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# Only in Israel



By Betty Intrater

There's a popular saying here, "Only in Israel." It refers to unusual, sometimes quirky, sometimes contradictory situations you find yourself in, particularly related to the culture, climate, or personality of our country.

I've never been able to explain to outsiders the relationship between Jews and Arabs in Israel. From abroad, it may seem there is only violence. However, that's far from the truth. There is actually quite a lot of integration in the workplace and community. Our current 'Corona Czar' is an Israeli Arab professor, and there is an Israeli Arab judge on the Supreme Court. There is a joke that you must be Arab to work as a pharmacist because that profession is so dominated by Israeli Arabs, and there are many Arab nurses and doctors, both male and female.

On the other hand, there is violence and tension, particularly with Palestinian Arabs from the disputed territories. I remember when we first came to Israel and lived in a geographically sensitive area. Arab construction workers built homes at a site patrolled by Jewish armed guards. However, my young son's nursery school was opened every morning by the beloved Arab maintenance worker who held the master key.

A few years ago, there were several instances worldwide of Muslim attacks on 'infidels,' often family members, where the attacker threw gasoline or chemicals in the victim's face. At that time, I had an eye infection and made an appointment with the local ophthalmologist. I couldn't help noticing his Muslim first name. As I sat back in the chair and let Dr. Mohammed pour eye drops into my eyes, I didn't miss the irony of the situation.

Today our new kitchen table and chair set was due to arrive. Early in the morning there was news of a *stabbing attempt* in the city center. Later in the day the sentencing of a Palestinian Arab who stabbed two citizens last month, was to take place.

At noon, there was a knock on the door. Two men, each approximately twice my size, stood with several large boxes. With some trepidation, I let them in. As they began to work, chatting with one another in Arabic, one turned to me.

*"Do you have a knife?" he asked.*

*"What type?" I answered trying to act natural.*

*"Anything will do. I can't open the box."*

I opened the drawer and let him choose one.

## Only in Israel.





# Meaning in the Mundane



By Hannah Tekle

*The wind blows to the south and turns to the north;  
Round and round it goes,  
Ever returning on its course...*

*What has been will be again,  
What has been done will be done again;  
There is nothing new under the sun. (Ecclesiastes 1:6,9)*

## **The feast cycle and the weekly cycle - Can there be too much of a good thing?**

September was almost entirely vacation days this year. The Biblical High Holiday feasts fell on weekdays, meaning - to the kids' delight - that there were only 9 school days in the whole month.

Each holiday eve we commemorated with friends or family and enjoyed making them special. This year, since none of the holidays fell on a Sabbath, we had twice the celebrations and twice the work. I made a record number of challah breads, and to tell the truth, so many special days in a row became quite exhausting. By the end, we were glad to have a chance to "rest" from the holidays and get back to a routine of school and work. The Sabbath, our weekly-cycle-holiday, had lost its luster and felt almost like a chore. Now that September is behind me I'm reminded of the noteworthy, necessary and meaningful nature of the Sabbath. What a special and welcome pause it is from the tiring cycle of the workweek.

## **Even nature takes a rest**

This last weekend, since the weather has begun to cool off, we went out to visit our nearby national park to see if the white autumn wildflowers were in bloom yet (squill); but we found that

the forest was dry, still in a dull-brown daze from the heat of the summer. Surprised and disappointed, I felt that somehow my forest had let me down. But of course, it is also appropriately cycling through the given seasons, and waiting for its time to be revived in green glory by the early rains of winter.



## **Making the scriptures real to our children - the cycle of Bible reading**

At the end of Autumn's Biblical High Holidays, we celebrated Simchat Torah. In Jewish tradition, this is the day in which the yearly cycle of reading the five books of Moses comes to an end and begins again.

It's a day of rejoicing in the giving of God's instruction, and rolling the Torah scroll back from the end of Deuteronomy to the beginning of Genesis. Children got to look at the scroll up close and see the ancient Hebrew lettering. They received sweet treats and a flashlight, reminding them of Psalm 119:103, 105: *"How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!"* and *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."*

Talking to the kids that day in class, we recited together the well-known verse, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."* Even after all of the excitement of the candies and the flashlights, the kids rolled their eyes to be going back to such a basic truth and said dutifully, "Yes, God is the Creator of the Universe."

