



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

# Purim is the Holiday of Prayer

inside: Righteous  
Gentiles & Purim p.4

By Rabbi Elisha Friedman / MyJewishLearning.com

Purim is commonly observed as a festive occasion recalling when the Jewish people were saved from a genocidal attempt to destroy them. But according to medieval Sephardic Jewish philosopher Maimonides (1138–1204), Purim has a more serious theological context. Maimonides defines the theme of Purim in his *Mishneh Torah*: “To remember the praise of God and the salvations He did for us, and [that] He was nearby to save us; to bless Him and praise Him and let future generations know that it is true what the Torah promised: ‘For what great nation is there that has a God so close at hand as is the Lord our God whenever we call upon Him?’”

The verse Maimonides quotes — Deuteronomy 4:7 — promises that God will answer our prayers. Purim backs that up. The story of Esther illustrates that prayer is a means to

*(continued p.2)*

#### REMEMBER:

**Purim is Tuesday, March 10.**

*(Jewish holidays begin at sunset the evening before.)*

## How Hamantaschen Cookies Got Their Name

By Olivia B. Waxman  
Time.com

Many Jewish people get ready for Purim by baking hamantaschen cookies, triangular treats made of dough with poppy seeds or fruit jam in the middle. This year, Purim falls on Tuesday March 10, and begins at sunset the evening before.

Asked what the dessert signifies, many celebrants would quickly answer that they're in the shape of the triangular hat supposedly worn by Haman, the villain of the Purim story in the Book of Esther. But there's more history than that to the cookie—and clues can be found in its name.

*(continued p.7)*



## Purim is the Holiday of Prayer *continued from cover*

change the world and confront the difficulties we experience. According to the Book of Esther (4:16), the Jews fasted for three days before Esther went to beg King Ahasuerus to save them. Most rabbinic interpretations say the fasting was actually prayer.

The Baal Shem Tov (the title given to Israel ben Eliezer [1698–1760], founder of the Hasidic movement) considered Purim a most auspicious time of prayer. He derived this from the principle that on Purim “all who extend their hand receive.”

The original meaning of this principle in Jewish law is that, while we normally evaluate charitable requests carefully and weigh their merits, on Purim we simply give to anyone who asks. The Baal Shem Tov suggested that this refers to prayer too. Anyone who asks God for something on Purim is answered.

How did Purim become such a powerful day for prayer? Since many salvations in Jewish history occurred as a result of prayer, **what distinguishes Purim?**

Unlike other miracles in Jewish history, Purim lacks direct and open involvement of God in the miracle it celebrates. The Book of Esther doesn't even mention God's name. Indeed, one might wonder whether the holiday marks a miracle at all. Nothing obviously supernatural transpired. No laws of nature were rewritten to help the Jews in need. The miracle of Purim happened quietly — it's what one might call a hidden miracle.

In fact, Esther's name derives from the Hebrew root word “to hide.” Deuteronomy 31:18 declares that God's face in the future will be hidden — in Hebrew, *has-tare es-ther*. Esther was the heroine of just such a time.

Purim illustrates that even when God seems to disappear, He remains the guiding hand of history. As such, Purim is the holiday that speaks most directly to our own times, to the period of God's hiddenness. Our spiritual world has little in common with the stories of the Bible, of God splitting seas and appearing in burning bushes. But we can readily understand a time when God disappears, when God is not seen.

The Torah promised that prayer would be answered. Purim is a commentary on that. It may seem that many prayers go unanswered, but Purim asks us to reevaluate what the word “answered” means. The sea may not split; a voice may not boom from Heaven. But we may discover that an answer was provided nevertheless. God listens to every petitioner. All who extend their hand receive. Perhaps not obviously, but they are answered.

For more about Esther, see [p. 17](#). ★





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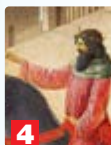
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# ISRAEL:

The only nation on Earth that  
lives in the same land  
with the same name  
and the same capital city  
speaking the same language  
and worshiping the same God  
that it did 3,000 years ago!

— ZOLA LEVITT

# What Does Purim Have to Do with Righteous Gentiles?



**PART 1:** BY ANDREW KOSS (r) MosaicMagazine.com



credit: National Gallery of Canada

Detail from *The Triumph of Mordecai* by Botticelli, circa 1475.

The main event of Purim is the reading of the *Megillah* (the scroll) of the Book of Esther — the narrative of how brave Esther and pious Mordecai saved Persian Jewry from the genocidal schemes of wicked Haman. Ashkenazi Jews traditionally read the scroll in public, then recite a poem whose unknown author lived no later than the 11<sup>th</sup> century. The concluding lines are usually sung to an upbeat tune:

*Cursed is Haman, who sought to destroy me;  
Blessed is Mordecai the Jew.  
Cursed is Zeresh, wife of my tormentor;  
Blessed is Esther, who protected me —  
And also Harbonah, who is to be remembered for the good!*

The reference to Haman's wife Zeresh, who plays a minor role, can be chalked up to poetic license — a female villain in counterpoint to the story's heroine. But what of Harbonah, a decidedly minor character mentioned only twice in the entire book (1:10 and 7:9), and whose appearance in the poem's final verse breaks the stanza's meter and rhythm? And what of the epithet "to be remembered for the good"?

Harbonah comes onstage near the story's end, just after Queen Esther has exposed to her husband the nefarious plan of his vizier Haman:

*And Harbonah, one of the chamberlains, said before the king,  
Behold also, the gallows fifty cubits high, which Haman had  
made for Mordecai, who had spoken good for the king, standeth  
in the house of Haman. Then the king said, Hang him thereon.*

*(continued next page)*



The medal of the Righteous bears the Jewish saying: “Whosoever saves a single life, saves an entire universe” (Sanhedrin 37, 71).

In other words, Harbonah is there to make sure that Haman gets his proper comeuppance by being hanged on the gallows built for his nemesis Mordecai. On Purim, we say, “Harbonah, to be remembered for the good.”

Harbonah’s intervention, even if targeted at one who had already earned the king’s disfavor, was certainly commendable. But the question remains: why this special treatment? A closer look may reveal a facet of the Purim story with enduring relevance.

A Biblical text not usually associated with Purim but chanted in the synagogue just before the holiday begins — Isaiah 55:6–56:8 — is the prophetic reading for afternoon services on fast days, including the Fast of Esther that normally falls on the eve of Purim. Here are the crucial verses:

*Neither let the son of the alien, that hath joined himself to the Lord, speak, saying, the Lord hath utterly separated me from His people; neither let the eunuch say, behold, I am a dried-up tree. For thus saith the Lord unto the eunuchs that keep My Sabbaths, and choose the things that please Me, and hold fast to My covenant; even unto them will I give in Mine house and within My walls a place and a name better than of sons and of daughters: I will give them an everlasting name, that shall not be cut off. (Is. 56:3–5)*

In 56:3–7 the prophet Isaiah is offering reassurance to two classes of people. The first is the **nekhar**, or stranger, a word that in this context clearly refers to a gentile (as it does elsewhere in the Bible). While such a person — perhaps a convert or someone taking on the intermediate status of a God-fearing non-Jew — might fear that not being born a Jew places an insurmountable barrier between him and God, the prophet assures him to the contrary.

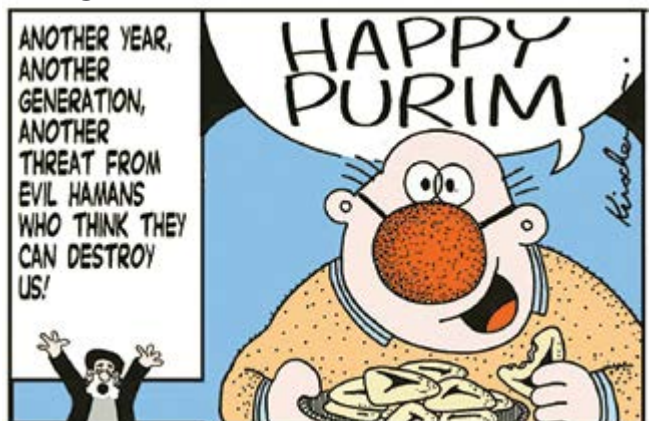
The second is the **saris** (usually translated as “eunuch”) whose despair comes from childlessness. To him the prophet promises “a place and a name,” in Hebrew *yad va-shem* — a phrase, sometimes rendered “everlasting memorial” that gives its name to Israel’s Holocaust Memorial Museum. Don’t worry, Isaiah is saying, you may think that your lack of progeny means that your name won’t live on. But God promises it will live on forever.

Next month we will consider the question What has this to do with Harbonah?

For an in-depth background of Purim, watch *Esther: For Such A Time As This* at [levitt.tv](http://levitt.tv). — David ★

## Dry Bones

Happy Purim



# A Little Effort

**Kirsten Hart**  
Studio co-host of  
*Our Jewish Roots*



Every tour to Israel requires a good pair of walking shoes. I put a lot of time and energy into finding shoes that fit just right, because we do a lot of walking! It takes energy to walk the hills of Israel and explore the streets of Old Jerusalem; you need shoes built for comfort and distance.

On every Zola Tour, pilgrims have the option to climb the thirty different-sized steps of the Southern Steps of the Temple Mount—or not. Each step was constructed with a different depth (tread) and height (rise) so climbers would need to mind every step as they ascended to meet with God. The ascent to the Temple never became commonplace.

