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# A Reason to Sing - My Redemption Story



By Paul Wilbur



Music has been a major part of my life for as long as I can remember. At age nine my Jewish dad handed me a Sears Silvertone guitar that would mold and direct my life and future in more ways than I could have imagined. Writing and recording music in real studios in Manhattan while still a teenager made it clear that music would be more than just a hobby for me. I went on to major in music at a prestigious undergrad college in Cleveland, Ohio where I gained a love for opera and sacred Jewish music, and then studied privately in Milan, Italy for a time. Back to Cleveland to teach high school vocal music and guitar classes for two years, and then on to Indiana University for a Master's degree to polish up my vocal skills before looking for stages to work on.

It was during a reluctant Sunday morning 'date' with my attractive accompanist that my life would take a dramatic turn. The only reason I was in church that day was because I was interested in the young lady sitting next to me. There I was, minding my own business, *when I heard a sound*. A young man about my age (27ish) had come to the stage to sing a 'special' to open the service. **I was being moved by what I heard, but I wasn't exactly sure why!** I could tell that he was singing to someone he actually *knew*, not just someone he had heard about. I remembered singing Hebrew in the Temple choir sitting next to the Cantor, but not ever feeling this kind of 'closeness' to God.

The feeling I had that morning was strangely comfortable and yet unsettling. I wanted to hear more, but the visitor left the building and the service was over. I returned to the church auditorium several Sunday evenings after this experience and asked some folks where I could find the young man whose song had **stirred my soul**.

No one seemed to know who I was asking about, so I dropped the inquiry. Then one Sunday evening the pastor made me an offer I couldn't refuse; a free dinner! All I had to do was sign the attendance pad and I would be assigned to a church family for next Sunday night's dinner. The dormitory cafeteria was always closed Sunday night, and so a free meal was absolutely the best way into the heart of a starving graduate student putting himself through school.

As I prepared to visit my hosts' home the next Sunday evening for my free meal, I had no idea what to expect. I walked up the sidewalk and knocked on the apartment door, and what?...there he was...the young man who had sung the song and moved me so many weeks before! I couldn't believe my eyes! *"It's you!"* I said, with my jaw hanging wide open, enough to capture any fly in the vicinity. After dinner we spoke at length, but not about music as much as the reason for singing. Another week later I was riding with Jerry and a couple of his friends from church on a fishing trip to Bumpus Mills, Tennessee. That night before bed Jerry shared his personal testimony with me. I knew this was what I was looking for my whole life...**a reason to sing!** Early the next morning on a walk by the river I met Yeshua. I offered Him my life and my song; He accepted, and now I travel the world to make music that moves the hearts of men.



# Is Your Love Growing Cold?



By **Eitan Shishkoff**

There she was, standing in my kitchen cutting up vegetables. From the moment I saw her I instantly knew she was my true love.

Now, over 53 years later, I can truthfully say that I have never doubted what I felt in that moment. *Has my passion cooled at times?* Have we ever experienced tension, disagreement, misunderstanding? Have the demands of raising children, work, moving across the globe... at time caused weariness—a cooler temperature to our love? Yes. Yet, every time, by mutual choice, we have forgiven each other and pushed “restart” on our tenderness.

Reminds me of Yeshua’s warning to us as believers entering the demands of the end times.

*And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars...nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places... And because lawlessness will abound, **THE LOVE OF MANY WILL GROW COLD.*** (Matthew 24:6,7,12)

## “I Can Feel a Dullness Coming On”

Yeshua warned that during the end times chaos and iniquity, the love of many will grow cold. That’s becoming easy to picture. Even while I write this article, I can feel a dullness trying to come on me: There’s just SO much to process. Yesterday I watched a documentary about one tribe being slaughtered in Ethiopia by another. Human atrocity. Unbearable suffering. Ukrainian corpses in the streets. If that wasn’t enough, acts of terror marred Jerusalem, and multiple shooting incidents, the USA.

While the loveliness of our Lord is not one whit diminished, these times can be overwhelming, intimidating, and confusing.

