

# ISRAEL'S RESTORATION

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# PRAY FOR MY ENEMIES!?

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"For the restoration of all things." (Acts 3:21)

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# WHEN HOPE SEEMS LOST



By **Jeremiah Smilovici**

There are moments in Scripture — and in our own lives — when everything appears to be collapsing. Promises seem lost. Hope feels irrational. Faith is stretched beyond logic. And yet, when we look closely at God's story, we discover a striking pattern: the moment that looks like the end is often the moment just before God's greatest breakthrough.

One of the earliest and most powerful examples is the story of Abraham and his son Isaac. In Genesis 22, God asks Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice — the very son through whom God had promised to establish His covenant (Genesis 17:19; 21:12). From a human perspective, this command contradicted everything God had spoken before.

And yet Abraham obeyed.

The New Testament gives us insight into what was happening inside Abraham's heart. Hebrews 11:17–19 explains that Abraham believed God could even raise Isaac from the dead. This is astonishing faith. At that point in biblical history, there was no recorded resurrection. No precedent. No testimony to rely on. Abraham trusted God beyond experience, beyond logic, beyond understanding.

At the very moment when it seemed Abraham was about to lose everything, God intervened (Genesis 22). Isaac was spared, and God reaffirmed His covenant blessing. What appeared to be the end became the gateway to greater promise.

This pattern reaches its ultimate expression in the crucifixion of Yeshua. From the disciples' perspective, the cross was total disaster. Their Messiah was dead. Hope was gone. Everything they believed had collapsed in a single afternoon (Luke 24:17–21). Even the powers of darkness believed they had won (Luke 22:53). But heaven was telling a different story.

On the third day, Yeshua rose from the dead (Luke 24:6–7). What looked like defeat became the greatest victory in human history. Through His resurrection came forgiveness of sins (Romans 4:25), reconciliation with God (2 Corinthians 5:18–19), and true freedom for humanity (John 8:36). The cross was not a dead end — it was the doorway.

Scripture also points us forward to a future moment that follows the same pattern. In Zechariah 12–14, we read of a time when all nations come against Jerusalem. The city is attacked. Captivity and devastation follow. Everything appears lost. And then — at the darkest moment — Yeshua appears, stands on the Mount of Olives, and fights against the nations that came against Israel. Deliverance comes both physically and spiritually, fulfilling the promise of Romans 11:26. Apparent total destruction becomes national and spiritual redemption.

**This is not only biblical history — it speaks powerfully to our present moment.**

We are living in days of distress. We see injustice, oppression, and suffering across the world. It may feel as though darkness is advancing and hope is fading. And sometimes, things do get worse — before they get better.

But Scripture teaches us this truth again and again: God often does His greatest work at the point where all human hope seems exhausted (Psalm 46:1; Isaiah 60:1–2).

**If you are facing personal crisis, or watching the world unravel and wondering where God is — take heart.** The moment that feels like the end may be the moment God is preparing His greatest breakthrough.

**Hold on.**

**Because in God's story, when hope seems lost, glory is often closer than we think.**



# GREEN AND GROWING



By **Hannah Tekle**



There's an expression in Hebrew: "to wash your eyes with green" (lishtof et ha'ainayim b'yarok). It means to look at beautiful natural views and feel renewed inside. In the rainy winter season, Israel's hills and valleys become a living canvas of green. After the long brown summer, the land erupts into luscious, extravagant shades of life.

The Bible often uses trees from this very landscape to describe the spiritual life of a person.

Consider the **"willow of the brook"** (*\*aravei nachal\**). Psalm 1 paints a vivid picture: **"...He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither."** Willows grow near a constant water source. The lesson is simple: spiritual vitality depends on **staying close to the Source**. When life becomes dry, when pressures mount, the answer is not to wander but to draw nearer to God.

In contrast, the **"tamarisk"** (*\*eshel\**) thrives where there is no visible water at all. Abraham planted a tamarisk in Beersheba (Genesis 21:33), at the edge of the desert. This tree survives harsh, dry conditions by drawing moisture from the air itself. It teaches a different but complementary lesson: there are seasons in life when obvious sources of encouragement are absent. Prayers feel unanswered, circumstances feel barren. In those times, we learn to **draw from what cannot be seen**. Faith becomes the moisture in the air. The tamarisk reminds us that growth is still possible, even when the landscape of our lives feels desolate.

The **"acacia"** (*\*shita\**), from which the Tabernacle was built (Exodus 25:10), is known for its deep root system that pulls water from far beneath the surface. The Israelites carried the presence of God in a structure made from this desert tree. The lesson: a shallow root system cannot sustain a person through difficulty. Only those **who send their roots deep into God's Word and character** can endure the long, hot seasons of life. What is hidden below the surface determines what is visible above it.



