine

Israeli Study Uses AI to Analyze CT Scans to Reduce Brain Hemorrhaging

UTILIZING ARTIFICIAL intelligence (AI) to analyze CT head scans in emergency rooms can help doctors detect brain bleeding earlier and thus enable them to start treatment quickly, reducing the mortality rate by nearly 32%, according to an Israeli study published in the *International Journal of Emergency Medicine*.

The study was conducted by researchers from Sheba Medical Center as well as other researchers from Tel Aviv University and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem on 587 patients who were admitted to the emergency room with a confirmed diagnosis of intracerebral hemorrhages (ICH).

ICHs are deadly, as they are the cause of 15 to 30% of strokes, the second-largest culprit for causing this condition, *Israel21c* reported.

The researchers used algorithms from Aidoc, a medical-technology start-up in Israel that utilizes AI in medical triage and notification systems to aid in earlier discovery and treatment.

Aidoc was founded at Sheba Medical Center and is used in more than 1,000 medical centers across the globe, *Israel21c* reported.

By utilizing the program to analyze CT scans, doctors were able to detect ICH earlier in patients and begin administering life-saving treatment quicker, according to the study.

For ICH patients, time is of the essence. Earlier detection and treatment can reduce the risk of complications that lead to death or disability, the Israeli researchers noted. Utilizing AI for early detection and treatment reportedly also reduced the hospital stay in such patients.

“Intracerebral hemorrhages are one of the most critical medical conditions in emergency care, with early detection vital for preventing loss of life and further morbidities,” Dr. David Orion, director of Sheba Medical Center’s Acute Stroke and Neuro-Endovascular Department, told *Israel21c*.

“This study shows the tremendous impact of AI to drive improved patient outcomes, helping to save lives and improve overall quality of life,” said Orion, who conducted the study.

Israeli technology and ingenuity truly is making a difference around the world, especially in emergency care and treatment, where small things and a short amount of time can tip the scale between life and death.

Kate Norman, *Bridges for Peace*

pioneering work. Professor Nahmias and his team embarked on an intricate endeavor to create an accurate replica of the human heart using human induced pluripotent stem cells (hiPSCs). The resulting model comprises multiple chambers, pacemaker clusters, epicardial membrane and endocardial lining—all meticulously designed to mimic the structure and functions of the human heart.

One of the most significant features of this model is its ability to provide real-time measurements of essential parameters such as oxygen consumption, extracellular field potential and cardiac contraction. This capability enabled the scientists to gain unprecedented insights into heart function and diseases, making it a game-changer in the field of cardiovascular research.

The model represents a remarkable feat in cardiac research. Notably, it unveiled a new form of cardiac arrhythmia,

distinct from those observed in traditional animal models, thereby offering new avenues for studying human physiology.

The implications of this discovery extend to the pharmaceutical industry, as it allows researchers to gain invaluable insights into the precise effects of pharmaceutical compounds on the human heart.

Partnering with Tissue Dynamics Ltd., the scientists developed a robotic system that can screen 20,000 tiny human hearts in parallel for drug discovery applications. The potential applications of this micro-physiological system are vast, promising to enhance our understanding of heart physiology and accelerate the discovery of safer and more effective pharmaceutical interventions, leading to a healthier future for all.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem



Unpacking the “Palestinian” Jesus

WHETHER IT MEANS STOCKINGS HUNG BY THE CHIMNEY

with care in the northern hemisphere or a week at the beach in the south, Christmas is a holiday beloved by billions around the world. For many Christians, it is a time with real sacred meaning, celebrating the birth of the Son of God, the Savior of mankind. For others, it is a time of goodwill, the hustle and bustle of shopping, giving gifts and gathering family together around festival meals.

Unfortunately, for others it's a time to weaponize the holiday and use it for political purposes. The Palestinian propaganda machine kicks into high gear every year as Christmas approaches, unable to pass up the opportunity to replace goodwill toward men with ill will toward Israel. From animated shorts to full-length videos, interviews with politicians and clerics, articles and tweets, even sermons at the local mosque, the airwaves and social media are awash with revelations of a new Jesus (Yeshua). He is no longer the Jewish baby born in a manger in Bethlehem of Judea who grew up to preach love for our fellow men, but a Palestinian Jesus—some even teach a Muslim Jesus—who grew up not to die on the cross to atone for the sins of men, but who died as a *shahid*, the first martyr to the Palestinian cause.

Palestine's Own?

In Christmas greetings to the Palestinian people, Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas has been quoted as saying that the holiday celebrates “the birth of one of our very own, Jesus the Christ.” Four decades ago, Abbas's predecessor and chairman of the Palestine Liberation Organization Yasser Arafat was fond of referring to Jesus as a fellow revolutionary and even decorated his office with a picture of an emaciated man crucified on a Star of David.

But the emergence of this new Jesus predates even that. It is believed that a dependence on historical revisionism and the creation of a Palestinian Jesus were reactions to the devastating effect that Israel's triumph in the Six Day War had on the entire Arab world. It was shortly after that victory that revelations of a new Jesus began to emerge from Muslim sources, planting seeds of hope for a demoralized people and laying the groundwork for a rewrite of history that would give the Palestinians a historic—though fictional—claim to the land of Israel.

Since that time, through a carefully orchestrated dis-information campaign, the concept of a Palestinian Jesus has become a widely accepted tenant of religious belief in the Arab world. Beginning with a new and revolutionary look at their history, Palestinians were encouraged by words such as these:



“Jesus is a Palestinian. The self-sacrificing Yasser Arafat is a Palestinian. Mahmoud Abbas, the messenger of peace on earth, is a Palestinian. How great is this nation of the holy Trinity!”

—An op-ed in the PA daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*

“Christmas blessings to the Christian communities... for this holiday. The holiday of the birth of the Palestinian prophet Jesus.”

—PA government spokesman Ibrahim Melhem

“Jesus is the virtuous patriotic Palestinian forefather. The Palestinians, Jesus’ descendants, rose from the ashes like the phoenix.”

—The PA daily, *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*

“Jesus was born in this land. He lived in this land. It is known that he was born in Bethlehem...He also lived in Nazareth, moved to Jerusalem. So he was a Palestinian par excellence.”

— Sheikh Muhammad Hussein,
Mufti of Jerusalem and the Palestinian Territories”

“Jesus was the first fedayee [militiaman] who carried his sword for Palestine.”

—Yasser Arafat

Bethlehem is the “birthplace of our Lord the Messiah, the city of the Palestinian Jesus!”

