

# dispatch from Jerusalem

A Publication of Bridges for Peace

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## In Every Generation

God has kept His promise to deliver  
the Jewish people from their enemies  
—in every generation.



# 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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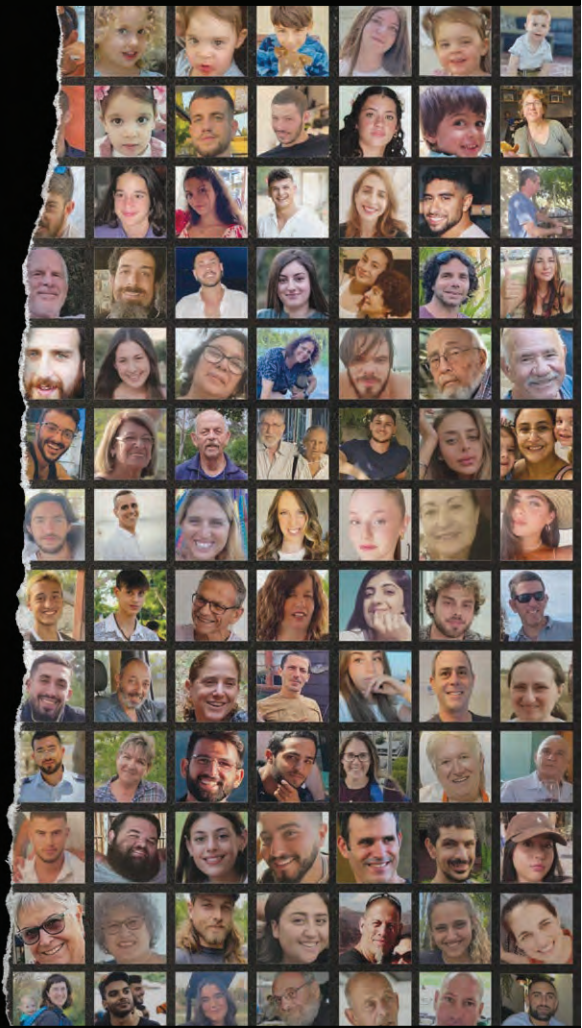
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BFP-USA  
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## "Let My people go!"

Exodus 5:1

To all those who are still held captive,  
we continue to wait for you to come home.

# #Bringthemhomenow

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# REPAIRING A DEVASTATED HOME



Our Israel Operations Director Daniel Kirchhevel with Rabbi Yehuda Glick



Some of the many cars completely destroyed in Kibbutz Be'eri

**A WONDERFUL FRIEND OF BRIDGES FOR PEACE**, Rabbi Yehuda Glick, and his wife Hadass lead an organization called *Amitsim* (Courageous). This amazing group works to support and bring restoration into homes that have suffered trauma due to the loss of a parent and a spouse. In partnership with Bridges for Peace, *Amitsim* ministers to children and surviving spouses with love, support and physical gifts, providing them with a space to heal.

The death of a parent forges two new identities: a widow/widower and orphans. Contrary to the Western mindset where an orphan is thought to be a child who has lost both parents, the biblical and Jewish perspectives see an orphan as a child who has lost at least one parent. The reason for this is that it takes two parents to form a complete home. The father and mother lean upon each other—like two supporting pillars—to bring stability, safety, provision, love, care, peace of mind and spiritual nourishment to their children and marriage. When one parent dies, the entire concept of the home is devastated and thus collapses. Security is compromised or vanishes altogether, which leaves the children and grieving spouse feeling vulnerable and exposed.

In the wake of the October 7, 2023 Hamas massacre on Israel's southern communities, hundreds of Israeli families experienced a level of devastation that nobody should live through. Over 1,200 people were murdered. Some were shot. Others, sometimes entire families, were burned alive. Many more were kidnapped. Within hours, horror had become reality.

On November 2, 2023, Bridges for Peace leaders drove to a Dead Sea hotel to visit the survivors of Kibbutz Be'eri, one of the epicenters of the attack. A staggering 10% of Be'eri's inhabitants were massacred—men, women, children and babies. For the roughly thousand survivors living in a hotel turned refugee center, community had been completely destroyed.

We met one survivor, a mother, who had hidden with her family in their home's bomb shelter as thousands of Hamas rockets rained down on Israel. Once the terrorists showed up in the community, the



Click here to make a difference  
in the lives of these broken Israelis.



terrified family started hearing the unmistakable sound of gunfire. The father quickly leapt into action. He took hold of the bomb shelter's door handle while Hamas terrorists tried to force open the door from the outside. For twenty minutes, the battle over the bomb shelter door continued as the desperate father fought to protect his family. Finally, the frustrated terrorists fired their automatic weapons at the door, mortally wounding the father. The mother grabbed her dying husband's handgun, and instinctively shot back through the door, which caused the terrorists to retreat.

The family was not out of danger though. Soon, smoke began to fill the shelter and it became obvious that the terrorists sought to burn them alive. In a desperate attempt to save her three children, the mother let go of the tourniquet that was keeping her husband's lifeblood from pouring out and opened a small window for them to take a few breaths. The mother and her children survived, but her husband bled to death. This courageous woman is now a widow and her children orphans.

On November 27, Bridges for Peace leaders visited the main dispatch center for Magen David Adom (MDA), Israel's emergency response service. We toured the center and heard about their incredible lifesaving aid. We learned about their ambulance fleet, medi-cycles and response times. We were also able to ask first responders questions and learn how they operate.

Then we discussed the October 7 attack. Hearing their painful and heroic accounts, we were able to understand the events through their eyes. We inspected an ambulance that bore countless terrorist bullet holes and heard the stories of emergency responders who were murdered. Finally, we listened to a recording between an MDA dispatcher and 9-year-old Michael from Kfar Aza, who hid in a closet with his 6-year-old sister after terrorists murdered his parents in front of him and kidnapped his 3-year-old sister, Avigail.

**Dispatcher:** *What about your parents? Please, when you talk to me, whisper, so that I can understand, but don't speak loudly.*

**Michael:** *Okay...Mommy...At first, my dad went outside. He left the shelter and then a soldier [terrorist] came in and killed my mom inside the house. Then he [my dad] came to us, and I told him that mommy was dead. Then we ran to the shelter... They killed dad...Now it's only the two of us.*

**Dispatcher:** *So, so right now, so I...sorry for asking this...just now your father and mother were shot?*

**Michael:** *Yes.*

Can you imagine the bravery of this young boy? And the trauma he lived through on that terrible morning? Miraculously, his younger sister, Avigail, was released in one of the hostage deals and reunited with her siblings. But Michael and his sisters are now orphans.

Bridges for Peace ministers in a number of very sensitive areas. We see people in their most vulnerable state of grief. We sit *shiva* (seven-day mourning period) with broken families and embrace them when they weep. We show them the love of God in their darkest hour and bring light into their lives by sharing the comforting and encouraging news that Christians around the world care and pray for them; that Christians stand with them and take action; that they are not alone. But we can't do that alone. We need your help. Will you please consider giving generously to our Widows and Orphans Fund to make a difference in the lives of these broken Israelis? Will you be a light in this dark hour? Let's unite to inject hope into these people's lives today!

With a heavy heart of gratitude,  
Rev. Peter Fast  
International CEO



Bridges for Peace comforting survivors from Kibbutz Be'eri



Hearing painful and heroic stories from Magen David Adom



# THE HEAD OF THE SNAKE

**IN THE AFTERMATH** of October 7, as Israel battled Hamas in the trenches of Gaza, the world went to war alongside the fighting forces, pitting Israel supporters against Palestinian sympathizers in the trenches of social media. On the ground and in public opinion, the battle lines seemed clearly drawn: Israel on the one side and the Palestinians on the other.

Yet as the hostilities rage past the eight-week mark, Professor Kobi Michael, senior researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies and editor in chief of *Strategic Assessment*, warns against missing the forest for the trees—and thus diminishing the scope and severity of the conflict.

The war that erupted on October 7, Michael explains, is not a confrontation between Israel and the Palestinians or even Israel and Hamas. Instead, it is a regional war with Israel at the center and Iran as the puppet master working behind the scenes, prompting its terror pawns to strike—all for a specific outcome.

## THE TIE THAT BINDS

The Jewish state is currently fighting a multi-front war featuring five active fronts in and around Israel, each with different levels of intensity, Michael says. The most visible and intensive is the Gaza Strip, home of Hamas. Then there's Judea and Samaria, or the so-called West Bank, where Hamas continues to make inroads and gain support. Further north, there's south Lebanon, where terror army Hezbollah lurks with its arsenal of up to 300,000 precision missiles. A stone's throw from there in southern Syria, a number of militias lie in wait, right next to neighboring Iraq, where a pack of other militias prepare to pounce. Finally, there's the Houthis in Yemen, launching sporadic ballistic missiles at the Jewish state and hijacking ships with supposed links to Israel.



Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis are all answerable to their terror overlord, Iran. Courtesy of Yaakov Kirschen



A singular thread links the five fronts together. These terror proxies form the “Axis of Resistance,” a military alliance birthed, groomed, mentored and funded by Iran over four decades to erase the Israeli and American presence from the Middle East.

The existence of the axis is no secret. These proxies have operated both overtly and covertly in the region and beyond for some 40 years. However, October 7 thrust the jihadist alliance into the international spotlight in a chilling new way. For the first time since Iran set out to recruit its regional terror puppets, the axis is mobilizing at the same time on multiple fronts to strike at a single target: Israel. And the future stability of the Middle East—and the Western world beyond—depends on how well Iran’s joint venture fares.

“In essence, this is the second chapter of Israel’s War of Independence,” Michael explains, “with Israel facing an existential threat, not because Hamas or Hezbollah are existential threats, but rather components in a much broader camp or axis of resistance, led by Iran and supported by Russia and China. The war isn’t local, confined to the Gaza Strip or even to Israel and the Palestinians. It is a regional war that has an immediate effect on the entire globe.”

According to Michael, every shot fired in and around the Promised Land echoes into every other area, sphere or industry across the globe, be it Africa, Ukraine or the South China Sea. “This is why the US immediately dispatched a substantial military presence to the region [following October 7] to contain the war and deter Iran from escalating the conflict. It was a clear signal to Israel’s enemies—in the region and beyond—that Washington is serious and committed to the security of its allies.”