**Continued on page 6.**



# Peer Pressure & Hearing the Voice of God



By Guy Cohen

Peer pressure is not new. It takes many forms, as does our reaction to it. When pressured, we might be tempted to go against our own better judgement, belief system or understanding of what God has told us to do. We could find ourselves having to choose between what we believe is right and *what is expected or even demanded of us by society, family, employers or governments, etc.*

In the book of Daniel, we see the young Hebrew exiles Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego faced with these issues in Babylon. They received a position in the palace and were given favor by King Nebuchadnezzar, in spite of being Jewish outsiders. Suddenly, they were given the command to bow before a statue of the king - to treat him as a god. Talk about peer pressure! Word was sent throughout the empire to gather key leaders to be present for the dedication of the gold statue, towering 30 meters (100 feet) high. When the music began, all were to bow down.

For Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-Nego to bow down would directly contradict the Word of God: **“You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image ... you shall not bow down to them or serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.”** (Exodus 20:3-5)

These three young believers had to take a stand, disobey an order and face the consequences in Daniel 3:12: **“These men, O king, have not paid due regard to you. They do not serve your gods or worship the gold image which you have set up.”**

Then they refused a direct order made by the king himself, who placed himself above their God. Their answer? **“Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”**

As they were being thrown into the fire, the situation turned upside down. Those who rushed to serve the king in his fury by pushing the Hebrews into the fiery furnace, were burned. As the king watched, God joined the three Hebrews in the furnace and the fire didn't even singe their hair!

*We need to walk the way these three exiles did - looking to the Word of God to guide us while listening for Yeshua's voice. We need the Spirit of God to bring us through these challenging times, while respecting each other and recognizing that people may be called differently.*

There are many among the believers who have taken the COVID vaccination and there are many who have not; each as he has felt led. Yeshua did not come to judge the world but to save the world. This should be our attitude when facing the onslaught of opinions and non-stop discussion on COVID and the vaccine. Our place is not to judge one another.

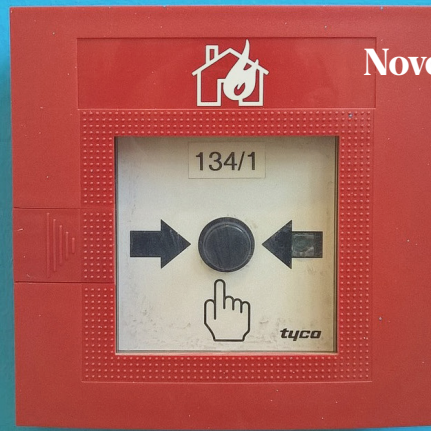
Each one of us must develop an intimate relationship with God so that we can hear His voice individually. Together let us turn our eyes and hearts to Yeshua, anticipating His soon return. Only then can we be united during the trials to come as we near the end of the age.



# Sound the Alarm



By Leon Mazin



The prophet Joel may be called a minor prophet, however, he had a major revelation about the days of the LORD, or as we like to call them, “the last days.”

The Apostle Peter quoted Joel 2:28 to describe the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the congregation of the first believers in Jerusalem. Yet Joel also speaks specifically about the future:

**“Blow the trumpet in Zion; sound the alarm on my holy hill.”** (Joel 2:1 NIV)

**“Blow the trumpet in Zion, declare a holy fast, call a sacred assembly. Gather the people, consecrate the assembly...”** (Joel 2:15-16)

**“Let the priests, who minister before the Lord, weep between the portico and the altar. Let them say, ‘Spare your people, O Lord. Do not make your inheritance an object of scorn, a byword among the nations. Why should they say among the peoples, ‘Where is their God?’”** (Joel 2:17)

**“Be glad, people of Zion, rejoice in the Lord your God, for he has given you the autumn rains because he is faithful. He sends you abundant showers, both autumn and spring rains, as before.”** (Joel 2:23)

These quotes from Joel parallel the biblical Day of the Blowing the Shofar (2:1), the Day of Atonement (2:15-17), and the Feast of Tabernacles (2:21-28). The culmination of these events will be the forgiveness of Israel and God’s people around the world, the outpouring of the Spirit of God, and the restoration (“tikkun”) of the world!

