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Discipleship Initiatives Sprouting



By Valerie Yanay

This spring's main discipleship training session, called "40 Days of Fire," began successfully on the first day of May.

We want to be "on fire" for the Lord, filled with love for Yeshua, and putting Him in the center of our lives. We started out with 8 students. Sadly, one of them had to drop out for now. He is a new believer from a religious background who experienced many traumas earlier in life. He heard the good news, came to visit and received Yeshua in his heart; but is still struggling to let go of his past. We know there is healing for him in Yeshua. Please pray that he would find peace and wholeness.

So now we have 7 students. Some are new believers. All are very thirsty for the Lord's presence. We started by getting to know each other and working together on the farm. On the second day, in addition to the teaching we had a great worship session out in the farming area. Then we heard each other's testimonies. It was very inspiring.

The students eat many of their meals with host families. Every day we open the Scriptures and go through chapters together. Several times weekly we help shepherd the goats, tend vegetables and prepare ground for planting on a large new slope. To prepare the ground we are removing rocks and old roots and building stone terraces. Other regular activities include field trips to feed and pray with the homeless in South Tel Aviv, as well as a weekly worship night open to visitors.

We spent Memorial Day and Israeli Independence Day with the broader community of families at the Yad Hashmona Messianic village. Then we had a day of hiking on the same ancient road to Emmaus mentioned in Luke 24:13-35, where two disciples' had an eye-opening walk with the resurrected Messiah (See photos).

Please pray for each of the students and staff to be strengthened in the Lord and know Him more.

In addition to the intensive Springtime session, we are also in the middle of a 9 month women's program called "Awake, Awake Deborah." Together we are putting off slumber and receiving God's grace to grow as women of courage and truth. Twenty ladies meet together for a full day once a month. Each time we address a different theme and serve together. It's simple but exciting.



Thriving in God-Given Ground



By **Hannah Tekle**

“Not that we dare to classify or compare ourselves with some of those who are commending themselves. But when they measure themselves by one another and compare themselves with one another, they are without understanding.” (1 Corinthians 10:12)

In the *dry weeks* following Passover, bristly hollyhocks suddenly appear across the landscape of Israel, thrusting skyward out of the *rocky soil*, often growing to the height of a man. Like accidental bouquets, clusters of bright pink blossoms are arrayed along the length of its slender stalk. Hollyhocks are a *surprisingly elegant looking flower for the harsh terrain in which they grow*.

At the top of the flower’s long stem grows a schizocarpic “mother” pod containing seedpods that will dry up at the end of the growth season. The dried seeds scatter in the hot wind of the late summer and are then watered in the winter rains before the next spring.

In recent years, this native Mediterranean wildflower has also been sown intentionally along highways and highway medians in northern Israel. Organic, “grass-roots” landscaping like this is one of my favorite things about Israeli aesthetics. In landscaping trends, there are those who prefer the ultra-manicured look, while others lean towards a wilder, more natural style. Both can be very attractive, but in this case, I prefer the wildflowers. When considering landscaping resources, choosing plants that naturally thrive in the local climate and soil, is smart.

Compared to the obedient impressiveness of manicured flowerbeds, wildflowers are so casually and surprisingly

beautiful, popping up in random and often not ideal spots. Like the Bristly Hollyhock, they just bloom where they land.



These striking pink beauties are so much taller than the plants around them – quite a contrast to the many delicate wildflowers that one hardly notices because they don’t stand out at all. People can be like that too. Some stand out and some do not. Yet, each person is fearfully and wonderfully made. God knitted each of us together in our mother’s womb. **He planted each of us in unique God-ordained soil of our own.**

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Will You Dream With Joseph?



By **Guy Cohen**

Jacob worked fourteen years to marry his beloved Rachel. Then for many years of their marriage, she was barren. Rachel at last gave birth to a son, Joseph, and he became Jacob's favored child.

When Joseph began receiving prophetic dreams about having authority over his brothers, and rashly told his family, you can imagine that they were less than thrilled. His brothers were already jealous and his arrogant attitude angered them even more. His father also became angry and yet "kept the matter" in his heart, wondering what Joseph's dreams might portend (Genesis 37:11).

If a dream or vision is truly from God, it will eventually come to pass, even though God will often allow other things to occur in the meantime. In Proverbs 29:18 we are told that we need vision to maintain restraint, not to "go crazy" as it reads in modern Hebrew. God sends dreams and visions in various forms and through various people and circumstances – especially through divine revelation of God's Word. Dreams and visions are not limited to a select few. They are meant to guide and direct us to God's plan and purpose.