## BUT TO WHAT END?

The *mullahs* in Iran have been outspoken about their ambition to annihilate Israel. However, the Jewish state is hardly the final frontier. In fact, Tehran’s aspiration of regional hegemony serves as a prequel to global supremacy, with the “Little Satan” and then the “Great Satan” standing as stepping stones to Iran’s ultimate goal.

Since the 1979 Islamic Revolution, one of the Iranian regime’s key priorities has been exporting the principles, beliefs and practices of the revolution abroad. In other words, Iran’s foreign policy calls for the imposition of Islamic *sharia* law in both Islamic and non-Islamic countries across the world by means of proselytizing, propaganda and if all else fails, following in the footsteps of the “victorious and triumphant” early Muslim armies who set “out from the mosque to go into battle” in line with the command from the Quran to “prepare against them whatever force you can muster,” Ruhollah Khomeini, the founder of the Islamic Republic of Iran wrote.

In the 40 years since the revolution, Iran has been hard at work answering Khomeini’s call. Today, Tehran boasts more than a dozen militias and terror groups across the



Hamas's Ismail Haniyeh meeting Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei

Middle East with outposts around the world. All these proxies are funded, trained and answerable to Iran’s Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, a paramilitary body born in 1979 to protect Iran’s fundamentalist regime. And all these proxies are ready and eager to set “out from the mosque to go into battle” to export the principles, beliefs and practices of Iran’s glorious revolution abroad, ultimately gathering all nations under the iron fist of Islam. And with several of these proxies, including Hamas, Hezbollah and the Houthis, perched within striking distance from the Promised Land, there’s no doubt that the *mullahs* have Israel in their crosshairs as the next—but certainly not the last—target.

## FIRST THE SATURDAY PEOPLE

“I strongly recommend that everybody listens carefully to what the leaders of Iran, Hamas, Hezbollah and the other members of the axis have said in the past and continue to say today,” Michael warns. “They admit that the destruction of the State of Israel is the first phase. The second phase will be Berlin, Paris and New York. And October 7 stands as proof that there is no difference between their words and their actions. October 7 stands as proof that we can take them seriously.”

News headlines and social media will continue to focus on the here and now, on the localized conflict in the Gaza Strip, aiming to present this fight as a separate, individual clash with no international ramifications. We are called to see the bigger context though. This is not a fight between Israel and the Palestinians or even Israel and Hamas. This is a fight between the forces of light and darkness; good and evil; freedom and slavery. Israel is not only fighting an existential threat. The Jewish state is in a battle on behalf of the free world.



Ilse Strauss,  
News Bureau Chief



# Archaeologists Rally to Help Identify Remains after October 7

**ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY** (IAA) archaeologists have enlisted to join the efforts to search for missing persons in the houses and cars that were incinerated in the October 7 massacre.

The archaeologists were called to the challenging task by Colonel Yossi Cohen of the Gaza Division of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and were directed by Major Rav Shlomo Hazut, the rabbi of the IDF's Gaza Division. These archaeologists have employed the techniques and the knowledge they have acquired in archaeological excavations of burnt and destroyed ancient sites, and have discovered many signs of human remains, in the hope that they will provide certain evidence for the families regarding the fate of their loved ones.

For two weeks, the archaeologists combed and sieved the ash from the burnt houses in which families from Kibbutz Be'eri, Kfar Aza and Nir Oz were murdered, as well as the contents of the cars from the party at Kibbutz Reim.

At first, the archaeologists, who were divided into different teams, looked for evidence of missing people who were known to be in their house at the time of the murderous attack. When it became clear that the archaeological methods could contribute to identifying additional remains that had not been exposed yet, it was decided that the IAA would examine the contents of all the burned houses and cars.

According to the archaeologists, "The archaeological methods employed at ancient sites are similar to the methods applied here, but it is one thing to expose 2,000-year-old destruction remains, and quite another thing—heart-rending and unfathomable—to carry out the present task searching for evidence of our sisters and brothers."

Since the beginning of the task, the archaeologists have managed to find certain evidence of at least ten deceased persons who were previously considered missing. Some have since been buried.

"Taking into account all the difficulty and the emotional challenges involved, our hope is that we can contribute to the certain identification for as many as possible families regarding the fate of their dear ones," says Eli Escusido, director of the IAA. "I salute our archaeologists for their immediate agreement—by no means to be taken for granted—to take part in this difficult task. It is an honor and a great responsibility that they are carrying out with great respect."

The IAA is also committed to contributing to the war effort by carrying out extensive educational programs and respite activities in many hotels throughout the country where families have been evacuated from the war zones.

*Israel Antiquities Authority*







## Earliest Evidence of Warfare in Israel Unearthed

**ISRAEL ANTIQUITIES AUTHORITY (IAA)** research has exposed the earliest evidence for warfare and organized arming in the Southern Levant, and specifically in the area of modern Israel. The research project has shown that there was mass production of weapons thousands of years ago.

The research, undertaken by Dr. Gil Haklay, Enno Bron, Dr. Dina Shalem, Dr. Ianir Milevski and Nimrod Getzov of the IAA, examined 424 slingstones from the Early Chalcolithic period (c. 5800–4500 BC) that were uncovered at two large archaeological sites excavated by the IAA at En Esur in the northern Sharon plain and at En Zippori in the Lower Galilee.

The research revealed that the hundreds of slingstones were almost identical. They were mostly manufactured from hard limestone or dolomite, and they were almost all uniform in size, with an average length of 52 millimeters [2 in.], a width of about 32.1 millimeters [1.26 in.], and an average weight of 60 grams [2 oz.].

“The stones that were intended to be projected from a sling are smoothed, with a specific biconical aerodynamic form, enabling exact and effective projection,” say the archaeologists. “Similar slingstones have been found at other sites in the country, mainly from the Hula Valley and the Galilee in the north to the northern Sharon, but this is the first time that they have been found in excavations in such large concentrations.”

“These stones are in fact, the earliest evidence of warfare in the Southern Levant. The similarity of the slingstones points to large-scale industrial production. The effort put into the aerodynamic form and the smoothing of the stones’ surface indicate that they were intended to be exact and deadly weapons,” the researchers say. The large quantity of slingstones, and the effort put into producing them also point to organized preparation for battle, and it may have been a community effort to produce ammunition. If so, it seems that in the Early Chalcolithic period, there was an escalation in preparations for warfare, involving a change from individual to large-scale production, employing many people.”

The large concentration of slingstones provides evidence for the more intense preparations for warfare in the Early Chalcolithic period in the region, possibly between local powers.

“Yet again, archaeology teaches us that history does repeat itself,” says Eli Escusido, director of the IAA. “The IAA researchers’ understandings open a window to a deeper understanding of the life and relationships between groups of people in prehistoric periods.”

*Israel Antiquities Authority*





Basel, Claraplatz

# The War of Language

**“THE FIRST CASUALTY OF WAR IS TRUTH.”** This phrase has echoed throughout the ages and has been attributed to various sources. In regard to the current situation with the enemies of Israel, I would edit it to say, “Truth is conspicuous by its absence.” Unfortunately, the propensity of Palestinian leadership and their supporters to spread disinformation—read, lies—has been business as usual for decades. In keeping with another adage, “A lie told often enough becomes the truth,” by the time the war with Hamas began, the seeds of Israel-hatred were already planted and blooming.

## Stemming the Tide

That helps to explain the reaction of seemingly normal, intelligent people worldwide who grabbed their posters and Palestinian flags to march by the thousands in support of a barbaric, murderous terrorist group determined to annihilate the Jewish people. They already “knew” that Israel is a colonialist occupier, occupying the Gaza Strip and oppressing the Palestinian people (lie number 1). They had heard that “From the River to the Sea” was a phrase that described a democratic, Palestinian state where Jews and Palestinians could live side by side in peace and harmony under Islamic rule (lie number 2). And somehow, they had become convinced that the massacre and mutilation of more than 1,200 innocent people of all ages during a rampage of rape, torture and destruction was a proportionate reaction to said occupation (lie number 3).

Unfortunately, the media, politicians, educators and religious leaders alike have fallen victim to using terminology that has been misappropriated and twisted for the specific purpose of not just delegitimizing Israel, but turning the Jewish state into a pariah in the international community. Words have power, and in the war for language, the liars are winning. The Nazis used the psychology of “a lie told often enough” very effectively prior to World War II, but certainly the same must be true of the truth as well. In other words, when we understand the meaning behind the buzzwords and catch phrases and choose our terminology carefully, perhaps we can stem the tide.

So what does “From the River to the Sea” actually mean? It is important to understand that there is no option of a one-state utopia here, with Jews and Muslims living happily together. The Hamas charter clearly states that the terror group’s work will not be done until every Jew has been murdered and all of the real estate we know today as Israel has been turned into a radical Islamic stronghold stretching from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea.

Which bring us to a “two state solution.” Hamas and its terror network have made it crystal clear that a Jewish state—or a state with Jews—is just not a viable option for them. Their leaders have repeatedly congratulated the perpetrators of the October 7 massacre and told the world unashamedly that such events need to happen all over the nation of Israel until not a single Jew is left alive. So one state it is, and a Jewish state it is not.





Dublin, Ireland

## But What About...?

What about the state of Palestine, you may ask. Such a state does not nor has it ever existed. The closest Palestinian leadership has come to statehood is to convince the United Nations that they deserve the meaningless title of “non-member observer state.” Somehow, they have never been able to convince even the United Nations Security Council that a Palestinian entity is a “peace-loving” body able to fulfill the universally recognized capacities for statehood.

But don't we all know that Israel illegally occupies Palestinian territory? According to the *Jewish News Syndicate*, the phrase “occupation” is incorrect both factually and legally. The territories—think Judea and Samaria, or the so-called West Bank, and the Gaza Strip—are neither occupied nor are they Palestinian. In order for the accusation of “occupation” to be true, there would have to have been a binding or authoritative international legal instrument, agreement, mandate, declaration or resolution that determines that the West Bank areas of Judea and Samaria and the Gaza Strip are Palestinian. But these territories have never been legally or formally designated as “Palestinian territory.” They were never part of any Palestinian sovereign entity because none has ever existed and were never taken from such a non-existent Palestinian entity. Which makes “Israeli occupation” nothing more than a political catchphrase that has no basis in any genuine legal analysis.

