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He Must Increase...



By Asher Intrater

Sometimes we as leaders have been criticized for pride and for trying to credit things to ourselves and our own ministries. I want to begin by asking forgiveness of anyone who has felt that way, and for anything we have done that was borne of ego and exclusiveness.

Those are sinful and evil attitudes.

We believe that the correct attitude is just the opposite. May the Lord grant us grace to be able to walk in true humility and inclusiveness.

A wonderful example was given to us by Yohanan (John the Baptist) in John 3:27-30:

Yohanan answered and said, “A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, ‘I am not the Messiah,’ but, ‘I have been sent before Him.’ He who has the bride is the groom; but the friend of the groom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the groom’s voice. Therefore, this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease.

A person cannot take on credit, anointing, blessing or authority. That must come from above. All empowerment should be given, not taken. There is no place for selfish **ambition** in God’s kingdom.

When we see someone else blessed, we should give credit to God who has blessed the person in His grace. Therefore, there is neither any place for **jealousy**. Good things come from God. He loves everybody. No one “deserves” the grace they receive. God is just as desirous of blessing you as He is of anyone else.

We must also watch out, when we are endeavoring to “serve” God, not to think that we are the center of the narrative. John said, “I am not the Messiah.” Sometimes we see ourselves as the key person in what God is doing. That is wrong and self-deceptive. ***The story here is not about you; it’s about Yeshua.***

It seems to me that most men live in a **fantasy narrative** about themselves. There is a saying in Hebrew, “You are living in a film.” Many men (I suppose women also, but I know the male psyche better) are living as if they are starring in a movie; that all the others around them are just secondary “supporting” actors. It’s really embarrassing.

The real “movie script,” in which we are all players, has a central hero. It’s not me and it’s not you. It is Yeshua.



Continued on page 7.

Perilous Exodus and Dream Come True

By Avi Tekle

Sig'd ceremony in Israel



Fifty days following Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement), the Ethiopian Jewish community celebrates **Sig'd**, a special day of Thanksgiving in realizing the fulfillment of God's promises. This is an ancient practice among Jewish descendants from Ethiopia. In Ethiopia, it was commemorated with half a day of fasting and intercession, and the latter part of the day was spent breaking bread and feasting as a community. Still cherished among the brethren of Ethiopian Jewish ancestry, today Sig'd is also a nationally-recognized Israeli holiday. On this day we like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the miraculous nature of our own family's story and enjoy our Ethiopian-Jewish heritage.

The government-sponsored event in honor of Sig'd takes place at Armon HaNatziv, a beautiful promenade overlooking Jerusalem. This year we couldn't make it to the main event, but decided to drive to Jerusalem anyway and see if we could catch the afterglow. Arriving just after sunset, we watched as clusters of beautiful Ethio-Israelis of all ages walked about with joy-filled expressions, matching beautifully the breathtaking view of Jerusalem bathed in soft evening light. Unexpectedly, we ran into two young adult girls who knew our daughters from believing conferences. "Are you coming to the youth worship night at Succat Hallel?" they asked as if the answer was obvious. We thought – what a way to end this day of celebration: coming together with young Messianic Ethio-Israelis to worship Yeshua in Jerusalem. It felt as if we were walking into the fulfillment of this verse right before our very eyes: **"From beyond the Rivers of Ethiopia, My dispersed daughters, My worshippers, they will bring Me an offering"** (Zephaniah 3:10).

It was the perfect timing and location for our daughters to join a youth worship night. Both our daughters are worshipers in heart and calling, and would happily give up other plans for such an event. Upon arriving at the building, the first person who met us was a daughter of dear friends we had not seen in a long time. Yet another special touch from God to encourage us parents, that even now, God is fulfilling His promise not just in bringing us back into the Land, but causing us to walk into prophetic Messianic fulfillment, with our very own daughters coming together with others to *"bring an offering"* to God. We were doubly blessed to celebrate Sig'd and witness a generation of young Messianic Ethio-Israelis serving Adonai shoulder to shoulder, welcoming the King of Glory in worship!

2021 marks 30 years since my own arrival in Israel, and is the anniversary of the Operation Solomon airlift. Despite the fact that modern Israeli life is nothing like what the Ethiopian communities dreamed it would be, we see that God's grand plan has not changed. He is faithful!