We as believers need a vision, a direction, and a higher purpose for ourselves and those around us. We see in Philippians 3:14 how even through trials, we are called to press forward toward the vision and high calling. The first century believers lived under the oppressive rule of Rome. Despite these conditions, they were able to keep their eyes on Yeshua because they held fast to the promises that He had given them.

What are the dreams and visions we have received from God and how can we operate in accordance within the framework of our daily lives? We are called to be doers of the Word, to bring change to our society. We must remain alert and ready because the enemy will try to take our focus from God's purpose. Put aside distractions and run toward the prize!

Back to Joseph, the beloved son. Like him, we are also dearly beloved. However, unlike young Joseph we should always act in humility, led by the Holy Spirit. Also, be careful not to prophesy out of personal thoughts and desires, but through the leading of the Holy Spirit and the Word of God (Jeremiah 23:16). God will guide us through His Word, and through visions and dreams. Don't be discouraged or confused when God shows you something and time goes by without it coming to pass. Hold it close to your heart. Be patient and faithful, and the day will come when the words you received will become a reality.

God has so much that he wants to share with each of us! So let's move forward with hearts totally submitted to His guidance and with these encouraging verses in mind:

"For I know the thoughts that I think about you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope." (Jeremiah 29:11)

"Press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Messiah Yeshua." (Philippians 3:14)



A Wave of Refugees Has Begun!



By **Leon Mazin**

The whole world is focused on the situation between Ukraine and Russia, where both good and evil spiritual forces are active and giving rise to a flood of refugees. Among them, many are returning to Israel, bringing to mind this prophecy: **"...For I will RESTORE them TO THE LAND I gave their ancestors. But now I will send for many fishermen, declares the Lord, and they will catch them. After that I will send for many hunters, and they will hunt them down on every mountain and hill..."** (Jeremiah 16:15-16 NIV)

Thirty years ago, when the Soviet Union fell, there was a big wave of Aliya as Jews were at last able to leave the former USSR and come to Israel. Everyone said it was the time of "fishermen." And many believers (like fishermen), traveled around the former Soviet countries seeking out and encouraging Jews to return to the land of their fathers. Today, due to the war, in Europe there are already 4.5 million refugees from Ukraine. It is estimated that over 200,000 Ukrainians are Jewish or have Jewish ancestry and can (AND SHOULD!) come to Israel. We can see that many are already "running from the hunters" – fleeing from devastation and death.

This influx of people seeking refuge in Israel has greatly affected us here at Shavei Tzion. For many years we encouraged people to return to Israel (our very name means Return to Zion!). Up until now, immigration was in slow mode – most weeks we would help 2 to 4 families. In the last month at least 15 families a week knock on our doors, and we are getting non-stop phone calls regarding more who are on their way. We must enter the mode of intense mass Aliya.

So now we are gearing up to assist many. This means updating our stock of essential household goods (bedding, blankets, kitchen utensils, etc).

We are also recruiting additional volunteers. We want to see how our people serve, not only in practical ways, but also how they shine with the Light of the Lord.

I want to recruit you as well. Partner with us on this project! Our goal in 2022 is to release \$50,000-100,000 worth of assistance for new olim/refugees. To give, please go to www.ritg.org/shaveitzion.

This "exodus" from Ukraine is reminiscent of the one from Egypt. God allowed us to be born for these days and it is important to fulfill OUR ROLE in His great plan.

I want to conclude with these ancient prophetic words which are still so true today: **"And you will again see the distinction between the righteous and the wicked, between those who serve God and those who do not."** (Malachi 3:18 NIV)

Testimonies from those we have been blessed to help:

One refugee who left Ukraine with hardly more than a change of clothes thanked us in this way: "...I needed practically everything; the help was very important for me. Thanks to the humanitarian warehouse at Return to Zion. But also important were the kind words and the warm attitude of the hearts that I met here. Moved to tears, thank you!"

Another said: "We came from Ukraine. Return to Zion helped us with what they had. Wonderful friendly people who responded and helped us. Thank you very much! Having arrived from the war in Ukraine, this was very important, since a lot [of our possessions] had to be left there. Thanks to those who help and donate towards this project!"



Thriving in God-Given Ground

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The 1 Corinthians 10:12 Trap

Human beings have always compared themselves to one another. The first murder in history happened because one man compared himself to his brother, and wasn't happy with the comparison. Today our society still wrestles with the same plague of juxtaposition. We often feel compelled to compare ourselves those around us. Yet, just as each flower has its own unique traits and environmental needs, so do we.

These days, the presence of social media further encourages a culture of perpetual self-estimation through the mirror of other people's reactions and posts. However, the truth is **we are only able to shine in our God-given beauty from where we are rooted.** Our life circumstances, the family we were born into, our body, the color of our skin, all form the soil from which we then bear fruit. Ultimately, we determine whether or not to bloom where we are planted.