But what about all those Palestinian refugees, you inquire. Under the United Nations' own definition, the Palestinian people—one of the world's longest lived refugee populations—don't qualify as refugees at all. The United Nations Resettlement Program has resettled millions of refugees from conflicts around the globe...except for the Palestinians. Instead, they have the United Nations Relief and Works Agency or UNWRA, their very own UN agency whose sole purpose for being is to receive billions of dollars annually meant to improve and eventually resolve the Palestinian refugees' situation. Instead, it has been perpetuated until the original 600,000 displaced Arabs in 1948 have morphed into 5.9 million stateless people today.



Union Square, New York

## A Bottomless Pit of Popular Deceit

We have barely scratched the surface of the seemingly endless supply of catchphrases, buzzwords and outright lies designed to influence the narrative surrounding the nation of Israel. Viewing the world through this distorted prism of propaganda, Israel is always guilty and the truth disappears into the dustbin of history. But perhaps the events of October 7 will be a wake-up call for a deceived world who can simply no longer ignore the facts on the ground. Perhaps buying into Palestinian lies will seem less palatable as more and more information becomes public regarding the atrocities of October 7, the brutally inhuman rape of women and the subsequent abuse of children in captivity. Perhaps we are on the precipice of a new reality and our language can help to move that reality forward. We can do our part to move the world from its self-imposed delusion to a place where, at last, the truth told often enough is recognized, embraced and celebrated.



Cheryl Hauer,  
International Vice President



# Jewish Values and Ethics in War

**WE OFTEN HEAR ISRAELI** leaders claim that the Israel Defense Force (IDF) is an ethical, moral army, motivated by Jewish values, while Israel's enemy is far different. What do they mean?

According to the *Oxford Dictionary*, ethics is defined as “moral principles that govern a person’s behavior or the conducting of an activity.” Values are beliefs that motivate people to act one way or another. Ethics, values and cultural mores define the worldview of any people. When there are basic disagreements about these, clashes occur. We sometimes hear the term “clash of cultures.” We are seeing such clashes all over the world in the political and general society. In the conflict between Israel and Hamas, there are huge cultural differences.

Jewish people form the largest percentage of the Israeli population at roughly 80%, with Christians coming in at 3% and Muslims at 16%. Jewish values and beliefs have a profound impact on the nation, including on the IDF. What are these Jewish values? Even though as many as half of Jewish Israelis would define themselves as secular, their values come from the *Torah* (Gen.–Deut.). This value system is clearly exhibited in the IDF. Many Jewish soldiers carry a book of Psalms with them into battle. Rabbis are attached to the military to lead prayer sessions. It is common to see pictures of soldiers wearing their prayer shawls and petitioning the God of Israel to be with them as they fight for the security of their families, homes and country. A major teaching of Judaism is the idea that it is important that our lives and actions sanctify the name of God, or in other words, bring glory to His name.

The IDF website lists the following four fundamental values.

**Defense of the State of Israel and its residents:** The purpose of the IDF is to protect Israel and its independence and ensure the security of its residents.

**Patriotism and loyalty to Israel:** Patriotism and commitment and devotion to the State of Israel and its people are at the very core of service in the IDF.

**Human dignity:** The IDF and our soldiers are obligated to protect human dignity. Every individual is of inherent value, regardless of their ethnicity, religion, nationality, gender or status.

**Statehood:** The IDF is the people’s army, the State of Israel’s military, subject to the law and government of the State of Israel. IDF soldiers will operate with their mission, the IDF’s values and the security of Israel as their priority. They will operate with integrity, practicality and presentably.



A soldier praying before battle



## LIFE OR DEATH

Israel is a nation that has a deep value for human life. Rabbi Dan Moskowitz, a leading rabbi from Canada, explains it as follows, “Because of what we learn in the *Talmud* [rabbinic commentary on Jewish traditions and the Hebrew Scriptures] (Sanhedrin 37a) ‘Whoever saves a single life is considered by Scripture to have saved the whole world.’ Because we are created in God’s image. That means everyone—not just Jews.”

The concept of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world) motivates Israelis to save human life in the face of disasters around the world. I’ve seen them send IDF medical teams with full field hospitals to Japan, Haiti, Turkey, Ukraine and India. They are committed to saving lives because life is precious.



IDF Search and Rescue Unit in Turkey following the catastrophic earthquake in 2023

When Israel arrests terrorists, they are imprisoned in a humane, civilized manner. These prisoners receive ample nutrition as well as medical and dental care. They are entitled to visits from their lawyers and family members, and security prisoners are allowed Red Cross visits. Israeli medical personnel even treated Hamas terrorists who were wounded while slaughtering and torturing Israeli civilians during the October 7 massacre.

Contrast this with Hamas and other radical Islamic groups, who teach their children to hate, glorify martyrdom and rejoice over the loss of civilian life, the savage rape of women and torture of innocents. The hostages that Hamas took during the October 7 massacre were denied basic human rights, weren’t given enough food and were denied adequate medical care. Visits from the Red Cross were not allowed. Hamas glorified death—and doesn’t even seem to care about the lives of their own people.

## ADHERENCE TO INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS

According to *Stand with Us*, an international education group based in Jerusalem, “Today, militaries are supposed to be constrained by the Law of Armed Conflict or International Humanitarian Law (IHL), which exist in large part to protect civilians during times of war. IHL requires armed forces to act only to achieve legitimate military objectives, to distinguish between civilians and combatants, and to avoid causing disproportionate damage to civilians who may be near a legitimate military target.” Israel acts in strict agreement with IHL. The IDF is an army committed to acting with integrity.



IDF Leaflets dropped over Gaza during the Israel-Hamas War in 2023

Israel has been forced to fight Hamas in urban areas. To limit civilian casualties, the IDF warn civilians in Gaza via phone calls, leaflets, text messages and the knock-on-the-roof approach, which entails dropping a light explosive on the roof of the building as a warning. Even though this means that the IDF exposes their strategies to the terror group they are fighting, they persist in advance warnings to civilians so that they can flee to safety.

In contrast, Hamas deliberately fires from civilian areas, places their weapon caches and operational centers in and under hospitals, schools and mosques while using civilians as human shields. When Israel provided humanitarian corridors and limited war activity for specified hours every day to help civilians reach safety, Hamas did everything they could to stop civilians from escaping the fighting.

## THE CONTRAST

Unlike her enemies, Israel is not bloodthirsty. The deepest desire of all Israelis is lasting peace. If the Arab residents of Gaza and Judea and Samaria would lay down their weapons and reach out a hand of true peace, the Arab-Israeli conflict would end immediately. The Palestinians have had multiple opportunities to live in peace with Israel. The fact is that they won’t do that, because they are not motivated by a desire for a quality life. Instead, many are motivated by religious fervor. Hamas will not be satisfied until Israel ceases to exist. Their genocidal war cry: “From the river to the sea,” which advocates for a Palestinian state from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea—thus the entire Israel—states their desire very clearly. Israel will not accept this option. Instead, their cry is “*Am Israel Chai*” (the nation of Israel lives). It comes down to this: Israel cherishes life while her enemies glorify death.



Rebecca J. Brimmer,  
International President



# Never Again?



## A DEADLY VIRUS IS ON THE LOOSE

in the world today. It is not a novel virus but an age-old disease that slyly simmers beneath the surface. Transmitted from one generation to the next, the symptoms and prognosis of this virus are well known. Yet from time to time, the virus is cultivated and replicated until inflamed to a full-blown pandemic. Nourished by hate and misinformation, the contagion culminates in a contamination of base, ugly violence. Anti-Semitism is the virus—and the world has once again caught the fever.

## Never Say Never

“I’m crying,” Holocaust survivor Elisabeth Merides lamented to the French news channel *BFM TV* recently. “I’m crying because I’m going to again feel the hatred that was there when we were kids. I don’t understand it.”

The footage of the elderly Merides, her eyes filled with tears and terror, is hard to watch. In the background, a series of Stars of David can be seen spray-painted on the exterior of her home and other Jewish residential buildings in France. Survivors of the Holocaust like Elisabeth remember all too well the final solution that eventually results from these warning signs.

The signs are not limited to France. Similar and worse acts of vandalism directed at Jewish homes, institutions, cemeteries and synagogues have flared up across Europe. Even the public display and lighting of *hanukkiot*—the nine-branched candelabras lit during *Hanukkah* or the Festival of Light—were canceled or curtailed for fear of being targeted. Understandably so, as one incident in Poland left parliamentarians shocked when Polish Member of Parliament Grzegorz Braun, a promoter of anti-Semitic conspiracy theories, took a fire extinguisher to quench the *hanukkiah* erected in the Polish parliament building.

Even in countries once thought to be safe havens for persecuted Jews, Jewish people now find their security increasingly uncertain. According to data published by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), the United States alone saw a 337% increase of anti-Semitic incidents in 2023, including 905 anti-Israel rallies.



The list of incidents is endless. A Jewish man died after a counter-protestor struck him in the head at a pro-Israel rally in Los Angeles. The home of the president of a Jewish organization in Brentwood, California, was attacked on the Thanksgiving holiday, with fake blood and body bags placed at his door and across his lawn. Passing motorists threatened Jewish guests leaving a *Hanukkah* event at the Israeli Embassy in Washington DC, yelling, “We will kill you all, occupiers!” In Montreal, a Molotov cocktail was thrown at a Jewish community center, alongside two incidents of gunshots being fired at a Jewish school. And in Calgary and British Columbia, Jewish institutions were branded with swastikas. Australia saw a 591% increase in anti-Semitic events, most notably an incident where countless pro-Palestinians protestors repeatedly chanted “Gas the Jews” on the steps of the Sydney Opera House.