—Yasser Arafat

“Jesus is the greatest Palestinian in history since Yasser Arafat.”

—Senior PA leader Jibril Rajoub

Even Santa Clause has not escaped the Palestinian usurping of Christmas, with a Palestinian Father Christmas appearing in at least seven videos where he is harassed, chased and even murdered by brutal Israel Defense Forces soldiers and their vicious dogs.

Perhaps most disturbing of all, however, was a remark from a Muslim cleric being interviewed on Palestinian television. Referring to Matthew 27:45, he claimed that the Aramaic phrase, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” that is traditionally translated, “My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?” is in fact a mistranslation. What Jesus was actually saying on the cross, claimed the cleric, was, “Alluah Akbar, Alluah Akbar, Alluah Akbar.” According to the cleric, Jesus was prophesying the coming of Mohammed, the final prophet.

The End Game



Itamar Marcus, director of Palestinian Media Watch, claims that Palestinian leadership is suffering from what he calls “Jesus envy.” Because of that obsessive resentment, Marcus says, Palestinian leadership has falsified an entire Palestinian heritage that is a mirror image of Jewish antiquity. They have claimed a

5,000-year-old history that is not substantiated by the historical record or by archaeology. Many believe that the PA’s falsification of history is so absurd, it should just be ignored. But Marcus warns of the dangers of such a position.

First of all, this counterfeit history robs Jesus of His Jewishness, helping to remove any historical link between the Jewish people and their ancient homeland. Secondly, much of the language used by Palestinian leadership finds its genesis in age-old anti-Semitic rhetoric and the Jew hatred of Nazi Germany, attempting to ignite anti-Semitism in the hearts of hearers. Finally, by connecting modern Palestinians to the ancient Jesus, a level of validation is granted to a history that, without it, has no foundation in reality.

But if we don’t ignore it? What can we do to change the situation? Marcus is a strong believer in the power of prayer and invites Christians to pray for God’s intervention on Israel’s behalf. Bible believers also have a responsibility to educate themselves regarding these issues and commit to standing with Israel and speaking out against the anti-Jewish lies that are proliferating literally everywhere. We all have spheres of influence, Marcus says, some more profound than others. But if we all do our best to bring the truth to those spheres, we can make a difference. After all, if a lie told often enough becomes truth, then the truth told often enough will surely have the victory every time.



Cheryl Hauer,
International Vice President

THE RIGHT TO EXIST?

THE NATION OF ISRAEL IS OFTEN misunderstood and misrepresented in the global media—many times deliberately. For example, when speaking of Israel's efforts to bring an end to a deadly wave of terror attacks in Judea and Samaria, Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir made the comment, "The right to life precedes freedom of movement." The outrage in the press was palpable. Ben-Gvir's statement was interpreted—and communicated—as Israel punishing the Palestinians with increasing restrictions in the form of additional check-points in Judea and Samaria.

It became so intense that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a statement of explanation. "Israel allows maximum freedom of movement in Judea and Samaria for both Israelis and Palestinians," he said. "Unfortunately, Palestinian terrorists take advantage of this freedom of movement to murder Israeli women, children and families by ambushing them at certain points on different routes."

As we have witnessed a year of horrifying and deadly terror attacks perpetrated by Palestinians on the roads of Judea and Samaria, the underlying question becomes clear. That question really is an age-old one: "Do Jews have the right to exist?" And in this case, do Jews have the right to exist in the biblical heartland, the land where God promised to plant the Jewish people so they should no longer be uprooted (Amos 9:15)?

What's In a Name?

The name by which you refer to this specific region speaks volumes. Most of the world uses the term "West Bank", a term coined in 1950 by the Kingdom of Jordan to refer to the area west of the Jordan River. Jordan occupied this land when a cease-fire was declared after Israel's 1948 War of Independence and annexed it two years later. Use of the term West Bank deliberately removes any connection this land has to the Jewish people.

Much older and more accurate terms from a biblical perspective are Judea and Samaria. Judea is the Roman adaptation of the word Judah. Even earlier, the Assyrians provided the first known reference to a geographic location named "Judah" on a cuneiform dated 733 BC, over 2,700 years ago. The name Samaria is well documented in Scripture and was first used to refer to the capital and territory of Israel's northern kingdom under King Omri in the ninth century BC.



Route 60, which traces the ancient pathways of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, goes through the center of Judea and Samaria.

Rich in Jewish History

Israel regained its biblical heartland after the 1967 Six Day War. The area is rich in Jewish history, as many important events took place there. From the patriarch Abraham up to the time of the Babylonian exile, sites of biblical significance abound. Consider Shiloh, where the Tabernacle stood for 369 years; Machpelah, the burial place of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Sarah, Rebecca and Leah; and Alon Moreh (near Shechem), where God promised to give the land to Abraham's descendants (Gen. 12:6–7). I imagine you could choose just about any spot in Judea and Samaria and tie it to a biblical account.

However, there is an ongoing battle. The Palestinian Authority seeks to destroy archaeological sites and establish new “facts on the ground” by building on top of the ancient ruins. Just one example is the location of Joshua's Altar on Mount Ebal, the site where Joshua fulfilled Moses's instructions (Deut. 27:2, Josh. 8:30) after the Israelites had entered the Land. Two years ago, volunteers from “Preserving Eternity” were able to stop Palestinian plans to build a community on top of the altar but this autumn, work began again. Once again, Jewish volunteers were able to halt the destruction, but constant vigilance is required or significant biblical sites will be lost forever.



Joshua's Altar on Mt. Ebal

Deadly Roads

Beyond the attempts to rewrite history and erase evidence of Jewish presence, there are also attempts to remove the Jewish residents themselves. Too often, the roads and highway junctions in Judea and Samaria have become death traps for innocent civilians and Israel Defense Forces (IDF) soldiers.

The Meir Amit Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center reported 129 critical terror attacks in Judea and Samaria in the first nine months of 2023. The institute defines a critical terror attack as, “involving shooting, stabbing, a vehicular attack, the use of IEDs, or a combination of the above. Stones and Molotov cocktails thrown by Palestinians are not included.”

In an article for the *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, Yoni Ben Menachem wrote, “The Israeli security establishment is concerned about the spread of armed terrorist groups throughout Judea and Samaria equipped with large stockpiles of weapons and ammunition. There are about 20 armed terrorist groups carrying out attacks.”



The IDF on the main street in Huwara following a terror attack

The August 21 killing of Batsheva Nagari near Hebron brought the number of Jewish Israeli deaths in 2023 to 34. Although not all of these deaths have occurred in Judea and Samaria, some of the most violent and horrific have taken place there.

