

Levitt Letter

Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved.—Rom. 10:1

FEATURES

Bible's Role in Creation of the United States

The Hebrew Bible, with its message of obedience to God alone, of personal responsibility, and of freedom from tyranny, was in tune with the mindset of Protestant sects in America. Focusing on the issue of individual responsibility, the Massachusetts Bay Colony enacted legislation requiring parents to teach their children to read and understand the basic principles of religion and capital laws.

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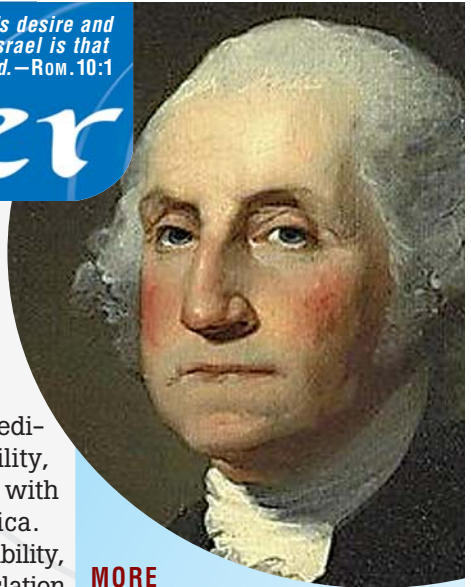
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MASADA



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ISRAELI MEDICINE

A Microbe Fighter at 91

By Judy Siegel-Itzkovich,
www.JPost.com



Retired university professors typically rest on their laurels. Not so for Hebrew University Faculty of Medicine emeritus professor Nathan Citri. Two decades after his retirement, the veteran microbiology expert has developed an ingenious kit to detect multidrug- and extremely antibiotics-resistant “superbugs,” providing instant guidelines for patients’ appropriate treatment in hospitals.

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FEATURE STORY CONTINUED...

Bible's Role in Creation of the United States

By Rabbi Ken Spiro, www.Aish.com

All towns in New England with a minimum of 50 households were required by law to establish schools and appoint teachers. Universities were established—the first being Harvard University, founded in 1636 as a training school for Puritan ministers.

In insisting on education for all, the Puritans were following Jewish law.

Education for all thus became a hallmark of early America. In addition to Harvard, many other colleges and universities were established under the auspices of various Protestant sects: Yale, William and Mary, Rutgers, Princeton, Brown, Kings College (later to be known as Columbia), Johns Hopkins, Dartmouth, etc. The Bible played a central role in the curriculum of all of these institutions of higher learning with both Hebrew and Bible studies offered as required courses.

So popular was the Hebrew Language in the late 17th and early 18th centuries that Harvard, Yale, Columbia, Brown, Princeton, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Pennsylvania taught courses in Hebrew—all the more remarkable because no university in England at the time offered it.

Many of the population, including a significant number of the Founding Fathers, were products of these American universities—Thomas Jefferson attended William and Mary, James Madison Princeton, Alexander Hamilton King's College (i.e., Columbia). Thus, we can be sure that a majority of these political leaders were not only well acquainted with the contents of both the New and Old Testaments but also had some working knowledge of Hebrew.

Their Biblical education colored the American founders' attitude toward not only religion and ethics, but most significantly, politics. We see them adopting the biblical motifs of the Puritans for political reasons. Numerous examples clearly illustrate that the political struggles of the colonies were identified with the ancient Hebrews. **The first design for the official seal of the United States recommended by Benjamin Franklin, John Adams, and Thomas Jefferson in 1776 depicts the Jews crossing the Red Sea.**

Even the basic framework of America clearly reflects the influence of the Bible and Jewish ideas in shaping American political development. Nowhere is this more evident than in the opening sentences of the Declaration of Independence: *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.*

This and the other documents of early America make it clear that the concept of a God-given standard of morality is a central pillar of American democracy. **For the first time in history, Jewish ethical ideas were legally enshrined into the laws of a non-Jewish nation.** ★

Read the full account, from Puritans to independence, at <http://wp.me/pieUD-1hP>



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Interdependence Days



National holidays yield a fruitful field for teaching from their meaning. The USA marks July 4 as its anniversary of severing ties with Great Britain. With pride and pomp, we remember our dramatic founding. Fireworks, food, and fellowship attend this annual recognition of America as the greatest, ongoing constitutional republic. Blessings like these do not occur by chance or accident. They are from God.

This form of government works only when we are independent from the rule of men and interdependent with God and His Word! That is why we see the continual failure of “democratic” initiatives in the Muslim world. Sharia law, with its insistence on theocratic dictatorships, is fundamentally incompatible with an interdependent relationship with a loving God.

On July 2, 1776, the Continental Congress voted to approve a complete separation from Great Britain. Two days later—July 4—the Declaration of Independence was signed. Four days later—July 8—it was read aloud from the steps of Independence Hall in Philadelphia, after which the Liberty Bell rang out.



The inscription around the top of that bell, Leviticus 25:10, was most appropriate for the occasion: “Proclaim liberty throughout the land and to all the inhabitants thereof.” We chose a replica of this bell—hung in Jerusalem in 1976 to commemorate America’s bicentennial—to provide the background for part of our TV series *Acts: Then and Now... The Story Continues*. (see p.17)

The Leviticus verse stands as a standard by which to measure our freedoms. It is Scripture, and the Word of God forms the clearest basis for our nation’s *raison*

d’etre; it was always intended to guide us. John Adams said, “The general principles on which the Fathers achieved independence were...**the general principles of Christianity.**” It is amazing that on the very day Congress approved the Declaration, Adams was already foreseeing its celebration by future generations. Adams contemplated the propriety of holding such celebrations, but concluded that the day should be commemorated—but in a particular manner and with a specific spirit. As he told his wife, Abigail: “It ought to be commemorated as the Day of Deliverance by solemn Acts of Devotion to God Almighty.”

John Adams believed that the Fourth of July should become a religious holiday. Faith played a seminal role in founding this country. There are many examples of clergy and businessmen who led the way. Some ministers were prime movers in the revolution. The British labeled them “Black Robed Regiment” because they fearlessly led from their pulpits.

A motto of the American Revolution was directed against the tyrant King George III. It theologically discredited the doctrine of the Divine Right of Kings, which asserted that when the king spoke, it was the voice of God speaking directly to the people. The motto was simple and direct: “We have no king but King Jesus!” ★



A Bible that’s falling apart usually belongs to someone who isn’t.

-Charles Spurgeon



Free Indeed

By Katharine Weiss



In the Middle East, grudges last not for years, but for *generations*. For example, the Crusades are still remembered with intensity by Muslims, although they occurred long ago.

What about you and me? How long are we willing to hang on to past offenses when, as disciples of Yeshua, we are commanded to forgive? Forgiveness is a great gift of the Cross; through it, we do not condone wrongdoing, but we do not allow it to have a hold on us. In one of Jesus' most beloved teachings, the "Lord's Prayer" (some call it the "Disciple's Prayer"), the Messiah underscores the importance of this attribute. After including the need to receive and grant forgiveness in the body of the prayer, He reiterates the importance of forgiveness in Matt. 6:14–15, admonishing, "For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you don't forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses."

The character of the God of Israel shines through in this exhortation. What a stark contrast from other ideologies in the "neighborhood." Our good friend Walid Shoebat often refers to this attribute of God when he recounts the story of his journey from Islam to Christianity. Walid was raised

in Bethlehem on a steady diet of hatred for all infidels, Islam's term for Jews and Christians. He was shocked when he read the ten-dollar Bible he bought to dissuade his wife from following Jesus. In its pages, he found a God of love who produced righteousness and peace and joy in His followers (Romans 14:17)! Walid turned from terror in the name of Allah to testifying in the Name of this God of the Bible. He found forgiveness for his sins, and now preaches about the power of forgiveness.

This power, available to us when we allow Messiah into our hearts, is an active word. We let God come through us, and He imparts His perspective on our situation. His sacrifice paid the full price for us to live at peace with God and men. The irony in the act of forgiveness is this: **we** are the ones who benefit from granting it to others! It's been said, "**Holding resentment is like swallowing rat poison, and waiting for the rat to die.**"

I am grateful that we follow a God who embodies forgiveness and imparts the ability to release it. He is the One who can cause us to see the goodness in life in spite of the hardships we face. I draw strength from Holocaust-era people who experienced darkness beyond anything I have known, and can still be positive. Anne Frank amazingly stated, "I don't think of all the misery but of the beauty that still remains." Forgiveness helps us to walk in the light of God's love.

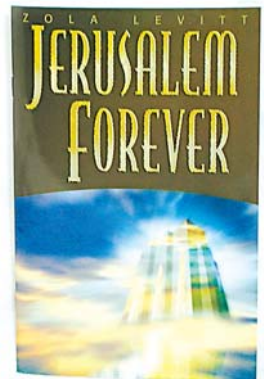


Jerusalem Forever Booklet

Zola wrote that no other city in the world can claim God's personal favor like Jerusalem. Over 3,000 years old, Jerusalem is much more than the seat of the Chosen People in the Promised Land.

It is literally an eternal city. Every Believer will eventually make Jerusalem his home for 1,000 years plus eternity. This booklet's look at Jerusalem's past, present, and future will inspire you to praise God for His faithfulness, and motivate you to pray for the peace of Jerusalem like never before.

Please see page 18 to order.



Why My Mother Wants Me Dead

By Sabatina James
www.TheDailyBeast.com



When I was 18, my parents threatened to kill me. When I was 15, my family lived in Austria—a world away from our native Pakistan, where I had grown up. I loved the freedoms of my life in Europe—T-shirts and jeans, lipstick and eyeliner. My conservative parents didn't.