## History Repeating

Historians of anti-Semitism have long issued caution about virulent anti-Israel sentiment, warning that it will mutate over time into flagrant hatred of all Jewish people. Their warnings have now become a stark reality. Last October in Dagestan, a Muslim-majority region of Russia, an anti-Israel riot broke through airport security at the main airport. Forcing their way onto the tarmac, the mob searched out an airplane that had arrived from Israel. Baying for blood, they accosted passengers, demanding to know if they were Jewish. Ironically, the passengers arriving from Israel were Russian citizens, including Dagestani children returning home after receiving life-saving medical treatment in Israeli hospitals. Had the mob

found any Jewish people, one can only imagine the horrors that would have ensued.

Anti-Semitism has skyrocketed globally to levels unseen since World War II, and pro-Palestinian rallies are a leading cause for the explosion of hate. These rallies have become cesspools of hostility, where actively promoting anti-Semitism is an acceptable form of free speech. Steeped in anti-Israel, anti-Semitic hatred, protesters rehash common anti-Semitic tropes, with some going as far as openly calling for the extermination of the Jews. Add to this the fact that many far right-wing extremists groups have been actively joining or hijacking anti-Israel rallies, and the result is an amalgamation of open Jew-hatred.

Spanish philosopher George Santayana warned, “Those who cannot remember the past, are condemned to repeat it.” There is clearly some alarming amnesia in the hallowed halls of academia when it comes to the history and outcome of flagrant anti-Semitism.

In December, the *Economist* published a shocking survey reporting that one in five Americans aged 18–29 thinks the Holocaust is a myth. Equally alarming, one in four of those interviewed in that age group believes the Holocaust has been exaggerated. This survey came on the heels of a United States congressional hearing where the presidents of the three top universities in the US—Harvard University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Pennsylvania—refused to admit that calling for the genocide of the Jewish people violates their campus rules on hate speech and discrimination. University campuses around the world are also the breeding ground for pro-Palestinian mobs, who have shut down train stations, airports and universities in major capitals around the world.

What many in the West choose to forget is that the hatred being espoused by these groups may start with targeting the Jews but it never stops there. The hatred will spread like a virus and destroy those it affects and infects.

## What Can We Do?

Every year, we join millions in Israel and around the world on Holocaust Remembrance Day to say “Never Again.” Perhaps naively, we hope and wish that history would not repeat itself. Yet as we witness the surge of attacks and open hatred toward our Jewish brethren, we as Christians have a choice to make. Saying “Never Again” is not enough. We need to put action to our words and stand with the Jewish people wherever we are and wherever they are: in our communities and in our nations. **The time has come for this generation’s Righteous Among the Gentiles to rise up and stand with and for the Jewish people. Never does mean never, and “Never Again” is now.**



Nathan Williams,  
Director of Marketing  
and Communications



# Israeli Study Finds New Way to Combat Severe Crop Disease

**AN ISRAELI STUDY** found a new way to combat one of the challenging diseases affecting cotton cultivation in Israel and around the world: charcoal rot, caused by the *Macrophomina* fungus.

A series of experiments conducted by Dr. Ofir Degani from the Migal Galilee Research Institute and Tel-Hai Academic College and Dr. Onn Rabinovitz from the Migal Galilee Research Institute's Northern Agriculture R&D comprised one of the largest field experiments ever conducted in Israel.

According to the researchers, the experiment's results have demonstrated the high efficacy of biological pest control both separately and in combination with low-dosage chemical pest control.

*Macrophomina phaseolina*, which affects cotton and other crops, is distributed via the soil and infects more than 500 different plant species. It causes charcoal rot disease in cotton, with symptoms at later stages of growth, including leaf and stem dryness, wilting and eventual death.

In recent years, the disease has spread throughout cotton fields in Israel, which is likely related to the development of strains resistant to common chemicals.

"We discovered that the causative agent of the disease is also present in other crops, including cotton," Degani said. "We thought the impact of biological methods might strengthen when combined with low-dosage chemical compounds."

## Environment



"We demonstrated the effectiveness of integrated biological-chemical pest control in corn. The success encouraged us to apply it against the same disease in cotton."

Eight trichoderma fungi isolates were screened against the cotton pathogen. The strains that yielded the best results (*T. asperellum* and *T. longibrachiatum*) were selected for biological pest control trials.

The treatment resulted in improvements in plant survival (34%), weight (45%), plant height (32%) and development (56%) compared to the control group.

Last year, researchers implemented the new pest control method based on these fungi, alone and in combination with chemical pest control.

The combination of *Trichoderma* bio-priming in seed treatment was as effective as chemical priming.

Biological pest control achieved a significant improvement in growth factors and yields. Furthermore, biological priming combined with low-dose chemical priming almost completely eliminated plant infection by the *Macrophomina* pathogen.

"This work heralds a new approach for pest control treatment, allowing a reduction in the use of chemical substances while maximizing environmental friendliness in this process," Degani said.

*Ynetnews*

## Medicine

# Israeli-made Thermal Patch Primed to Save Lives in Battlefield



**IN THE REALM OF INJURY AND BLOOD LOSS**, hypothermia poses a significant risk due to the rapid decrease in body temperature. Addressing this challenge, an innovative Israeli development aims to rewarm the body, prevent further deterioration of the injured and ultimately save lives.

This groundbreaking initiative stems from the Rescue Heat start-up, led by Hagai Weisbrod, CEO of Noyad Biomed and Paratrooper Reserve Brigade, and Dr. Amit Lehavi, director of the pediatric anesthesia unit at Health Care Campus Rambam, a military doctor and the company's medical advisor.

The technology has successfully passed feasibility tests in the laboratory and on healthy human skin.

"In trauma situations, such as combat injuries, the body may go into shock and lose heat for various reasons, such as blood loss, the inability to maintain body heat due to peripheral blood vessel constriction, and sometimes simply





Israel's  
"Iron Sting"  
in action

Technology

# HISTORY MADE:

## Cutting Edge Weapons in First Operational Use

**ISRAEL MADE HISTORY** in November with the first operational use of its "Iron Beam" laser defense system during its war with Hamas.

The laser beam successfully intercepted an incoming rocket fired by terrorists in the Gaza Strip at Israeli territory.

The incident is the first use of a laser air defense system in a war zone.

Thousands of missiles, rockets, mortars and drones have been launched at Israel since the start of "Operation Swords of Iron" in response to Hamas's October 7 massacre.

Israel is accelerating the development of the Iron Beam, with the security establishment aiming to make it fully operational in early 2024, according to Israeli daily business news site *Calcalist*.

"More than a hundred engineers from Rafael's Research, Development and Engineering division are

working on accelerating the development of Iron Beam," the article stated.

Iron Beam is the first ever ground-based laser air defense system against rockets, mortars and unmanned aerial vehicles, delivering speed-of-light engagement of threats at low cost compared to missile interceptors.

Israel's "Iron Sting" laser—and GPS-guided mortar weapon—was also used for the first time in combat during the Gaza ground operation, the Israel Defense Forces [IDF] reported in November.

Soldiers from the Maglan unit used the Iron Sting weapon along with the Spike anti-tank guided missile during activities in Gaza. According to the IDF, the Maglan soldiers destroyed over dozens of targets and killed many terrorists.

*Jewish News Syndicate*

lying on the cold ground," explains Dr. Lehavi, who has participated in numerous rescue and relief missions.

"Once the body temperature drops below 95°F [35 C°], the body enters a state of hypothermia, and various body systems stop functioning as they should. In the context of injuries and bleeding, the main danger in these situations is that hypothermia affects blood clotting, leading to uncontrolled bleeding and an increased risk to life."

Adi Shalev, VP of Operations at Noyad Biomed and manager of the Rescue Heat project, explains the groundbreaking approach to combat the challenge and prevent hypothermia even before reaching the hospital.

The product, an innovative heating patch designed for efficient and safe body warming, is simplistic and quick to use.

The heating material, a unique patented development, springs into action when shaken and exposed to air. The sticker's composition is a smart material that adheres to the body and is engineered to heat up to 107.6°F [41C°], carefully regulated to prevent burns.

According to Shalev, "The bag heats up to 107.6°F [41C°] within 15 minutes of its activation, and maintains the temperature for eight hours. The direct adhesion optimizes the transfer of heat tenfold compared to the products currently used in the field.

"We have already distributed units of the thermal sticker to the Israel Defense Forces for field testing by elite units. We are hopeful that this development can contribute to saving lives," Dr. Lehavi concludes.

Lior El-Hai, *Ynetnews*



# A History of Hate

**WE'VE HEARD IT AGAIN AND AGAIN.** The events of October 7 are indelibly imprinted on the minds of countless people the world over. We've read about the atrocities, seen the videos and heard the gut-wrenching testimonies of survivors, released hostages and the families of those who are still in captivity. And we wonder, is there any nation on earth that would not have responded the way Israel has?

Yet Israel's motives are challenged, and it is suggested that this is not a just war. Israel's commitment to dismantle Hamas, accusers say, is based on nothing more than a desire for revenge. It isn't though. Jewish law actually forbids war for any other reason than as a response to the actions of enemies that threaten the survival of the Jewish nation.