Have you ever counted the steps in your home? A typical staircase has 12–13 steps. I like to know the exact number when I'm carrying a load of laundry that blocks the view of my path. Yet after a while, I know exactly how many risers there are and can rely that the treads will feel the same every time I walk on them.

**The Southern Steps are different.** You have to

invest some energy in the climb and look down at each and every different step. The architect wanted the stair climbers to take their time, praying and being conscious of the ascent's effort. Rather than a load of laundry, they might carry a sacrifice or an offering for the Lord. Purpose and effort factored into the climb to a holy meeting.

Likewise, reaching the Tabernacle in Ancient Shiloh (where the Ark of the Covenant rested for 369 years) required exercise—not too strenuous, but definitely an effort—to reach the Holy of Holies. The land in Israel is mountainous and hilly, but I think it reveals God's purpose.



Kirsten at Southern Steps of the Temple Mount

*(continued next page)*



God **wants** to meet us; He **wants** to meet our needs. But I think He also appreciates us putting some personal exertion into our requests. As parents of grown sons, David and I greatly appreciate when they take the time and make an effort to come and be with us in our home. Their making a conscious effort to be in our presence warms our hearts. I believe it warmed God's heart when the Israelites came into His "home" with a little sweat on their brow, but thankful to be there. ★



## Hamantaschen Cookies ... *continued from cover sidebar*

Early versions of the cookies were more commonly known as *oznei Haman*, meaning "Haman's ears." The *Encyclopedia of Jewish Food* (below) by late Jewish food historian Gil Marks (1952–2014) traces



that phrase— but not the cookie— to the Roman scholar and poet Immanuel ben Solomon (c.1261–1328) who, thanks to "a misinterpretation arising from the medieval Italian custom of cutting off a criminal's ear

before execution," argued that Haman's ears had been cut off after he was hanged, at the end of the Purim story.

Marks traces the first record of *oznei Haman* as something to eat back to "the oldest extant Jewish play," a 1550 satirical Hebrew play that was produced for a Purim carnival in Mantua, Italy and drew from both religious stories and Italian dramatic traditions. The script contains a play on words in which one character thinks that the Biblical story of the Israelites eating manna in the desert means that the Israelites ate Haman; another character responds with an interpretation that it must mean that Jews are commanded to eat *oznei Haman*.

Rabbi Cheryl Peretz, a dean at the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies of American Jewish University, says that by connecting Purim treats to manna, the play, while

satirical, resonated with audiences because it touched on an issue that still comes up today of "how you renew customs and traditions in meaningful ways in a contemporary world."

Sometime in the 18<sup>th</sup> or 19<sup>th</sup> century in Germany and Eastern Europe, a triangular pastry pocket filled with poppy seeds, often called *mohntaschen*— *mohn* meaning "poppy seed" and *tasch* meaning "pocket"— came onto the scene.

**The word became a pun around Purim:** *oznei Haman* plus *mohntaschen* created *hamantaschen*. The name caught on.

The idea of naming a pastry after someone "wicked" is to "turn it into something sweet" Peretz explains. The name *hamantaschen* being a pun and the carnival atmosphere of Purim festivities reflect the best of Jewish humor. The tradition "forged by life in exile and a vital element in dealing with it," wrote Gil Marks, "particularly manifests itself on Purim, a time when joking and frivolity is encouraged."

There were home-baked *hamantaschen* on the set while we taped [Esther: For Such A Time As This](#). Their aroma permeated the entire studio. I could go for a few right now! —Kirsten ★

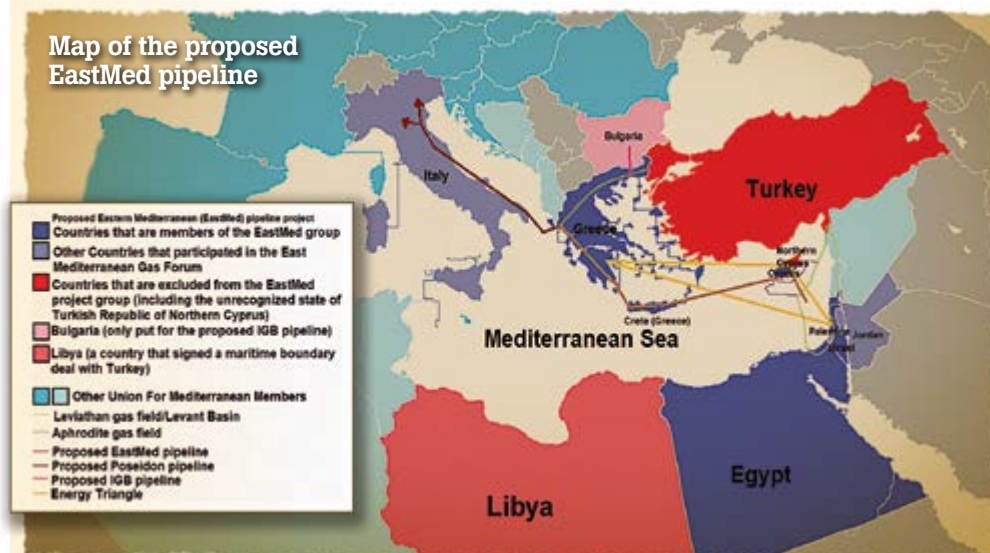


# The Gog and Magog Prophecy

On the Ground in Israel  
**Sarah Liberman**  
[SarahLiberman.com](http://SarahLiberman.com)  
OJR Contributor



Early in 2020, three agreements were signed within days of each other. All deal with natural gas supplies from the Middle East to Europe. The significance of these scarcely reported agreements only emerges when you put the pieces of a puzzle together.



Vast fields rich with natural gas were recently found in the Mediterranean Sea just off the coastlines of Israel and Cyprus. This discovery led to an agreement called **“EastMed,”** which includes a gas pipeline from Israel to Cyprus and on to Greece and Italy, supplying energy to multiple countries in Europe. **This plan would significantly increase Israel’s national income and global economic standing.** To kick things off, Israel sent a research ship to help Cyprus pinpoint the gas fields in its own economic waters. However, a Turkish warship threatened the Israeli research vessel, making it leave Cyprus. Turkey announced that it does not recognize ANY Cypriot rights to their sovereign waters, even close to the island’s shoreline, claiming that all Cyprus’s territorial waters belong to Turkey.

Going further, **Turkey signed an agreement with Libya** detailing the division of the territorial waters between those two countries. The lines drawn in this agreement ignore the very existence of Cyprus and its water rights. In signing the agreement, Turkey declared that it will not allow the EastMed pipeline to be laid in these newly declared territorial waters. This agreement was one-sided and not recognized by any other country. There are two main reasons for Turkey to make such aggressive moves: First, they want any economic benefits from deposits found in the sea to be theirs. The second reason has to do with the third agreement, signed between Russia and Turkey, which calls for a new natural gas supply pipeline: **TurkStream.**



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credit: Adam Hegazy/337259 - Own work, Wikimedia Commons

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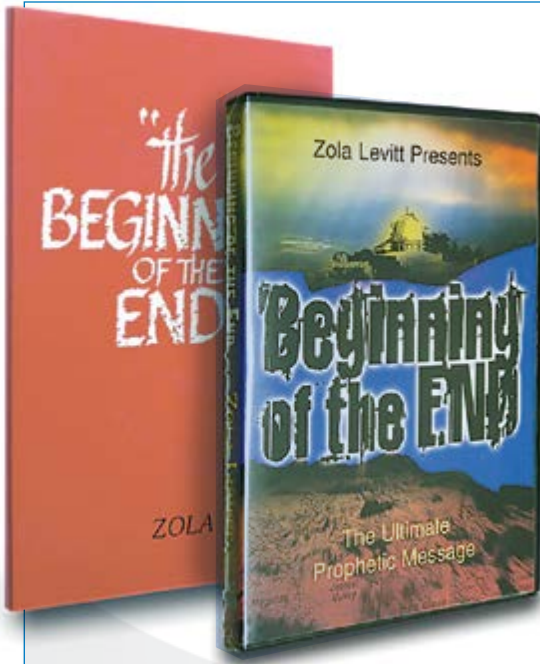
Russia has been selling gas and oil to Eastern Europe for some time. The new TurkStream line will allow Russia to ship Russian gas to Turkey and then on to other nations in southeastern Europe. The scheme will increase income for Turkey and solidify Russia's dominance over European energy supplies. Working with Turkey to block any competition lets Russia keep its natural gas prices and sales high. Critics point out that signing the Turkey-Russia agreement just as winter hit the Northern Hemisphere pressured European countries to agree under duress.

These three agreements result in putting Israel and Turkey (and, therefore, Russia) on a collision course that could significantly escalate tension between the countries. This is a high-stakes game for Russia. Indeed, anyone who sells energy to Europe stands to gain huge amounts of money.

It is only a matter of time before we see the repercussions of these conflicting economic interests, with Russia and Turkey on one side, and Israel and Cyprus (backed by America) on the other.

Ezekiel 38–39 contains a prophecy of the Gog and Magog war in which a massive aggregate army from the north comes against Israel to plunder an Israeli resource. Could we be watching the initial steps of this prophecy unfold?