Social media touches on more than our own perceptions of self; it feeds our choices and preferences of community and our affiliations. With live-screened services and online resources available at a click, one's spiritual nourishment may be out-sourced remotely from a vast number of spiritual families. While new and different spiritual food can be healthy and energizing from time to time, comparing spiritual communities can be destructive – uprooting us, literally or inwardly, from our God-given soil.

Modern society, and perhaps our human nature, encourages us to seek the best, to detect and point out problems for the purpose of fixing or improving them, and in general to go for the highest common denominator. This is true about the food we eat, the spouses we choose, the living conditions we arrange for ourselves, and the list goes on.

The problem with comparison is that it has the potential to poison our roots while spreading toxic discontent to our alliances.

In contrast, God calls us to foster an environment, a “soil,” where each of us can become the best “versions” of ourselves, blooming as He intended. Rather than comparing ourselves to others, we should seek to enrich and enhance our surrounding habitat so that each brilliant “flower” compliments the other.

*“...the LORD will continually guide you,
And satisfy your soul in scorched and dry places,
Giving strength to your bones;*

*You will be like a well-watered garden,
And like a spring whose waters do not fail.*

*And your people will rebuild the ancient ruins;
You will raise up and restore the age-old foundations...”*

(Isaiah 58:11-12)



Counting in Anticipation for What God Is About To Do – The Omer Factor



By **Ariel Blumenthal**

God instructed Israel to count off the seven weeks after Passover leading to Pentecost (*Shavuot*). It is called counting the “Omer” – the wheat *ripening unto springtime harvest*.

Here in Israel, these weeks are filled with prophetic indicators of how God has already been present in the modern-day, miraculous restoration, preservation, and prosperity of His covenant nation. As believers in Israel and everywhere, may these **serve to sharpen our expectation** as we come to the end of the *Omer*, on the 49th day, *Shavuot*/Pentecost and the celebration of the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

It was also during this exact season two thousand years ago that the resurrected Yeshua shared with His disciples for 40 days about the Kingdom of God (Acts 1:3). Luke, the author of Acts, summarizes for us these 40 days of teaching and dialogue with that famous question from the disciples, “*Lord, are you now at this time going to RESTORE the Kingdom to Israel?*” (Acts 1:6). Yeshua’s teaching about the Kingdom had everything to do with the Davidic, Messianic restoration of Israel. The emphasis of the disciples’ question was about timing, *not* whether God was still planning to “restore the Kingdom to Israel.” We know this because of Yeshua’s response, “*it is not for you to know the times and seasons*” (Acts 1:7).

Six Prophetic Signs You Should Know

Amazingly, this period of counting the *Omer* (Leviticus 23:15-16 and Deuteronomy 16:9-12) is marked in modern Israeli history by the same issues of restoration and timing. There are six holidays, or memorials, during this time **that you should know about as we mark these times with anticipation over what God is about to do.**

1. **Yom HaShoah (Holocaust Remembrance Day).** On the 14th day of counting, the nation of Israel officially mourns the six million Jews killed by the Nazis. It also “celebrates” the Jewish resistance to the Nazis that began with the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising in 1943. There are many things in the life of Israel that parallel the life of Yeshua. The Holocaust was like a “national crucifixion,” which ended in 1945. Just as He rose from the dead on the third day, three years later Israel experienced a “national resurrection,” as the newly independent State of Israel was declared in 1948.

2. **Memorial Day.** On the 20th day of counting, we remember the fallen soldiers and victims of terrorism who paid with their lives to defend the State of Israel. As on Yom Hashoah, air-raid sirens are sounded throughout the country at an appointed time during the day, and everyone stops what they are doing to pay tribute.

3. **Independence Day.** On the 21st day of counting the Omer, immediately following the somber remembrances of Memorial Day, we celebrate the rebirth of Israel. This is the day, according to the Jewish calendar, when Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion officially proclaimed the establishing of the independent country of Israel on May 14, 1948. Today, Israelis celebrate with much joy, picnics, outings, fireworks, fly-bys of military jets, etc.

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Counting in Anticipation for What God Is About To Do – The Omer Factor

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4. **Memorial/Birthday of Theodore Herzl.** On the 28th day of the Omer, we remember the remarkable man who is called the “visionary/prophet of the country.” Herzl was a Hungarian Jewish journalist for whom assimilation into European high society was the greatest goal. But after witnessing some major antisemitic events in the 1880s and early 1990s – both in Eastern, and the supposedly “enlightened” Western, Europe – Herzl became the prophet and founder of the modern Zionist movement. His book, *Der Judenstaat* (The Jewish State), became the constitution for a generation of Zionist pioneers who laid the groundwork and infrastructure for the re-birth of the State of Israel. His story, and the speed at which doors opened for him (aided by many early “Christian Zionists”) to the halls of power in Europe and Istanbul, is an inspiration for how God can use one man to change history.