Then there is the **"Jerusalem pine"** (*\*oren\**). Its pine cones open and release seeds in extreme heat. Fire and pressure are not the end of the pine's life cycle—they are conditions that enable new growth. This mirrors Romans 5:3–4: **"Suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope."** Some seeds in our lives only open in seasons of intense pressure. Trials do not merely test us; they **release future growth**.

What a beautiful thing that the trees are all green but each with its own unique shade and unique message about growth, vitality, and fruitfulness. So it is with people. **God did not design us for a single set of perfect conditions**. He designed us to grow in many environments—beside streams, in deserts, in deep soil, and even in fire. The *challenges* we face are not obstacles to growth but invitations to develop deeper roots, stronger faith, and closer dependence on Him.

When we "wash our eyes with green," we are reminded that growth is God's intention for both nature and humanity. The trees become a living parable. Like the willow, we must stay near the Source. Like the tamarisk, we must learn to draw from unseen faith. Like the acacia, we must send our roots deep. Like the Jerusalem pine, we must allow pressure to open what lies dormant.

Green is the color of a life that refuses to wither. It is the evidence of a person who, regardless of conditions, continues to grow toward the destiny God has planted within them.

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# BAR AND BAT MITZVAH — ARE THEY REALLY THE SAME THING?



By **Leon Mazin**

As a matter of fact, they are. It is the age when a child becomes personally responsible before the Almighty for their behavior (literally becoming a son or daughter of the commandment).

Traditionally, a boy is called up to the Torah scroll, whereas an Israeli Bat Mitzvah (the coming of age of a girl) is often reduced to just a party. However, it's different in our Congregation. Here a girl also takes responsibility before God: she studies, understands and reads from the Torah herself.

## And now, several prayer requests:

Our *three Congregations* are located in Haifa, Kiryat Haim (Suburb of Haifa), and Nof Ha-Galil (Upper Nazareth). We are grateful to God for blessing us and generating our “dynamics.” This is not an easy time for Israel — we are at the epicenter of events and are directly or indirectly attacked by many enemies. It makes me recognize a sense of distraction and paralysis across many spheres: among politicians, in the economy, and simply in human relations. This also leads to weariness, and we need a Divine impulse! So, I ask you to pray for us.

*Keshet Tzlimim' Music School* is a “home” for 130 children. This is a significant project and a serious investment of finances, wisdom, and professionalism. As we enter this season of concerts, we want to pray for the anointing of the Spirit. We pray that we might touch the hearts of parents, children and all our guests with God's love beyond what words can say.

For many years, we have been dedicated to *humanitarian aid*. We distribute food parcels to those in need, provide gifts for new immigrants, and prepare hot meals for those who are physically unable to cook for themselves. Recently, we've had the opportunity to join the 'Kitchen for the Homeless' Project in Haifa. Together with a group of fellow believers, we are now providing hot meals to about 100 people several days a week! This is a small start to what could become a major project. I ask for your prayers.

Update on the '*Shivat Tzion' Exhibition Project* of the ingathering from the exile: we're moving forward, though not as quickly as we had hoped. Please pray for us. I truly believe this project will draw in crowds of local Israeli tourists and serve as a living letter for everyone to read.

Preparations are in full swing for the '*Nesher*' summer Project, where we send pre-army young adults to a youth village in Norway. Our experience in 2025 was truly magnificent, and we are praying that 2026 will likewise bring much good fruit, faith, Gifts of the Spirit, and encouragement to our young people!

Thank you for your prayers and for standing with these ministries. We keep you in our prayers. Shalom in Yeshua the Messiah!





# PRAY FOR MY ENEMIES!?



By **Guy Cohen**

The story of Jonah is not just the “adventures” of a prophet.

It's also an ongoing challenge that confronts every generation.

How do we respond when the God of Israel *extends His mercy toward those we consider enemies*? Nineveh was not a neutral city but the capital of Assyria, a violent imperial power and a direct threat to Israel's future. Knowing this only too well, Jonah tried to escape in the opposite direction – not out of fear but out of resistance. He did not want mercy to be shown *where he believed judgment was deserved*.

Yet the God of Israel does not ask Jonah whether Nineveh is worthy. He sends him. And in doing so, God reveals a hard truth. The calling of a prophet is not to defend human anger or national resentment; but rather to reflect the mercy of God, even toward His enemies. Jonah is sent not because Nineveh is righteous, but because God desires repentance and life.

When Nineveh hears Jonah preach, the city repents! God chooses mercy, and Jonah's anger erupts. This anger is not merely personal; it is deeply spiritual and exposes the struggle within the heart of Israel itself. Can we accept a God whose compassion reaches beyond our boundaries, beyond our history of pain, beyond those who threaten us?