Why so much turmoil over blessings? Israel and Cyprus are blessed to find this immense natural resource — yet the result is hostility from Russia and Islamic Turkey. See more from Zola about this prophecy on [p. 13](#). —David ★

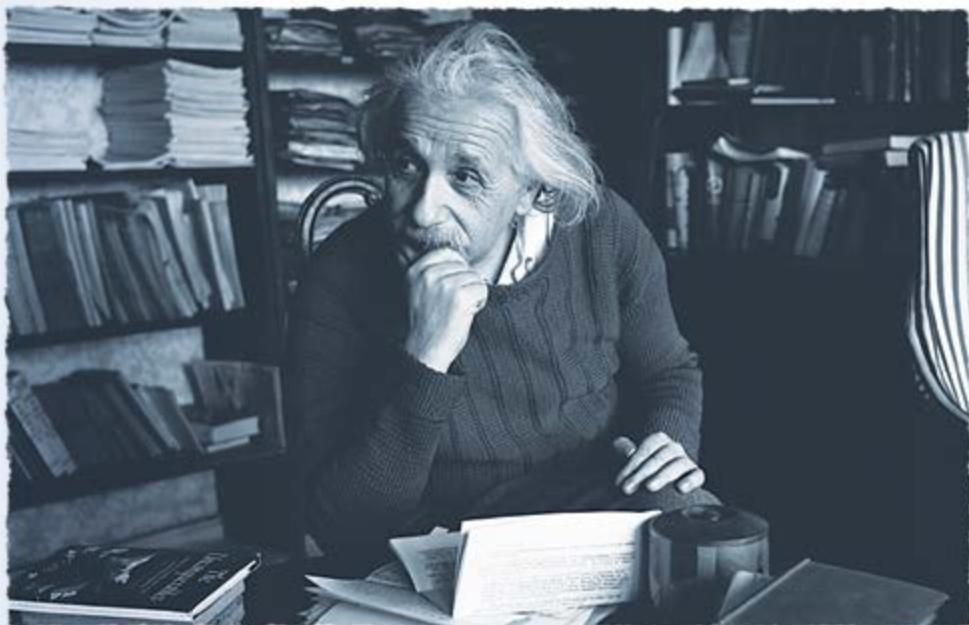


## *The Beginning of the End* book & teaching/music CDs

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# The Secrets of Jewish Genius

BY BRET STEPHENS (r) NYTimes.com



credit: Getty Images

Albert Einstein at home in Princeton, N.J., 1944

*An eminent Lithuanian rabbi is annoyed that his yeshiva students devote their lunch breaks to playing soccer instead of discussing Torah. The students, intent on convincing their rav (teacher) of the game's beauty, invite him to watch a professional match. At halftime, they ask what he thinks.*

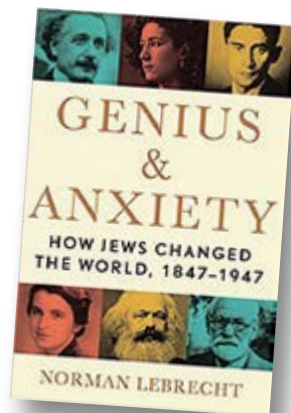
*"I have solved your problem," the rabbi announces.*

*"How?"*

*"Give one ball to each side, and they will have nothing to fight over."*

This (apocryphal) anecdote comes from Norman Lebrecht's book *Genius & Anxiety*, an erudite and delightful study of the intellectual achievements and nerve-wracked lives of Jewish thinkers, artists, and entrepreneurs between 1847 and 1947. Sarah Bernhardt and Franz Kafka; Albert Einstein and Rosalind Franklin; Benjamin Disraeli and (sigh) Karl Marx — how is it that a people who never amounted even to one-third of 1 percent of the world's population contributed so seminally to so many of its most path-breaking ideas and innovations?

The common answer is that Jews are, or tend to be, smart. But the "Jews are smart" explanation obscures more than it illuminates. Aside from perennial nature-or-nurture questions, there is the more difficult question of why that intelligence was so often matched by such bracing originality and high-minded purpose. One can apply a prodigious intellect in the service of prosaic things — formulating a war plan, for instance, or constructing a ship. One can also apply brilliance in the service of a mistake or a crime, like managing a planned economy or robbing a bank.



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credit:  
Michael Thaidigsmann  
(Wikimedia Commons)

But as the story of the Lithuanian rabbi suggests, **Jewish genius operates differently**. It is prone to question the premise and rethink the concept; to ask “why?” (or “why not?”) as often as “how?”; to see the absurd in the mundane and the sublime in the absurd. Where Jews’ advantage more often lies is in thinking differently.

Where do these habits of mind come from?

There is a religious tradition that, unlike some others, asks the believer not only to observe and obey but also to discuss and disagree. There is the never-quite-comfortable status of Jews in places where they are the minority — intimately familiar with the customs of the country while maintaining a critical distance from them. There is a moral belief, “incarnate in the Jewish people” according to Einstein, that “the life of the individual only has value [insofar] as it aids in making the life of every living thing nobler and more beautiful.”

And there is the understanding, born of repeated exile, that everything that seems solid and valuable is ultimately perishable, while everything that is intangible — knowledge most of all — is potentially everlasting.

**Jewish genius ... is prone to question the premise and rethink the concept; to ask “why?” (or “why not?”) as often as “how?”; to see the absurd in the mundane and the sublime in the absurd.**

“We had been well off, but that was all we got out,” the late financier Felix Rohatyn recalled of his narrow escape (with a few hidden gold coins) from the Nazis as a child in World War II. “Ever since, I’ve had the feeling that the only permanent wealth is what you carry around in your head.” If the greatest Jewish minds seem to have no walls, it may be because, for Jews, the walls have so often come tumbling down.

These explanations for Jewish brilliance aren’t necessarily definitive. Nor are they exclusive to the Jews.

At its best, the American university can still be a place of relentless intellectual challenge rather than ideological conformity and social groupthink.

At its best, the United States can still be the country

that respects, and sometimes rewards, all manner of heresies that outrage polite society and contradict established belief. At its best, the West can honor the principle of racial, religious, and ethnic pluralism not as a grudging accommodation to strangers but as an affirmation of its own diverse identity. In that sense, what makes Jews special is that they aren’t. They are representational.

The West, however, is not at its best. It’s no surprise that Jew hatred has made a comeback, albeit under new guises. Anti-Zionism has taken the place of anti-Semitism as a political program directed against Jews. Globalists have taken the place of rootless cosmopolitans as the shadowy agents of economic iniquity. Jews have been murdered by white nationalists and black “Hebrews.” Hate crimes against Orthodox Jews have become an almost daily fact of life in New York City.

Jews of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century would have been familiar with the hatreds. Jews of the early 21<sup>st</sup> century should recognize where those hatreds could lead. What’s not secret about Jewish genius is that it’s a terribly fragile flower.

To our request to *sha’alu shalom Yerushalayim* (pray for the peace of Jerusalem) please add “pray for the peace and safety of Jews throughout the nations.” — David ★



## Life and Death after Dying

**Dr. Todd Baker**  
Zola Levitt Ministries  
Staff Theologian



### Q. What Happens After Death?

**A.** The Bible tells us that God made man with a physical body and a spirit that resides in that body (Genesis 2:7). The spirit is the immaterial part of us that continues existence after physical death.

**Every human being survives physical death as their spirit continues into an afterlife**—into eternity, which is in another dimension altogether.

The atheist gets it wrong when he assumes that after death you simply cease to exist. In Luke 16:19–31, Yeshua unveils the reality of what happens when a person dies and goes to the afterlife. The Lord tells of a poor man named Lazarus and a rich man. Both die, and their souls go to two different places—one to Hell and one to Paradise. Yeshua’s true account applies to all people who die—Heaven for those who believe in Jesus Christ and Hell for those who die in unbelief. This is called the “intermediate state of the soul”—meaning that at death, the spirit of the deceased survives and goes to one of two places, depending on whether that person believed in Jesus Christ for salvation or didn’t.

Thus, God’s Word affirms life after death for both the believer in Yeshua and unbeliever. The souls of those who believed in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins and accepted His gift of eternal life (John 3:16, 5:24) go to the “third heaven” (2 Corinthians 12:2), where they are brought into the presence of the Lord. For Believers, to be absent from the body at death is to be at home and in the presence of the Lord (2 Corinthians 5:6–8). At death, the soul (spirit) of dead Believers goes to Heaven while their physical bodies remain in the grave—asleep, so to speak.

When the first resurrection (the Rapture of the Church) occurs, the disembodied souls of Believers will, at that point, be reunited with their resurrected, glorified bodies that will rise from the graves (1 Corinthians 15:50–54; 1 Thesalonians 4:13–17).

**Believers will possess this reunified soul and glorified body throughout eternity** (Revelation 21–22). The future for unbelievers after death is horrible and damnable. Those who do not believe in Yeshua for salvation will enter Hell immediately after death—a temporary holding place of torment until the second resurrection (the Great White Throne Judgment), which will occur after the thousand-year reign of Christ (Revelation 20:11–15). All the departed souls of the unbelieving dead are currently being held in Hell where they reside in darkness and fiery torment, as happened to the unbelieving rich man in the “Lazarus and rich man” narrative.

The unsaved souls remain in Hell until they are physically joined to their risen bodies to stand before the Lord at the Great White Throne Judgment, a judgment that applies only to unbelievers. Once judged, they will be cast into the lake of fire, where they will be tormented forever as eternal punishment for their sins against the eternal God (Revelation 14:11; 20:13–15). ★



# RED ALERT!

**Classic Zola**  
from 1981  
39 years ago



Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin recently revealed the presence of Russian military advisors in Lebanon—one of those startling bits of news that excites prophecy watchers. In recent times, the appearance of “advisors” has repeatedly preceded a full-scale invasion by the regular armies of the “advising” nations—for example, American advisors in Vietnam and Russian advisors in Egypt before the Yom Kippur War.