5. **Lag B'Omer** (the 33rd of the Omer). Just in case we forget during these heady times that this restoration of Israel is not yet *the* full, Messianic restoration prophesied in the Scriptures, we have this “un-holy-day.” Hundreds of thousands of ultra-Orthodox Jews light bonfires and visit the tomb of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai on Mt. Meron in northern Israel. Their hope is to receive some spiritual, “sparks” of power from the atmosphere around this dead rabbi, one of the founders of Jewish mysticism, or *Kabbalah*. Spiritually, it feels like a kind of Jewish Halloween, a celebration and worship of the dead. It is a potent reminder of how lost our people are without Yeshua, and how the Rabbis, in the absence of the Holy Spirit, have had to fill the void with pagan, quasi-Jewish spirituality. The day is full of references to false Messiahs and the anti-Christ, and should serve as a warning to Christians around the world today who are naively drawn to Rabbinic teachings through the wrong kind of Hebrew/Jewish roots teaching. Tragically, last year during lag b'Omer, 45 men and boys were crushed to death in a chaotic stampede on Mt. Meron.

6. **Jerusalem Day** falls on the 42nd day of the Omer. On this last celebration before *Shavuot*, we commemorate the reunification of Jerusalem during the Six Day War in 1967. Yeshua prophesied that Jerusalem would be “trampled underfoot by the gentiles until the times of the gentiles are fulfilled” (Luke 21:24). On this day 55 years ago, biblical Jerusalem (today’s Old City) was returned to Jewish control for the first time in 2100 years. It happened approximately, or even on the very calendar day, according to the biblical/Jewish calendar that Yeshua ascended to heaven from the Mt. of Olives in Jerusalem (Acts 1:9-11). This timing is no coincidence, but a sign of His soon return as the conquering King of Kings who will rule the nations from this city. Israelis come up to the capital from all over the country, to celebrate the day with many concerts and parades throughout the city.

Sharpen Your Expectation

May these remembrances, these signs of the times, encourage your heart to seek a fresh touch from the Holy Spirit, that we might all come to the fullness of the promise in Joel 2 and Acts 2:17-18.

And may we also be prepared to see the fulfillment of the rest of that prophesy (Acts 2:19-21; Matthew 24:15-31) as events lead up to His 2nd Coming.





Undergirding Families and Children in the Northwestern Galilee

After-school Outreach at Congregation in Port City of Akko

Dear Friends,

We are all endeavoring to raise our children to follow in the ways of Yeshua. We desperately want each child to understand the Gospel and embrace it. We know that the enemy is lurking, seeking to draw them away. Pastor Guy Cohen, of Harvest of Asher Congregation in northern Israel, is doing something about it.

“One of our main challenges in the body of believers in Israel as parents bringing our children up in the faith is that educational options for our children innately oppose Yeshua – both secular schools and Orthodox Jewish schools.”

In response to this need, a decade ago Guy and his wife began an after-school project at their congregational facility in Akko, which has since served over 100 children, helping undergird believing parents and their children.

The “magnet” program gathers together both Jewish and Arab children/teens from the region, for fellowship and enrichment. It is a welcome initiative to strengthen the younger generation in the faith, while at the same time teaching them to worship with musical instruments. Classes in art, robotics and table tennis are also part of the afternoon activities.

Unfortunately, three years ago, Harvest of Asher had to temporarily close the flourishing program due to a bureaucratic issue with the municipality and then COVID struck, making gatherings impossible.

But now, Guy and his team are excited to re-launch the project.

In their preparations, they draw inspiration from the Biblical blessings over the tribe of Asher, whose territory was the northwestern Galilee where Harvest of Asher is located – *“Asher is most blessed of sons”* (Deuteronomy 33:24). Concerning Revelation 7:6, Guy adds, *“We want to help prepare 12,000 representing the Tribe of Asher who can take their place in the 144,000.”*

Would you please consider supporting this endeavor to retain and empower the next generation of Israeli believers, both Jewish and Arab, in the northwestern Galilee? **The annual budget is \$70,000. They are asking for assistance to subsidize the costs of supplies, transportation and teacher’s salaries.** Your gift could snatch a young Israeli teen from the claws of the enemy. Your partnership will change lives here on the ground in the restored Zion.

To do so [click here](#).

Ron Cantor
Director, #IAmWithIsrael
REVIVE ISRAEL | TIKKUN GLOBAL

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