*Our love is confronted by the intensity of a world spiraling out of control.* Even if physically we are in survival mode, our focus must be on our primary reality: Your relationship with God is THE most important thing in your life in these last days. Given the circumstances around us, it’s hard not to harden your heart. But the crucial need is for the exact opposite response.

## Who’s Bringing Salvation in Ukraine?

You may have seen the photos and videos of Ukrainian believers praying and worshiping DURING deadly attacks by the Russian forces. They’re seeking God in the bomb shelters. They’re gathering to give Him praise while bombs are falling. What’s happening there right now, spiritually? Many people are coming to faith.

When the chips are down and people are suffering around me, who’s going to help them find God? Only those whose LOVE has not grown cold, only the ones who pursued God and kept the fire burning. When our fire has cooled, it’s time to blow on it, like a *campfire that’s burned down to the embers.* “*A fire shall always be burning on the altar; it shall never go out*” (Leviticus 6:13).

## An Urgent Message From Yeshua

The ancient city of Ephesus was the most important city in Ionian Asia Minor. A thriving port on the Aegean Sea, it was a center of trade, culture, and pagan religion. Yeshua addressed the congregation there in Revelation 2:2-5. He recognized their works, their labor, their patience, and their intolerance for evil. Albeit, they had persevered...Yet he reprimanded them, “*But I have this against you: **you have let go of the love you had at first***” (Revelation 2:4).

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# Forgive Them



By **Guy Cohen**

In the last month the Spirit of God breathed into my spirit to emphasize forgiveness – *God forgiving man, and man forgiving man*. We are living in a world where people find it easy to offend and take offense. The reason is that they are selfishly focused on their own pain more than that of their neighbor.

We are in the end times, and the Scriptures say that the time before Yeshua's return will be a season of great crisis. When man looks toward his own challenges and pain with an unforgiving spirit, he brings death upon himself, and wickedness grows. We must find ourselves in the One who overcame offence, fear, pain and anger: Yeshua, who took it all to the cross, and said: "*Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do*" (Luke 23:34).

There on the cross, the lowest point in Yeshua's life was the highest for all mankind. It reminds me of how God provided the bronze snake for the people of Israel to look upon and be healed from deadly poison (Numbers 21). He made a way then and now to rid ourselves of the poison of unforgiveness and resentment – by looking to Yeshua, not our ego and pride.

Yeshua prophesied that He would be "lifted up" and offer His life on the cross (John 3:14). All of humanity must look toward Him, the source of all forgiveness. Even if the world turns upside down, when I have Yeshua in my heart and am focused on His sacrifice, His lowest point; then the place where everything looks impossible, becomes the place where He provided me with forgiveness. There I am reconciled to the Father and forgiveness flows from within me and out towards my neighbors (2 Corinthians 5:18).

Beloved, this is our time to find that forgiveness in Him. Let us become the priests He has called us to be, interceding for the eyes of mankind to be turned to Yeshua. We are living in times when the wickedness in the world is growing, times of gross immorality, when bad looks like good and good looks like bad. But be strengthened in the knowledge that Yeshua came and we have been freely given the gift of forgiveness to cover our sins: past, present and future.

In order to unconditionally forgive another person we must expect nothing in return. Their actions are between them and God. Only God can help us set our ego aside and seek the release of the other person into God's hands, praying "Father, forgive them" over those who hurt/offend/annoy us. This is not an easy or natural thing to do, but it is a big key to life!

*"When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Messiah. **He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the charge of our legal indebtedness, which stood against us and condemned us; he has taken it away, nailing it to the cross. And having disarmed the principalities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross.**"* (Colossians 2:13-14)



# Of Weddings & Exiles



By **Leon Mazin**

Shalom friends, first of all, I want to thank you for your prayers and financial support. You are an integral part of our service before the Lord.