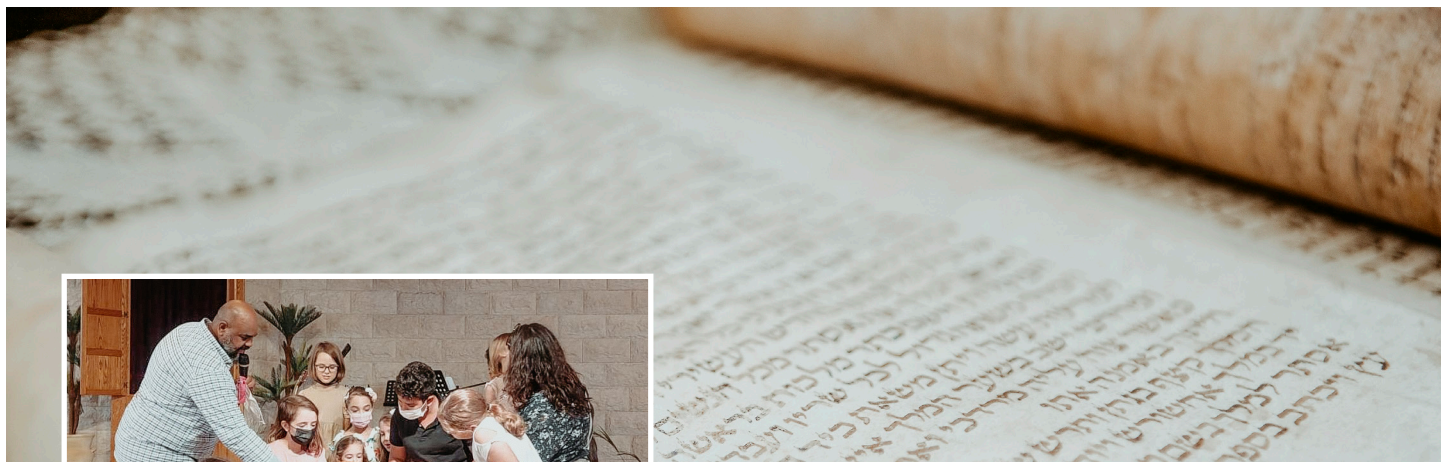
As we look at a world choking in fear of Covid, filled with rumors of war, inundated with disasters and fires; sometimes we think maybe this is “it.” But we don’t know. Yeshua encouraged us that no one knows the day or the hour, but we should wake up, be alert and ready for any good deed! And we will not miss out on the reward from the Lord!

## Please pray:

- For the humanitarian outreach of our ministry, as we help the needy in collaboration with the local municipality. We also continue to prepare hot meals for the elderly and lonely people. This project is growing daily.
- For the new school year at our Music and Art School which has begun. Your prayers are a vital part of this project.
- Stand with us in prayer for the Restoration of Yeshua’s name and boldness to proclaim it in Eretz Israel.

Thank you for your prayers and partnership.





## Making the scriptures real to our children - the cycle of Bible reading

We read the scripture in cycles, and if we are doing it right, hopefully by the time our children reach age 18, they will have gone through the Bible many times at increasing levels of internalization and application.

We finish and begin again, and the Word of God does not change. Sometimes children complain that they are bored. With this young, digitally occupied generation, it seems more challenging than ever to present the scriptures in a new, stimulating and *meaningful way*.

What can we do? One key lies in the secret of the Sabbath and the furtive forest flowers.

In our life cycles and routines, we need a combination of the known and the dependable, along with the spice of the fresh and different. We thrive on the security of knowing something expected will come, and we revel in the joy of experiencing the freshness of what hasn't been for a while.

The Word of God guides this combination.

- *Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.*
- *And you shall rejoice in your feasts.*
- *I have stored up Your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.*

Psalm 119 is the longest chapter in the Bible. The whole of the chapter is spent extolling, describing and prescribing the word of God. In Hebrew the chapter number 119 is designated as קי"ט. In modern Hebrew the word *kayt* (קייט) is a synonym for the word vacation - "That which is done with the purpose to bring rest or relaxation to the body and soul." This notion is reflected in verses 35 and 37: "*Direct me in the path of Your commandments, for there I find delight...revive me with Your word.*"

Of all the popular self-help strategies that are out there, one of the most promising is an app that claims to help you read whole books in record time. Successful people, they claim, read lots of books. As a literature and language major, I love to read, but in this era of easy entertainment, getting absorbed in a book is not as easy as it used to be. Sometimes daily reading of even The Book of Books can feel like a challenge or a chore.