For instance, on April 7, Palestinian gunmen forced the car driven by Lucy Dee off the road. They opened fire, killing her two teenage daughters. Dee was critically injured and died several days later. She left behind her husband and three other children. Or the February 26 murder of 21-year-old Hallel and 19-year-old Yagel Yaniv as their vehicle was caught in a traffic jam in the Palestinian town of Huwara.

The roads and intersections of Judea and Samaria have indeed become deadly

They Will Dwell in Their Own Land

The world is quick to condemn the Jewish families who choose to settle and build their homes in Judea and Samaria, effectively denying them the right to exist in the land of their inheritance. Yet they are fulfilling the promise of God as they dwell in the land He promised Abraham and his descendants—and He has the final say in the matter. The end of the story culminates with a resounding “Yes!” to the original question about Jewish right to exist.

“Thus says the Lord God: ‘When I have gathered the house of Israel from the peoples among whom they are scattered, and am hallowed in them in the sight of the Gentiles, then they will dwell in their own land which I gave to My servant Jacob. And they will dwell safely there, build houses, and plant vineyards; yes, they will dwell securely, when I execute judgments on all those around them who despise them. Then they shall know that I am the LORD their God’” (Ezek. 28:25–26 emphasis added).



Janet Aslin,
BFP Staff Writer

DON'T STRAY TOO FAR FROM HOME:

Iran's Sinister Method of Attacking Israel

FOR THE PAST SEVERAL YEARS, Israel has been engaging in a shadow war with Iran. The clerics in Tehran seek to wipe the “Zionist enemy” off the map and extend their influence across the Middle East, while Jerusalem seeks to thwart Iran’s regional and nuclear ambitions. Without an outright showdown on the battlefield, the Jewish state and the Islamic Republic have been striking at each other in more covert ways over the past few years.

DRAWING THE BATTLE LINES

Iran attacks Israel through proxies. Tehran orders its terror puppets—for example, the Lebanon-based Hezbollah terrorist organization and the Gaza-based Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ) terrorist groups—to attack Israel from all sides and even to deploy lone-wolf terror attacks within Judea and Samaria, the biblical heartland.

Iran fed into the chaos of the Syrian Civil War, utilizing the war-torn land as an opportunity to entrench itself further across the Middle East. Syria became a training ground for Iranian fighters and a shipping route for advanced weapons bound for Hezbollah. The leadership in Jerusalem has vowed to prevent Iran from entrenching itself at Israel’s doorstep, and the Israeli military sporadically conducts air strikes in Syria, targeting terror sites and weapons shipments belonging to Iran and its proxies.

The Islamist regime also strikes at Israeli-owned cargo ships. In February, Tehran targeted an oil tanker owned by an Israeli billionaire in the Persian Gulf with suicide drones and in November, Iran used a suicide drone to attack another tanker owned by an Israeli shipping magnate off the coast of Oman.

Iran blamed Israel for several assassinations over the span of a few weeks in the summer of 2022 that eliminated the regime’s top military chiefs and nuclear scientists, hobbling Tehran’s nuclear development program.

Around the same time, then-Foreign Minister Yair Lapid advised Israelis traveling to Turkey, a popular vacation spot, to leave the country “as soon as possible,” warning that they faced a “real and immediate danger.”

The danger, Lapid warned, was Iran’s attempt at avenging the assassinations: by carrying out terror attacks or kidnappings of Israelis in foreign countries.





The aftermath of the Syrian Civil War



Iran targeted oil tankers.



Palestinian Islamic Jihad is backed by Iran.

KIDNAPPED IN IRAQ

In late 2022, Elizabeth Tsurkov, an Israeli researcher who also carries a Russian passport, used her second passport to enter Iraq and conduct research for her doctorate on Shiite movements in Iraq. The 36-year-old PhD candidate from Princeton University reportedly had traveled to Iraq some 10 times on her Russian passport, in addition to Jordan, Syria and Turkey.

It is illegal for Israelis to travel to enemy countries—which includes Iraq—on a foreign passport. The former head of Iraqi intelligence became aware of Tsurkov's travels and sent a warning to the US and Russia informing them that her activities were “endangering her,” *Channel 12* reported.

Fearing for her safety, Israeli officials then sent Tsurkov multiple warnings. Their warnings went unheeded, and things took a turn for the worse once her research contacts discovered that she was Israeli, Arab sources told Israel's *Channel 12* news.

Tsurkov went missing at the end of March and is believed to have been abducted by the Kataib Hezbollah, an Iraqi Shiite paramilitary group that is distinct from the Lebanon-based Hezbollah terrorist organization. Like Hezbollah, however, the Kataib Hezbollah also takes direct orders from Tehran.

In July, London-based Arabic newspaper *Asharq Al-Awsat* reported, citing Iraqi sources, that Tsurkov's kidnapping was intended to pressure Israel to release an Iranian it was holding in custody.

The *Times of Israel* postulated that the Iranian held in Israeli custody could be Yousef Shahbazi Abbasalilo. The Mossad, Israel's intelligence agency, announced in June that it had captured Abbasalilo in Iran and interrogated him, leading to a confession that he had been involved in a plot with the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) to kill Israeli businessmen in Cyprus.

DANGER OVERSEAS

Israel's National Security Council (NSC) issued a statement in March warning Israelis to think twice about traveling abroad—particularly to certain countries—amid a threat of terrorism against Israelis overseas.

The danger stems from Iran, “the main generator of global terrorism,” the NSC warned, particularly with proxy elements who had attempted attacks and kidnappings against Israelis in Georgia, Turkey, Cyprus and other

countries. “We estimate that Iran will continue to use terrorist acts as a tool to achieve its main goals and will continue to work to promote damage to Israeli and Jewish targets around the world,” the organization warned. Danger zones include the United Arab Emirates, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Greece, Turkey, Bahrain, Cyprus and Iraq.

The NSC repeated its warning in August, ahead of the Fall Feasts, highlighting again the dangers of Iran and its interest in harming Israelis and Jews around the world. The NSC also reiterated the ban for Israelis traveling to enemy countries—including Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Iran—with foreign passports. The organization even noted Tsurkov and her kidnapping as an example of the danger.