When my mother learned that I had kissed a boy after school, she cracked me across the cheek, calling me a whore. Thus began a violent three-year battle with my mother.

In families like mine, rooted in tribal tradition, marriage is a daughter's fate. But when you're becoming a mature young woman and your mother is beating you, you have no anchor. Still, I refused to submit. I didn't want to disappear into a forced marriage. I wanted my freedom. Embarrassed among their Pakistani peers in Austria, my parents became more determined than ever to marry me off and restore the family "honor."

When I was 16, my family visited Pakistan. I walked outside in an outfit I felt was perfectly modest—loose pants and a blouse. My mother beat me again, in front of a roomful of relatives. Then she struck herself repeatedly, saying, "I have given birth to a whore!"

My parents shipped me off to an Islamic school—a *madrassa*—to "get educated." I lived in a room with 30 other girls—no chairs, no beds, no ventilation. We did nothing but study the Koran, pray, and listen to lectures on the prophet from a *mullah*, who stood behind a curtain. If a girl spoke out of turn, she was publicly caned. Flies and vermin swarmed the washrooms. The toilet was a hole in the ground.

After three months, I stopped eating and got expelled. I agreed to marry a man my family had chosen, so I could return to Austria during the engagement. When my parents realized I did not intend to go through with the wedding, my father told me, "The honor of this family is more important than my life or yours."

(According to the UN, 5,000 females are murdered worldwide each year for "shaming" their family.)

At 18, I escaped to Vienna where I changed my name and converted to Catholicism. Now, I'm trying to break the marry-or-die tradition. My foundation—Sabatina—acts as an underground railroad, helping women escape their families by finding them shelter and jobs. I have always loved my freedom—but I have paid a high price. ★



There is one advantage to being Muslim: when you change your wife, you can still keep the same photo on your desk.

Whenever the Levitt Letter derides the misery of oppressed Muslim women (such as the captioned photo of women in burkas: "Who brought the sunscreen?"), we hope you will realize that this ministry sees them (and even the men who are mandated to oppress them) as victims. —Mark

AMEN, Mark! The people are not the main problem, but rather the dark ideology of the Koran that mesmerized and deceived them. —Myles



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A Bridge from Japan Reaching to Zion

By Eitan Shishkoff

Japan of the 1930s would seem an unlikely setting to birth a prayer movement for Israel. Yet that is exactly what happened, through the daring leadership of Juji Nakada. A pastor in the Holiness Movement, Nakada was gripped by the Spirit. He came to the enduring conclusion that Israel must come to faith in Yeshua as Messiah before He could return as the conquering King spoken of in the books of Zechariah and Revelation.

The outworking of his vision was to train faithful disciples who considered it their lifetime calling to intercede for Israel's salvation. The original disciples had never even met a Jewish person. The children of those disciples are now the elders of a movement that continues today. In 1996, a group of these members visited Israel for the first time, at the invitation of Joseph Shulam, founding director of Netivyah Ministries in Jerusalem. They have been coming ever since, developing a deepening relationship with us, the Israeli Messianic Jewish congregational leaders.

At a recent conference held in Herzliya, their senior statesman, Takeo Maraoka, 75, identified with Paul's radical statement in Romans 9:2-3. "Like Paul, I would willingly trade my own salvation for the salvation of the people of Israel," he declared with utter sincerity.

The passion with which these men and women are committed to the redemption of our nation is inspiring.

Eitan and Connie Shishkoff



They are a prophetic voice, traveling to Israel from one of the farthest eastern points of the Earth to remind us of God's promises and His timetable.

We cannot take their devotion for granted. They prayed consistently, even when it meant jail terms for "disloyalty" to the Emperor in the time of Japan's entry into World War II. Four generations of Japanese Bible believers persevered in their mandate, even when they were misunderstood and rejected by other Christians. The fruit of their dedication includes the establishment of the State of Israel and the rebirth of a national Messianic Jewish community in Israel. How humbling and how healthy for us to realize that, in Japan, God stirred distant hearts to adopt us as the focus of their prayers for 80 years!

Our Japanese brothers and sisters met with us during Israel's spring to stimu-



Eitan with Takeo Maraoka and his wife, Tomoko

late us to make Yeshua real to our people. They came to assure us that "You have lifetime friends in Japan." They are a fulfillment of Isaiah's promise that in the latter days, ambassadors from the nations will flow to Israel, saying, "Come let us go up to the mountain of the Lord" (Isaiah 2:3-4). ★



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Pray for the Peace of Washington

It took the near assassination of the president of the United States to make it happen, but the federal legislators of this country recently turned to prayer. And it was valid, godly prayer offered in the name of “Jesus Christ, our Lord.”

On the day of the assassination attempt, of course, we all had a great deal to pray about. The president survived by a matter of inches, and we were grateful. We were also very apprehensive and much reminded of our own mortality.

But we could desire a little more prayer in the United States Senate; prayer that might be offered at less critical moments. The prayer leader of the Senate implored God “in time of need,” but I think we can assume that God would like to hear from the Senate even on dull and ordinary days. The Old Testament is filled with stories of kings and high priests who seemed to turn to the Lord only when nothing else would do the job. King Manasseh of Judah worshipped pagan idols for fifty-five years but then remembered “from whence his help cometh” when he was taken prisoner by an Assyrian army. No less a personage than King David knew enough to turn to the Almighty

when facing Goliath, but would later approach God in repentance only after the fact. Last-minute entreaties to a patient and faithful God are a major theme of all Scripture.

But before we criticize such worthies as the kings of Judah and the senators of the United States, we might ask ourselves if we were in prayer the day *before* the day the president was shot, or the day before that. A survey would likely show millions of prayers rose to Heaven as our leader lay in surgery, but on previous days Heaven wasn’t kept very busy at all. Christian prayer ought not to vary with the circumstances. We are admonished to “pray without ceasing” (1 Ts. 5:17; Rom. 12:12).

Probably something good would happen if we each picked some Tuesday or Friday when church is not in session and the president hasn’t been shot and offer up some earnest prayer. We might even offer up some praise and thanks. We constantly fail to count up the good things. Think of all the days gone by during which the president was not shot, nor we ourselves for that matter.

The prayers of the Senate have been answered. Our president and the other victims are recovering as of this writing. Perhaps we should all contact our senators and remind them that God is available even on ordinary days. ★



Ladies & Gentlemen:

Join the King David Club
Help us advance the Kingdom!
When you donate \$10,000,
you will receive the following
with our grateful thanks:

1. One each of all our teaching materials (more than \$2,400 worth), not just for your library, but also to give away.
2. One \$500 discount on each of up to four (4) of our tours to Israel.
3. One-on-one telephone conference with Myles to discuss this ministry’s goals and visions.

Is the Final Prophecy Being Fulfilled?

By Bryan Fischer
RenewAmerica.com



In my understanding of New Testament eschatology, all but one of the Matthew 24 prophecies were fulfilled by 70 AD. The lone prophecy yet to be fulfilled before Christ returns is laid out in Romans 11:25–32, where Paul, seeing into the future, speaks of a massive spiritual awakening among the Jewish people.

According to the Apostle, a “partial hardening” came upon the Jews, so the Gospel would deflect off their hardness and be redirected to the gentiles. When “the fullness of the gentiles has come in,” Paul says, “all Israel will be saved.” The implication is that when God’s harvest among the gentiles is complete, He will remove the callus from the hearts of the Jews, and they will turn en masse to Christ.

That Israel has a spiritual awakening in its future is certain, for as Paul states flatly, “the gifts and calling of God (on Israel) are irrevocable.” The Jews have never stopped being the chosen people of God and His plans for them are not yet complete.

Jews, who have historically ignored and rejected Jesus, are now seeking to understand Him and claim Him as one of their own. For instance, Amy-Jill Levine, co-editor of the *Jewish Annotated New Testament* [see May Levitt Letter p.32], says, “In reading the New Testament, ... I actually find myself becoming a better Jew because I become better informed about my own history.”

And Rabbi Shmuley Boteach argues in his book *Kosher Jesus* that “There are many reasons for accepting Jesus as a man of great wisdom, beautiful ethical

teachings, and profound Jewish patriotism.” Boteach even goes so far as to say that Jesus was “a patriot of our people,” and that “Jews will gain much from re-embracing Him as a hero.” Whoa. And the motive for this Jewish embrace of Jesus is precisely the motive that Paul indicated would trigger this final awakening: jealousy (see Romans 11:11). Strikingly, this is what is motivating many contemporary Jews to take a fresh look at Jesus of Nazareth.

For example, Orthodox Jew Benjamin Cohen recently spent a year attending Christian churches and frankly admits that he is jealous of Christians because they have Jesus: “He’s a tangible icon that everybody can latch on to. Judaism doesn’t have a superhero like that. I’m not advocating for Moses dolls ... [but Christians] have this physical manifestation of the divine that they can pray to.” Double whoa.

Continues Cohen: “I understand Christians’ love for Jesus and I respect that. If

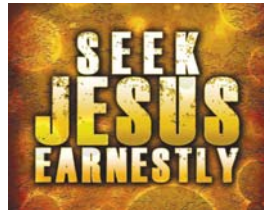
anything, I learned a lot from them, and I appreciate my Judaism more because I hung out with Jesus.” Triple whoa.

So, modern Jews are embracing Jesus as a lost Jewish patriot, are jealous of Christians because they have in Christ the embodiment of the Godhead, have been hanging with Jesus, and are claiming Him as one of their own. Quadruple whoa.