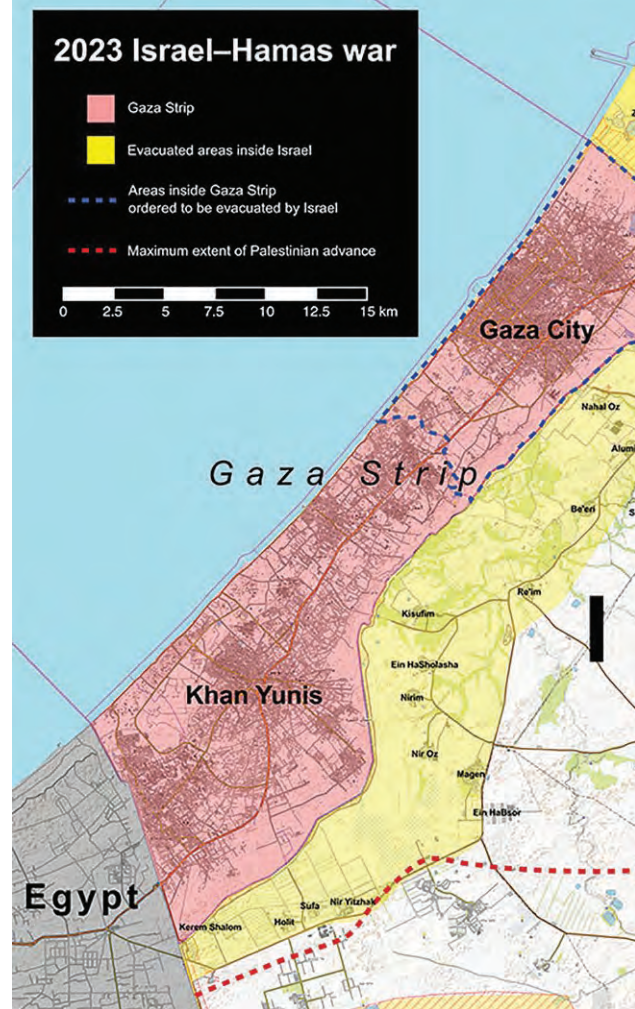
But isn't Jerusalem's response overly forceful, critics ask. If we are to understand Israel's reaction to the horrific October 7 massacre, it is imperative that we understand the history of terror that has been the reality of life for Israeli's since well before statehood.

## The Seeds of Hatred

Simply put, hatred for Jews is at the heart of what has been called the longest conflict in modern history. It stretches beyond the 19th century with reports of cross-border attacks and local massacres even in the 18th century, well before the birth of the modern state. In the 20th century, with the influx of European Jews and the establishment of mandatory Palestine, such incidents increased in number. The Arab riots of 1929 precipitated the massacre of 67 innocent Jews in Hebron alone, where Jews had lived for centuries. In fact, the October 7 assault is eerily reminiscent of the actions of the 1929 rioters that resulted in the horrific and violent deaths of 133 Jews across the nation and are viewed by some as the "point of no return" in relations between the two populations.

With the formation of the Arab League in 1945, that hatred of Jews was solidified and politicized. The League—with Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen as members—set about making "from the River to the Sea" a reality. Its member states vehemently opposed the UN partition plan of 1947 and coordinated the invasion of Israel, marking the start of the War for Independence in 1948.

The League has since been key in promoting the "Palestinian cause," and in the past, has belligerently refused negotiations for a settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. They have supported Palestinian leaders in promoting hatred of the Jewish people through a constant flow of disinformation to both the Palestinian people and the nations. And they have helped to create an education system that teaches young Palestinians to hate Israel and trains them in activism that glorifies death.







## A History of Seeking Peace

In 1948, the unbridled joy of the worldwide Jewish community at the declaration of Israeli statehood was short-lived. Within 24 hours, the armies of five Arab League members attacked the fledgling state, instigating a bloody war for independence. After nearly 10 months of fighting, Israel emerged as victor—but the cost was high. Over 6,000 Jews lay dead and over 15,000 were injured.

Since that time, Israel has been on a constant quest for peace. However, partners for peace have been in short supply. The state has been involved in six wars since the War of Independence, none of which were wars of aggression. In every circumstance, Israel acted within the parameters of Jewish and international law in responding to increasing threats from her Arab neighbors who overtly call for her destruction.

In addition to those wars, Israel has been forced to carry out military operations in response to terrorist incursions and the murder of innocent civilians. From 2008 to 2022, five such operations were conducted, including Cast Lead, Pillar of Defense, Protective Edge and Guardian of the Walls, all of which were in response to thousands of rockets launched from the Gaza Strip, killing and terrorizing the citizens of southern Israel.

As political leaders and diplomats struggled to find peaceful solutions through the Oslo Accords, the First *Intifada* (violent uprising) raged, killing over 200 Israelis and injuring over 3,000. Then came the Second *Intifada*, resulting in the deaths of 1,100 Israelis between 2000 and 2005.

According to the Jewish Virtual Library, the period from 1993 to the present has seen over 4,000 Israelis dead at the hands of Hamas and other terrorist organizations. Attacks on Israelis from suicide bombings and rockets to stabbings and car rammings have occurred in 69 of Israel's short 75-year life span. That means any Israeli aged 75 years has known only six years that were free of terror. Worse still, Israelis born after 1968 have never experienced a year of peace in their lifetimes.

## Good versus Evil

It would be almost understandable if Israel's commitment to destroy Hamas was based on a thirst for vengeance. But this is not a war of retribution. It is a battle between good and evil. And make no mistake, it is evil.

Do we think that Hamas did not know how Israel would react to the slaughter of people in their beds and at their breakfast tables? Do we think they didn't realize what would happen in Gaza when Israel responded? Or did the thought never cross their minds that they were putting millions of innocent Gazans' lives at risk?

The answer is simple. Of course Hamas did. But they did not care. They baited Israel into this war, a war that Israel did not want, that Israel has been trying to avoid for decades. And the goal of Hamas and its radical Islamic network is not just the destruction of Israel, but the annihilation of Christians as well, followed by the establishment of global Islamic rule.

**Israel is fighting a war for survival,  
and for all our sakes,  
it is a war she has to win.**



Cheryl Hauer,  
International Vice President



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# BEAUTY AMID DEVASTATION

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**WAR IS UGLY.** It destroys lives. It steals away innocence. It highlights the evil of which humanity is capable.

October 7, 2023 should have been a day filled with laughter and joy on *Simchat Torah* (Rejoicing in the *Torah*). But some 2,000 Hamas terrorists shattered the festive morning by storming Israeli communities and homes, carrying out unimaginably violent acts against men, women, children, babies and the elderly.

The images emerging from that day are unbelievable. No one could imagine such brutality. Bodies with hands tied together, burnt beyond recognition. Bloodstains on children's beds. Bullet holes in kitchen walls. Beautiful young people lying lifeless in pools of blood. Innocent lives cut tragically short.

War is ugly indeed. Yet hardship has a way of bringing out the beauty in people. Trauma and tragedy bridge gaps that had once been insurmountable.

On October 6, Israel had been a country divided. After October 7, the people of Israel were a nation united, joining hand in hand to heal, cope, mourn together and move forward.

## A Quick, United Response

Following the Hamas attack, Israel needed all hands on deck. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) called up thousands of reservists across the nation. But Jewish and Israeli people scattered around the world also answered the call, returning to defend their homeland. Reservists flooded into Tel Aviv carrying bags stuffed with tactical gear, clothing and other equipment donated with love by international friends of Israel.

Photos went viral of an El Al flight from Bangkok that was so full of young men and women heading to Israel for reservist duty that many of them ended up sleeping in the aisles or in any other available space. A man on the flight described the scene on X, formerly Twitter, adding that the flight crew also packed people into the crew's chairs and in the kitchen, not wanting to leave anyone behind.

Editor in chief of the *Jerusalem Post* Avi Mayer shared an account on X from an El Al crew member who witnessed quiet generosity at the airport in New York City. An Orthodox Jewish man who wanted to remain anonymous stood near the counter and purchased tickets for anyone with a call-up notice from the IDF. He ended up buying 250 tickets.





## A Wave of Volunteers

The helping hands extended from beyond the military. Nearly half the population of Israel mobilized as volunteers in the aftermath of October 7, the Institute for the Study of Civil Society and Philanthropy in Israel at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem reported.

People sprang into action in any way they could, passing out meals and sweets to soldiers on their way to the front, hosting bereaved and shell-shocked families from the Gaza periphery or making Shabbat meals for survivors or lone soldiers. The people of Israel gave their time, money, resources and everything else they had to offer.

It wasn't just Jewish Israelis who opened their hearts, hands and wallets. Some 29% of Arab Israelis joined in the efforts, according to the Hebrew University report. Also, some 28% of the volunteers at the beginning of the war had never volunteered before.

Examples of philanthropy abound. Less than a week after the attack, some 2,000 people were packed into a parking garage in Tel Aviv to organize, pack and deliver boxes of goods for soldiers and survivors, including food, toiletries, clothes, toys and more, *Israel21c* reported.

"It's basically a group of friends who started off wanting to do anything that they possibly could to help the current situation," Tamar Ohnona, an immigrant from Canada who works in high-tech, told *Israel21c*.

From there, it snowballed, and as more people showed up to help, they needed to keep finding bigger workspaces until the gathering of volunteers grew so large that they had to start turning people away.

An American Israeli family also issued a call for volunteers to help in Israeli hospitals. A wife of one of the family members sent a WhatsApp message to a group of her friends, *Israel21c* reported. Within the first 48 hours, more than 5,300 medical and non-medical professionals from countries around the world offered their services. By mid-November, more than 8,500 people from Israel and 50 additional countries had volunteered to help.

Israeli mothers came to the rescue when an Israeli woman who was kidnapped left behind a three-month-old baby who needed breast milk. A Facebook post and WhatsApp message pleading for help reached a gynecologist, Dr. Yasmin Farhadian, who had given birth a few months prior. Farhadian donated an entire supply that she had saved to use when her maternity leave was over.

Farhadian wrote in a Facebook post, as quoted by *Israel21c*: "There are many exciting civil initiatives at the moment, this one touches my heart in a special way: hundreds of women from all over the country are opening their souls and freezers, offering breast milk to babies whose mothers cannot breastfeed them...Those who breastfeed or pump know from what deep place such an offer comes."



Bridges for Peace delivering supplies in Sderot

## Christians Standing in the Gap

Christians also stepped up and stood alongside their Jewish brethren. Christians around the world donated their money to Israeli organizations and the IDF. They donned their Star of David necklaces and IDF sweatshirts in solidarity. Churches around the world prayed for Israel each Sunday and held special prayer vigils. They organized peaceful protests and marches, proudly waving Israeli flags.

Bridges for Peace played a leading role in the October 7 aftermath. Hours after the massacre, we delivered over 1,000 bags of food and clothing to Sderot and Ofakim, communities on the Gaza border that had been hard hit. We sponsored 200 displaced families and supplied school kits for children from displaced families to continue their education. We visited families in mourning, listened to their stories and cried with them. We arranged for 500 kilograms (1,100 lbs.) of supplies to be airlifted from the United Kingdom to Israel, purchased six bomb shelters for two Jewish communities in the line of fire and purchased an ambulance for the Israeli emergency services. As the calls for help continue pouring in, we keep answering.