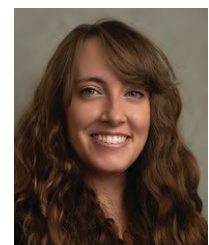
The alert is similar to Lapid's warning to Israelis to leave Turkey in the summer of 2022, following the string of alleged Israeli assassinations of Iranian military and nuclear chiefs. In fact, Lapid announced at the time that Israel and Turkey together had thwarted attempts by Iranian operatives to kidnap or kill Israeli citizens visiting the country, particularly in Istanbul. He even said some Israelis had traveled to Turkey and returned to Israel “without knowing their lives were saved.”

BEYOND THE BORDERS

Israel is under constant threat from Iran and its proxies. The Jewish state must constantly be on guard to defend its borders from attacks by Hezbollah in the north and Hamas and the PIJ in Gaza. The Iran-backed Palestinian terrorist groups also, following orders from Iran, attempt to sow chaos in Israel's heartland by plotting terror attacks. Israeli-owned ships passing through the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman must remain wary of Iranian drones.

And Israeli citizens traveling abroad must also take care. Even during their holidays, citizens of the Jewish state in certain parts of the world have to look over their shoulders, careful not to become the next target and bargaining chip for the clerics in Iran.

Kate Norman,
BFP Staff Writer





The Fight for *Hanukkah*

ACROSS ERETZ YISRAEL (the Land of Israel) and in Jewish communities around the globe, the season to kindle the *Hanukkah* (Festival of Lights) candles is here! Synagogues, community centers, households and businesses come aglow with the light of the special *menorah* (seven-branched candelabra) called a *hanukkiah*. Its eight branches (plus one to light the rest) recall the miracle of *Hanukkah*, when a single day's oil used to kindle the *menorah* in the rededicated Temple in Jerusalem lasted for eight days instead. The lights of *Hanukkah* speak of Jewish freedom, but behind the glory of liberty is a tale of a hard-won liberation. The ancient story reminds us that it is God who fights Israel's battles—both then and now—for it is on this land and among these people that He works out His redemption plan for all the nations of the earth.

Our Story Begins

The drama unfolds in 165 BC in the Judean foothills near the village of Emmaus, when the Jewish revolt against the Hellenistic (Seleucid-Greek) regime of Antiochus IV Epiphanes was in full swing. Antiochus had mercilessly oppressed the Jews and had turned his wrath on Jerusalem through great slaughter and pillage. He prohibited reading and studying the *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.), forbade circumcision and sacrificed swine flesh upon the sacred altar of the Temple.

As in the days of Moses, Joshua and David, Israel was desperate for God to raise up a man who would deliver them from their oppressor. Just like then, God would once again act as Israel's ultimate, Heavenly Deliverer, and as such, His chosen human deliverer had to know his core mission: reestablishing the worship of the God of Israel by the people of Israel in the Land of Israel.

Israel's Heavenly Deliverer did indeed raise up a human deliverer for His people. The leader of God's choosing was called the "Hammer."

God's Deliverer: Judah Maccabee

Judah Maccabee was the third son of a priest named Mattathias. The surname Maccabee comes from *maqqa-ba*, which is Aramaic for hammer. While the word was built into the family name, Judah decidedly earned the moniker through the exploits of his ragged Israelite band against vastly superior Seleucid forces, both entrenched in the Land and invading from the north.

Judah led his mace and sling-equipped freedom fighters against highly trained Seleucid regulars employing the latest in Greek-developed tactics and armament. Under General Gorgias, they boasted heavy and light infantry, cavalry, ballista, chariot, javelin, spear, bow, battering ram, sword and shield. The rag-tag band of Jewish troops was no match, unless God working through inspired leadership could somehow overcome the imbalance of forces.

As a deliverer, Judah was indeed inspired. Perhaps that inspiration came from his father in the faith, Abraham, who centuries earlier, had used his few advantages against the Mesopotamian kings and their mighty armies that had absconded with his nephew Lot, his family and all their possessions. Catching up with his opponents near Dan in the north, Abraham adopted guerilla tactics as he "*divided his forces against them by night*" (Gen. 14:15). Judah Maccabee would employ the same tactics against the military might of the Seleucids.

The Fight

The Hammer chose the narrow valleys in the *sh'felah* (lowland) region to stage his ambush. There he could cut off escape routes while harassing the vulnerable flanks of the invading forces. Units in column marching with those constrictors could not form the deadly phalanx that made them invincible. The Israelites could hit and run, thus demoralizing the soldiers and reducing their combat efficiency.

The champion of the Jews was also inspiring a zeal for God and the Land of Israel among his growing number of followers. The apocryphal book of 1 Maccabees records Judah's motivational address to his soldiers on the eve of battle. The words spoken by Israel's human deliverer that night echo with a deep dependence on the Heavenly Deliverer, the God of Israel:

"It is easy for many to be defeated by a few. In the sight of Heaven, there is no distinction between deliverance by many and deliverance by a few. Victory in war does not depend upon the size of the fighting force, but rather upon the strength that comes from Heaven. Our enemies have come against us in a display of insolence and lawlessness to destroy us and our wives and our children, and to plunder us. However, we are fighting in defense of our lives and our laws. He himself will crush them before our eyes; therefore, do not be afraid of them" (3:17-22).

Gorgias had to break out of his tactical quagmire, so he devised a night attack on the Maccabean encampment at Emmaus. With intelligence gained from Judean hill dwellers, Judah ordered campfires lit all around Emmaus to draw in Gorgias while he withdrew his main force, leaving only a rearguard in the camp. As Gorgias staged the assault, the Maccabean remnant retreated into the valley, thus drawing the Seleucids after them and into the trap that Judah had set. The follow-on forces of Gorgias then retreated in disorganized panic!

Mission Accomplished: Worship Restored

The war was by no means over, but a subsequent victory at Beit Zur secured the Jewish army's victory march into recaptured Jerusalem. Judah's first order of business was cleansing the Temple of the Lord, sanctifying it after defilement. The rekindling of the *menorah*, and the miracle of the eight days' supply of oil, birthed the *Hanukkah* traditions that lives on to this day.

Traditions certainly abound during this holiday. Jews gather to enjoy foods fried in oil, recalling the miracle of the oil in the menorah. There are eight days of gift giving in celebration of hard-fought freedom, and there is storytelling of the Maccabees' bravery and victory over their Seleucid oppressors.

During this time, you too can gather, perhaps in like celebration, but also in prayer for the security and well-being of Israel. As during ancient times, enemies today continue to seek to oppress, subjugate and destroy the Jewish people. But in the power of the One who fights Israel's battles and in the spirit of the Maccabees, the Israel Defense Forces and the other security arms of Israel stand guard to secure the land and people of God's choosing for His redemptive purpose in the earth.