Jesus said, “When the fig tree’s branch becomes tender ... you know that summer is near. So also, when you see all these things, you know that He is near, at the very gates” (Matthew 24:32–33).

**The branch is becoming tender.
Can summer be far behind?** ★

All the more reason to reveal the undeniable “Jewishness” of Jesus. We proclaim, we share our testimonies, we pray, and it is up to the Holy Spirit to reveal the Divine Messiah to our people. —Myles



Ask The Chaplain

By Dr. Todd D. Baker
ZLM Staff Theologian



Q. Dear ZLM,
What does 1
Corinthians 15:29 mean
when it talks of baptism for the
dead? —P.B.

A. Dear P.B.—
Whenever you come across
a difficult Scripture passage
to interpret, one sure rule is to compare
it with other passages that will
clarify the meaning. The Scripture in
question, when compared with other
Scripture passages, cannot mean
that a dead person can be saved
through some sort of proxy baptism
by the living (as the Mormon Church
falsely teaches and practices). Nor
does it mean that we should baptize
the dead. Scripture clearly teaches
that we are not baptized for salvation
since we are saved by grace through
faith in Jesus Christ *alone*, not by
anything that we do (Ephesians
2:8–9; Galatians 2:16; Titus 3:5).

Two possible meanings exist here:

1) Living Believers were coming to
faith in Christ and were being bap-
tized because they were drawn to
the faith by the example and faith of
other Believers who had subsequently
died. Paul asks, If there is no resur-
rection of the dead or life after death,
what is the point of following in
baptism those who have died?

2) Paul had already indicated (1
Corinthians 11:19) that there were
various “heresies” among the
Corinthians, and now he points out
another one, arguing with those who
are denying the resurrection: Why
baptize the dead if they will not be
raised from death? This would be
absurd on the face of it. The fact that
it is mentioned only once and only
here indicates that proxy baptism
for the dead or baptizing the dead
wasn’t a normal practice that the
Apostles approved or practiced. It
was, however, practiced by heretics
in the early second century of the
Church. ★

(Editor’s note: Heretics are much alive,
preaching the same heresy today.)

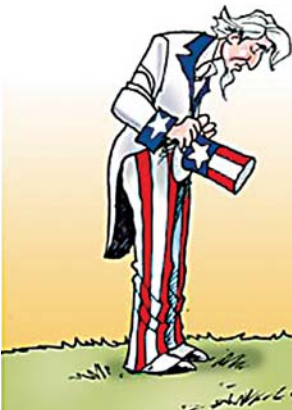


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Geoffrey Hume
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The Patriot's blood is the
seed of Freedom's tree.

—Thomas Campbell



A Microbe Fighter at 91

His invention will improve patient care, save lives, shorten hospital stays, and significantly reduce healthcare costs, according to HU. The kits not only detect the presence of bacteria resistant to antibiotics, but also offer immediate information on which type of antibiotic may still be of use.

The Polish-born Citri, 91, was one of 27 HU researchers recently honored in a permanent photo exhibition on the Mount Scopus campus.

Citri never intended to become a scientist, but rather a farmer in a kibbutz. The Holocaust—to which he lost most of his family—persuaded him otherwise.

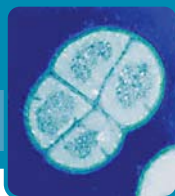


He was born Natan Cytrynowski in 1921, in Lodz. His father, Yechiel, was a Hebraist, Zionist, painter, and Hebrew teacher. Natan's Russian-born mother, Genia, taught Hebrew language and literature. Natan and his younger sister Miriam were thus raised in a Hebrew-speaking home where Zionism and moving to the Jewish homeland were pervasive ideas.

When a Youth Aliya emissary arrived in Lodz in 1936 to rescue Jewish children, Natan insisted on going the following year to Palestine, with the family planning to join him. "I was the only one to survive. I owe everything to [Youth Aliya] founder Henrietta Szold."

In 1939, Yechiel traveled to Palestine to look for work. He was offered an excellent position and went home to bring his wife and daughter, but they did not make it out of Europe in time. As World War II broke out, they were forced into the Warsaw

By Judy Siegel-Itzkovich
www.JPost.com



Ghetto. Genia died in 1942; Yechiel died in Treblinka, and Miriam slapped a Nazi officer in Auschwitz and was shot and killed on the spot.

Natan studied at Ben-Shemen. He volunteered for the British Army in 1942 and remained until 1946.

"My father had drawn a scroll for the opening of the Hebrew University back in the '20s. I was less than four years old. By accident, I pushed his finger," Citri recalled. The scroll was sent to Jerusalem for the opening. When Natan was an IDF commander at Mount Scopus during the War of Independence, he found scrolls on the floor of the shelled library. "I looked for his scroll and found it; I identified it by the centerpiece—the dome of the library—and found the place where I had pushed his finger. He hadn't changed it."

For a while Citri kept his original name, hoping to be identified by Holocaust-survivor relatives. When no one was found, he shortened it.

Finally out of uniform, Citri remembered the call of Labor Zionist leader Berl Katznelson to fill the ranks of Jewish intellectuals lost in the Holocaust. Instead of becoming a farmer, he decided to be an academic at the Hebrew University. "I was accepted to study bacteriology, but studied general science and then parasitology instead."

With his first wife, Citri had a son—"a brilliant neurobiologist who was killed in 1995 in an accident," and a daughter, who is a social worker at Hadassah University Medical Center. A son is at Stanford University in California and coming soon to work at HU's natural sciences faculty.

Citri has six granddaughters and three great-grandchildren. "In Israel, when I do something, I can see the blessings. I can make a contribution," he said. ★



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Israel Lures Hi-Tech Companies



By Brian London
www.PJMedia.com

In January, U.S. electronics firm Apple confirmed its purchase of Israeli flash memory company Anobit, whose products already provide storage capacity in Macs and iOS devices.

The basic components of flash memory are traded as commodities, and every Apple product announcement—especially if it includes a jump in device memory—causes the whole market to move. Flash memory is the next most expensive part of devices like the iPad (following the screen). Flash memory, which retains information without the need to be powered constantly, was invented in Israel by Eli Harari, a former Intel engineer who founded a company in 1988 that became SanDisk.

Intel had come to Israel in 1974—just a few months after the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Israel was the first country outside of the U.S. in which Intel performed development work. Founded in 1968, Intel by 1971 was selling the world's first complete microprocessor on a single chip, and already in 1974 Intel realized Israel held a pool of engineering talent unrivaled in the world.

Intel was just the earliest pioneer: now Apple joins the top names of the high-tech world. Microsoft, Google, SAP, Cisco, and dozens of others maintain large offices in Israel. And not just local sales or support offices: full-scale research and development performed on a large scale. The mayor of Tel Aviv, a city that has spawned dozens of startup companies later bought by giants, says: "We are creating a good place for high-tech people to live in. I am doing it for the people working in high-tech." [See *Levitt Letter*, May '12, p.11.]

Buying Anobit is not the end of the story for Apple. Sources in Israel report that Apple is also looking to establish its own chip research and development office. This is big news because Apple has performed only marketing, selling, and support outside California, never core component or product design work.

The reasons for such a huge step? A little-known phenomenon of Israel's universal conscription into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) is the creative use of the brightest and best recruits: a special program, "Talpiot," takes a select few from each year's intake and grooms them in technical sciences. This elite group has gone on to produce many of Israel's best-known technical successes. Basically, the three or more years in the army are put to extraordinary use. It's almost incalculable what contribution this IDF program has made to Israel's economy. Apple will tap into this just by being in Israel.

Also, an international study lists Israel as the second-most educated country in the world. [See *Levitt Letter*, May '12, p.30.] After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Israel absorbed one million new immigrants in around ten years, people with a disproportionately high amount of advanced training. This was also a source of new scientific and engineering talent.

Barriers to doing business in Israel are not high. I own small companies in both the U.S. and Israel. I no longer employ anyone directly in the United States: the burden of having staff there has become astonishing. Israeli employment law is more attractive. Working and social conditions are comparable with America. But Israelis enjoy better government services, such as early childcare and health coverage. Employers don't need to spend money on health plans, since their employees are covered by national health insurance.

From my personal small business experience, the Israeli tax system is a lot easier to deal with than the muddle of local, state, and federal taxes I pay an accountant in New York to file for me. My little company in New York, with no employees, generates accounting work that dwarfs my 15-employee company in Israel. I'm sure at the scale of an Intel- or Apple-size company, things become much more complex, but the comparison is probably valid. ★



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Egyptian Christian Student Jailed for Insulting Islam

English.alArabiya.net



An Egyptian court recently sentenced a 17-year-old Christian boy to three years in jail for publishing cartoons on his Facebook page that mocked Islam and the Prophet Mohammed, actions that sparked sectarian violence.

Gamal Abdou Massoud was also accused of distributing some of his cartoons to his school friends in a village in the southern city of Assiut, home to a large Christian population and the hometown of the late Coptic Orthodox Pope Shenouda.

"Assiut child's court ordered the jailing of Gamal Abdou Massoud ... for three years after he insulted Islam and published and distributed pictures that insulted Islam and its Prophet," the court said in a statement.

The cartoons, published by Massoud in December, prompted some Muslims to attack Christians. Several Christian houses were burned and several Christians were injured in the violence.

Human rights lawyer Negad al-Borai said the jail sentence was the maximum penalty under Egyptian law for such a crime.

Christians, who make up about 10 percent of the country's 80 million population, have long had a difficult relationship with Egypt's overwhelmingly Muslim majority.