So, how can the Word of God be both a vacation and a chore all rolled into one? It's a paradox, one that Solomon no doubt understood. The wisest man on the earth, when looking over his life clearly felt regret over things he had done against God's commandments. He also wrote these words in Proverbs 30:5, "*Every word of God proves true; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him.*"

In these days when "new" challenges require "new" solutions, let's remember that the living Word of God **is the perfect prescription that never changes, yet is new day after day.** It is our daily bread, the manna that never goes moldy and is always enough. It revives us, heals us, **and holds the remedies to all that ails us.**



# Struck by the Vast Difference



By Ariel Blumenthal

*Editor's note: Ariel and his Israeli-born wife Vered are leaders of the downtown Jerusalem branch of Revive Israel | Tikkun Global as well as elders in Ahavat Yeshua Congregation. They have a unique heart for the radical unity of Jew and Gentile in Yeshua. This is Ariel's story. Enjoy.*

I was raised in a Reform Jewish home in Connecticut, USA. I excelled in high school and was accepted to Duke University, where I began my studies in engineering. However, one late night in late 1985 as I pored over a programming piece on my Apple IIc I thought: *"I'm not sure I want to spend all my time crunching numbers and code; there must be more to life!"*

My search for higher meaning in life began right then. It took me far and wide. Eventually, I stumbled on the course "Intro to the Religions of Asia." The professor was a devout expert in Tibetan Buddhism, which he taught with flair and passion. I was hooked! The Four Noble Truths spoke deeply to my intellect and my increasingly hopeless struggle to find meaning. My fascination with Buddhism soon connected me to Japan. I decided to spend my junior year there, learning Japanese quickly and with ease, almost as if I was remembering the language rather than learning it for the first time. I meditated morning and evening. Many Japanese friends were convinced I was the reincarnation of a Japanese Buddhist monk!

After graduating from Duke, I returned to Japan to teach English in remote Yamaguchi, but soon my infatuation with Buddhism began to wane, as I struggled with paralyzing loneliness.

One night in the fall of 1991, I stood on a hill close to my Japanese home and gazed heavenward toward the stars. I was desperate, and for the first time in my life, I prayed with real intention: *"God, I don't know who you are or if you are, but someone must be behind this incredibly beautiful universe; I'm lost, confused and far from home; I don't know who I am. If you're real, please help me!"*

A few months later I found a job at a small Tokyo company with several Christians on staff. When they discovered I was a Jew, they began to speak about people, places, and events in the Bible—assuming that I would know what they were talking about. *I was embarrassed I knew so little about my own heritage.* Christians were starting to provoke this Jew to jealousy (Romans 11:12).

I bought an English Bible and began to read from Genesis. ***I was immediately struck by the vast difference between the lofty logic of the biblical narrative, as compared to the convoluted, animistic myths that I had studied***—from India, Tibet, China, and Japan. Faith began to take root. I sensed I was reading the *true testimony of the Creator*, and of the God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

My colleagues invited me to church. Young people from all over the world gathered in a basement hall where I heard the good news of Yeshua the Messiah for the first time.

I quickly made friends with a young Korean man. I knew how the Koreans had suffered from Japanese aggression and cruelty in the first half of the 20th century. When I asked my friend how he was able to live in genuine harmony with the Japanese, he said, *"It's simple: Yeshua forgave my sins and now I have to forgive everyone, even the Japanese."*

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Continued from page 7.

“But,” I replied, “why do you have to forgive them? You weren’t even born when all that stuff took place 70 years ago.”

“I know,” he said, “but it’s been passed down to us, it’s become part of our Korean identity—to hate the Japanese. But in Messiah, we have to forgive, we have to move on, we have to make a new future together.”

Well, this Jew was “convicted,” as they say. That night I couldn’t sleep a wink. I was well educated in the tragedies of the Holocaust, growing up with a brooding sense of calamity whenever I heard anything that sounded like German. Forgive? Can we forgive the Nazis? Impossible!

All night I wrestled with God and myself, discovering deep in my heart unforgiveness on many fronts. I knew the challenge: “... But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions” (Matthew 6:14-15). All I could do to finally get some rest was pray, “God, if Yeshua is really the Messiah and Savior, and the only one who can forgive our sins, then I want to know, I must know.”

A few weeks later, in June 1992, I attended a special outreach service with a passion play that depicted Yeshua teaching, healing the sick, answering his critics; and at the end betrayed, judged and sentenced to death on the cross. As I watched, **I began to weep and sob like a little child.** When the Roman guards whipped him, a strong internal voice not on the usual “channel” of my conscious thinking, said: “By his stripes, you are healed...” I was startled and knew beyond the shadow of a doubt that God was speaking to me.