We pray for their success and their protection. We pray for the peace of Jerusalem (Ps. 122:6). Chag Hanukkah sameach (happy Hanukkah)!



An engraved illustration of Antiochus IV Epiphanes



An illustration of the Maccabees



The battle at Beit Zur



The rekindling of the menorah



Bill Adams,
Senior National Representative
BFP United States



ISRAEL, WE ARE WITH YOU!

WE BID FAREWELL TO 2023 and step into 2024 in the shadow of the October 7 massacre. So instead of general wishes of love and joy, the Bridges for Peace volunteers want to use this opportunity to tell Israel in their own words that whatever comes, whatever happens—good or bad—we are with you.

"It is my prayer that 2024 will be a year of peace and that the Lord would redeem the past. May He protect and watch over you like the apple of His eye and guard you under the shadow of His almighty wings."

Stefan Bergen, Canada 🇨🇦

"My prayer is that in the aftermath of the brokenness and trauma Israel and her people experienced on October 7, 2023, they would feel love and support from millions of Christians around the world who stand with them and weep with them. I pray that the reality of this global Christian love would lead to healing and strength for Israel."

Peter Fast, Canada 🇨🇦

"I want to express my love and support for the people of Israel. These last few months have been difficult. I am praying for every family in Israel. I pray that they will have peace and comfort. The resilience and strength of the Israeli people have been incredible. I have seen communities band together to support one another in times of pain. I will continue to support Israel, from here in Jerusalem or back in Ireland."

Sarah Flanagan, Ireland 🇮🇪

"May the Holy One, blessed be He, destroy your enemies before your eyes, bringing true peace to the Land He has promised you. May the hearts of the entire nation be turned to Him in gratitude and in joy. May He rescue those who are in captivity and restore them in peace; may He remove from them the pain of both body and spirit and restore to them the joy of His salvation. We will stand with you as partners, brothers and friends as He heals your land, and may He lead us forth—Jews and Christians together—making the world a better, safer place for all mankind."

Cheryl Hauer, United States 

"I came to Israel in September, and just as I was finally getting used to life here, I heard my first alert warning of a missile on the morning of October 7. Then I saw the shocking news of a terrorist attack by Hamas. My heart broke when I saw the unbelievably tragic news. But I know that in the end, the God of Israel will prevail. Also, I am grateful to be able to volunteer in Israel at this time. I pray that the nation, land and people of Israel will be blessed even more abundantly in 2024. May His joy, grace and peace be with you now and evermore!"

Sayaka Iha, Japan 

"Israel, you are relevant as a nation until the end! God says He is for you (Ezek. 36:9) and that you are His special treasure (Deut. 14:2). He tells you not to fear because He will help you (Isa. 42:12b–13). Israel, you are not alone. We are here to pray for you, to comfort you and to support and help you. We stand with the God of Israel, therefore, wherever we stand, we stand with Israel."

Eddelene Marais, South Africa 

"As we move into 2024, our hearts, our thoughts and our prayers are with Israel and its people. We pray for the ongoing strength and resilience of the Jewish nation as it continues to be a beacon of hope and humanity during these troubled times."

April Roberts, Australia 

"Israel, you are a blessing and a light to the world and to me. Part of my heart is forever yours. I pray your light shines all the brighter in this time. I know HaShem will bless you and keep you. His face is always shining upon you."

Jo Sarah Stanford, Australia 

"In whatever Israel and the Jewish people face, we will stand shoulder to shoulder with you. We will not turn back. We will not step down. Our common values, based on a shared and sacred text, hold us together. Chazak, chazak, v'nitchazek. Be strong, be strong, and let us strengthen one another."

Terry Mason, United States 

"Four-and-a-half years ago we came to Israel to volunteer with Bridges for Peace. During that time, Israel and her people have become a part of our hearts. We came because we wanted to show practical support, however, we have also received so much from the people we have come to love and learned so much from the culture we have been a part of. We have heard so many people's stories and each one has shown that God is doing a miracle here which is still unfolding. We came believing that Israel has a significant part to play in God's ongoing story, but now we have heard it with our own ears and seen it with our own eyes. We continue to stand in support of Israel and pray that all God's promises and purposes will be fulfilled through and in the face of all adversity."

Gill Stary, United Kingdom 

"I pray that you will know continued protection through 2024 under the hand of the Almighty God, that He will cover you with His wings, strengthen the bars of your gates, and grant you peace in your borders. We bless you and stand with you from the UK."

Hugh Stary, United Kingdom 

"October 7 was not our tragedy. And we don't pretend to know your pain and horror. We can't fight this physical battle with you. But this we can offer: we are right next to you, cheering you on, advocating for you and praying for you. We will not quit, we will not leave you once the going gets tough and we won't be silent, even if it makes us unpopular. May the year ahead finally bring an end to those who come against you. May you be able to enjoy the land God gave you as a promise. May you know rest, prosperity and peace."

Henry Strauss, Namibia 

"God loves Israel. I'm praying for the healing of those who suffered in this war. May God bless you and your family with an abundance of love, joy, health, prosperity and shalom. May God strengthen you to overcome, preserve and prosper."

Shiho Yasuda, Japan 

TOURS

Australia

EXPERIENCE ISRAEL TOUR October 27–November 9, 2024

Hosted by: Matthew Chivers

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

Canada

TOUR & VOLUNTEER January 16–27, 2024

Hosted by: Charlie and Shirley Robinson

A Restoring Hope to Cities tour that includes three days of volunteering at Bridges for Peaces

EXPERIENCE ISRAEL February 19–March 1, 2024

Hosted by: Garri Sergienko

An original Bridges for Peace tour with a special rate for pastors

BFP FRIENDS AND FAMILY TOUR March 13–24, 2024

Hosted by: James Waffle

A tour of Israel designed for families

DISCOVERING ISRAEL THROUGH THE EYES OF WOMEN

October 26–November 6, 2024

Hosted by: Victoria James

A prayerful and inspiring tour of Israel for women

JOURNEY OF SERENITY November 10–22, 2024

Hosted by: Victoria James

A uniquely designed accessible, slow-paced tour of Israel

REV. HOWSON'S 60TH TOUR TO ISRAEL January 21–31, 2024

Hosted by: Rev. John Howson

Join me on my 60th trip to Israel to gain a new understanding of the Bible.

UK

ISRAEL TOURS Dates available throughout 2024

Hosted by: Michael and Sian Treharne

Throughout 2024, we will host eight-day tours for small groups in Israel. We will also host a special walking tour in Israel and a visit to Poland. Contact the office for more information.