Egyptian Islamists Pin Hopes on Islamic Law

By Jeffrey Fleishman, www.LATimes.com

The men gathering outside the yellow Cairo, Egypt mosque agreed: Adulterers should be stoned to death, the hands of thieves cut off. "But not now," said Kareem Atta. "Sharia law must be gradually put into place so it doesn't shock the system. You can't cut people's hands off if you first don't give them financial justice."

The young students, engineers, and laborers are followers of ultraconservative Salafi Islam. Politicians who follow the ultraconservative line have suggested revoking Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, and hold up Iran as an exemplar of defiance against the U.S. Their hardline rhetoric has nudged American officials closer to the more moderate Muslim Brotherhood, a sign of Washington's scrambling to keep pace with the tremors of the "Arab Spring."

"I will never become a puppet for the U.S. or Israel or any Western power," one politician said in a recent speech. He added that the U.S. was funneling money to certain Egyptian candidates to "suit their interests" and he urged young Muslims to "spoil such a plot."

In the fractious, political Islam that is spreading across an Egypt freed from three decades of Hosni Mubarak's secular rule, the movement's passions and designs on power are shaking



leftists and non-Muslims but also altering the dynamics for Islamists and challenging the dominance of the Brotherhood.

The new set of politicians embody a new Egypt searching for a religiously resonant yet pragmatic brand of politics that can fix the nation's deep economic and social problems. Similar scenarios are enveloping rising Islamists in Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen, and will certainly factor in Syria if President Bashar Assad falls.



Christians, about 10 percent of the country's 80 million population, have a difficult relationship with Egypt's Muslims. (Reuters)

Egyptian Americans View Islamic Party's Rise with Hope, Suspicion

By Pamela Constable,
www.WashingtonPost.com

When Egypt's autocratic regime collapsed last year amid an unstoppable wave of protest, Sherif Mansour leaped at the chance to help shape a nascent democracy in his Muslim-majority homeland. Mansour, who works at a D.C.-based human rights group, traveled to Cairo, applied for a government permit, opened an office, and hired local staff.

But in December, the office was shut down by Egypt's interim government, along with 16 other international non-profits, and its staff was charged with the crime of running an illegal foreign operation. Ever since, Mansour has watched with growing concern as conservative Islamist groups capture more and more of the political space that burst open with the Arab spring.

"The liberals in Iran made many sacrifices for their revolution, and the Islamists stole it," said Mansour, 32.

But things have gotten more complicated. The Muslim Brotherhood, a once-

banned extremist Sunni movement, won nearly half the seats in Parliament and adopted a new, democratic vocabulary.

Mohammed el Menshawry, an Egyptian American scholar at the Middle East Institute says,



"It was easy for the Brotherhood to say Islam is the solution when they were the opposition. Now they will have to find solutions for healthcare, jobs, and education."

Many are skeptical that the Brotherhood is changing its stripes because it sees a chance to win power at the polls. The Coptic community, long ostracized in Egypt, is among the most suspicious. Nermien Riad's educational charity office in Cairo was also raided in December, and she was later summoned to face prosecution for operating an illegal foreign agency.

"For the Copts, there is no clear future. The Facebook generation spurred the revolution, but they may have handed it over to the Islamists without meaning to. We will face a lot more difficulties ahead, but we will get through." Riad added, "We have been persecuted for 2,000 years. This is just another wave." ★



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School Shows It's OK for Jews, Arabs to Differ

By Eetta Prince-Gibson, www.JTA.org

The two seventh-grade girls walk together down the hall, their heads touching as they talk excitedly. Dana's dark auburn hair is pulled back in a ponytail. Waard's head is covered by a *hijab*, the traditional Arab headscarf, held with a fashionable pin.

Dana is Jewish and lives in the German Colony, a few miles away. Waard is Muslim and lives in the nearby neighborhood of Beit Tzaffafa. Best friends since the first grade, they are talking about the school ceremony to mark Memorial Day for Israel's Fallen Soldiers and Israeli Independence Day.

Selected to read a poem, Dana is busy with rehearsals. Waard will not attend the ceremony, but instead will meet with the other Arab students to talk about the day's meaning for them. Afterward, all the students, Arabs and Jews, together with their Arab and Jewish teachers, will join to discuss the significance of the day for them.

"It'll be Wednesday for both of us, but it doesn't mean the same thing to us," Dana explains. "One of my great-grandparents died in the War of Independence. And he was fighting people that Waard's great-grandparents probably knew. Maybe he killed some of them. And on Independence Day, I'll be happy because there's a Jewish state." "And I'll be sad because of the *nakba*," Waard says, using the Arabic word for "catastrophe."

"We're really OK with this," Dana says. "**You don't have to think the same to be friends,**" Waard adds.

Dana and Waard are students at the Max Rayne Bilingual School in Jerusalem, a K-12 public school with some 530 students, part of the Hand in Hand non-profit educational organization. (Other schools are in the Wadi Ara Valley in central Israel and Galilee in the north.)

Few opportunities exist for meaningful interaction between Jews and Arabs; schools are almost completely segregated. Bilingual schools seek to foster coexistence through cross-cultural learning.



Arab and Jewish students holding hands at the Max Rayne Hand in Hand School for Bilingual Education in Jerusalem.
(Kobi Gideon/Flash90)

"Teaching two languages, nationalities and cultures, together with contradicting historical narratives, requires deep commitment and a sense of mission to meet the challenges," says Max Rayne principal Nadia Kinani, an Arab Israeli from Nazareth now living in Jerusalem. The mission is especially challenging in the weeks that follow the Passover holiday, when Israel marks, in rapid succession, Holocaust Memorial Day, Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers, and May 15 Independence Day. In recent years, Arab Israelis have been marking the *nakba* on May 15.

"Pedagogically and ideologically, this is a difficult time," Kinani says. "But in truth, we prepare for these days all year in everything we do—with our vision of equality and understanding, by teaching our children to ask questions, with our pedagogical methods, and by emphasizing that we can deal with differences in a respectful, non-judgmental, and nonviolent way.

"Some people accuse us of living in a bubble. But I think the rest of the world is in a bubble and we are living reality, because reality is that Jews and Arabs cannot avoid our differences and we cannot continue to avoid each other." ★



Why Does Being Alawite Matter in Syria?

latimesblogs.LATimes.com

If you've been reading about the uprising in Syria, you may have heard that Syrian president Bashar Assad is an Alawite. What does that mean—and why does it matter in Syrian politics?

What do the Alawites believe?

The major divide in Islam is between Shiite and Sunni Muslims, who initially split over who was supposed to succeed the prophet Mohammed. Alawites identify as Shiite Muslims, but carried over older beliefs that predate Islam. (Alawites celebrate some Christian and Zoroastrian holidays.)

Although most Muslims have five pillars of faith, the Alawites have seven. They believe in the divinity of Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of Mohammed; other Shiites revere Ali but do not believe he was divine.

Muslims have sometimes questioned whether Alawites can really be considered Muslims. A *fatwa* in 1973 declared that they are Shiite Muslims, but orthodox Muslims still call them heretics sometimes.

In Syria, most of the population is Sunni. Alawites are a minority (12% to 15% of the population). The Assad family, which has ruled Syria for more than 40 years,

is Alawite. The religious group also dominates the Syrian security forces.

If the Alawites are such a small sect, how did they come to dominate the Syrian military?

It might seem logical that the Assads put them there, but it was actually the other way around. After World War I, French colonial officials tried to make Syria more inclusive by encouraging minorities to fill government positions. The Alawites ended up finding their place in the military.

As Alawites were recruited to the military, wealthier Sunni urbanites often shunned the military as a career path for their children. That led to the military becoming heavily Alawite. Ultimately, the Syrian military was the springboard from which Alawite air force officer Hafez Assad staged his 1970 coup, beginning the Assad regime.

Why does it matter that the Assads are Alawites?

Alawites have been persecuted throughout their history, and the Assad regime has played on Alawite fears to help it stay in power. But Assad is not guaranteed Alawite support. Some do not see Assad as truly Alawite, considering he married a Sunni woman and grew up in Damascus, not the rural areas other Alawites come from. The Assad family has also repressed dissent from Alawites just as it has other Syrians. ★



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Syrian president Bashar Assad belongs to the small Alawite sect.

Hebrew Lesson



The Cry of the Heart ...

By John J. Parsons

רְצוֹן־יְרָאִי יַעֲשֶׂה וְאֶת־שׁוֹעֲתָם יִשְׁמַע וְיוֹשִׁיעֵם

“He fulfills the desire of those who fear Him;
He also hears their cry and saves them” – Psalm 145:19

רְ	צוֹן־	יְרָאִי	יַעֲשֶׂה	וְ	אֶת־	שׁוֹעֲ	תָם	יִשְׁ	מַע	וְ	יּוֹ	שִׁ	עֵם					
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ve-yo-shi-em	yish-ma	ve-et – shav-a-tam	ya-a-seh	re-tzon – ye-re-av	and saves them	He hears	the ones who cry out	He fulfills	the desire of the godly									

The sages ask, “Why were our forefathers unable to have children?” and the reply is given, “because God desires to hear the prayers of the righteous.” It was only through long periods of waiting, anticipating, and hungering that the substance of their hope was realized, just as it was only through groaning of heart that their faith was made sure.

It is said that “the deeds of the fathers are signs for the children,” meaning that the narratives of the Bible serve as parables or allegories for us. Therefore Paul wrote that when Abraham was declared righteous because of his faith, it was not for his sake alone, but for all who likewise earnestly trust that God will keep His promises (Rom. 4:20-25).