There are countless more stories of beauty amid the ugly war, both within and outside Israel. These dark times allow the light in people to shine brighter, and they highlight the beauty and resilience of the Jewish and Israeli people—and the love of those who stand with them.



Kate Norman,  
BFP Staff Writer





# The Most Fruitful Lie

## A THRILL OF ANTICIPATION

rippled through the crowd. They'd come in their thousands, carrying a sea of red, green, white and black. Some of them shuffled impatiently, eager to move, to fight, to push back against the injustice. Others stared straight ahead, their faces set like flint at the thought of the horrors they'd come to decry.

As if on cue, the chant rang out, bellowed like a battle cry. "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free!" It rose and swell, carried by a mob convinced of their own morality.

In the aftermath of October 7, this scene has become commonplace, with pro-Palestinian protestors crowding city streets, town squares and college campuses with terrifying frequency. They come to stand for something bigger than themselves; to voice their outrage at the oppression; to demand a peaceable, fair and just solution to the abhorrent stain marring a society otherwise known for tolerance, social justice and political correctness.

It would all have been rather noble, had the entire cause not been a farce. That seems to matter little though. In the quest for tolerance, social justice and political correctness, society has long since abandoned the pursuit for truth and accuracy. "Not since the time of Dr. Goebbels has there been a case in which continual repetition of a lie has born such great fruits," former Israeli minister Prof. Amnon Rubinstein argued nearly half a century ago. Today, his warning rings more true than ever.

The cause of a historic Palestinian people in their ancient Palestinian homeland **is indeed the most fruitful lie of our generation.**

## What's in a Name?

To be fair, it can all be a bit confusing. The Palestinians claim the strip of land between the Jordan River and Mediterranean Sea, arguing that their roots as a nation go back thousands of years. The Jewish people, on the other hand, have no ties to the land before 1948. They arrived as colonizers from Europe to drive the rightful owners out and then imposed a foreign Jewish culture and history on the land that has been home to a thriving Palestine nation for three millennia. As time goes by, more details emerge that are deftly woven into the narrative, until the farce is so intricate, colorful and emotive that it simply has to be true, right? After all, Jesus was a Palestinian. The Tomb of the Patriarchs—burial spot of Abraham, the father of the Jews—is a Palestinian heritage site. So is the Temple Mount. And did you know that today's Palestinians are the posterity of the giant that faced King David?

Yet the Palestinian claims rest on a flimsy foundation of one part truth, nine parts fiction. According to the Palestinian narrative, this plot of land has been called Palestine since the foundations of time, with records bearing the term as early as the 12th century BC. In truth, early records mention "Peleshet" or the Pelisthim, a Hellenistic people who invaded Israel and established a five-city state on the Mediterranean coast to feature as Israel's biblical archenemy. Yet the Babylonian invasion in the late fifth century BC obliterated the Philistines, who disappeared from the pages of history.

Fast forward to AD 135. Nearly two centuries of Roman occupation, reducing Jerusalem and the Second Temple to rubble and putting down yet another revolt had failed to break the Jewish yearning for freedom from their pagan colonizers. Roman Emperor Hadrian needed a new tactic. So the Roman leader set out to deJudaize the Promised Land, stripping it of its biblical name and erasing its Jewish identity. Judea became Syria Palaestina, a humiliating throwback to Israel's archenemies, the Philistines.





Arabs are not indigenous to the Promised Land and came only in 637 AD when Umar ibn al-Khatab conquered the land as...wait for it...a colonizer. As part of the Arab-Muslim Empire, the name Syria Palaestina and its Gentile equivalent Palestine disappeared as a separate administrative or socio-cultural entity, with the Ottoman Turks, who ruled the Middle East from 1516 to 1917, viewing the geographical region of Palestine as a backwater part of Southern Syria, not an official designation.

For nearly 2,600 years, the Christians, Jews and Muslims living in what Hadrian had renamed Palestine were called Palestinians, which makes the term applicable to those who hail from a specific geographical area, not to describe an ethnic or religious group. In other words, the centuries before the rebirth of Israel were devoid of any sense of Palestinian identity, with no unique or separate Palestinian language, religion, nationality or culture. In fact, the Arab inhabitants didn't even call themselves Palestinians, but identified as Muslims or Christians, members of a clan or a resident of a specific city.

Following their conquest of the area in World War I, Britain resurrected the name Palestine from the dust heap of antiquity to bestow it on a separate entity: a mandate held by the British Empire. In the years leading up to Israel's independence, the moniker Palestinians became more prominent, used, however, to describe the Jews, not the Arabs, living in British Mandate Palestine. That identity is reflected in the institutions of the time, like the *Palestine Post* (later the *Jerusalem Post*) and the Palestine Symphony Orchestra (later the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra). The Arabs, on the other hand, scoffed at the term as "a British imperialist device" and wanted nothing to do with it. In fact, an Arab leader, Auni Bey Abdul-Hadi, told the Peel Commission, which ultimately suggested the partition plan, "There is no such country [as Palestine]! 'Palestine' is a term the Zionists invented! There is no Palestine in the Bible."

## The Birth of a People

The transition from a geographical location to a fabricated people began at the turn of the previous century. As the Jewish people began to return

to their ancient homeland—substantiating their claim of an uninterrupted presence on that particular plot of earth with undisputed archaeological and historical evidence—their Arab neighbors faced an identity crisis. That sense of disorientation ultimately prompted the emergence of a fabricated people with a fictional history and a name stolen from the British, who borrowed it from the Romans, who took it from Israel's extinct biblical archenemy.

However, it was only after Israel recaptured Judea and Samaria from the Jordanians during the 1967 Six Day War that the Arabs—who rather than seek independence in 1948 after Jordan occupied the region, swore fealty to the Jordanian king—ushered an organized demand for an autonomous Palestinian state. And it was only some 20 years later in 1988, that the Palestinian Liberation Organization declared its intention of a Palestinian state separate from neighboring Arabs.

## Same Old

Attempts to physically annihilate the Jewish people are scattered through world history. But when those attempts prove unsuccessful, the enemies of Israel come with a different tactic.

In the end, the most fruitful lie of our generation is not about the fabrication of a people or the superimposition of their legacy in a history that bears no trace of it. Ultimately, it is about an attempt to use that fabrication to erase the fingerprints and footsteps of the Jewish people, to strip history of their existence and wipe their legacy from our consciousness. Why? Simple. The fingerprints and footsteps of ancient Israel speak of the character and nature of God. Through their tales, trials and tribulations, God reveals Himself to humanity. And today, the rebirth and thriving existence of the modern State of Israel stands as proof that God exists, that He is faithful and that He does what He says He will do.

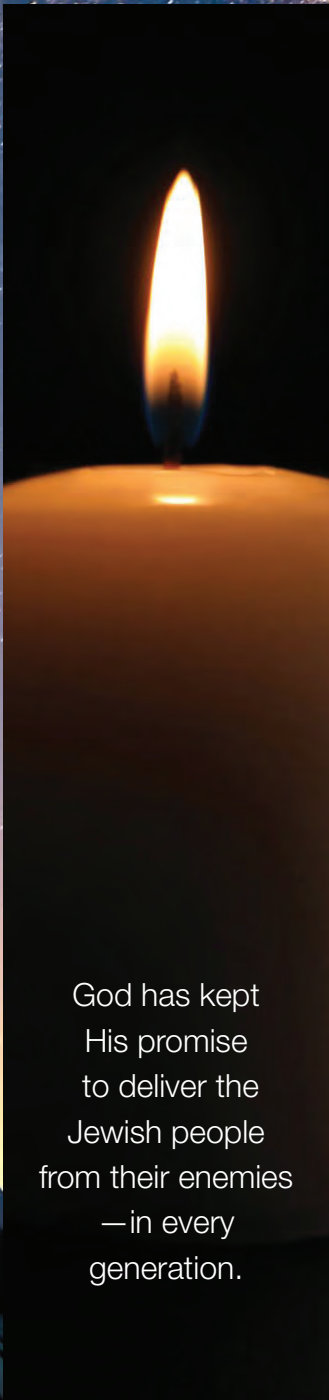
**This is about more than a people, land or social justice. It is about the God of Israel showing Himself true to His word.**



Ilse Strauss,  
News Bureau Chief



# In Every Generation



God has kept  
His promise  
to deliver the  
Jewish people  
from their enemies  
—in every  
generation.

**SINCE THE FIRST TIME** I heard its haunting melody, I have been drawn to the short Jewish liturgical piece put to music entitled “Vehi Sheamda.” The words of the title are translated, “And it is this that has stood,” with the word “this” meaning God’s covenant relationship with Abraham and his descendants. The song goes on to state how, in every generation, enemies have arisen against the Jewish people, seeking their destruction and utter annihilation. However, this is a song of ultimate hope in God during such times.

## A Pesach Melody

“Vehi Sheamda” is a *Pesach* or Passover song, originally found in the *Haggadah* (“Telling”), the centerpiece of the *Seder* meal. Jewish families around the world sing it in remembrance of how God brought them out of slavery in Egypt. In light of Jewish history over the millennia since their Exodus, it is not surprising that this short poem put to music has gained audiences in times when the Jewish people’s very existence is threatened and not only during the annual *Seder* meal.

Originally written in Hebrew and sung since the early eighth century, there are various English translations. Rabbi Dr. Marcus Lehmann translated the version below. It appears in the *Lehmann Haggadah*.

*And it is this [the Torah] that has stood by our ancestors and for us.  
For not only one [enemy] has risen up against us to destroy us,  
but in every generation they rise up to destroy us.  
But the Holy One, Blessed be He, delivers us from their hands.*

## They Rise Up to Destroy Us

October 7 was a day so shocking in brutality and violence toward Jewish Israelis living along the border with Gaza, it was hard to fathom that the news was true. With a final death count of over 1,200, it was the deadliest single day for the Jews since the Holocaust, over 80 years ago. During the years since the fall of Hitler and his Nazi party, various enemies have arisen and managed to take Jewish lives, but certainly not on this scale, and never inside the State of Israel.