UK

TOUR OF KRAKOW, INCLUDING THE AUSCHWITZ–BIRKENAU MEMORIAL AND MUSEUM

Date to be announced

Hosted by: Michael Treharne

Join us in Krakow, visiting the Old City, Schindler's Factory Museum, synagogues, Auschwitz–Birkenau and the Wieliczka Salt Mine.

TEN-DAY TOUR OF ISRAEL March 4–13, 2024

Hosted by: Sian Treharne

The tour includes the Mount of Olives, City of David, Garden Tomb, Yad Vashem: The World Holocaust Remembrance Center, Shiloh, Ein Gedi, the Dead Sea, Capernaum, Korazin, Tiberius, the Sea of Galilee, Megiddo, Gideon's Spring, Mount Carmel and many more.

United States

ISRAEL TOUR January 29–February 7, 2024

Hosted by: Pastor Ken and Dawn Goodban, Pastor Randy Alonso

In conjunction with the Heritage Study Programs, we will head an incredible mission to Israel. The mission will include an on-location advanced Bible study program and a fact-finding expedition that will focus on and offer unique insights into the region's current events. We heartily invite you to what will be a most informative study program and an exciting expedition.

LAND OF THE BIBLE STUDY TOUR 2025 March 16–29, 2025

Hosted by: Dr. Bill and Lizzie Adams

Travel the land of the Bible with your seasoned hosts Dr. Bill and Lizzie Adams and expert guide Allen Rabinowitz. Track the footsteps of Jesus, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the prophets and the apostles. This life-changing experience includes connecting with modern heroes of Israel, including a service opportunity in an Israeli community. Join us!

New Zealand

PILGRIMAGE TOUR OF ISRAEL May 5–17, 2024

Hosted by: Beth Mather

Join us to experience the biblical and historical places of Israel for 13 days! The tour includes visiting the Jordan River, Masada, the Dead Sea, Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jaffa, Tel Aviv and many more. This will also be your opportunity to visit and be a blessing at Bridges for Peace in Jerusalem.

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



VOLUNTEER WITH US

Don't just read about biblical prophecy, join our team of volunteers in Israel to live it out.

Grow in your relationship with God while making a difference in the lives of the people of Israel.

- **Administrative Assistant**
- **Bilingual Administrative Assistant** (Fluent in English and Russian)
- **Graphic Designer**
- **Home Repair Manager**
- **Home Repair Team**
- **Journalist**
- **Social Media Team**
- **Proofreader**

Hanukkah (Festival of Lights) is an eight-day festival celebrating the rededication of the Second Temple following the Maccabean Revolt. It is celebrated by lighting the *hanukkiah* or the nine-branched *menorah* every night, reciting special prayers and enjoying fried food. This feast falls during the cold, dark months of winter, so what's better than a hearty stew full of warm spices and fried ingredients for a perfect *Hanukkah* meal?

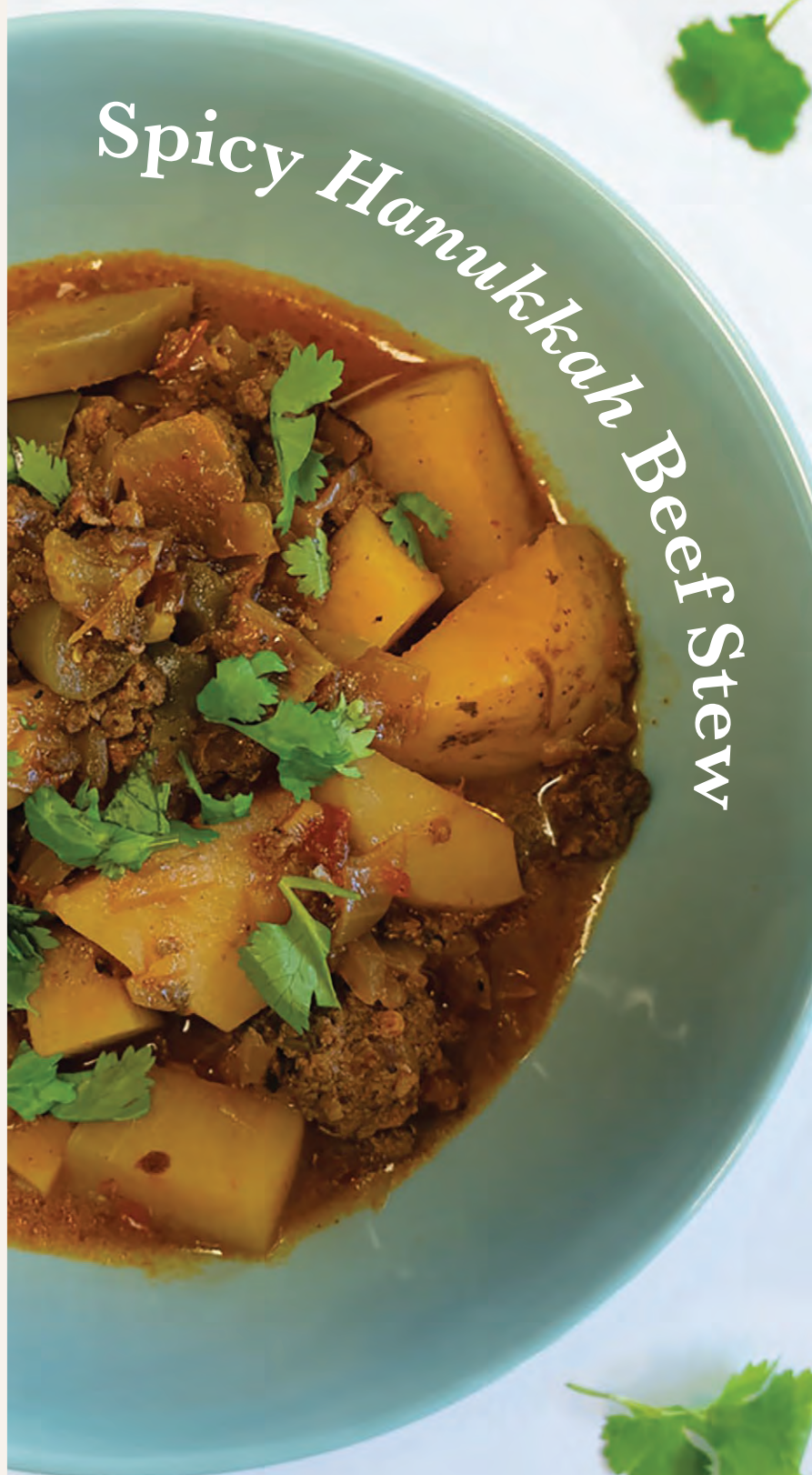
Ingredients

Olive oil for frying
1 kg. (2.2 lbs.) ground beef
2 Tbsp. fresh coriander, finely chopped
2 onions, diced
2 large potatoes, diced
2 large tomatoes, diced
3 cups water
1 Tbsp. fresh ginger, finely chopped
1 tsp. cumin powder
1 tsp. ground black pepper
1 tsp. smoked paprika
1 tsp. hot paprika
4 garlic cloves, minced
1 Tbsp. vinegar
2 Tbsp. tomato paste