We see this pattern over and over again in Scripture. For instance, God waited until His people were “out of breath” from oppression before He initiated the great Exodus from Egypt (Exod. 2:23; 6:5-9), just as He waited until they were forced to cry out for deliverance before they could cross the Sea of Reeds (Exod. 14:10). It was only after they realized they were entirely out of options that the people lifted their eyes and cried out to Him. Some of the sages say that God sent Pharaoh’s army to pursue Israel so that He could save them as a “knight in shining armor” rescues a maiden crying out in distress.

Our verse says that the LORD fulfills the desire of those who fear Him, and He hears the screams of those who cry out for salvation. The question may be asked, if God constantly fulfills the desire of the godly, then why is it necessary to save them? Why are they often forced to cry out for help? The answer is that God *desires* to hear their voice so that they may know Him as their Deliverer and only true Savior. The LORD engineers trouble in our lives so that we will “keep asking, keep seeking, keep knocking” —and to find that the door of blessing is opened by steadfast perseverance of heart. “For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened” (Matt. 7:8).

An old Jewish prayer, uttered wistfully, begins, “O Lord, I know that Thou wilt help us; but wilt Thou help us *before* Thou wilt help us?” Where it is written, “hope to the LORD, be strong and strengthen your heart, and (again) hope to the LORD” (Psalm 27:14), we see that hope gives inward strength. The repetition of the phrase “hope to the LORD” means that as you earnestly trust in Him, God Himself imparts His strength to you. **May you cry out to Him in heartfelt hope this very hour... Amen.** ★



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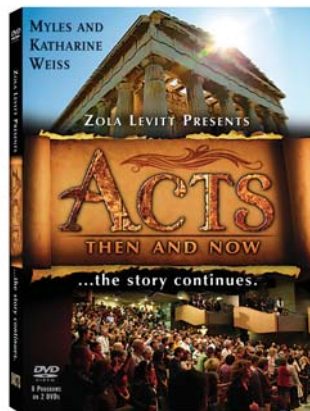
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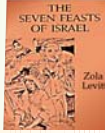


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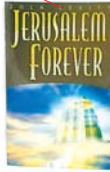
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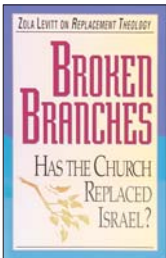
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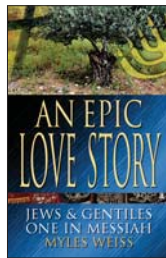
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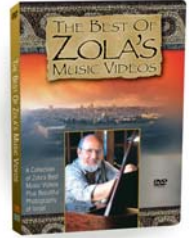


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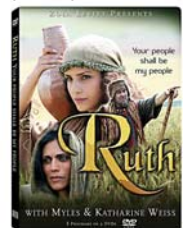


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For several months, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability reviewed all aspects of this ministry's financials, newsletters, website, government documents, television broadcasts, etc. The ECFA knows more about our ministerial effort than some of our employees! We are honored to announce that the ECFA has accepted ZLM as an official member.



For details, see Mark's article on page 21 of our February 2012 *Levitt Letter* and visit www.ECFA.org (Search 31258).

You can see ZLM's ECFA document at www.levitt.com/about#docs.

"Come Home!"

Zola
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See page
36 for details



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Of Muppets, Serpents, & Sharks



Mark Levitt

Who can indict an industry better than an insider? Remember *The Insider*, a movie about a tobacco executive who blew the whistle on cigarettes?¹

Greg Smith, a former Goldman Sachs executive director, said that his colleagues referred to clients as Muppets.² The sharky stockbrokers smile to our faces while concealing feeding frenzies. What the brokerage firm A.G. Edwards did to Zola, this ministry, and my family years ago inspired the semi-monthly *Wise As A Serpent* series of articles posted toward the bottom at www.levitt.com/essays. Perhaps calling it the “financial disservices industry” would warn of its “buyer-beware” playing field when it comes to investing.

A recent *AARP The Magazine* article, “The Two Faces of Your Financial Planner,” describes an industry insider pulling back the curtain on how money advisors really work—and why “good” planners sometimes do very bad things to investors.³ The writer, Allan Roth, specifies what planners can and can’t do for you and lists ten ways to get the best money advice.

Staff Sgt. Robert Bales is the U.S. soldier accused of shooting 16 women and children in their sleep in Afghanistan. Before that, as a stockbroker, he was ordered to pay \$1.5 million in restitution for decimating an older couple’s nest egg. Nonetheless, he STILL is licensed to advise you and me on how to invest our life savings!⁴

Years ago, I asked God if it was His will for Zola and me to trust such a con man—a supposedly sharp, ethical financial “advisor,” introduced by a Believer from my children’s Christian school. Then came my calling to strengthen the body of Christ by alerting fellow Believers to be as wise as serpents about these hucksters (Matt. 10:16).

wise as a serpent

Even the well-meaning ones can be trading on misinformation from their firms’ investment bankers.⁵ Mixing conflicts of interest with human nature brews a cocktail as unhealthy for your financial future as cigarettes are for your lungs.



Hopefully, this article’s footnotes and links will inspire you to read, think, and pray before investing (Matt. 25:14–23). One silver lining here is that I’ve never seen Vanguard in any headlines about scandal, and Scott Burns (a real, credentialed financial expert, unlike yours truly) heralds them as a legitimate, low-cost option.

For most of us, there’s no better investment than paying off debt, including the mortgage, while maintaining a cushion of savings equivalent to 3–6 months of income. ★

1 “Fighting Off Merchants of Death,” Nov. 2007 *Levitt Letter*, page 7, www.levitt.com/newsletters/2007-11.pdf

2 “Goldman Sachs Exec Resigns and Takes Aim at Bank—Says Colleagues Called Clients ‘Muppets,’” <http://tinyurl.com/6tc2gc9>

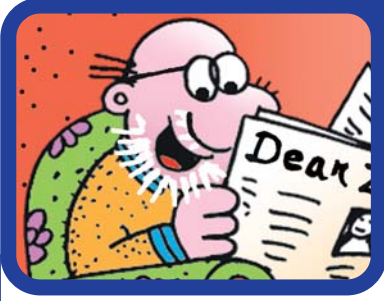
3 *AARP The Magazine*, April/May 2012, pp. 55–57. http://pubs.aarp.org/aarptm/20120405_PR?pg=57#pg57

4 “The Afghanistan Shooting Suspect Had An Incredibly Shady Financial History” <http://tinyurl.com/7vykzx9>

5 “The Sheriff of Wall Street” <http://tinyurl.com/y9rn625>



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Letters to ZLM

Comments from www.levitt.com

From K.H. (NJ): I caught the tail end of Zola's Passover teaching on TV. I was amazed that what Jesus said at the Last Supper (the Passover *Seder*) are the same words said in church over the bread and wine to consecrate them. I know that there are many other parallels and this is what I wish to learn.

From G.J. (MI): I am a Christian. Who are the 144,000? When will they be chosen? According to Revelation 7:4–8 and 14:1–5, the 144,000 are Jewish male celibates from the twelve tribes of Israel. They will be hand-selected and sealed by the Lord for their evangelistic mission. —Todd.

From C.B. (MN): I feel like the missing piece of the puzzle has fallen into place. May God richly bless you and your ministry!

From E.J. (TX): It saddens me that the Jewish roots you teach were not revealed more in my seminary studies, yet I praise the Lord for where I am in this journey He has for me. May Zola be praising our Father in Heaven.

From S.R. (Israel): I'm ordering the DVD *Ruth*—the main character (Ruth) is my wife!

From L.M. (OH): Thank you for making the treasures in your webstore so affordable. God bless you.

From D.W. (OH): Thank you for showing Zola teaching again. Blessings to Myles and Katharine for picking up the mantle and carrying on the ministry that I know will bring many to the Lord, even as Zola did for me.

From D.W. (MN): We watch your program via podcasts and have been receiving the *Levitt Letter* for several months now. We love it! It was the first of the many free resources offered through the website. We use them often, benefiting from things we would not have otherwise known. Of course, we recognize that there are significant costs to production and we want to help with those as we can.

The value of the resources ZLM offers cannot be measured in money: the blessings are eternal! Thank you for the historic teachings of Zola and Jeff and the current lessons by Myles and Katharine. We pray earnestly that God will continue to supply the ministry.



Israeli target: Natanz nuclear facility in Iran



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Stamps of Approval

Dear *Levitt Letter* staff,

I fell off your mailing list. I look forward to the *Levitt Letter* because of the timely political news and sound Bible teaching. In prison, we have no access to the Internet or DVDs, so newsletters are important for us with few avenues to seek biblical wisdom. The responses to letters are often miniature Bible studies for me to grow by. I love the comics and have the maturity in spirit to recognize their purpose. Never offended by them, I have found some to be thought-provoking. Funds are lacking for inmates, but please accept the enclosed stamps to help with expenses. Six stamps equal about ten Ramen Noodle Soups (smile). —C.S. (VA)

Dear C.S.—

Your commitment is convicting! We send our *Levitt Letter* at no charge to over 2,100 prisoners. Through my correspondence with them, I have learned about the use of Ramen Soups as currency. Thanks for this testimony and for sending us stamps to help defray the cost of mailing. Very encouraging. —Myles

Spirit of Compassion

Dear Everyone at ZLM,

The quality of your programming was always good, very good in fact, but Katharine completes Myles fully as he teaches, bringing earnest compassion to every lesson. My heart is touched. —W.F. (TX)



Shalom, W.F.—

I chuckled when I saw your note regarding Katharine's genuine compassion and her earnest love for God's people. I am a Marriage and Family Therapist. A few years ago, a visiting minister quipped, "Why are you the counselor? *She's* the compassionate one!" God has been good to me, and I am glad to share Katharine's spirit with our viewers. —Myles

Am I Jewish?