Some Americans today fear sending our military advisors to El Salvador, understanding that those advisors may be followed by actual fighting men. It is no secret that military advisors have a way of escalating local conflicts, giving more than mere advice. Regarding Biblical prophecy, we must suppose that these Russian advisors on Israel’s northern border simply preview the coming Russian invasion of Israel as prophesied in Ezekiel 38–39.

abreast of developing prophecy, and thus far, Ezekiel hasn’t been wrong about anything. The Russians are quite where he expected them: firmly entrenched in “Persia” (the Middle East) and now utilizing their Libyan allies.

A few weeks ago, the ABC news program “20/20” detailed the presence of nuclear weapons in certain Middle Eastern nations. It reported Israel as being well-armed with nuclear bombs and delivery systems, obtaining most of its supplies covertly from the U.S. Israel’s Negev Nuclear Research Center at Dimona houses an arsenal that will deeply impress the Russians when they arrive. Iraq, with technology from France and Italy, is also progressing toward nuclear readiness; and Pakistan, another Moslem nation, is doing the same. With French and Belgian technology, Pakistan is well-supported and encouraged by Libya.

The politics are complex, but one can see at a glance that the Moslem countries tend to take their nuclear knowledge from the European confederacy of nations. This alignment previews the antiChrist’s coming regime with Israel’s enemies. Not only is Russia’s invasion of Israel being set up, but long-term preparations are underway for Armageddon to follow seven years later. Egypt, though suspected of atomic warhead capability, will not use them in the Russian invasion. (Ezekiel omits Egypt in his list of aligned powers, but Egypt will surely be a protagonist at Armageddon.)

To simplify all of the above, the Russians are already in Lebanon, to Israel’s north, and so are the Libyans. The Israelis are busy fortifying their northern front and knocking out anti-aircraft missile emplacements in Lebanon. Peripheral powers are preparing nuclear weapons as fast as they can for an ultimate confrontation. And the stage is set for a major Russian move on the Middle East.

**Ezekiel’s prophecy tells us Who, What, and Where. All we’re missing is When.** Are we watching that happen now? The prophecy remains absolutely accurate—nation by nation, step by step—we can rely on it completely.

“It is written.”

[Sarah Liberman brings us up to date on p.8.](#) ★



**background** the Israeli flag and the flag of the Soviet Union  
**left inset** Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin  
**right inset** Begin’s Russian counterpart, Leonid Brezhnev

An interesting source of support concerns another revelation by Begin—the presence of Libyan troops at missile bases in Lebanon. Ezekiel mentions the Libyans as an ally of Russia (Ezekiel 38:5).

The *Levitt Letter* endeavors to keep you



# Young Frankenstein... “Little z”

A Note from Mark  
by **Mark Levitt**  
ZLM Director



Actor, screenwriter, director, producer, singer-songwriter, and author Gene Wilder (1933–2016) played the role of Dr. Frederick Frankenstein in the 1974 parody *Young Frankenstein*. Gene’s real name was Jerome Silber-  
man. You may fondly recall some of his other 21 movies.

Two brief *Young Frankenstein* scenes occasionally come to mind. In one, Dr. Frankenstein tosses and turns in his sleep, crying out:

1. “All right, you win, you win, I give! I’ll say it; I’ll say it: **Destiny! Destiny!** No Escaping — That’s for Me!”



After decades of denial (insisting his name be pronounced *Fronken-schteen*), he dramatically accepts his destiny to follow in the footsteps of his infamous grandfather, Victor Frankenstein, by creating a monster. **Reflecting on my 31 years with this ministry has revealed that many twists and turns along the way, including Big Z’s\* graduation, were preordained — destiny, if you will, per Romans 8:28.**

The younger Frankenstein’s creature, magnificently portrayed by Peter Boyle (1935–2006), turned out to be a disaster due to having an abnormal brain. With his violent monster locked in a cell, Dr. Frankenstein decides to enter the cell and have the door locked behind him. He emphatically advises his two cohorts:

2. “Love is the only thing that can save this poor creature. And I am going to convince him that he is

loved — even at the cost of my own life. **No matter what you hear in there, no matter how cruelly I beg you, no matter how terribly I may scream, do NOT open this door, or you will undo everything I’ve worked for. Do you understand?! DO NOT OPEN THIS DOOR!!**”



I felt a similar sense of do-or-die commitment when I wrote “Pray About Your Two Pence” for the [July 2018 Levitt Letter](#) (p. 14). That Note urges ZLMers not to donate beyond their means, not to give out of what they don’t have. “I cannot encourage donors who presently rely on [high interest] credit to donate to ZLM.” In [last month’s Note](#), I wrote, “Rather than requesting your best donation, we seek your best prayers ... for the floodgates of spiritual blessings to open wide.”

In mid-2018, I made a financial pact with Berg Productions, producers of *Our Jewish Roots* (previously *Zola Levitt Presents*) and brokers of our television airtime. That agreement stipulates that they receive 60% of our revenue to pay for television production and airtime, while the ministry uses 40% for the *Levitt Letter*, *Personal Letter*, [levitt.com](#), staff, rent, benevolences, etc.

Now, thanks to your many prayers, contributions, purchases, and word-of-mouth publicity, this ministry has restored a second and added a third TV network and is back from the brink. As the young Dr. Frankenstein would declare: “It’s ALIVE!!” ★

\* Since Zola stood at 5'6", our jocular Israeli tour guides jokingly called him *Big Z*. Those same guides gleefully called me, at 6' 2", *Little z*!

# ZLM Bulletin Board

## Mark of the Beast Precursor?

Linking credit card information to shoppers' palmprints will soon enable checking out at Amazon stores without plastic cards or cell phones. Amazon is patenting a "non-contact biometric identification system" that includes "a hand scanner that generates images of a user's palm." Asked how consumers' hands might carry more than one account and how shoppers could choose which one to use, we wonder if we're approaching Rev. 13:16-17.



☆  
Pray for  
the peace of  
Jerusalem

## FBI Report:

Jews and Jewish Institutions were 2018's overwhelming target of religion-based hate crimes in the U.S. Of 7,120 total hate crimes, religious bias accounted for 1,550. The majority of those, 57.8%, were against Jews even though Jews make up just 2% of the population. Meanwhile, 14.5% were anti-Muslim, and 4.1% anti-Sikh. Ira Forman, senior advisor on anti-Semitism to Human Rights First, observed, "The fact that such a small percentage of the population has such a large percentage of hate crime incidents should be worrying for all of us."

## Gifts-in-Kind Made Easy

Clicking on [Donations](#) at [levitt.com](#) allows you to contribute to our 501(c)(3) tax-exempt ministry from anywhere. You can even text a donation amount to 469-615-2009. Our **SECURE** Donation Form lets you donate just about anything: money, but also vehicles, assets (stock and mutual funds, real estate, business interest), gift cards, or other (bulk donation, inventory, commodities, jewelry, precious metals, other). You still can call 1-800-WONDERS (1-800-966-3377) anytime or, during office hours CT, 1-214-696-8844. Or write to us at P.O. Box 12268, Dallas TX 75225.

## FREE ITEM

### Pamphlet of the Month

If you own a home or other property that you no longer wish to occupy or manage, a charitable gift of such property can efficiently meet multiple goals. The 20-page pamphlet **Giving Real Estate** addresses topics such as: 1) property that has changed in value, 2) making a gift while retaining use of the property, and 3) providing income from a contribution. Its Technical Advisory Section touches upon 1) real estate held long-term, 2) depreciated real estate, 3) limits on the income-tax charitable deduction, and 4) special gift opportunities with personal residences and farms. To receive this booklet at no charge, email us at [staff@levitt.com](mailto:staff@levitt.com) or write to our P.O. Box.  
**Request POM# 14.**

## "Come Home!"

Zola  
Tours to  
Israel



See [page 36](#)  
for details



↑  
To  
Index

## Faithful Afflictions

by John Parsons  
Hebrew for Christians  
[Hebrew4Christians.com](http://Hebrew4Christians.com)



טוב-לי כי-עניתי למען אֶלְמֹד חֲקִיד

*"It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I might learn Your decrees." (Psalm 119:71)*

טוב-לי	כי-עניתי	למען	אֶלְמֹד	חֲקִיד
(2) (1)	(4) (3) (2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)	(2) (1)	(3) (2) (1)
tohv- lee	khee- oo-ney-tee	le-ma-an	el-mad	choo-kay-kha
good for me	that I was afflicted	so that	I might learn	Your decrees

**You may at times struggle with your faith.** It's not that you question Yeshua as the Savior who died for your eternal healing. Rather, in an hour of testing — when you're exhausted by pain, when you pray for relief and seek God in your cries and tears, but the pain continues — you are left wondering why you were denied your request, why your suffering endures. Surely, you believe, God can heal you by simply saying the word. And then you speculate to what extent you need to be broken in order to be fully remade. As C.S. Lewis once said, "We are not necessarily doubting that God will do the best for us; we are wondering how painful the best will turn out to be." There is a trust issue in suffering, and an intimacy that comes through its fires.

**The difficulty of personal suffering is intensely intimate:** How do you keep hope in the midst of this tension? ("Lord I believe; help my unbelief" — Mark 9:24) How do you affirm that your heavenly Father will heal you, but at present, you must endure suffering? Do you devise a "soul-building theodicy" to explain your struggle and answer "why" you suffer? Or do you try to sanctify suffering as a means of healing others by the grace of the Messiah (Col. 1:24)?