Both before and after the establishment of the modern State of Israel, the Jewish people have been targeted for destruction. Let’s take a look at recent history.

Since the Holocaust, most of the Jewish deaths from terror attacks have been in single digits. Even the deadliest attack during the Second *Intifada* (violent uprising during the late 2000s to the mid-2005s), which occurred at a *Pesach* celebration in 2002 when 30 civilians were killed in a suicide bombing at the Park





Hotel in Netanya, does not come close to the October 7 figure. Jews living outside Israel have also been in the line of fire, so to speak. The 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish Center in Buenos Aires left 85 dead, the largest death toll in a single day since the Holocaust—until now.

None of these victims are forgotten. Every year on *Yom HaZikaron* (Memorial Day), Israel pauses to remember not only her soldiers who have fallen in battle but also victims of acts of terror. This past year, the figure stood at 24, 213, which included 4,120 victims of terror attacks, 740 of them minors. None are indeed forgotten.

## Every Jew Has an Internal Spark

It is well known that Judaism is a faith that reveres life. And that makes the events of October 7 even more reprehensible. What possible response can be made by the survivors along with the rest of the Jewish community? An indwelling hope in the God of their forefathers is one response.

Writing about “Vehi Sheamda” for *Aish.com—The Jewish Website*, Rebecca Rubenstein gives an explanation of Jewish resilience that arises in the face of tragedy. “Every Jew has an internal spark. Our enemies can try and extinguish this spark. They might enslave us as Pharaoh did, they might try and annihilate us physically as Hitler did, they might try and take away our Jewish identity as Stalin did, but they can never take away our hope and the Jewish spark within us.”

After October 7, we could add the following: They might infiltrate our borders and murder innocent civilians—from the elderly to the very young and every age in between—in the most horrific ways possible, and yet they can never take away our hope.

## God’s Covenant with His People

Where does this internal spark originate? I think one of the reasons “Vehi Sheamda” resonates so loudly is that it gives us the answer to that question.

The opening words don’t specifically say what or who stood by the Jewish people’s ancestors when danger threatened. But the placement of the song in the *Haggadah* speaks volumes. It follows a portion of the telling of the Exodus story called “Blessed be the One who keeps Their promise to Israel.” This refers to the covenant God made with a then-childless Abraham that his descendants would be more numerous than the stars (Gen. 15:5) and went on to describe the physical land they would inherit (Gen. 15:18–21).

## Reason for Hope

If you have never heard this song, there are many different renditions that can be found on YouTube. One of my personal favorites is a duet sung by Yaakov Shwekey and Shlomi Shabat, who are at times joined by their audience of thousands of Israelis. You can listen to it here. Yes, it is in Hebrew and most likely you won’t understand everything. But watch the faces of those singing and hear their faith in the God who made a covenant with Abraham. His descendants, numbering more than the stars, are proof that God has kept His promise to deliver the Jewish people from their enemies—in every generation. And that eternal covenant is the reason for the internal spark of hope within the heart of each Jewish man, woman and child.



Janet Aslin, *BFP Staff Writer*

“Our enemies  
can never take away  
our hope and the  
Jewish spark within us.”





# DEBUNKING the Popular Social Media Slurs

## ISRAEL FACES UNRELENTING CRITICISM

born of a prevailing false narrative that casts the Jewish state as the colonizing oppressor and the Palestinians as the colonized oppressed. We offer several examples from the most widespread and influential form of disinformation in modern culture: social media, and more specifically, X, formerly Twitter. We then counter that false narrative with the facts framed in an accurate understanding of Israel's modern history, societal values and cultural aspirations.

### Israel Is Guilty of Genocide in Gaza

*"The collective punishment of Palestinian civilians through the unlawful use of force by Israel is a war crime... tantamount to genocide."*

—Presidency | South Africa @PresidencyZA

**The Facts:** Hamas commits a double war crime by targeting Israeli civilians while using their own civilians as human shields. Israel neither targets nor seeks to punish Palestinian civilians in any way. In fact, the Israeli military takes extraordinary measures and employs precision targeting methods to strike Hamas terrorists, tunnels and weapons caches while protecting non-combatant Palestinian lives.

### Israel Targets Innocent Civilians

*"As people headed to their homes and areas after the temporary truce took effect, they found the bodies of Palestinian martyrs on the coastal road in the Gaza Strip."*

— ساج @sajeda1512

**The Facts:** Israel cherishes life and regrets the death of Palestinian civilians. However, the death of Hamas combatants, which many of the casualties are, is the necessary result of Israel's stated goal of eradicating Hamas as both a terror threat to Israel and a controlling oppressor of the Palestinian people. When Israel calls on Gazan civilians to retreat from their homes for the safety of designated areas, the Hamas totalitarian regime forces their people to stay and die gloriously as martyrs.

*"This is how the Zionist apartheid premeditatedly bombs ambulances and refugee families in the Gaza Strip, an extermination camp where nowhere is a safe haven."*

—inaya bisma @inaya\_bisma

**The Facts:** What interest would an advanced, law-based, justice-seeking, sovereign state have in bombing ambulances, children, patients or refugees? None, of course. When innocent civilians are displaced, wounded or killed, it is because Hamas's belligerence has put the entire region at

risk. Often, the terror group's own rockets have fallen short, hitting civilians in Gaza and increasing the death toll.

### Israel Targets Civilian Infrastructure Like Hospitals

*"Over a hundred unknown #Palestinians were buried in a mass grave this morning in Khan Yunis after being brought from the #AlShifa #Hospital in #Gaza, which is now under direct #Israeli military occupation. #IsraellsATerrorist #IsraeliTerrorist #Gaza\_Genocide #FreePalestine"*

—Sreen @Sreen\_Sara

*"The Israeli army targeted the infant intensive care unit of Kemal Advan Hospital in Jibaliya, north of Gaza City."*

—HaberSeyret @haberseynet

**The Facts:** The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is clearing Hamas terror operatives and infrastructure from within, underneath and around Gazan hospitals. Israel's army liberated Al-Shifa patients and staff from Hamas, which was abusing them as human shields. Israeli medical personnel have come to their aid, bringing tons of much-needed aid. Rather than ceaseless condemnation from ill-informed social media hacks, Israel deserves universal praise for its compassionate wartime posture that spares Gazan lives and gives hope to hurting Palestinians.

### Israel is Guilty of Collective Punishment in Gaza

*"We are now beginning to see the full scale of the apocalyptic obliteration of the centre of Gaza by a fascist regime. Collective punishment. Ethnic cleansing. Genocide."*

—Howard Beckett @BeckettUnite

**The Facts:** Let's unpack this devilish canard. Fascism refers to a racist, xenophobic regime marked by strict control and minimal individual rights. Israel is a liberal democracy with full civil rights that consistently ranks among the freest societies in the world.

Collective punishment entails sanctions imposed on an entire group for acts perpetrated by one member of the





group. Israel acts against the terror organization Hamas for its many years of terrorizing Israel's populace, culminating in the massacre of 1,200 innocents. Even so, Israel is not vengefully attacking but seizing on a rapidly closing window of international support to reduce a destabilizing terror threat.

Ethnic cleansing describes the systematic, forced removal of ethnic, racial or religious groups with the aim of making a region ethnically homogeneous. Israel—far more ethnically, racially and religiously diverse than any Arab nation—wages a limited war against an Iranian-backed terror army that is sworn to Israel's destruction. At its founding, Israel welcomed all peoples of the region to be part of the reborn state. The several thousand Arabs who said “yes” are now two million strong and thriving citizens of Israel.

Genocide is the intentional annihilation of a people, in whole or in part. Israel is not destroying but preserving a free state for a free people, be they Jewish, Muslim, Christian or a host of other religions and ethnicities. The IDF is the most humane army in the world. No other military goes as far to reduce civilian casualties, with millions of calls, texts, leaflets and selective warning munitions. With its military might, Israel could have leveled Gaza from the air long ago. Instead, it waited 19 years, finally sending its soldiers door-to-door, many of whom will die while preserving the lives of Palestinians.

### Israel is an Apartheid State

*“For Palestinians to accept the right of Zionist, racist, #ApartheidIsrael to exist, will be like if Nelson Mandela would have accepted the right of #ApartheidSouthAfrica to exist...!”*

—Carl Niehaus @niehaus\_carl

**The Facts:** After shouting “Nazi,” the most triggering accusation on social media leveled at Israel is apartheid. Plainly put, Israel is not an apartheid state. Since 1967, Israel has managed a very complex humanitarian and security situation, involving several million stateless Arabs who assumed the “Palestinian” identity in 1964.

In areas where Israel has given over security and civil authority to the Palestinian Authority (PA), terror abounds. The Gaza Strip, where Hamas expelled the PA in a violent coup, serves as one example. As a result, Israel is forced to spend billions securing its nine million citizens, 20% of whom are Arabs, all with full rights and privileges.

### Israel Occupies the Gaza Strip

*“Resisting the Israeli occupation is not a crime. Denying the oppressed Palestinians the right to resist is the crime. #GazaConcentrationCamp #InvokeGenocideConvention”*

—Ahmed Samir @AhmedSamirPS

**The Facts:** There's no Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip. In 2005, Israel pulled out of Gaza so completely that even the graves were exhumed. Since 1967, Israel has extended military and civil authority over portions of the Judea and Samaria, or the so-called West Bank, while facilitating partial settlement on 2% of the land mass.

### The Bottom Line

While the merit of these facts should persuade, they are yet unlikely to sway the ardent social media activist committed to the false narrative that drives their anti-Israel rants. Armed with the facts, truth-lovers might influence more simply by confronting with the question, “Why do you want to blame Israel?” The answer to that can be nothing other than anti-Semitism. And that must be exposed for the evil it is.



Bill Adams,  
Senior National Representative  
BFP United States



# 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

**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

## 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.

**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.

## UNITED STATES

**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.

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- Journalist
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- Social Media Team
- Home Repair Manager
- Proofreader
- Home Repair Team





# HALVA

*Halva* is a sweet treat made from *tahini* or sesame paste. Thought to have originated in ancient Persia, *halva* has captured the hearts of Israelis and is a sweet treat of choice enjoyed throughout the year. It has become a feature in markets around the country, with Jerusalem's *Mehane Yehuda* market boasting a delightful variety of colors and flavors on stall tables. This delicious dessert is simple to make. You can enjoy it on its own, crumble it over ice-cream or add it to sweet pastries.