## A Family Blessing

Let me share some exciting family news. Most of you do not know that my eldest daughter has been engaged for some time to Elijah, the son of a Messianic pastor from Minsk (the capital of Belarus). For nearly a year, the Israeli Ministry of Internal Affairs refused him entry into Israel. Many of you know of these nuances in the life of Israeli Messianic believers. Faith has a price, and sometimes patience is an important part of our walk with the Lord. After much waiting, Shirley and Elijah were finally reunited, and on May 27th Eitan Shishkoff performed their wedding ceremony. We all rejoiced to witness what God had brought about. It was a beautiful event, and I am sorry I can only share a few photos! Words can hardly express the satisfaction Nina and I feel, together with an overwhelming gratitude to the Lord!

## The Eagle Project Returns

After a long lull due to Covid restrictions, together with my assistant Evgeny, we made a productive trip to Norway to relaunch the **Eagle Project**. We met with friends and partners who help minister to Israeli young adults after they complete their army service, and we are now including pre-military participants. With God's help, we will reach new horizons in working with youth.

The Eagle Project was extremely active before Covid and renewed the faith of many young people. Of the 60 people who went through the program, eight became youth leaders in their communities, and five weddings took place. Thank God for new families!

All that was just on the side of the Israeli participants. Young people from Norway, Taiwan, Japan and Korea have joined the effort; and we look forward to seeing how God will lead as we continue to follow Him in this endeavor.

## New Immigrant & Refugee Report

April, May and June were record-breaking months for immigration/aliyah with 60% of the returning exiles coming from Russia and Belarus and 35% from Ukraine. Thanks to you, we have been able to help them massively with household goods such as bedding and kitchen utensils.

We would have expected more newcomers from Ukraine. Where are they? Unfortunately, many of those eligible for Aliyah to Israel still prefer the Diaspora of Europe. And yet Scripture says, "Return to your land"! So as people of faith who know the Trumpet Voice of God, let these words serve to raise up in you a prayer for Aliyah. In Ukraine, there are as many as 400,000 people eligible to receive Israeli citizenship. These people are a potential new strength for Israel and for the Lord!

Peace and blessings upon you from the Lord God and His Son, Yeshua the Messiah!



# Is Your Love Growing Cold?



Continued from page 3

## What Does First Love Look Like?

I began this article by recalling the moment I fell in love with Connie. Easily, I remember our early days together. It was like a dream. I could scarcely believe that I had found my true love. We couldn't get enough of each other. I wanted to learn all that I possibly could about this Jewish "maideleh." We were so in love that we honeymooned in a mountain cave and were happier than in a honeymoon suite on the Riviera.

Fast forward 26 years. Now we were living in Israel, planting a Hebrew-speaking Messianic congregation. Few members had cars, so we were filling our vehicle on the way to services and taking people home afterward. Our praise and worship was in Hebrew, Russian, and English; so we copied fresh transparencies for the overhead on the way to our building. I was both worship leader and preacher – all in my broken Hebrew. I was preoccupied with creating a spiritual community from scratch. Meanwhile, my wife Connie was caring for our multi-generational family. Our children were 25, 22, 7, and 2. At times I slipped into impatience and irritation toward her, a far cry from my First Love.

## Works Must Flow Out of Love

Why did Yeshua rebuke the Ephesians? Because they were like Martha, bustling about serving. There's nothing wrong with serving. But it bugged her that Miriam just sat at the Master's feet. He said "*Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her*" (Luke 10:41,42). Our serving must flow out of our loving to be in in His presence (Matthew 5:14).

## How Can We maintain Our First Love In the Last Days?

**First**, I need to become an expert in receiving God's perfect love – to remember that my very existence is the result of God's love. And, that I am created for His pleasure.

One way to renew that love is to "look up." In describing the tribulations of the end of days, Yeshua said "*Now when these things begin to happen, look up and lift up your heads, because your redemption draws near*" (Luke 21:28).