Directions

1. In a small bowl, combine the ground beef with half of the fresh coriander and half of the black pepper.
2. Take teaspoons full of the meat mixture and roll it into small balls. Place aside on a tray or plate.
3. Heat the olive oil in a skillet or large frying pan and fry the meat balls until cooked. Remove from the pan and set aside.
4. Add the onions to the same pan and fry until golden brown.
5. Add the ginger, garlic, cumin, paprika and remaining black pepper to the pan and fry until aromatic.
6. Add the meat, potatoes, tomatoes and tomato paste to the pan, followed by the vinegar and water.
7. Bring to a boil, then turn down the heat and allow the stew to simmer for about 1.5 to 2 hours.
8. For best results, allow the stew to sit for a few hours or overnight to allow the flavors to develop.
9. Reheat before serving. Garnish with a sprinkle of fresh coriander.

Serves 8 people



Israel's Extraordinary Resilience

IN THE BUSTLING CORRIDORS OF OUR HOSPITAL,

I've borne witness to Israel's extraordinary resilience during one of our nation's most challenging times. Every day, I walk through the ICU where the monitors beep in rhythmic precision and patients^a civilians and soldiers^a fight for their lives.

Sheba Hospital is an emblem of medical excellence in the Middle East and the world. It has treated some of the most critical cases since the start of the current war. We have increased our capacity^a more beds, advanced equipment and technologies, and our dedicated and skilled staff^a all to ensure that we provide the best possible care.

However, what lingers most in my mind is not the clinical precision of our medical staff, nor our advanced technology, but the unwavering strength and palpable spirit of the families gathered together. In this darkest hour, they offer a shining beacon of hope, a testament to the unbreakable spirit that defines Israel and its people.

Our history is riddled with moments that tested the strength of our resolve, and yet time and again, we have risen above adversity. Over the past few months, our nation has been entrenched in deep political conflict. However, in times of crisis, a remarkable phenomenon occurs^a divisions dissolve and a profound unity takes hold. It is a testament to the unwavering spirit of the Jewish people that in the face of tragedy, no force can sever the bonds that bind us together.

In my attempt to strengthen patients and families grappling with the gravest of circumstances, I found myself strengthened in return. Families and loved ones of those viciously attacked exuded a strength that defies comprehension. In their eyes, I saw a deep well of confidence, an unyielding resilience and a powerful sense of togetherness. It is a strength that goes beyond the physical and delves into the very essence of the Israeli spirit.

What strikes me most in these trying times is the unity that pervades our society. Israelis of all backgrounds and

Lt. Col. (Res.) Yoel Hareven, director
of the International Division and Resource
Development at Sheba Medical Center.
He served in the IDF for 28 years.



walks of life are standing shoulder-to-shoulder. From parents and families of soldiers and civilians^a some born in Israel, some who immigrated from other countries^a the collective strength of our people is awe-inspiring. Together, we sit, we pray and we bolster the spirits of our nation, including our medical staff, giving back to the dedicated nurses and doctors who work tirelessly to save lives.

It is heartening to witness the spirit of volunteering that has permeated every corner of our hospital. Organizations, youth groups and individuals alike converge to offer support in a myriad of ways^a from providing food, clothing and electronics to families and staff to simply being there, a reassuring presence in a time of chaos. Volunteers stay with patients, allowing families precious moments of rest and bringing not just sustenance but also a sense of normalcy and humanity to a situation fraught with pain and uncertainty. It is a testament to the innate goodness that exists within the Israeli people.

The spirit of the people of Israel strengthens the medical staff, urging us to continue our vital work even in the face of the daunting challenges that lie ahead. We are ready^a we have trained for this moment.

In the coming days, as we work to expand our capabilities even further, we will draw inspiration from the unity, strength and acts of kindness that define us as a people. It is a resilience that refuses to be broken, a collective will that declares, unequivocally, that we will overcome, we will flourish again and, together, we will rise. Just as the human body has an astonishing capacity to heal, rebuild and regain its strength, so too does our nation possess the remarkable ability to mend its wounds and emerge even stronger.

Lt. Col. (Res.) Yoel Hareven, *Jewish News Syndicate*

"Seeing *olim* arrive in Israel during the most challenging days we've ever known fills our hearts and gives us strength to carry on."

Dozens Make Aliyah amid War

DESPITE THE BACKDROP OF WAR and increased tensions in the region, El Al flights from New York, Los Angeles and Miami landed at Ben Gurion International Airport bringing new immigrants to Israel.

The *olim* [new immigrants] arrived through the assistance of Nefesh B'Nefesh, in partnership with Israel's Ministry of Aliyah and Integration, the Jewish Agency for Israel, Keren Kayemeth Lelsrael and the Jewish National Fund USA.

Spanning in age from 19 to 79, the new arrivals hail from various US states. They plan to establish their new homes across Israel^a from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv, Haifa, Netanya and beyond.

Joshua Rosenthal, 36, from Baltimore, shared, "My aunt immigrated to Israel nearly 45 years ago in 1979. She thought I was crazy when I told her I was still sticking with my plan to make *aliyah* [immigration to Israel] now. But as far as I'm concerned, as long as I have a seat on the plane with my name on it, I'm there! It's very important that the people of Israel know that Jews all over the world still support Israel with everything we have^a and we're still coming. Hope is our secret weapon, and it's what will get our people through this...."

Israeli Minister of Aliyah and Integration Ofir Sofer told the new immigrants: "We will never give up on the vision of the return of the nation of Israel to their land. The new immigrants from the United States prove and emphasize to our enemies that the belief in the righteousness of the path that has accompanied the Jewish people for the last 2,000 years of exile burns even now. The same longing for the Land of Israel burns in the Jewish people, especially in the war for the existence of the Jewish people in the State of Israel...."