1 1/2 cup *tahini* or sesame paste  
1 cup water  
1 cup sugar

Suggested toppings:

1/2 cup crushed pistachio  
1 Tbsp. honey  
1 tsp. sea salt

1. Line a baking tin with parchment paper.
2. Add the water to a saucepan and heat over a medium heat.
3. Add the sugar and stir until dissolved.
4. Bring to a boil.
5. Using a candy thermometer, heat the syrup until it reaches 250°F/121°C. (If you don't have a candy thermometer, drip some of the syrup into a bowl of cold water after it has been boiling for 10 minutes. When the syrup forms hard, teardrop-like shapes in the water, it is ready).
6. Pour the *tahini* paste into a separate bowl and add the sugar syrup.
7. Mix until the dough no longer sticks to the bowl.
8. Pour the mixture into the lined tin and sprinkle over your toppings of choice.
9. Leave to cool for a few hours or overnight.
10. Slice and enjoy.



Serves  
10



# Death to Life: Bringing Hope from Tragedy



**Ayelet Samo uses a stethoscope to listen to her son's heart that was transplanted into Yaakov Malka. Staff Sgt. Yehonatan Samo was killed while fighting Hamas in the Gaza Strip.**

## THE ORGANS OF A 22-YEAR-OLD

Israeli soldier who died after being wounded in Gaza in December were donated, bringing life and hope to four other patients.

Staff Sgt. Alemnew Emanuel Feleke's heart and lungs went to an undisclosed patient, while his liver went to a 53-year-old woman, one of his kidneys and pancreas went to a 45-year-old woman and another kidney to a 58-year-old man.

Feleke was not the first warrior to leave behind a legacy of hope and generosity. Several fallen Israel Defense Forces soldiers—the exact number is unknown—have given patients a second chance at life.

Staff Sgt. Yehonatan Samo died after succumbing to injuries incurred in Gaza. His parents agreed to donate his organs to six patients in need.

Ten days after his death, his parents, Moshe and Ayelet Samo, visited two patients who received organs from their son, including 46-year-old Yaakov Malka, who received their son's heart. The doctor placed a stethoscope on Malka and allowed the grieving parents to listen to their fallen son's heart beating.

They also visited 9-month-old Tehila, who desperately needed a liver transplant. Samos's liver lobe came in the nick of time, allowing doctors to save her life.

"I don't have the words to thank you," Tehila's mother told Samos's mother. "My little girl has been born again thanks to your son."

"The fact that part of him will continue to live and help others...there is nothing more uplifting than that," Samos's mother said.

Then there was also 23-year-old Sgt. Amichai Rubin, who was shot in the leg and then the head while fighting terrorists in Gaza. He saved many of his fellow soldiers by engaging the terrorists and killing many of them. He even continued fighting for 20 minutes after the bullet entered his brain.

Ruben's family requested for his organs to be used to save lives. His lungs went to a 70-year-old man, his liver to a 23-year-old man, a lobe of his liver to an 8-year-old boy, one kidney to a 29-year-old woman and another kidney to a 7-year-old girl.

Staff Sgt. Shoham Ben Harush had a big smile and twinkling eyes. The 20-year-old was injured while defending

a *kibbutz* [collective community] from Hamas terrorists on October 7.

Medical staff worked hard to save him, but were forced to declare Ben Harush brain dead. His heart went to a 48-year-old man, his lungs to a 59-year-old man, a kidney to a 57-year-old man, his liver to a 61-year-old man and his other kidney to a 69-year-old woman.

Master Sgt. (res.) Naaran Ashchar, 33, sustained critical injuries in northern Israel on the border with Lebanon. He was declared brain dead a week later.

Ashchar had voluntarily donated one of his kidneys a few months earlier to a stranger, and he needed medical clearance to serve so soon after the surgery.

In death, he saved four people, as his heart was transplanted into a 59-year-old man, his lungs to a 72-year-old man, his liver to a 67-year-old man and his other kidney to a 43-year-old man.

There's a long list of soldiers who died protecting the citizens of Israel—and then continued bringing life even in death. May their memory and their legacy always be a blessing.

Kate Norman, *Bridges for Peace*



# Light from Darkness: Israelis Name Babies for Destroyed Border Communities



**IN THE MATERNITY WARD**—the happiest place in the hospital during wartime—some very special names are given to newborns, reflecting that Israel lives and thrives amidst grief and mourning.

According to the Population and Immigration Authority, from October 7 until November 22, 17,629 babies were born in Israel. Among them, 49 boys and one girl received the name “Oz,” carrying a dual significance. Oz is Hebrew for courage, but it also appears in the names of two of the *kibbutzim* [collective community]—Nahal Oz and Nir Oz—that came under attack and fought fierce battles against invading Hamas terrorists.

Thirty-four parents of boys and another 11 parents of girls opted for the name “Be’eri,” inspired by the *kibbutz* that was almost entirely destroyed and suffered a great number of casualties.

Other names given to infants born in this period are also connected to the ongoing war. The name “Erez” was given to eight boys and two girls, named after the *kibbutz* where armed civilians successfully thwarted invading terrorists. Five boys and three girls were named Nir for Nir Oz, while three girls received the name “Nova,” meaning “new” in Latin and echoing the music festival where over 300 Israelis were murdered.

Liraz and Dudu Samdajah chose to name their third son “Oz.” He was born during the ongoing

war. The couple is intimately familiar with the battles in the south though. “We got married on the first day of the 2014 war against Hamas,” Liraz says. “The wedding was scheduled, and we didn’t cancel the events, so we got married amidst sirens, and I gave birth amidst sirens.”

Liraz couldn’t ignore the events of the war. “I never thought about this name before, but since the war started, we’ve been moved by the stories. We felt the pain of what was happening. The name ‘Oz’ came to me mainly because of its meaning: bravery, not just because of the names of the *kibbutzim*. It connected me to the strength and courage shown by our heroic soldiers. ‘God will give strength to His people,’ that verse came to mind. In the covenant, when the rabbi read his name, we blessed our soldiers wholeheartedly, and the word ‘Oz’ fit perfectly.”

Korin Elbaz-Alush, *Ynetnews*

## Israeli Boy Orphaned in Hamas Attack Marks Bar Mitzvah



**AN ISRAELI BOY** whose parents, two sisters and grandfather were murdered in the Hamas attack on his *kibbutz* [collective community] celebrated his *bar mitzvah* [religious coming-of-age celebration for boys] in December.

Ariel Zohar of *Kibbutz Nahal Oz* was saved from the October 7 massacre because he went out for a run.

His father, Yaniv Zohar, 54, mother, Yasmin, 49, and sisters Keshet, 18, and Tehelet, 20, were buried after a joint funeral in Rishon Letzion in October.

Zohar recovered two pairs of *tefillin* or phylacteries—the small black leather boxes with leather straps containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the *Torah* [Gen.–Deut.] and worn during weekday morning prayers—from his destroyed home.

The first pair was the one that his parents had bought him for his *bar mitzvah*. The second, retrieved by a ZAKA [non-governmental volunteer rescue and recovery organization] official at Zohar’s request, had been handed down to Zohar’s father from his surviving grandfather Marco, a Holocaust survivor whose own parents were murdered by the Nazis.

Chaim Otmazgin, who recovered the *tefillin* from the house, recounted the moving words that Zohar’s 90-year-old grandfather told his grandson: “My parents were murdered when I was 14. Today, I have a grandson living in Israel! To you too. They did this to you when you were 12 years old. You too will have grandchildren in Israel!”

*Jewish News Syndicate*



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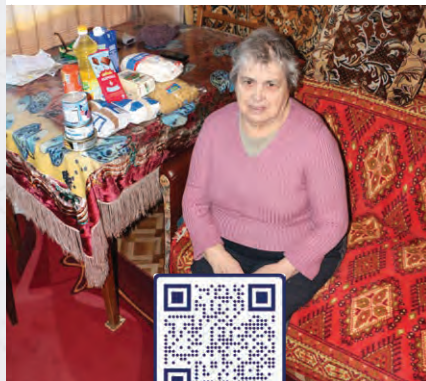
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“ We have hope for the future because of people like you who show us care in what you do ”

Sergey and Irina Gezentsvei,  
*New immigrants*



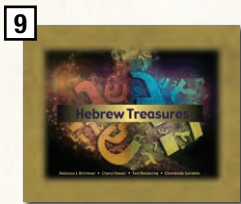
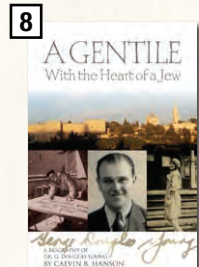
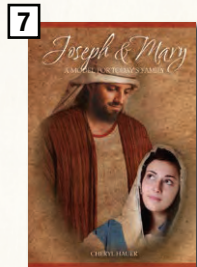
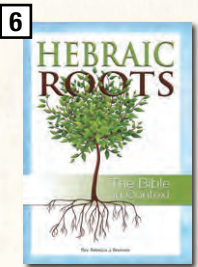
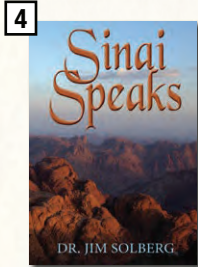
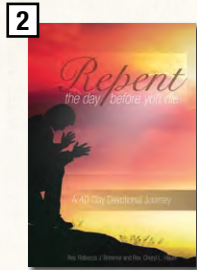
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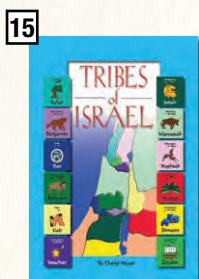
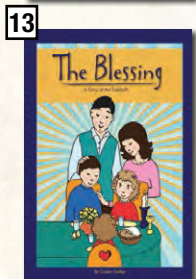
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