**Second**, I need to refocus on my Savior, my Shepherd, the Lover of my soul. Why did He become one of us? Was it not to relate with and identify with us and to make God's love utterly personal? Love in human relationships is about BEING together, spending time together, DOING things together. Why should it be any different in my relationship with Yeshua my Messiah? What causes me to drift from my first love for Him? I easily become too busy – even busy seeking to serve Him. Also, my attention veers away from my Redeemer onto myself. Ugh! That's really the worst, because when I obsess on me (my feelings, thoughts, desires, mistakes, comfort) I lose sight of the One whom to love is life itself.

**Third**, it's time to respond to God's love with all my heart. Asked about the greatest commandment, Yeshua replied "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength*" (Matthew 22:37). Love is an issue of the heart.

Where is your heart? Where is mine? What are my fondest desires? Where am I investing my mental and emotional energy? I understand that we have jobs, bills, kids, responsibilities. But God also knows that and can empower us to walk in our love for Him while we are faithful to those depending on us.

Beloved, it's time to reflect, to ask, to pray. "Lord, what's pleasing to you and what's not, in my life? I want to love you better. I make you my center. I'm listening afresh for your voice. **I'm fanning the embers of my heart to burn and keep burning toward you.**"



# Report on Revive Israel Discipleship Session

By **Yuval and Valerie Yanay**

We just completed the 6th intensive discipleship session to be held in the last 24 months. The full-time, immersive program was called “40 Days of Fire.”

Our time together was rich with activities and service. We worked on the organic community farm and held daily prayer and worship sessions. They take place both on our base in the community’s worship room and outside in nature on the farm grounds. Bible study is one of the most important ingredients in our program as we go through the Word of the Lord together. We hold our Bible study sessions in a discussion format and not as a lecture. The students are encouraged to participate and even lead Bible studies on their own.

We came into a deep place with the Lord and witnessed breakthroughs with both physical healing and inner healing. Yet, at the same time we experienced a lot of attacks – light sicknesses and small accidents that really “squeezed” our little community. We spent time in the hospital with one of the students who had an epileptic seizure. Twice students had a sprained ankle and we had to go with them to the clinic.

However, God watched over us and protected us from the bigger dangers at our doorstep. Once, as we returned from a field trip serving in a dangerous area in Israel, adjacent to Palestinian territory, we almost got into a serious accident with a truck.



At the last second God moved the car and saved us. Another miracle is that we encountered no venomous snakes during the whole period of our work on the property. We are working in the Israeli summer – moving rocks and building dry stone agriculture terraces and clearing bushes and thorns. Snakes are very common in Israel during the summer season, especially the viper. None of our students has ever been bitten by a viper, and we saw neither viper nor scorpion during the program.

According to their testimonies, the students were very encouraged and experienced personal breakthroughs. During the program the students could see healthy family life in our staff families that were open before them. They ate with us and even slept in our homes. They connected with our children and could see the love that we have in our families. That experience brought the students to a restored place in the way they see family, parenthood and family life in the Kingdom.

During the program the students received practical tools and hope to internalize life in the Kingdom of God. They were strengthened to more reflect the nature of Jesus and make the Kingdom of God visible. The participants have returned to their studies and jobs, and already now we hear testimonies that their lives have changed and that they are thirsty for the Kingdom of God more and more every day. Hallelujah!

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# Report on Revive Israel Discipleship Session

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## Testimonies from student participants in the discipleship program 40 Days of Fire – Springtime 2022

M: Joining the program was a small miracle in itself. I have seen evidence of God at work...and I feel less stressed and more relaxed after a long period of stress in my life. I learned that God does not discriminate between people. Each of the disciples in the program had their place, and God used each of them...each member of the body is important. I realized that, as a group, if we did not get the right results in what we aimed to do, then we all needed to make some kind of adjustment together. I stopped blaming, judging and discriminating. It helped me decrease the negativity, which provides an opening for Satan. Something changed in me. I realized that we need to work together and help each other and not look at each other's problems.

T: I thank God for getting me out of the depression I was in. With the help of others, I was able to make a decision to join the program and go through the healing process. I was able to release the pain I had from the past through prayer. I thank God for the power of prayer in my life.