Tony Gelbart, co-founder and chairman of Nefesh B'Nefesh, said "it is incredibly moving to welcome the *olim*, who despite extremely tragic and insecure circumstances, are continuing to fulfill their Zionist dreams of moving to Israel. There is no doubt that the *olim* send an unmistakable message that the Jewish nation is united, strong and resilient, and we welcome them to their new homes...."

"Seeing *olim* arrive in Israel during the most challenging days we've ever known fills our hearts and gives us strength to carry on,..." said Chairman of the Jewish Agency Maj. Gen. (res.) Doron Almog. "These *olim* boost our resilience and will be part of rebuilding our wonderful country. I embrace each one of them...."

Nefesh B'Nefesh via 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 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.

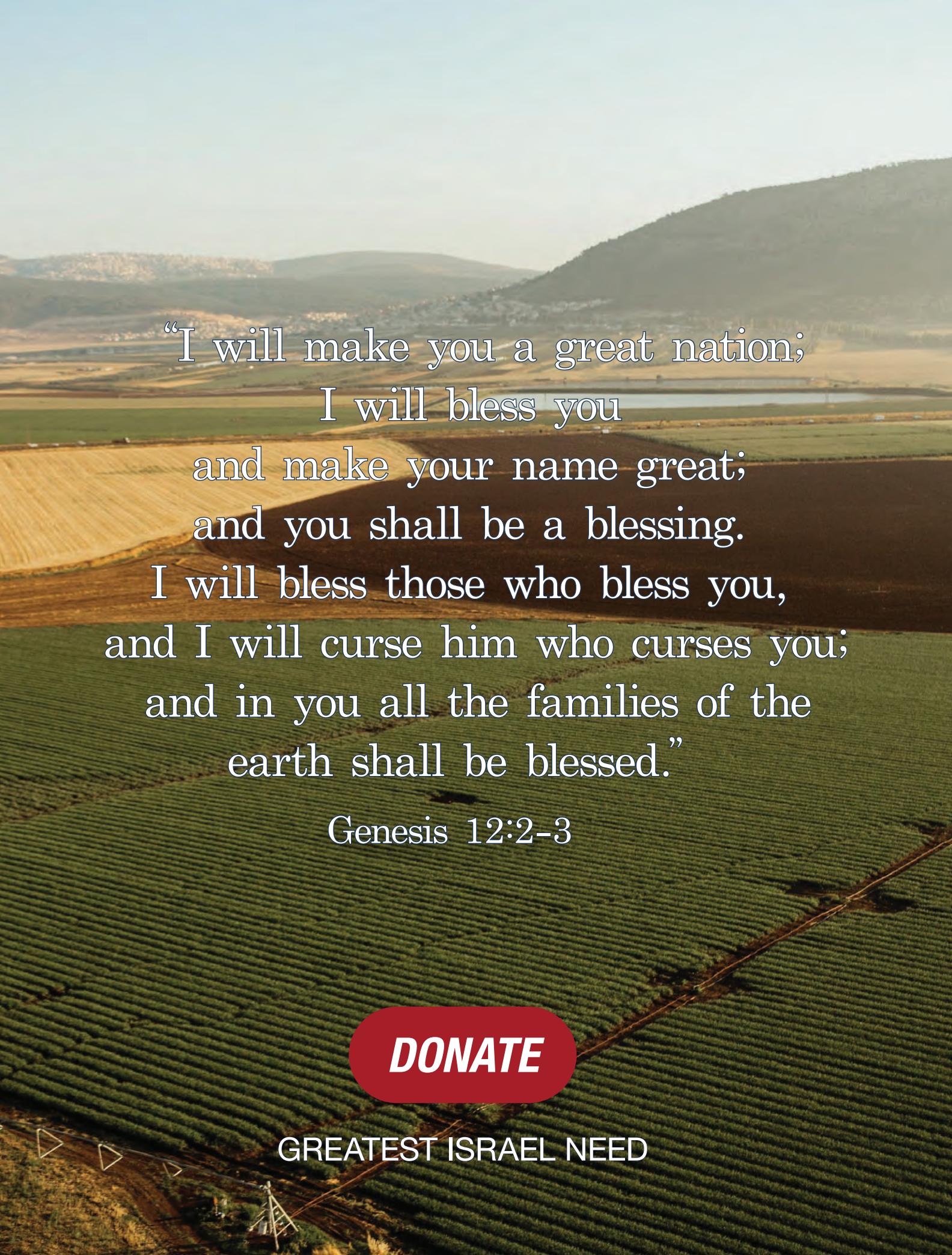
IMMIGRANT WELCOME GIFTS: Welcome new immigrants to Israel with a large gift package that includes a kitchen set of pans and utensils, blankets, school kits for children and a 1-volume Hebrew–Russian or 2-volume Hebrew–Spanish edition of the Hebrew Scriptures.

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.

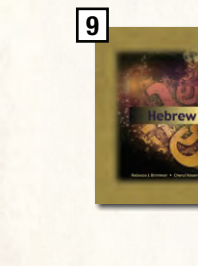
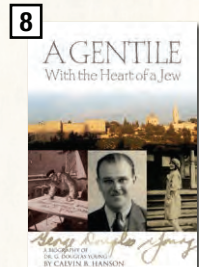
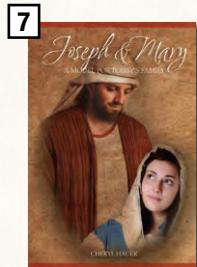
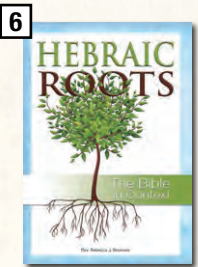
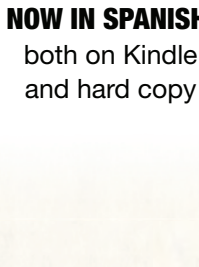
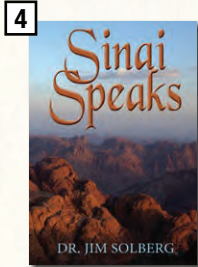
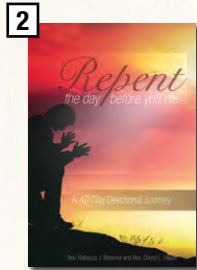


“I will make you a great nation;
I will bless you
and make your name great;
and you shall be a blessing.
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and in you all the families of the
earth shall be blessed.”

Genesis 12:2-3

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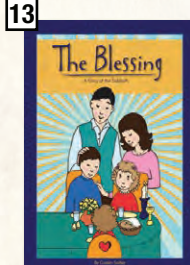
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