As a tribute to God's faithfulness, we want to share excerpts from an article published in 2007 – the gripping story of our dear Aunt Webijig, a member of our congregation who made the ***miraculous, perilous exodus from Ethiopia to Israel*** decades ago...

Continued on page 6.

Meeting the Needs



By Guy Cohen

During our lifetime, we each face our own challenges and difficulties. Often, we go through these experiences with a sense that no one really grasps our inherent need to be understood and to feel warmth and acceptance.

Through people and experiences, we will, at the very most, only temporarily meet those needs. The only way to find long lasting contentment and gratification is through a personal relationship with Yeshua. Building that connection and embracing Yeshua as a true friend is the only way life will not ultimately be a disappointment. In Yeshua we find the answers.

We each have the need to be accepted but, all too often, through our own weaknesses, we are misunderstood. This can be one of the main reasons for division in a congregation. Unfortunately, this leads some to focus on internet or television edification where we can hide in anonymity. We must face the fact that each of us is liable to be hurt or misunderstood as well as be the source of hurt or misunderstanding.



The Source

In John 6, Yeshua fed the five thousand with two small fish and five small barley loaves.

What did the people see? A miracle.

What did the disciples see? Something brought forth from nothing.

What did Yeshua see? He saw the people and their needs, including being hungry.

“When Yeshua looked up and saw a great crowd coming toward him, he said to Philip, ‘Where can we buy enough bread for all these people to eat?’ He asked this only to test him, for he already had in mind what he was going to do.” (John 6:5-6)

My ego is an obstacle to God meeting people’s needs through me. I must die to self, for only when I am weak can I be strong. **“Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Messiah’s power may rest on me”** (2 Corinthians 12:9-10).

It is Yeshua working through us in the lives of others to meet their *needs* – not us. Let’s look to Him.

Advance Warning



By Leon Mazin



“They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will *think they are offering a service to God.*” (John 16:2 NIV)

In the days of Yeshua, the synagogue was not just a place of prayer and learning, it was the center of Jewish communal life. Yeshua’s forewarning was serious!

In today’s age, people’s feeling of social acceptance may be related to their job, college, hobby, and extended family. This is a general warning from God that, for the name of Yeshua, we may be subject to rejection.

I believe that in the coming outpouring, the inner fire and desire to glorify the true God will open believers’ lips in bold Gospel proclamation in a manner reminiscent of the book of Acts. With the outpouring, greater persecution is also coming. However, God’s Word encourages us all that His Spirit will give us enough ability, strength, and patience to stand in the truth at that moment.

There is absolutely no need to force events, yet we must understand that this is reality. It will happen one day, **“I have told you this, so that when the time comes you *will remember that I warned you.* I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you.”** (John 16:4 NIV)

Ministry Update:

At our weekly congregational worship gatherings, we feel the nourishment of the Holy Spirit, yet there are still numerous members that are fearful due to Corona. I ask for prayers for continuous strengthening in the Holy Spirit, and victory over fear!

With God’s help, we are opening an exercise gym, in the bomb shelter of our congregational building, for members of our congregation. In the future we hope to be able to open it to the public. God’s truth can be preached in many ways!

The humanitarian kitchen worked super hard all October, and many people were blessed! Many elderly, needy, and brand-new immigrants (with their families) come to us for support and guidance as they settle in their homeland.

As you know, Return to Zion has several educational projects. Over the past 14 years, the music school has served hundreds of people, not only with knowledge and talent development, but also with spiritual encouragement. We see it on the faces of both children and teachers.

Now we are in the developmental stages of an educational project which will teach computer science to young new immigrants. This project is to help low-income families educationally and vocationally. Please pray with us for God’s guidance.



Aunt Webijig's Exodus Story

The elders of the Jewish Council had given each family notice when to depart. On the appointed night 27-year-old Webijig, her father and three of her seven siblings set out to meet the guide whom they had hired for the price of one cow and a 50 birr (\$5) wristwatch to lead them through the desert. They were filled with excitement. The dream and longing for Jerusalem, passed down through the generations, were finally coming to pass.