It is precisely at this point that the words of Yeshua come into sharp focus, as a continuation and fulfillment of the message of Jonah. **“But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you”.** (Matthew 5:44)

Jonah finds this calling unbearable. He is willing to proclaim judgment, but not to carry compassion in his heart.

Yeshua on the other hand, both teaches this path; and also walks it. He reveals that the way of the Kingdom of Heaven is not shaped by political categories, but by the *character of the God of Israel, who seeks repentance and restoration - rather than destruction*.

Through this lens, the book of Jonah speaks directly into our present reality. Like ancient Nineveh, Iran today (Persia) is also an enemy of Israel. The threats and hostility are real, and the danger must not be minimized. Yet Jonah forces us to ask a deeper, covenantal question; not only who stands against us, but how the God of Israel calls His people to respond.

The Hebrew scriptures remind us that the relationship between Israel and the Persian people is not one-dimensional. Persia was also the place from which redemption came during exile. Cyrus, king of Persia, is called God's anointed instrument for the return to Zion. The story of Esther unfolds within the Persian empire and reveals a hidden but faithful God, working salvation for His people even through foreign rule.

This is where Jonah becomes a mirror for us. Are we willing to pray for a people we perceive as enemies - not to excuse evil, but to cry out for repentance, freedom from oppression, and salvation? To pray for Iran does not mean denying Israel's suffering or ignoring real threats. It means trusting that the God of Israel is still sovereign over nations, and that His mercy is not limited by borders, regimes, or ideologies.

In the end, Jonah remains outside Nineveh, angry at God's compassion. The book closes *without resolving his struggle, because the question is handed to us!*

Will we stand outside the “Ninevehs” of our own generation, coddling our anger? Or will we dare to walk in the ways of the God of Israel - enlarging our hearts to pray even for enemies, believing that He still desires repentance, restoration, and life?



Now, at the height of the winter green, we are getting ready for our **Passover Food Basket Project** - actively filling our warehouses with goods to be distributed to 900 needy households in our city. We are only able to do this because of partnership with friends like you.



# RESTORATION THROUGH DISCIPLESHIP

By Tikkun Global



Thanks to our partners and friends around the globe, we were able to send a second group of young Israelis to take part in a discipleship program at EKBALLO Ministry in Hawaii – following our pilot program a year ago.

Participant feedback highlights from last year's program:

*"Hawaii was a time of rest after a packed service in the IDF during the war. Doing life with the Christian community and the discipleship program there brought renewal and growth to my trust in God and Yeshua." - N*

*"Our time with Ekballo was full of sweet moments in the spirit that are dear to my heart. I came with great excitement to have time alone with God. Ironically, God surprised me by surrounding me with a lovely community, teaching me a great lesson in life- you are never alone! And he never intended us to be. Working side by side in the field, worshiping, praying, sharing testimonies, dreams, cultural backgrounds - was so special. It's the true meaning of kehila and is crucial for discipleship." - D*

The cooperative program is the “baby” of Vered Blumenthal from our leadership team. The heart of it is to bring restoration, grounding, and spiritual renewal to young, believing Israelis, most of whom have recently completed their service in the IDF. While IDF service is always intense and challenging, the last two and half years have been especially so. These young people have been through a lot.

In early January, our Jerusalem staff dedicated 5 days of teaching, equipping and team building with the group (5 men and 5 women) before they left for Hawaii on January 11th. Vered accompanied them and spent 10 days with the Ekballo staff and students, to successfully integrate the Israelis into the already existing program. Each student from Israel paid a participation fee, but Tikkun Global is subsidizing the majority of the costs.

The program is known as “Yalla Aloha.” The name brings together Hebrew slang meaning “Let’s get going” with the native Hawaiian word “Aloha,” reflecting the spirit of this journey. The students are there for a total of 3 months.

Key moments so far:

- Worship nights, with Israeli disciples leading some worship in Hebrew
- An overnight farm retreat including camping, worship around the bonfire, and shared meals that deepen trust and community
- Teaching sessions on the “soil of our hearts,” and the theme “God Is Love”
- Hands-on work together on the coffee farm, strengthening teamwork and responsibility
- Weekly community dinners and worship with local families
- Dedicated times of prayer for Iran and the Middle East

Please pray that the Lord will do all He has in mind in the hearts, souls and bodies of these young people in the coming months.

We ask you to consider giving financially through the links below, to help facilitate these steps of restoration. Thank you for standing with us.





# PRAY FOR IRANIANS



By **Motti Cohen**

The US president wrote on January 14:

**“Iranian Patriots, KEEP PROTESTING – TAKE OVER YOUR INSTITUTIONS!!!!... HELP IS ON ITS WAY.”**

Two days later, Trump announced that he had called off a military strike against Iran, saying that the Iranian regime’s commitment to “cancel” planned executions was an encouraging step. It’s not clear whether that was a bluff or an actual change of course. Either way, if Israelis felt “whiplash” from bracing and unbracing for another Iranian ballistic missile attack — we can only imagine how the Iranian protestors felt.