Dear Myles,

A letter in the April *Levitt Letter* asked, "Am I Jewish?" You answered that the rabbis say Jewishness passes through the mother, but the Bible says the father. Where does it say that?

Blessings on you, the staff, and ministry.

—L.P. (NM)

Shalom, L.P.—

The biblical evidence of patriarchal lineage is overwhelming! Read Matthew chapter one, or the OT about Joshua son of Nun; in the NT, Simon Bar-Jonah. I am Mordechai Ben Pinchas (Myles the son of Paul) and Jesus is Yeshua Ben Yosef AND Yeshua Ben David—the son of Joseph and David's greater Son. Blessings, —Myles

Give Me, Give Me, Give Me

Dear ZLM,

I was so angered by the letter from A.W. in prison (*Levitt Letter*, April '12, p. 21) that I had to reply: A.W., prisoners like you give convicts a bad name. You're a something-for-nothing kind of guy. Own up to your mistake that landed you in prison and learn what prison teaches: how to size people up quickly. I too despise people trying to get the pie out of piety. I just don't see Myles or ZLM in that light. Sure they ask for donations, but no hard sell. Look closer at other ministries; they are just like you: give me, give me, give me.

You say you serve God, but do you help others? Teach others? Don't talk about the speck in Myles's eye until you have addressed that log in yours! (Matt. 7:3) I hope your chaplain wrote ZLM for those free materials. You should read them. You should also apologize to Myles. I kind of like the guy. —W.B. (NY)

Dear Mark,

After reading the letter from A.W., I must write in complete support of your generosity. Unlike A.W., I recognize that it costs ZLM a small fortune each and every month to not only print, but also mail over 2,100 FREE *Levitt Letters* to prisoners such as me. So, I definitely thank you!

There is no question in *my* mind regarding your ministry's motives or methods—both are totally honorable and beyond reproach. —C.Y.G. (VA)

Dear W. and C.—

Mark Twain famously stated, "I can live for two months on a good compliment," so I thank you both for your refutations of A.W.'s misconception of who I am and what motivates me. This ministry is not afraid of criticism, but your point of view is welcome! W., your "insider's" insight was poignant and well put. —Myles



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Afikoman

Dear ZLM,

Moishe Rosen's book about the Passover indicates that the *Afikoman* was not used in the *Seder* meal until after the destruction of the Temple in 70 AD. Can you confirm this? If true, wouldn't that mean that when Jesus said the blessing over the bread, it was not bread that had been wrapped and hidden?

Thanks for your help on this. —D.W.

Dear D.W.—

Actually, the Mishnah of the Talmud in the tractate (a volume of the Talmud) entitled Pesahim 119a informs us that the Afikoman was the last thing eaten in the Passover meal, was present during both the First and Second Temple Periods, and was eaten even when the Tabernacle stood before the Temples were built in Jerusalem! So its practice goes back some 3,000 years. Jesus and His Disciples had it on their *Seder* table in first-century Israel. —Todd

Israel's Right to the Land!

Re-released!

Just as its title implies, this booklet answers head-on the question, "What right does Israel have to its land?" Featuring an introduction by Zola, *Israel's Right to the Land!* pulls abundant evidence from the Scriptures and directly addresses the 12 key issues that resolve this topic once and for all. Let's spread the Word on who owns the Land ("from the river of Egypt to the River Euphrates" Gen 15:18) by divine right! **Order on page 18.**



Please Sign Me Up

Dear ZLM,

I came across a copy of the *Levitt Letter* today and I loved it! I am a Messianic Jew from Israel and I've never seen a publication like yours: I felt it was made just for me! Please sign me up. Shalom, —Mordechai M.W.L. (FL)

Dear Mordechai (my name too!)—

You are now on our mailing list and you join the roughly 2,100 inmates that receive our free monthly *Levitt Letter*. Thanks for your kind words. —Myles, a.k.a. Mordechai



Next Year in Jerusalem

Dear Friends of Jesus,

Your work reaches my heart like nothing or anyone else. The desire of my heart is to say, "Next year in Jerusalem" and then *be* there. —P.McC. (OH)

Dear P.McC.—

We know how that ache can grow ... "Next year in Jerusalem." In our experience, those who truly desire to make this pilgrimage find that God makes a way. Over the years, we have seen miraculous provisions come for those whose "heart is set on pilgrimage" (Psalm 84). See you there! —Myles

Jew and Gentile Together in Messiah

Dear ZLM,

I am 84, a gentile, and have been receiving the *Levitt Letter* for 20 years. You are doing a wonderful job bringing the latest news on Israel, clever cartoons, great books, DVDs, and Zola's music to us. I received the Lord in my heart at age 68. —J.G. (MA)

Dear J.G.—

What a great testimony—coming to Yeshua at age 68 (it's never too late!) and your obvious love for His people. We are one in the Spirit (Ephesians 2:14)—Jew and gentile together in Messiah. —Myles

We Can SEE Prophecy

"As the day approaches, the darkness will increase, but so will the brightness of His shining through us"

Dear Friends,

We appreciate your ministry and the *Levitt Letter*. We drop everything and read it cover to cover.

We are well into our 80s and can see prophecy happening right before us. Truly His coming again is very soon. God's blessing on you, —D. and L.G. (PA)

Dear D. and L.G.—

You are spot on ... we *are* living in the days of fulfilled prophetic Scriptures. As the day approaches, the darkness will increase, but so will the brightness of His shining through us, His disciples. Thanks for your support. —Myles



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Common Era or Year of Our Lord?

Dear ZLM,

I notice an increasing use of BCE in place of B.C., and CE in place of A.D. How did this get started and who is behind it? I am as offended by the removal of this terminology as they are (apparently) by its presence. —K.P.

Dear K.P.—

Secular historians have adopted the term Before the Common Era (BCE) as an alternative to the classical B.C. (Before Christ) to deemphasize the religious nature of historical dating. But what I want to ask them is what divides the Common Era and the time before that—and the answer is Jesus Christ. So why change the dating system since the referent is the same? —Todd

You got a speck in your eye!

Ignoring Our Plank—(Matt. 7:3)

Dear ZLM,

Our Bible study teacher seems to be picking on Jacob, using the definition of his name to do it! He criticizes the manner in which Jacob obtained the birth-right and the patriarchal blessing, and his “cheating” when he agreed to meet Esau at Seir but went instead to Succoth. The teacher focuses on the meaning of Jacob’s name as “heel, heel-catcher, supplanter, deceiver, cheater,” and barely considers God’s changing Jacob’s name to “Israel” (“ruling with God”) ... a substantially more positive name.

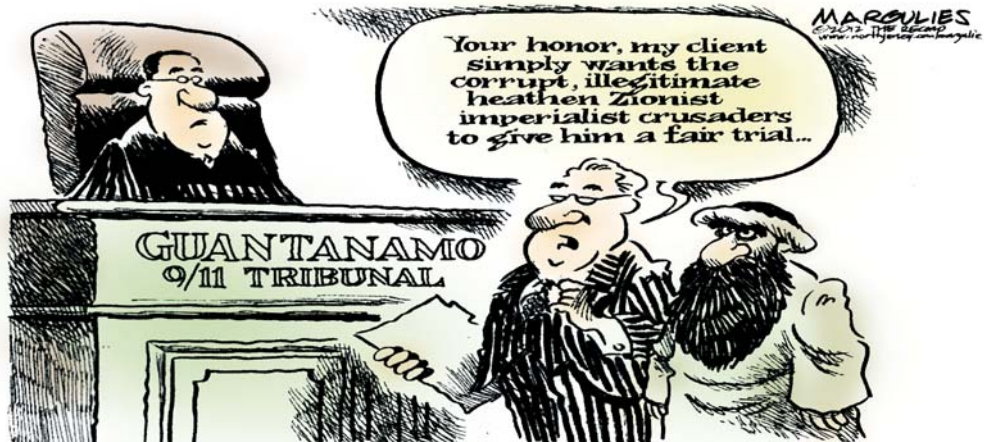
Isn’t there a more positive meaning for the name “Jacob”? —N. and L.R.



Dear N. and L.R.—

The name Jacob is the English form of the Hebrew *Yacov*. The name can also mean “may God protect” or “to follow or be behind.” God did protect Jacob from himself and from Esau and even from Laban. When Jacob became “Israel,” he followed behind the Lord to become a prince with God. We should be careful in treating Jacob, as your teacher does, with sanctimonious contempt. In fact, Jacob represents all of us in our unsaved state—deceitful, stubborn, and selfishly conniving. And even when saved, we struggle with these sinful traits as Jacob did. —Todd

Right you are, Todd. It is amazing that some Bible teachers manage to bend the Scriptures to slip some anti-Semitic flavor into their exposition. God’s sovereignty and His *chesed* (loving-kindness, grace) shines through in His first choosing the sons of Jacob AND then inviting the gentile world into fellowship with Himself! —Myles



Thanks to Katharine

Thank you, Mrs. Weiss, for your accurate portrayal of Islam and Allah (May and June '12 *Levitt Letters*). I have done extensive research comparing the Koran with Christianity and the Bible. You are correct—it is impossible for Allah to be the same as the true God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

John gives us a simple “test” in 1 John 4:1–3: “Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God, but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus, is not from God. This is the spirit of the antiChrist.”