When Yeshua victoriously proclaimed, "It is finished" just before He died on the cross, He knew that His followers would experience a "purging process," a "refining fire," and time on the "potter's wheel" to perfect their sanctification. At the Cross, death and all that it implies was overcome. Nevertheless, we will suffer and die, and death persists as an enemy (1 Cor. 15:26).

While we celebrate the reality of the final redemption, the "instrumentality of our sanctification" needs to be willingly accepted and endured. "Endured" because I don't think we will ever completely answer "why" we undergo the tests we face in this life. Our disposition in the midst of seemingly unanswered prayers is where our faith is disclosed: Will we despair of all temporal hope? Will we console ourselves with the vision of a future without tears and loss — a Heaven prepared for us? Will we trust God with our pain and submit to His will, or will we "curse God and die" inside, losing hope and despairing of all remedy?

God forbid you should give up now, friend. Faith "sees the unseen" (Heb 11:1) and believes that the day of our ultimate healing draws near.

**Stay strong and keep your hope alive (Psalm 27:14).** ★



Courtesy: The Jerusalem Connection



## *Esther: For Such a Time as This*

### DVD Set

Eight 30-minute TV programs  
on two DVDs

The Book of Esther is one of the Jewish people's favorites. In this series, Dr. Jeffrey Seif explains the story's details and points out that, like Esther, we Believers may be *alive for such a time as this*.

**Beautiful Inside and Out** Does God use women? Yes! We consider Esther's rise and Queen Vashti's fall, and how God elevates individuals to places of influence—then as now.

**Chosen for a Purpose** Though wickedness surfaces in every generation, God positions His people to thwart the devil's plans and fulfill His own. We examine Mordecai and Esther's placement—and our own; for we, too, are called to God's work.

**Called to be Courageous** Faced with a plot to destroy the Jews, Esther wavers but decides her sacrifice is worthy: "If I perish, I perish!" If only we all had such resolve!

**Undone by a Woman** Our story's heroine hatches a plan to thwart the scheming Haman. The once-sheepish Esther arises as a shepherdess, boldly taking on the wolf, guiding the saga to its conclusion.

**God Rewards the Righteous** God uses irony to give the wicked and the righteous their just deserts.

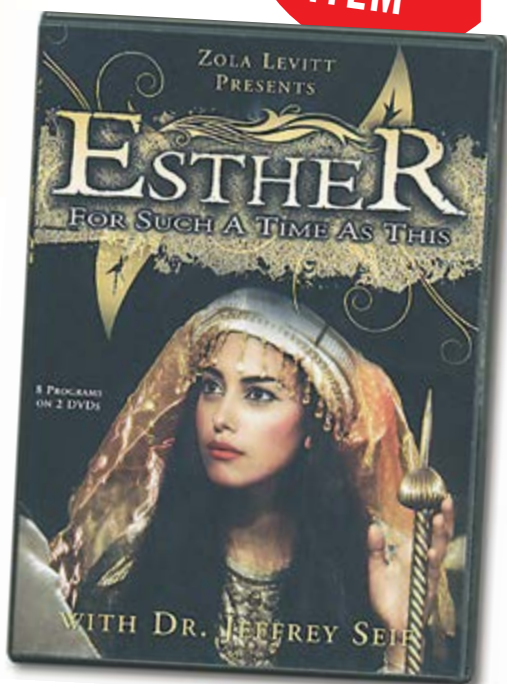
**Justice at Last!** Our story's villain meets his inglorious end as he becomes the object of his own wicked scheme. Seeing the triumphal outcome of righteousness and faith encourages us in our own lives.

**Fight We Must!** Even with Haman gone, the Jews had to defend their homes and families. Spirited self-defense is Biblical.



Dr. Jeffrey Seif

**The Triumph of God in Human History** God turns our mourning into joy. The Jews are bidden to commemorate God's saving power and goodness in an annual celebration, Purim. We should all celebrate God's goodness, thereby banishing the clouds of despair.



## Zola's Classic Study Booklet Library

Qty.	Title	Price	Total
___	A Christian Love Story .....	\$3	___
___	Glory! The Future of the Believers .....	\$3	___
___	How Can a Gentile Be Saved? .....	\$3	___
___	In My Father's House .....	\$3	___
___	Israel, My Promised .....	\$3	___
___	<b>The Miracle of Passover</b> (p.20) .....	\$3	___
___	The Promised Land .....	\$3	___
___	The Second Coming .....	\$3	___
___	Seven Churches—Does Yours Fit In? .....	\$3	___
___	<b>The Seven Feasts of Israel</b> (pictured) .....	\$3	___
___	Spirit of Pentecost .....	\$3	___
___	Jerusalem Forever .....	\$4	___
___	<b>Mix or Match:</b> 50 Classic Study Booklets (above) .....	\$49	___

## Books

___	An Epic Love Story .... (Part of 50-book offer above)	\$3	___
___	<b>The Beginning of The End</b> (p.9) .....	\$8	___
___	The Bible Jesus Read .....	\$10	___
___	Broken Branches (Zola on Replacement Theology) .....	\$6	___
___	Genesis One—A Physicist Looks at Creation .....	\$5	___
___	<b>Heaven and Earth</b> (pictured) .....	\$18	___
___	<b>The Iranian Menace</b> (pictured) .....	\$8	___
___	Israel's Right to the Land .....	\$2	___
___	Once Through the New Testament .....	\$9	___
___	Our Hands are Stained with Blood .....	\$16	___
___	<b>The Passover Haggadah (Messianic)</b> (p.20) .....	\$6	___
___	Raptured .....	\$10	___
___	<b>Signs of the End: The Millennium</b> (pictured) .....	\$7	___
___	The Warrior King .....	\$12	___
___	What About Us? .....	\$8	___
___	Whose Land Is It? .....	\$6	___
___	<b>Zola's Introduction to Hebrew</b> (pictured) .....	\$39	___

## Featured DVDs

___	Abraham: Father of Faith .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Bad Moon Rising .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Beauty for Ashes .....	(9 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$59	___
___	Best of Zola's Music Videos .....	(3+ hours, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Called Together .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Close Encounters w/ Yeshua .....	(10 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$59	___
___	Divine Deliverance .....	(12 programs, 3-DVDs)	\$69	___
___	<b>Esther</b> (p.17) .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Ezekiel & MidEast "Piece" .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	<b>NEW! Joshua</b> (pictured) .....	(9 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$59	___
___	Journey of Restoration .....	(10 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$59	___
___	<b>The Miracle of Passover</b> (p.20) .....	(3 programs, 1-DVD)	\$19	___
___	Psalms of Ascents .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Sons of Israel .....	(9 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$59	___
___	The Seven Feasts of Israel .....	(7 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Watch Therefore .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	The Warrior King .....	(8 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$49	___
___	Thy Kingdom Come .....	(12 programs, 3-DVDs)	\$69	___
___	Zion Forever .....	(9 programs, 2-DVDs)	\$59	___

## To order:

Online:  
[store.levitt.com](http://store.levitt.com)

Phone 24/7:  
**800-966-3377**,  
ZLM Dallas office:  
**214-696-8844**

Print/tear out this 2-pg. form,  
fill out box at right, and mail to:

**ZLM, Box 12268**  
**Dallas TX 75225**



## ORDER FORM continued

### UNIQUE WITNESSING ITEMS!

### Studies, Specialty, Etc.

Qty.	Item	Price	Total
___	<b>2-flag Collar Pin</b> (pictured) .....	\$2	___
___	AHAVA Mineral Body Lotion 17 oz. ....	\$37 <sup>50</sup>	___
___	AHAVA Mineral Foot Cream 3.4 oz. ....	\$22	___
___	AHAVA Mineral Hand Cream 3.4 oz. ....	\$23	___
___	Flag of Israel (3' x 5') .....	\$10	___
___	Grafted-In Gold Decal (1.2" x 3" hand-cut) .....	\$2	___
___	<b>Grafted-In Lapel Pin</b> (pictured) .....	\$10	___
___	<b>NEW! Jewish Heritage Calendar</b> (5780 / 2020) (pictured) .....	\$6	___
___	<b>Matzoh Postcards</b> (pack of 12) (p.36) .....	\$8	___
___	Messianic Grafted-In Sterling Silver Necklace .....	\$39	___
___	<b>Names of God Notecards</b> (set of 12) (p.33) .....	\$24	___
___	Pictorial Map of Jerusalem .....	\$12	___
___	"Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem" Bumper Sticker ..	\$2	___
___	The Prophesied Messiah Bookmark .....	2 for \$1	___
<b>NEW!</b>	<b>The Classic Zola Collection</b> .....	80 products for \$999	___
___	<b>Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies</b> (info only) ....	no charge	___

### Teaching CDs

___	<b>The Beginning of The End</b> (p.9) .....	(2 CDs)	\$12	___
___	<b>The Miracle of Passover</b> (p.20) .....	CD	\$7	___
___	The Seven Feasts of Israel .....	CD	\$7	___
___	<b>Zola Teaches the New Testament</b> (pictured) .....	(6 CDs)	\$29	___

### Music CDs: Hear samples at [levitt.com/music](http://levitt.com/music)

___	<b>I Call You Friend</b> (p.24) .....	(Music CD)	\$14	___
___	<b>Next Year in Jerusalem</b> (pictured) .....	(Music CD)	\$12	___
___	The Works .....	(Zola's first 8 albums on 4 CDs)	\$49	___
___	The Works II .....	(Zola's next 8 albums on 4 CDs)	\$49	___

PLEASE SEND THIS ENTIRE 2-PAGE ORDER FORM—THANKS. 