## Historic Moment in Iran

We are clearly witnessing momentous and historic events in Iran, including possibly the greatest massacre of Iranians by the Islamic dictatorship since they took over in 1979 and the greatest popular uprising against the regime in 49 years. Estimates of the death toll from the government’s brutal crackdown on protestors **have passed 16,500 with roughly 330,000 injured** - based on initial data from hospitals where doctors reportedly used Starlink to communicate during the government’s internet blackout. Other estimates are even higher.

**Why are these protests in Iran so meaningful as opposed to other demonstrations and protests in the past?**

**Tiferet Yeshua Congregation in Tel Aviv**

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In the past, it was mostly young people and students who protested. This time, merchants, businessmen and everyday Iranians took to the streets to protest the country’s economic collapse caused by the government’s abysmal mismanagement of the country and its funding of international terror proxies in Lebanon, Syria, Yemen, and Gaza. Soon young people and students joined the protest. Sensing the weakness of the government, they began calling for an end to the oppressive regime.

## Iran’s Response: Blackout and Crackdown

Like a wounded animal in its death throes, the Islamic regime responded dramatically and violently: internet and cell phone service was cut off, effectively drawing a curtain over the country and giving government forces a media blackout to begin its brutal crackdown. A few images leaked out, showing rows and rows of body bags and corpses.

## Spiritual Revival in Iran

For years now amazing reports have been coming out of Iran that a massive move of God is underway there. Many Iranians are following Yeshua - with amazing testimonies of miracles, deliverances and bold, anointed Iranian witnesses sharing the gospel, despite likely imprisonment, torture and death.

## Is a dramatic shift taking place?

All signs seem to be pointing to the fall of the once powerful Ayatollah regime that supported terror around the world and was tightening a stranglehold around Israel. Iran has been at the center of an axis of oppressive, evil governments (Iran, China Russia) that oppose democracy and religious freedom. The fall of the Ayatollah regime would be a massive blow to the agendas these countries have been advancing around the world (including the obsessive anti-Israel, antisemitic content pushed by their bot farms across social media platforms over the last two years).

At the same time, **God is calling us to stand in the gap for the people of Iran:** to ask for mercy, grace, protection and a great spiritual outpouring for the salvation of many across Iran and the greater Middle East!

## Please pray

- for the protection of civilians in Iran
- that God would reveal Himself mightily to many and intervene supernaturally in the midst of persecution
- for boldness and anointing on Iranian followers of Yeshua to be powerful witnesses in this turbulent and dangerous time
- for God’s perfect plan to end this oppressive, murderous and dangerous Islamic regime
- for the peaceful implementation of a new Iranian government that will provide stability, safety and freedom for the Iranians



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# HELPING YOUNG ROOTS GROW DEEP



By **Revive Israel**

The field feels alive right now. After the recent rains, everything has turned green; and with that comes the steady work of weeding. We spend hours bending down, pulling, clearing, and making space.

The weeds we remove, then feed the chickens and goats. Weeding helps the soil breathe so the vegetables can grow strong. It's slow, physical work, but it's good work. The kind that quietly reminds us how real growth happens.

We're also happy to begin the year again with *Makor HaTikva Messianic Day School program*, and excited to launch a new initiative where teenagers study the Scriptures while working in the field. God's Word doesn't stay theoretical here. It's learned while doing, talked through in the middle of the work, lived out in simple, everyday ways, and in the relationships we build. We're looking forward to seeing how God will grow us in this season.

Working the land is something we do together. Recently, as we were out in the field, our autistic friends, volunteers, and the rest of their team joined in, each one finding their place. There's a steady rhythm to it, hands in the soil, quiet focus, small conversations, shared effort. Everyone brings something, and everyone belongs.

Valerie also recently taught at a *girls' conference*, and it was a meaningful and blessed time. We love teenagers, and we care deeply about walking with young people during these formative and often difficult years of their lives. It's an age filled with questions, pressure, searching, and longing. It's also a time when something deep can take root.

*Valerie met the Lord when she was 16*, and that shapes how she walks with young people today. She knows how much it matters when someone takes the time to listen, to be present, and to speak truth with love. They are still tender, still forming. They need care, patience, and strength at the right moments so they can grow straight and healthy and bear fruit.

This is why we choose to invest in young people. We want to walk with them, to pour out God's love in practical and personal ways, and to help them truly come to know Him, not just in words, but in real everyday life. What is planted during these years truly matters. Thank you for standing with us as we continue this work, tending to the soil, making space, and trusting God to bring growth in the land and in the next generation.

With love and gratitude,  
The Revive Israel Community

**Revive Israel**

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