Based on this test, the Islamic teachings of Christ are NOT the Spirit of God. Islam *denies*: 1) that Jesus was crucified, 2) that He is the Son of God, 3) that He is a member of the Trinity, 4) that Jesus is God, 5) that Jesus is the biblical Messiah.

The Bible and Koran were NOT revealed by the same God and, despite some Koranic verses that seem to befriend the Christians, the majority of the verses teach that Christians and Jews are unbelievers and are worthy only of death.

As Christians, we are called to treat ALL people civilly and live in peace as far as it depends on us. But at the spiritual level, we MUST realize that Islamic teachings are in direct contradiction to the Bible, and we CANNOT waver on our foundational beliefs of Christianity. —J.McK. (TX)

Dear J.McK.— Thank you for the support. —Katharine



“Pro-Israel Lawfare” Revisited

Dear ZLM,

Last October, the *Levitt Letter* published many errors about the flotilla (p. 35). Contrary to the information in the article, it was not the Israeli government, nor the U.S. government that sunk [sic] the second flotilla. It was totally due to the efforts of a young Israeli lawyer and her colleagues who sank the flotilla. You will be amazed at the unusual tactics she used. —B.M.K. (NJ)

Dear B.M.K.—

We also were amazed at the ingenuity of the young band of lawyers behind the sinking flotilla. The article we ran focused on national reactions to the flotilla’s demise. At the very top of page 35 is a link intended to take interested readers to the article www.levitt.com/news/2011/08/28/ describing the Israeli law center’s legal gymnastics. We squeezed the link onto the already-full page. If you missed it, I’m afraid other readers missed it too.

Thank you for writing in and giving us this opportunity to call attention to this daring feat of “lawfare.” Please read the article that we posted last August and then give an extra cheer with supporters of Israel.

—Editor ★

*May God Smile
On You Today*



Israel's Top Archaeological Sites

By Abigail Klein Leichman, www.Israel21c.org

Always a magnet for archaeologists, Israel has seen its rich historical layers sifted through and catalogued exhaustively. There are always plenty in progress, says Jon Seligman, head of excavations and surveys at the **Israel Antiquities Authority**.

The IAA supervises about 300 annual excavations. The digs usually take place at a mound (*tel* in Hebrew) composed of the remains of ancient settlements. "We have 30 excavations every day," says Seligman, "and we can carry on for many more years." Israel's most significant archaeological sites, now preserved as national parks, include:

1. Masada

Herod the Great—who built the Second Temple in Jerusalem, and the port of Caesarea—was also responsible for Masada, an ancient fortress overlooking the Dead Sea. Hiking paths and cable car take visitors to the top.



Masada is Israel's top tourist site.



Tel Megiddo City Gate

At the base, a nighttime sound & light show tells of the revolt against the Romans by a band of Jewish families here.

2. Megiddo

Located in the Lower Galilee, Megiddo is identified with Armageddon,

the battle at the End of Days according to Revelation. Already a fortified city by the third millennium BC, 1,000 years later it became a center of Egyptian rule over Canaan. King David then conquered Megiddo, and the city flourished under his son Solomon, who installed its first water system. The wicked King Ahab turned it into a chariot city before the Assyrians conquered it in 732 BC. Many battles later, the city was abandoned after the Persian period.



A "bell" cave at Beit Guvrin

3. Beit Guvrin-Maresha

"The land of a thousand caves," Beit Guvrin-Maresha National Park encompasses approximately 1,250 acres of rolling hills in the Judean lowlands. Over thousands of years, people cut into the rock to make a huge network of bell-shaped quarries, burial caves, storerooms, industrial facilities, hide-outs, and dovecotes. King Rehoboam of Judah built cities for defense on Tel Maresha. It was abandoned during the Roman period, when the nearby city of Beit Guvrin was built and became important in the Crusades era. *(Continued next issue)*



Druze Behind Biggest Kids' Store in Mideast



An ambitious Druze businessman in northern Israel is planning to conquer the world, one stroller at a time.

Well, not just strollers. Jassan ("Jess") Kanan's mammoth **My Baby** store sells everything parents need for babies and kids, from 350 suppliers, at low cost. Even the many imported items sell for about 35 percent less than Israelis ordinarily pay. Price and selection are the primary reasons for the steady line of weekend shoppers heading to My Baby, in the otherwise obscure West Galilee village of Yarka—where Kanan grew up and still resides with his wife and their three young children.

"Israelis love shopping," Kanan says. "Every Shabbat they come to shop." The store gets up to 2,000 weekday customers and closer to 5,000 on weekends.

Yet there is more to My Baby than 118,403 square feet of retail space. Kanan designed his seven-day-a-week business as an "Ikea for kids," he says, taking a lesson from the Swedish chain that's thriving in Israel. The giant store is set up as a bright "airport" arranged in "terminals"—maternity items are in Terminal 1, car seats in Terminal 5. He'll be adding an "arrivals and departures" board listing weekly bargains.

My Baby's rooftop pay-per-play entertainment center and restaurant (Terminal 16) has a train ride, trampoline, go-carts, ball pools, zip line, and birthday party space.

Kanan, 39, says he got

By Abigail Klein Leichman
www.Israel21c.org

his retailing education in "the university of life." The successful but camera-shy business owner served in the Golani Brigade of the Israel Defense Forces for three years. "Every day I learn something new, and I learn quickly," he says. "I always get three opinions, and a little luck helps too."

He and his younger brother, Wissam, have long worked together in retail. Yarka was known in the 1980s as the place to score cheap Levis at a factory that made them there, and the jeans traffic boosted other local businesses. The brothers established a children's store in 1996 and steadily expanded. My Baby now sees annual sales of more than \$25 million.

They employ 140 Druze, Christian, Muslim, and Jewish workers, including several Kanan siblings and cousins. "My customer base is 70% Jewish and 30% Arab," he relates. "It's important for me that whoever comes in the door is honored. I don't care who they are; they will get treated well. My workers and customers come first."

As a minority within a minority, Kanan is used to getting along with Israelis of different religions and ethnicities. Politics do not interest him. "I am very loyal to my country," he says, citing his faith and respect for parents and family as his strongest values. ★



SELECT BRIEFS



Jon Lovitz Crusades Against Global Anti-Semitism

gawker.com

After three teenage girls left dog poop and anti-Semitic syrup graffiti in front of the home of a classmate whose grandparents are Holocaust survivors, actor/comedian/critic **Jon Lovitz** sprang into action.



Lovitz, who is a friend of the family, took to his Twitter to denounce the hateful act he claimed was perpetrated by “3 popular girls in school who did this” to bully his friend’s daughter. “You mess with me, I retaliate ... TIMES TEN!” Lovitz continued. “Jews are no longer victims. And the world doesn’t like it.”

The perps were eventually apprehended, but will not be charged. The involvement of a mother who drove them to the home is still under investigation.

Lovitz followed up with his own update, telling his Twitter followers the girls “have been expelled from their school permanently.”

Bullies: 0, Jon Lovitz: 0 (because 10 times 0 is 0).

“Exodus 1947” U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum

www.ushmm.org

Exodus 1947 was a worn-out, U.S.-owned coastal passenger ship, launched in 1928. Originally called *President Warfield*, it sailed the Chesapeake Bay between Baltimore and Norfolk for over a decade. Transferred

to the British under the Lend-Lease agreement as part of a group of shallow-draft ships, *President Warfield* was later deployed in the Normandy invasion. After World War II, it returned to U.S. waters. Yet the ship was to take part in one more event which ensured its place in history, symbolizing the struggle for unrestricted immigration into Palestine.

Initially sold as scrap for slightly more than \$8,000, the ship was acquired by the Hagana (an underground Jewish military organization). Hagana personnel arranged to dock the ship in Europe in order to transport Jews who sought to illegally immigrate into Palestine.



—Central Zionist Archives
As UN official Emil Sandstroem (bottom right, white hat) looks on, British soldiers remove Jewish refugees from the ship *Exodus 1947*. The passengers are deported back to Europe. Haifa, Palestine, July 20, 1947.



The plight of the ship's passengers would capture the world's attention.



Jewish children, forcibly removed by British soldiers from the ship *Exodus 1947*, stand behind a barbed-wire fence. Photo by Henry Ries. Poppendorf Displaced Persons Camp, Germany, September 1947.

In July 1947, *President Warfield* left Sete, France for Palestine with over 4,500 Jewish men, women, and children, all displaced persons (DPs) or survivors of the Holocaust. Even before the ship (by then renamed *Exodus 1947*) reached Palestine's territorial waters, British destroyers surrounded it. A struggle followed in which a Jewish crewmember and two passengers were killed. Dozens suffered bullet wounds and other injuries.

Attempting to make an example of *Exodus 1947*, the British transferred the passengers onto three navy transports which returned to Europe. The ships first landed at Toulon, France where passengers were ordered to disembark. When the French authorities refused to use force to remove the refugees from the ship, British authorities, fearing adverse public opinion, sought to wait until the passengers disembarked of their own accord. When the passengers, including many orphaned children, forced the issue by declaring a hunger strike, the British were forced to return them to Hamburg in the British-occupied zone of Germany.

Amid worldwide outrage, the British authorities compelled the passengers to disembark; some were forcibly removed from the ship. The passengers were then transferred to displaced persons camps in Germany.



An exhausted Jewish woman from the refugee ship *Exodus 1947* is given a drink as British soldiers stand nearby. The British forcibly returned the passengers to Europe. Haifa, Palestine, July 19, 1947.