**Please fill out area below and send the entire page.**

#### Shipping & Handling Chart

up to \$15.99, add \$5  
 \$16 to \$30.99, add \$7  
 \$31 to \$60.99, add \$9  
 \$61 to \$97.99, add \$10  
 \$98 and over, FREE SHIPPING

For shipments outside the United States, please **DOUBLE** shipping. Please send U.S. funds.

(Please allow about 2–3 weeks for delivery.)

Any amount that exceeds the listed price is considered a tax-deductible gift to our ministry.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

(please print)

Shipping Address \_\_\_\_\_

Billing Address (if different) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

On what station/network do you primarily watch our programs? \_\_\_\_\_

Donor # \_\_\_\_\_ Phone No. ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

(see number above your name on mailing label)

My check is enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_ or, Please charge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to:

Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Card ID# required \_\_\_\_\_



Cardholder Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Subtotal \_\_\_\_\_

Shipping (See left chart) \_\_\_\_\_

UPS shipping (\$4 extra) \_\_\_\_\_

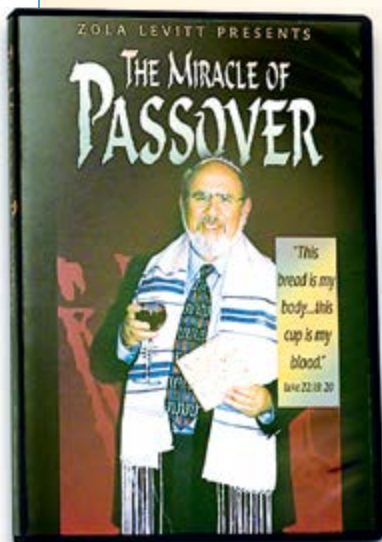
Rush! (\$5 extra) \_\_\_\_\_

8.25% Tax (Texas only) \_\_\_\_\_

Donation? \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_





## **The Miracle of Passover**

DVD, CD, study booklet

(One of our most popular and best-selling titles.)

**Passover, the crown jewel of the Biblical feasts, begins this year at sundown on Wednesday, April 8.**

In the booklet, CD, and DVD, Zola explains the origin and significance of Passover and demonstrates the feast in which Christ is revealed through its very elements. This is one of the most basic and important Bible studies, shedding clear light on the mysteries of the Lord's Supper and unearthing the Jewish roots of Christianity.

Zola demonstrates how dramatically this traditional celebration, thirty-five centuries old, typifies Christ—even in Jewish homes that don't realize that the Messiah for whom they wait has already come.

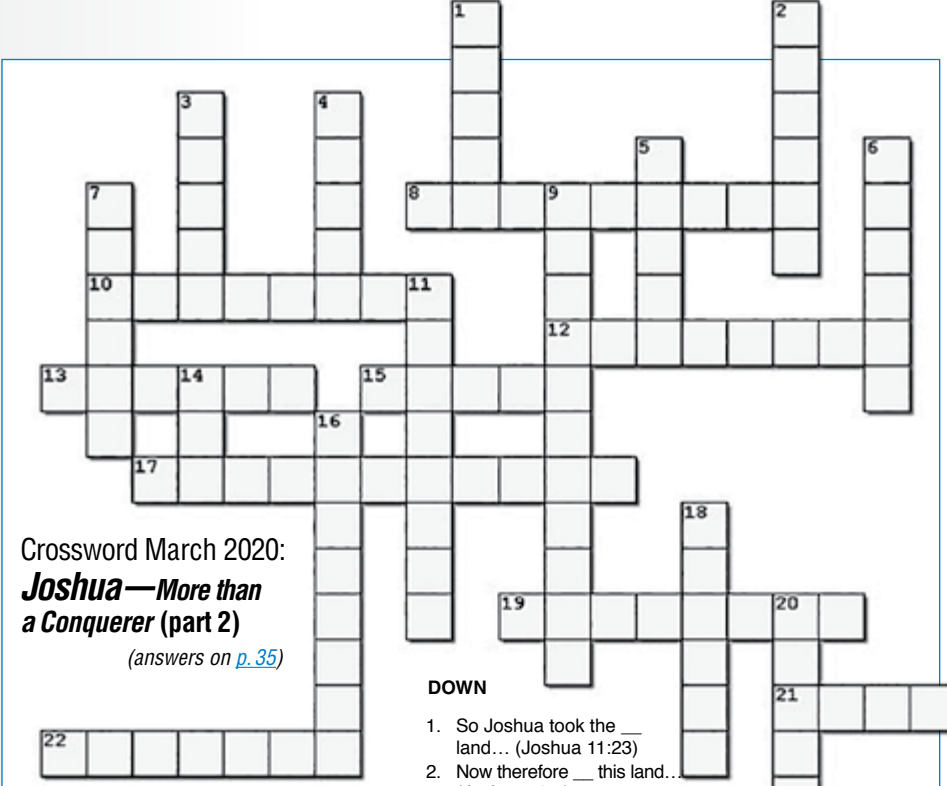
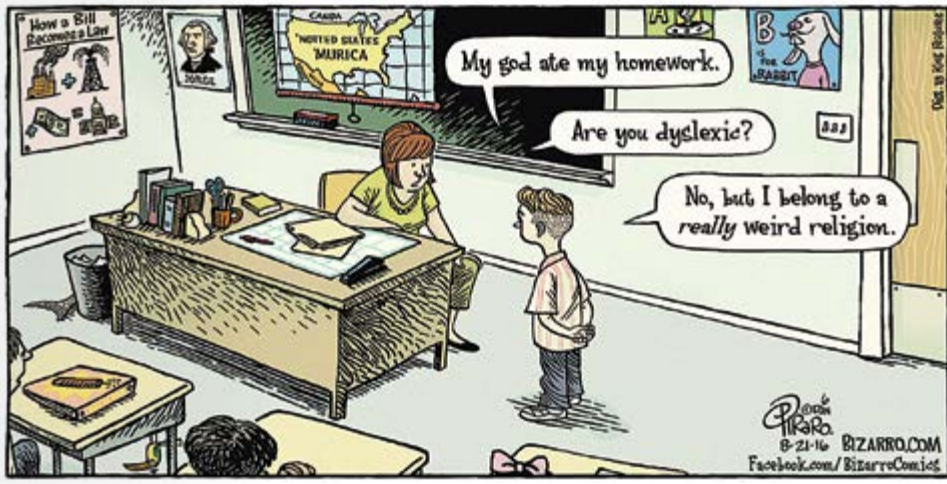
## **The Messianic Passover Haggadah** – a Messianic book of celebration

You don't have to be Jewish to relive the Feast of Redemption—just redeemed! This 2-color, 36-page book guides you step by step through the traditional Passover Seder, the dinner Jews celebrate annually to remember the Israelites' rescue from Egyptian bondage.

This unique Haggadah focuses on Yeshua's teaching in the Upper Room, which institutes the Lord's Supper. The theme of redemption recurs throughout the evening. You'll find words and sheet music for the songs traditionally sung on Passover. Singing them will enrich your celebration.

Scripture quotations come from the popular *Complete Jewish Bible*.





Crossword March 2020:  
**Joshua—More than  
a Conqueror (part 2)**  
(answers on [p.35](#))

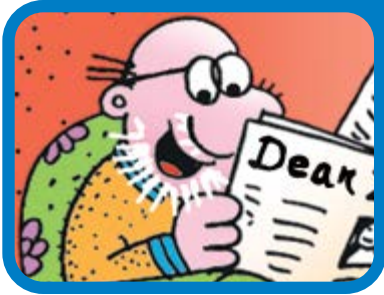
**ACROSS**

- 8. And the Lord \_\_\_ it also... (Joshua 10:30)
- 10. ...we are thy \_\_\_ (Joshua 9:8)
- 12. ...children of Israel committed a \_\_\_ (Joshua 7:1)
- 13. Now therefore ye are \_\_\_ (Joshua 9:23)
- 15. ...the \_\_\_ of the Lord was kindled... (Joshua 7:1)
- 17. By lot was their \_\_\_ (Joshua 14:2)
- 19. Now therefore give me this \_\_\_ (Joshua 14:12)
- 21. And Joshua \_\_\_ his clothes... (Joshua 7:6)
- 22. So Joshua \_\_\_ them... (Joshua 22:6)

**DOWN**

- 1. So Joshua took the \_\_\_ land... (Joshua 11:23)
- 2. Now therefore \_\_\_ this land... (Joshua 13:7)
- 3. Then Joshua built an \_\_\_ (Joshua 8:30)
- 4. And Joshua said unto \_\_\_ (Joshua 7:19)
- 5. And Joshua made \_\_\_ with them... (Joshua 9:15)
- 6. Then ye shall rise up from the \_\_\_ (Joshua 8:7)
- 7. So the Lord was with \_\_\_ (Joshua 6:27)
- 9. ...hear the \_\_\_ of thy father (Proverbs 1:8)
- 11. Up, \_\_\_ the people... (Joshua 7:13)
- 14. And the \_\_\_ stood still... (Joshua 10:13)
- 16. ...why hast thou \_\_\_ us? (Joshua 7:25)
- 18. These were the \_\_\_ appointed... (Joshua 20:9)
- 20. \_\_\_ hath sinned... (Joshua 7:11)





Some letters have been edited for space.