Leaving the familiar outskirts of the village in the darkness, barefoot Webijig stumbled and fell. Her little four-year-old sister whom she had been carrying in a sling flew off her back and landed in the bushes. Webijig searched frantically but couldn't find her until she cried out. It was only after Webijig drew her close to her chest to quiet her, that she noticed the large and bleeding gash in her leg. Fearful of the barbaric night thieves, she carried her sister in her arms for some time so that they wouldn't hear the child's cry and attack.

The excitement of the journey carried them swiftly along the path that first night. As the dawn began to break, Webijig could suddenly see hundreds of additional families from her village and others, trudging along determinedly in the same direction. Her home already seemed a lifetime away. The sun was already hot at seven in the morning as they stopped to get some rest and hide from bandits.

After a fitful sleep, they woke and prepared for the night's walk, eating a small meal of dried meat, dabo kolo (a cracker-like snack), honey and water they had brought. With charcoal they smudged dark streaks on their faces, camouflaging to blend into the darkness and distort any physical beauty liable to appeal to the desperate lusts of the night thieves. When everything was ready, Webijig lifted her six-year-old brother onto the family horse and hoisted her little sister back up into the sling on her back.

For six weeks, Webijig and her family followed this same harrowing routine, night after grueling night, day after blistering day. At night, the sound of lions, hyenas and other wild beasts sapped their courage. In the day the sun beat down as they slept, drying out their exhausted bodies and baking the earth they slept on. Bandits besieged the families, stealing, assaulting and even killing. The more they walked, the farther they spread out one from another.



Webijig recently carrying her grandchild

One evening after walking a short distance, Webijig noticed that her aunt was no longer beside her. She went back and saw to her grief that her aunt had collapsed dead on the path! The family wept and stood in reverence for a moment. As they walked on, they saw other grieving families. At that same time they also heard the cries of a woman in labor walking with a family beside them. The family cried out in joy at the birth of a sweet new son, and Webijig was awed at the fusion of death and life together on the path to Jerusalem.

The physical adversity of the journey did not weaken their deep faith and desire to reach the Promised Land. "This will all be worth it," Webijig thought, "because when we arrive in Jerusalem we will wipe our feet with oil and draw milk and honey out of the earth." Webijig and her family envisioned a land of righteousness, and she and all the other journeyers determined that, "even if our hands and legs are cut off and our eyes cease to see, we will be content just to reach the Promised Land!"

After crossing the border into Sudan, they were in refugee camps for 9 months until being airlifted to Israel along with hundreds of other Ethiopian Jews to Israel by disguised Israeli planes from a remote rendezvous point. Webijig came to faith in the Messiah 3 years after her arrival in Israel.

"Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land."

(Ezekiel 37:21)



To whom does the bride belong?

In addition, Yohanan said that the “bride belongs to the groom.” The bride is the people of God. The groom is Messiah. The marital or bridal model here implies a bit of ownership - possessiveness likened to a man’s romantic and sexual feelings toward his wife.

This is just a parable; but the point remains. Yeshua wants the affection and attention of His people. They belong to Him. Sometimes we want to “credit” things as belonging to us; seeing other people as “our flock.” That is evil and selfish. And it makes Yeshua angry like a husband being angry at another man for trying to attract his wife’s attention and affection.

[This situation is reminiscent of political dictators who don’t want true Christians in their country, even though they know the Christians will be the best citizens, workers, and patriots. Why would a dictator be against them? Because he wants all the loyalty and affection to himself. Even though the Christians would be outstanding citizens, their heart devotion is to another Man.]

We need to learn a non-selfish kind of joy. We need to become joyful altruistically and vicariously. We are like the friends of a man who is about to be married. We are delighted and joyful at his opportunity to be with his wife. We share his joy at the wedding. We are not looking to draw attention and affection from the bride.

Shrink our egos

Finally, Yohanan said that Yeshua is to increase and he is to decrease. It is a natural human desire to want to increase. However, spiritual maturity sees the wisdom and correctness of decreasing. That is victory over soulishness and selfishness. We shrink our egos. Our goal is to see Yeshua “magnified” – that is, to be made bigger. We are delighted to decrease in the eyes of others as we see Yeshua increased to them.

The issue of inclusiveness means that we see God’s blessing as belonging to everyone together. It is not “mine” but “ours.” We hold the grace of God “in common”. When God does something wonderful because of His grace, we see it as a blessing to all. It is not “ours” and not just for our group, but “ours” to all who are servants of the Lord.