Displaced persons in camps all over Europe protested vociferously and staged hunger strikes when they heard the news. Large protests erupted on both sides of the Atlantic. The ensuing public embarrassment for Great Britain played a significant role in the diplomatic swing of sympathy toward the Jews and the eventual recognition of a Jewish State in 1948.



West Bank of What?

By David Ha'ivri, www.YNetNews.com

The term “West Bank” is used so widely that it gives the impression that it has some real historical significance. Those who call for Israel to pull out of this area and allow the establishment of a Palestinian state here would like you to believe that one previously existed and that Israel took it over. The narrative presumes that people will believe it without question and will not ask for any proof. Amazingly, that strategy has worked pretty well so far.

Most people do not expect to be lied to by TV news and academics, so they believe the narrative. Even people who support Israel often do not realize how unrelated to fact many of the claims against Israel are. So, Israel’s supporters are often put on the defensive, trying to point out the good deeds that Israel does in the world as a way to cover up for actions that they do not know how to explain.



But, in fact, the West Bank narrative appeared on the stage of history only in 1948, when the Hashemite army of Transjordan crossed over its own western border—the Jordan River—as part of the joint Arab effort to destroy

the newly founded Jewish State and push the Jews into the sea.

The line of defense that the Jewish army held as it defended Tel Aviv was later dubbed the “Green Line” because it was marked with green-colored crayon on the map used at the signing of the armistice agreement between Israel and its neighbors in 1949. In that agreement, the Arab side refused to define the Green Line as a recognized border, but only as an agreed ceasefire line.

Transjordan tried to annex its new-found land west of the Jordan River by imposing its laws and naturalizing the Arab residents. It even changed its name to Jordan, removing the prefix “Trans” (“beyond”) as a way to hide the fact that it belonged on the east side of the river, but not on both.

Israel’s Heartland

Jordan’s occupation and annexation of “its” west bank was not recognized by the international community, or even sanctioned by the Arab League. Only Great Britain and Pakistan backed the move. During the 19 years of Jordanian occupation of the West Bank, not one move was made to establish a Palestinian state there. On the contrary, the PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) was founded during that period, with the stated goal of ridding the area of Israel.

So, the term “West Bank” is not even as old as the State of Israel. Before the Jordanian invasion, this region was called Judea and Samaria—clearly marked on maps throughout history. When you hear people talk about the “West Bank,” ask them if they have any idea when and why this term was coined. Point out that Judea and Samaria are Israel’s heartland, and inform them that most of the main events of the Bible occurred here.

It is also a strategic buffer for Israel: without it, Israel would be less than 10 miles wide. ★



Biblical Humor

Q. Which servant of God was the most flagrant lawbreaker in the Bible?
 A. Moses. He broke all 10 commandments at once.

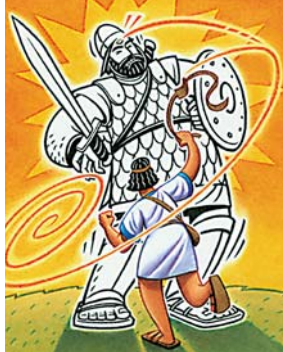
Q. Which area of Israel was especially wealthy?
 A. The area around the Jordan—its banks were always overflowing.

Q. Who is the greatest baby-sitter mentioned in the Bible?
 A. David. He rocked Goliath into a very deep sleep.

Q. Which Bible character had no parents?
 A. Joshua, son of Nun.

Q. Why didn't they play cards on the Ark?
 A. Because Noah was standing on the deck.

P.S. Did you know it's a sin for a woman to make coffee?
 Yup, it's in the Bible. It says "He-brews"



*A cheerful heart is good medicine—
 Proverbs 17:22*

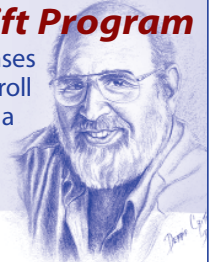


"I'd really like to join the church, pastor, but that 'tithe' thingy is a little steep...do you have a junior membership program?"



Automatic First Aid! Zola's Monthly Gift Program

Increase the effectiveness of your contributions by reducing our expenses in processing them, plus save your time and postage. Once you enroll in our **Monthly Gift Program**, our ministry will electronically receive a monthly offering from either your checking account or credit card.



If you wish to use your checking account for donations, please follow directions numbered 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5 below:

1. Transfer date: (please circle one) 5th 20th
2. Withdrawal amount: (please circle one) \$8 \$12 \$16 Other _____
3. Enclose your check payable to Zola Levitt Ministries (ZLM) for this month's gift. The monthly transfers will begin in about 4 weeks, and you can cancel at any time.
4. Signature _____ (required for processing)
5. Printed Name _____ Date Signed _____

For credit/debit card donations, please follow directions 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, & 11 below. Your charge date will be between the 15th & 20th of each month. You may cancel at any time.

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Israel's Rocket-Hunting Ace Got His Start Playing 'Warcraft'

By Amir Mizroch, www.Wired.com

While many of the boys in **Idan Yahya's** high school class were buffing up and preparing themselves for selection into elite combat units, this gawky teenager was spending "a lot of time" playing *Warcraft*—the real-time strategy computer game where opposing players command virtual armies in a battle to dominate the fictional world of Azeroth.



Four years later, the high school jocks who made the cut into the IDF's Special Operations units now crawl through the sand dunes on the outskirts of the Gaza Strip and watch while Idan knocks rockets out of the sky hundreds of meters above their heads. Idan Yahya, 22, an Iron Dome "gunner" in the Active Air Defense Wing 167, currently holds the record for the number of rockets intercepted: eight.

People in the army describe him variously as a geek and an ace. But the geek who grew up playing *Warcraft* is now a highly prized soldier on the cutting edge of real war craft. He's the Israeli army's top rocket interceptor.

The Iron Dome is a mobile anti-rocket interception system that Israel moves around the country to shoot down the rockets fired at its civilian population centers by armed groups in Gaza and southern Lebanon. It fires interceptor missiles at the rockets if they're heading toward populated centers. The system has become increasingly important as Hamas, Hezbollah, and other groups amass surface-to-surface rockets to hit the Israeli home front.

The war between Israelis and Arabs is becoming a hi-tech rocket war. The

IDF's Director of Military Intelligence, Maj. Gen. Aviv Kochavi, said recently that there are 200,000 rockets aimed at Israel from the south, north, and east. And in this increasingly technological battlefield of rockets, anti-rocket interceptors, radars, control rooms, drones, and drone hacking, it is soldiers like Idan Yahya (and his counterparts on the Arab side) who are making the most impact.

Computer geek, keyboard combatant, soldier—call him what you will, Idan and others like him man the controls of advanced military technology. "There are a lot of flashing blips, signs, symbols, colors, and pictures on the screen. There's a lot of information and very little time. It definitely reminds me of *Warcraft* and other online strategy games," Idan says.



Rocket interceptor batteries in position

"My Iron Dome operators are all fighters, and many of them played PlayStation and computer games before they got to my unit. But we train them to look at a very complex ballistic picture, with a lot of information about targets and threats, to decide which target is more threatened, how to communicate with other systems online, and to make decisions in a matter of seconds under conditions of extreme stress and with a lot of unknowns. These teenagers who get drafted into the army need to be able to thrive in a technological environment," says Colonel Zvika Haimovich, commander of the Israel Air Force's Active Defense Wing.

And this is specifically what Idan Yahya, the IDF's ace rocket interceptor, is so very good at. ★



Voting To Rename Jew Pond

By Jim Morrison
www.HuffingtonPost.com



This spring, residents of Mont Vernon—a rural New Hampshire town—voted to rename a fishing and skating spot that’s been called Jew Pond since the 1920s. The 104-33 vote allowed the board of select men to ask the U.S. Board of Geographic Names to officially change the Jew Pond moniker, which appears on a 1968 map but not on any town signs.

Residents debated the issue with some urging that the name be changed and others saying it should be kept.

“I don’t know if it was meant to be offensive or not, but if people are offended by the name I don’t see why we shouldn’t change it,” said Bill Davidson, who has lived in Mont Vernon for 13 years.

But 34-year resident Lawrence Rondo and his wife, Annette, disagreed. “Changing it is stupid. People just like to stir up trouble,” Rondo said. Added his wife, “People are too sensitive today.”

Mont Vernon town health officer Rich Masters pushed for the vote after the

name appeared in a news report about an algae bloom at the pond. “I find it inappropriate, disrespectful to some people,” he said.

But for many long-time residents, the effort was a lot of fuss over a small, manmade body of water that no one cares much about. The pond originally was named Spring Pond, because the owners of a hotel there created it by digging up a spring to irrigate their golf course. They made clear in a brochure that Jewish guests were not welcome.

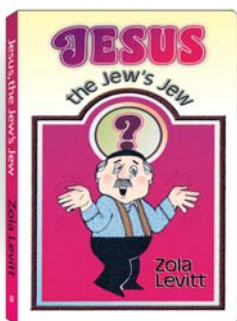
It’s generally believed that the body of water became Jew Pond when two Jewish businessmen from Boston bought the hotel. They intended to make the pond bigger and rename it Lake Serene, town officials say.

Mont Vernon Historical Society member Zoe Fimbel, who has lived in the town for 31 years, said there’s nothing bigoted about the Jew Pond name. She said it was more about longtime residents in the 1920s being annoyed by out-of-towners trying to turn the pond into something it was not.

Still, resident Kevin Schmidlein thought the name should be changed. “If we’re going to be known for something, I’d rather it be for something other than this,” he said. ★

Jew Pond: Mont Vernon, NH





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