# Letters to ZLM

For ministry products and TV programs, visit the [web store](#) and [video archives](#).

## Comments via the internet and phone:

**From C.H. (ND):** The kindness and graciousness of the sweet woman in your office who helped me with getting back issues of your *Levitt Letter* says a lot about your ministry.

A lovely compliment, thank you. Feel free to send friends to [levitt.com/newsletter](http://levitt.com/newsletter) to read your favorite articles online. — Mark

## Supplementing the Spirit's feeding

Dear ZLM,

After a stroke, my mother had problems going to church, so we read your monthly news magazines. Unfortunately, we missed many of your television programs. She loved both. Recently, she went to be with the Lord. This is just to say thank you. — T.C.

Dear T.C.,

A "thank you" goes a long way in this world, and we appreciate yours. You're welcome. Are you able to view our new broadcasts on TBN or TCT (see times below)? Or watch us at [www.levitt.tv](http://www.levitt.tv)? Our prayers are for your family during this time of transition. — David

(continued next page)



## Our Jewish Roots TV Airing Schedule

Zone	Pacific	Mountain	Central	Eastern
<b>Daystar Airing Day &amp; Time by zone</b> DirecTV – Channel 369 Dish – Channel 263				
Days	8 PM Wed 3 PM Fri	9 PM Wed 4 PM Fri	10 PM Wed 5 PM Fri	11 PM Wed 6 PM Fri
<b>NEW! TBN Airing Day &amp; Time by zone</b> DirecTV – Channel 372 Dish – Channel 260				
Day	3:30 PM Thursdays	4:30 PM Thursdays	5:30 PM Thursdays	6:30 PM Thursdays
<b>NEW! TCT Airing Day &amp; Time by zone</b> DirecTV – Channel 377				
Day	4 PM Sundays	5 PM Sundays	6 PM Sundays	7 PM Sundays

### WE'RE AVAILABLE 24/7 AT LEVITT.TV.

Our complete TV Airing Schedule includes dozens and dozens of independent channels and is posted at [www.levitt.com/schedule](http://www.levitt.com/schedule)  
(New television series from Israel airing soon!)



## Zola's influence still abounds

Dear ZLM,

I'm so unhappy about ZLM changing the name of its TV program that this will be my final donation. —H.McC. (OK)

Dear H.McC.,

We're sorry to see you go, and we're grateful for your previous contributions. Perhaps reasoning together will promote understanding for you and others who share your displeasure.

Please remember that [www.levitt.tv](http://www.levitt.tv) offers several decades' worth of original Zola Levitt Presents programs that new viewers of *Our Jewish Roots* will discover, thanks

primarily to our updated program name. Be aware, also, that our new productions, despite the title change, will carry the same solid, two-Testament, pro-Israel teaching. **Incidentally, are you aware that TBN and TCT would not be broadcasting our teaching without the new program name?**

This ministry (we listened to reader response, so it's still called Zola Levitt Ministries) continues to offer the *Levitt Letter*, the *Personal Bible Study Letter*, the *Institute of Jewish-Christian Studies* correspondence course, Bible teaching resources galore, Zola's Bible Exchange, the To the Jew First outreach, Holy Land pilgrimages by Zola Tours, and the many facets of [www.levitt.com](http://www.levitt.com). Would you cut off your hand because you dislike the color of one finger-nail? —Mark

## Learning from Zola

Dear ZLM,

In the letters in [December 2019's Levitt Letter \(p. 22\)](#), I said "For me, less Zola, less giving" to get your attention. But I want to clarify that my giving has actually *increased*! I just happen to think that the current teacher should stick to writing—not teaching, not interviewing. I'll always support the ministry as long as it stays with Zola's intended mission. Thanks, J.B.

Dear J.B.,

We wish we could give you new Zola teachings, but it's pretty obvious why we can't. He passed through the Pearly Gates in 2006.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jeffrey Seif, a Jewish-Christian Bible scholar, is beloved by many viewers in this country and overseas. However, those who prefer the style of Zola and our other teachers can find their archived teaching at [levitt.tv](http://levitt.tv). Zola can teach you 24/7 right from your computer screen. Please visit [levitt.com/roku](http://levitt.com/roku) to see how to play internet TV on your television set. —David

(continued next page)



See the side story on [p.1](#) to learn more about the delicious Purim treat, Hamantaschen cookies





## *I Call You Friend*

music CD

with 10 Messianic Songs

Marty's voice is magnificent, and he sings Scripture in such a way that inspires profound worship. Our *Psalms of Ascent* TV series (offered on [p. 18](#)) features much of this heartfelt exaltation of the Lord.

## Tony's Bible lessons on target!

Dear ZLM,

I enjoy your monthly *Personal Bible Study Letter* from Tony Derrick, and [December's](#) — about Messiah's coming — was on target again. Thanks.

I'm delighted to be 75 as it puts me closer to "home." I've looked forward to Heaven for many years while enjoying God's daily blessings. My God-honoring church teaches His Word, and His Love permeates our fellowship — all in a small town three hours from anything that qualifies for a place on the map.

I enjoy fellowship wherever God is glorified and His truth proclaimed. Thank you for your fellowship. —L.W.

Greetings L.W.,

We're glad you enjoy and learn from Tony's Bible lessons. Tony will be gratified to read your compliment.

David and I also live off the beaten track. Fellowship is important, and we encourage it among our viewers and readers. I agree with you that being closer to our reunion with Yeshua is a significant blessing of aging. —Kirsten

## When changing names is wise

Dear ZLM,

I think it is WISE to change the name of your television program to *Our Jewish Roots*. **Words matter.** In today's crazy world, when people are seeking Truth, changing the TV program's title will draw in curious viewers...and hopefully win new souls to Christ.

My husband's successful painting company in Rhode Island used his name. Calling it Mercurio Painting worked in the predominately Italian area where many people knew him. When he moved to Florida and restarted the business, he called it Five Star Painting...and it stuck!

Zola is **ALIVE** with Jesus; the Holy Spirit *still* works through his testimony! Just like Billy Graham's teaching still speaks to millions of people. —H.S.

Dear H.S.,

What a wonderful name-change story...and much appreciated. You're right — Zola and Billy Graham are as much alive in the Spirit as they are dead in the flesh. Meanwhile, their testimonies and teachings inspire others to be born anew! —David

(continued next page)



## Apologize for WHAT?

Dear ZLM,

I just finished reading the article “How the Church Failed the Jewish People” (mainly by accusing them of being Christ killers) by Susan Michael on the front page of your [January 2020 Levitt Letter](#).

**As a Messianic Jew, I was offended.** Throughout the article, Michael continued to write how the Church should show compassion and forgiveness rather than “holding grudges” and “blaming someone else.”

“Show forgiveness (to the Jewish people)” — for WHAT?? “Not hold grudges” — for WHAT?? “Not blame someone else” — for WHAT??

I hope I reached a wrong conclusion. However, I didn’t see the word *repent* anywhere in the article or how today’s Church should repent of any animosity against our Jewish people. I remain concerned about the article. Respectfully, C.W.

Dear C.W.,

Please stop being offended — particularly since Jews were both falsely accused *and* unforgiven (for what they **didn’t** do). Not only did the Church believe Satan’s lie about Jews deserving persecution for supposedly crucifying Jesus, it held a grudge and helped perpetuate anti-Semitism.

Even if the Jews *had* killed Christ (which they didn’t), wouldn’t they *still* be entitled to forgiveness? The article explains, “Centuries of anti-Jewish rhetoric in Church doctrine gave Christians reason to hate the Jews.” Not that the Jews were ever guilty of what the rhetoric caused haters to believe. — Mark

Dear C.W.,

I believe Susan Michael is saying that if Christians had practiced the compassion and forgiveness of our Lord **from the beginning**, then even if they erroneously blamed the Jews for “killing Christ,” anti-Semitism would not have taken root. — Editor

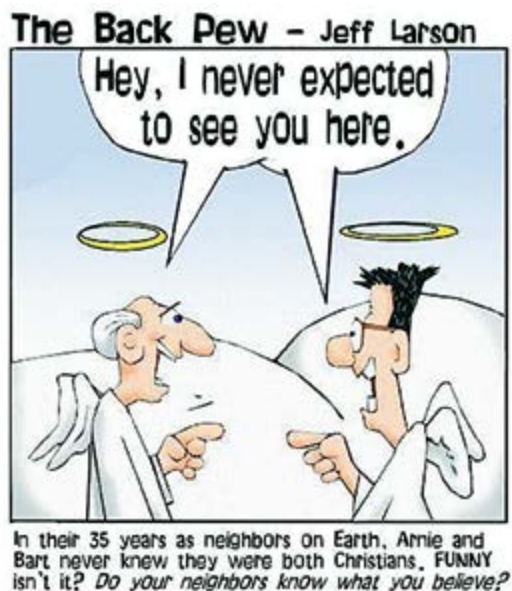
## No politics

Dear ZLM,

Thank you for being impartial in the political arena. When I see all the political hoopla within the Christian community, it makes me sick. Thank God He is neither Democrat nor Republican. — A.A. (TX)

Dear A.A.,

Our God is way beyond the politics of this world. He is the Alpha *and* Omega. He transcends time — and, most importantly, cares much more about the hearts of people than about their politics. — David ★



# Removing Dust from Solar Panels

SCIENCE: BY JUDY SIEGEL-ITZKOVICH (r) BreakingIsraelNews.com



While deserts provide the largest space for electricity-producing solar panels, these environmentally friendly devices are plagued by dust, preventing the maximum absorption of sunlight and making the photovoltaic cells less efficient.



credit: Michael Thaidigmann (Wikimedia Commons)

Taking a cue from the self-cleaning properties of the lotus leaf, researchers at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev (BGU) in Beersheba have shed new light on microscopic forces and mechanisms that can be optimized to remove dust from solar panels to maintain efficiency and light absorption. The new technique removed an amazing 98% of dust particles.