D: Sometimes it's hard for me to hear God's voice. But today as a result of the teaching I heard, I was able to get the "tools." ...I heard His voice instructing me to do something.

B: This discipleship program for me was a place of first steps in leadership. I have found that if I accept the authority of my superiors I can also use the authority that God has given me. I felt that the Lord emptied me of misconceptions from the past. And now he can start working through me...I learned not to do things alone, my heart has expanded, and I want to do more things together, teach and help others.

DA: God taught me the great value of friendship when the Lord is the foundation. He taught me to love Him, and through Him to love others as well. I learned that hearing the Lord is one thing, but sometimes you are meant to

share what He says and sometimes you are not meant to. Through farming, and the guidance of the staff I learned to see the land spiritually as a parable; I saw thorns as unforgiveness in our lives and the rocks we were removing, as lies. I felt I was doing something effective. Thanks to the connection with creation I learned more about the action of God, how He relates to His creation.

DV: I received much of God's healing mercy. This time gave me peace of mind and renewal, to return to my first love with God. It was a much needed break, a timeout. I enjoyed the physical work. I used this time to declare things over my life – every stone I removed from the field, I moved in faith. "It's another stone being removed from my life," and another and another...God has given me comfort and confidence in Him.

A: At first I had a hard time because I was uncomfortable being in the full-time framework...God literally showed me that this is a spiritual war. I felt there was a change at some point. I have learned that my words have power, power to encourage and help others, and it is important what I have to say. I understand that I am in process, there is still a long way to go. I really liked working with the soil. I learned new things in agriculture and enjoyed telling others about the phenomena in nature.







# IAM WITH ISRAEL

Dear Friends,

Recently an Arab Christian policeman named Amir Khoury, 32, was killed by a terrorist while protecting the Ultra-Orthodox neighborhood of Bnei Brak, just outside of Tel Aviv. His police-partner succeeded in neutralizing the terrorist, but not before five innocent people were murdered.

The Christian Friends of the Magen David Adom (CFMDA) is a group of believers who support Israel's version of the Red Cross medic volunteer organization. (A Magen David is a star of David.)

“The objectives of Magen David Adom include... first-aid services; maintaining a storage service of blood... instruction in first aid... operating a volunteer program... mobile intensive care units; transportation of patients, women in labor, and evacuation of those wounded and killed in road accidents.”

Recently my wife Elana was asked to join the board of the CFMDA. We met with Ambassador Danny Ayalon and his wife Anne who is the president of CFMDA. I asked Anne about some of their upcoming projects. After she shared a few of them she mentioned that they want to dedicate a "medi-cycle" to the memory of Amir Khoury—the Arab Christian policeman who was killed.

As soon as she said this I responded that we would pay for it. *And by we, I mean you and me :-).* These are high tech motorcycles that deliver life-saving aid, weaving through traffic, to get to those in need. Just the other day while in Jerusalem, I heard dozens of sirens. Within a few minutes I was at the scene of a terror attack. And one of the first things I saw was one of these medi-cycles.

Think about this, a Messianic Jewish ministry is raising funds from international Christians to bless the Israeli “Red Cross,” by honoring the memory of an Arab Christian who died protecting Orthodox Jews. What an opportunity to be a witness!

Once the motorcycle is purchased, we will have a big ceremony with the family of Amir Khoury. I have no doubt that Orthodox Jews who are grateful for his sacrifice will be there and will hear of your generosity.

## Matching Funds!

And here is some amazing news. We need to raise \$50,000. I shared this with a couple from the United States who loves Israel. They agreed to match every dollar you give up to \$25,000. If you give \$100 they will match it with \$100. If you give \$50, they will give \$50. We'd like to raise all these funds by the end of August.

We will be sure to video the ceremony and share it with all of you.

Thank you so much for loving Israel.

You can give at [\[link\]](#) or use the enclosed response card.

Ron Cantor  
CEO, Tikkun Global  
REVIVE ISRAEL | TIKKUN GLOBAL

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