We include others in the blessing and the credit; we do not exclude others. We are not exclusive, like an elitist club, when it comes to the glory of God. It belongs to Him, so we stay HUMBLE. He gives it to all the saints, so we stay INCLUSIVE in our attitude.

Growing Through Discipleship

By Tal Haroni



At the end of September, right after the Fall Feasts, we started the third cycle of our extended discipleship program. The theme of this program is *Reclining at Yeshua's Side*. We have five first-time students, most of whom came to the Lord in the past year, and four interns who graduated from previous programs at our center. All are accompanied by our devoted staff, led by Youval and Valerie Yanay.

During discipleship sessions, we invite the students to join our daily life with the Lord. We do practical service work in the field of our "Third-Day Farm." We worship, immerse ourselves in God's Word, serve the poor and meet with various leaders and teachers who tell us of their walk of faith. All this happens in a family environment.

We have reached the middle of the program (at the time of writing), and have already seen major changes in the lives of the students. We are growing closer to each other, building a spiritual family and learning how to trust each other. The Lord has begun to work deeply on our identities as His sons and daughters.

One of the main themes in the Spirit that we have been pondering the last two weeks was the light of God. When we open our hearts to the light of God, we begin to see ourselves as we really are and to see Him as He really is. We all tell a story to ourselves, whether it's a story of how good we are, or how sinful. It can be a story where we are in a constant need of God to rescue us, or a story in which we are victims of our lives' circumstances. However, as His light illuminates the lies we have believed, we begin to truly see ourselves and Him.

But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. Therefore, He says:

**"Awake, you who sleep,
Arise from the dead,
And Messiah will give you light."**

See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. (Ephesians 5:13-16)

Without letting shame prevent us from coming closer to God, we let God see us, convict us, and change us into His image. Because God loves us, He doesn't want us to hold onto a negative image of Him, nor a negative image of ourselves. He wants to heal us and help us see the truth.

We would appreciate it if you could join us in prayer in this season. Pray for each student, intern and staff member to let the light of God shine and change us more into His image. Pray that all will finish this program in complete victory! Pray for unity in our staff, protection over our families and students as we work the land, drive to outreaches, meet with different teachers, and live life together.

We bless you with new hope, with joy that overflows and light that shines brightly from deep within you!



- **Tents of Mercy** – during Passover, feeding the needy in the Galilee (Yeshua's homebase).
- **Revive Israel** – supporting a rehab ministry and evangelism with Roni Rajuan.
- **Shavei Tzion in Haifa** – feeding the needy and elderly in Haifa.
- **Katzir Asher in Akko** – providing humanitarian aid, plus a scholarship project for women.
- **Urgent War Relief Fund** – when war broke out in May, you showered Israelis with much needed relief and love.
- **Revive Israel Discipleship** – you poured into young Israeli believers who, through farming and discipleship, were trained in evangelism, leadership and servanthood.
- **Shelanu TV** – reaching tens of thousands of Israelis with the good news of Yeshua in Hebrew!
- **Tiferet Yeshua Feed Tel Aviv** – You touched the modern day “lepers” —untouchables—as Moti and the team handed out food to the homeless (and got some of them into rehab!)
- **Ahavat Yeshua in Jerusalem** – reaching out to Ethiopian Jews by impacting their youth and feeding the hungry.
- **Messiah’s Mandate** – as they build a large bomb shelter in Ashkelon for the Ethiopian Jewish immigrant center, so they will not be trapped in terror the next time Hamas attacks with rockets.

The Apostle Paul (Rabbi Shaul) expresses what is in my heart toward you, ***“I thank my God every time I think of you! I always pray with joy, whenever I pray for you all, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.”*** (Phil. 1:3-5). I also think of Paul telling the Romans how powerful it is when gentile believers stand with the Jewish people, as he collected funds “for the poor among the saints in Jerusalem.” (Rom. 15:26)

The needs are great here, and meeting them is one of the ways we share the Gospel. After so many centuries of Christian anti-semitism we want to show them the true Jesus, the true face of the Messiah of Israel. And your gifts will do that!

If you have not yet been able to give a Year-End donation to bless Israel, you can give [RIGHT HERE](#).

Thank you!

Until all Israel is saved (Romans 11:26),

Ron Cantor

Director, #IamwithIsrael

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