I said, “Okay God... I’m ready to follow you.” Immediately, I was struck, physically and powerfully from within. My cold, Jewish/Buddhist heart of stone was removed and I was born again, given a new, living heart by the Holy Spirit. I received grace to repent of my sins, receive the Lord Jesus and the forgiveness of sins through Him. I began to share the gospel with Japanese and foreigners and was baptized in the Pacific Ocean.

Wherever the Lord has placed me since then, I’ve been “standing in the gap” with my “dual” Jewish/Gentile identity.

## One New Man

### Reconciling Jew and Gentile in One Body of Messiah

In *One New Man*, author Ariel Blumenthal unpacks the mystery found in Ephesians 1 and 2: God is reconciling Jew and Gentile together “in His flesh” through the cross of Messiah. Amazingly, Paul’s vision of the ecclesia as the “one-new-man” preserves the uniqueness of Israel, while simultaneously upholding the God-given identity and calling of every tribe, tongue, and nation. This powerful work of Jesus is the fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant and is at the heart of God’s redemptive plan to “restore all things” and Israel and the nations together in loving service to one another. The gospel for both, is at work in the world as God is reconciling people to Himself—and to one another (2 Corinthians 5:20).



This book also tackles “hot-button” questions about the role of Mosaic law in the life of believing Jews and Gentiles, dietary laws, Sabbath observance, law vs. grace, etc.

Ariel holds degrees in East Asian studies and theology. He is an Israeli citizen who lived for years in Japan and China, becoming a living bridge between them and the Israeli Messianic believers. His “heart for the nations,” led him to write this book.

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# REACH JEWISH ETHIOPIANS

IAMWITH  
ISRAEL

Dear Friends,

In the 1980s and early 90s, tens of thousands of Ethiopian Jews were transported to Israel to begin a new life. That was more than 30 years ago, but the Ethiopian Jews are still getting acclimated to life in Israel.

After the war in May, when the southern city of Ashkelon was targeted 1,000 times by Hamas rockets, we reached out to the mayor. We raised \$100,000 to help him renovate bomb shelters all over the city. We also befriended the director of the Ethiopian Jewish Community Center. He told us that when the sirens would sound, indicating they had about 15 seconds to take cover, there was simply no place for the 50 elderly Ethiopians to go.

Every day, dozens of Ethiopians come to the community center. The older ones come for the companionship and for the programs the team there offers. They have two small bomb shelters behind the building. The director asked us if there was any way we could build a large bomb shelter that could fit everyone. Israelis know it is only a matter of time before Hamas attacks again...not if, but when.

We agreed to help them. We know that we have friends around the world like you who also want to stand with these precious Ethiopian Jews. One of the ways that we share our faith in Yeshua our Messiah, specifically in Israel, is through humanitarian aid. Most of them do not know about the real Yeshua. After 2,000 years of Christian anti-Semitism, their view is distorted. Our goal is to show them the true face of the Messiah.

They understand that we are Messianic Jews and that our donors are mostly evangelical Christians who love the Jewish people. This becomes a powerful witness of God's love and compassion. Finally, we are taking up Paul's challenge to provoke Israel to jealousy through kindness (Romans 11:11, 22).

In addition to building them this bomb shelter, we are going to buy 20 brand new computers. These are not for the elderly but for the children. Every day after school, kids come to the community center to do their homework. Many of their parents do not speak Hebrew well and cannot help them. Tutors at the center are there to serve them, but their current computer equipment is completely outdated.

I feel such joy and connection with God's heart when we help these people. I know that you will, too. The Lord's heart breaks for the Jewish people, and he's looking to us, those who have found salvation in his son Yeshua, to show them His love.

It's going to cost \$90,000 to build a 50-person bomb shelter. There will also be a new state-of-the-art classroom for the children. The computers will be an additional \$20,000. Fortunately, we already have financial commitments from other ministries that want to help. I can't wait to give this wonderful Hanukkah gift to the Ethiopian Jewish community of Ashkelon. I promise to send pictures! In fact, we will make a celebration video. Please consider a generous gift to *I am with Israel* this month. Heaven will remember your loving sacrifice.

Ron Cantor  
Director, #IamwithIsrael  
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Building in the Eternal City

Build with us! Your partnership strengthens the establishment of a base of outreach, ministry, prayer, teaching, and an Acts 2 community for both Jew and Arab in the heart of the city of the Great King—Jerusalem.

## Yeshua Laments Over Jerusalem

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!'

– Matthew 23:37-39 (NKJV)

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Build eternal treasure in the Eternal City.