In a new study published in the American Chemical Society's journal *Langmuir*, the researchers confirmed that changing the surface properties of solar panels could significantly minimize the amount of dust on their surface.

"In nature, the lotus leaf remains dust- and pathogen-free due to its nanotextured surface and a thin wax coating that repels water," says Tabea Heckenthaler, a master's degree student from Düsseldorf, Germany at the Zuckerberg Institute for Water Research at BGU's Jacob Blaustein Institutes for Desert Research.

The researchers looked into the effect of modifying a silicon substrate (Si) — a semiconductor used in photovoltaic cells — to mimic the self-cleaning properties of the lotus leaf, as water rolls down the leaves and removes contamination.

It is known that water repellence (hydrophobicity) reduces the friction between water droplets and the surface, thus making it possible for water drops to slide clean particles from surfaces. But the forces that attach and detach particles from surfaces during the self-cleaning mechanism and the effect of nanotextures on these forces are not fully understood.

To understand these forces and the effect of nanotexture on them, the researchers prepared four silicon-based samples relevant to solar panels: smooth hydrophilic; nanotextured hydrophilic surfaces; smooth hydrophobic; and nanotextured hydrophobic surfaces. They achieved this by etching the surface with wet chemicals to create nanowires on the surface and then applying a hydrophobic coating.

**Particle removal increased from 41% on hydrophilic smooth Si wafers to 98% on superhydrophobic Si-based nanotextured surfaces.** The researchers confirmed these results by measuring the adhesion of a micron-sized particle to the flat and nanotextured substrate using an atomic force microscope. They found that the adhesion in water is reduced 30 times over.

"We determined that the reason for the increased particle removal is not low friction between the droplets and the superhydrophobic surfaces," Heckenthaler explained. "Rather, it is the increase in the forces that can detach particles from the surfaces. The experimental methods we used and the criterion for particle removal we derived can be implemented to engineer self-cleaning surfaces exhibiting different chemistries and/or textures." ★



# Tuberculosis Vaccine and Alzheimer's

MEDICINE: BY SHOSHANNA SOLOMON / TimesOfIsrael.com



background photo credit: Pablo K. (Stock by Getty Images) portrait photo credit: Lior Mizrahi



**foreground** Prof. Hervé Bercovier of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (HU)'s Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics

**background** holding hand of Alzheimer's patient

A team of researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem say they have found that a vaccine originally developed to fight tuberculosis and commonly used to treat bladder cancer may also be effective in preventing Alzheimer's, a chronic neurodegenerative disease that causes memory loss, language problems, and loss of the ability to function.

According to the Alzheimer's Association, 5.8 million Americans are living with Alzheimer's. By 2050 this number is projected to rise to nearly 14 million. At the moment,

there is no cure or even treatment for the disease.

Now, say the researchers, "there may be a glimmer of hope." The research team was headed by Hervé Bercovier, Charles Greenblatt and Benjamin Klein at Hebrew University's Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics.

The scientists discovered that the *Bacillus Calmette-Guérin* (BCG) vaccine, originally developed for tuberculosis and commonly used to treat bladder cancer, may also be effective in preventing Alzheimer's. They published their findings in *PLOS ONE*.

"There are data reaching back to the 1960s that show that countries treating bladder cancer patients with the BCG vaccine had a lower prevalence of Alzheimer's disease, but it hadn't been properly analyzed," said Bercovier.

So Bercovier and his team followed 1,371 bladder cancer patients receiving treatment at HU's Hadassah Medical Center for at least a year after the diagnosis of the cancer. The average patient age was 68. During follow-up visits, 65 cancer patients (average age 84) had developed Alzheimer's. **Those who had not received BCG as part of their treatment had a significantly higher risk of developing Alzheimer's than did BCG-treated patients: 8.9% as opposed to 2.4%, the study found.**

In addition, people in the general, healthy population who had never been treated with BCG had a fourfold higher risk of developing Alzheimer's than did those who were treated with BCG, the study showed.

Alzheimer's is marked by three pathological features: an accumulation of amyloid  $\beta$  (A $\beta$ ) plaques, neurofibrillary tangles (hyperphosphorylated tau protein), and a sustained innate neuroinflammation. Inflammation, a defense mechanism of the body, occurs when the immune system recognizes damaged cells and begins the healing process. However, when inflammation persists longer than necessary, e.g., because of an overreaction of the immune system, this can cause harm, as is the case with Alzheimer's.

The exact way the BCG vaccine affects cancer has not been deciphered, but it is known to have an impact on the immune system, say the researchers. The BCG vaccine, which "modulates the immune system, appears to reduce this inflammation," added Bercovier. ★



# Correct Response to Anti-Semitism



BY REP. NITA LOWEY (D-NY) (r) and  
DAVID HARRIS (CEO American Jewish Committee) (r) NYTimes.com



credit: Amr Alkly/Reuters

Police officers at Grand Army Plaza in Brooklyn before a vigil for the victims of an assault at a rabbi's house in Monsey, N.Y.



In the wake of the horrific knife attack during a recent Hanukkah celebration in Monsey, N.Y., and following a spate of other anti-Semitic assaults in New York City and other U.S. locations, we must ask and answer two key questions: "Why now?" and "What can be done to stop such incidents?"

## Why now?

Why is anti-Semitism making a comeback now, when American Jews feel unmatched levels of inclusion and equality, and when, unlike in previous generations, Jews are found in every sphere of American society?

It is important to remember that **anti-Semitism has been called the world's oldest social disease**. It dates back millennia and has taken many forms—religious and racial, political and social. Its durability and ability to reinvent itself should never be underestimated. Even here in the United States, it never entirely vanished.

**HOLOCAUST DENIAL** Recent surveys reveal abysmal levels of knowledge among young people about what happened to the Jewish people in the Second World War. There is far too little understanding about the slippery slope from the Nazi dehumanization of the Jews in 1933 to the Final Solution nine years later.

**SOCIAL MEDIA** In the past, anti-Semites lived in small ideological circles with limited reach. Now the internet amplifies the voices and influence of these otherwise marginal groups.

**DECLINING CONFIDENCE IN LIBERAL DEMOCRACY AND ITS CORE VALUE OF PLURALISM** Our nation has made considerable progress in the social inclusion of minority groups. But that progress also poses a threat to those who are bewildered or angered by these changes and who prefer mutual rancor to mutual respect.

*(continued next page)*



**“COPYCAT” PHENOMENON** Hateful actions, and the publicity they engender, spur others who seek notoriety and attention. This includes offenses like scrawling swastikas or ugly slogans on synagogue walls; assaulting people on the street who are “identifiably” Jewish; and murdering them — synagogue shootings in Pittsburgh (2018) and Poway, Calif. (2019), and at the kosher supermarket, N.J. (2019).

### How to respond?

**First**, recognize the problem for what it is: an epidemic. We are no longer talking about isolated, occasional actions, but a regular phenomenon. Like an epidemic, it must be treated comprehensively, addressing root causes.

**Second**, acknowledge that multiple ideological sources feed this paroxysm of hate; it is not a result of a single political outlook. Some critics wish to exploit the issue to undermine their political opponents. That is no way to deal with anti-Semitism. There is no one-size-fits-all profile for the perpetrators of these attacks.

**Third**, we cannot allow this situation to become the “new normal,” as if attacks on Americans because of their religious or ethnic identities are now an expected part of our everyday lives. They are not. **These attacks violate everything that Americans should hold dear. An attack on any American group is a threat to the pluralistic fabric of our nation.**

**Fourth**, more needs to be done — including enhanced information-gathering, tougher prosecution and sentencing, and increased public education.



credit: Billings Gazette file photo

Eugene Trotter was among residents attending a “Standing Up Against Racism” gathering in Billings in 1994.

One model for community engagement: Billings, Mont., 1993, after a year of racist and anti-Semitic incitements culminated with a brick being thrown through the bedroom window of a young child in a Jewish home that had a menorah on display. Under the swift leadership of the police chief and a newspaper editor, paper cutouts of a menorah were made widely available. Thousands of



households in Billings put them in their windows. The message was clear: Anti-Semitism and racism had no place there.

In a survey of American Jews by the American Jewish Committee, released last October, 31% of respondents had taken steps to hide their Jewish identity in public, while 25% now avoid Jewish sites. And this survey was conducted before the Jersey City and Monsey attacks.

This loss of liberty is not acceptable — not in America. We call on all Americans of goodwill to ask how each of us can defend our founders’ vision for this country.

**How do we citizens combat anti-Semitism’s ugly spirit? Well, we too have a voice! Wherever you have a “platform,” speak your love for Israel and support the Jewish people. And do it unashamedly. Use social media to express your love and speak positively about our Jewish brothers and sisters. You be the change! — David ★**



Jerusalem, January 2020—  
President Reuven Rivlin  
of Israel, center, with  
heads of state

## SELECT MEDIA BRIEFS

### World Leaders Commemorate Auschwitz Liberation

By David M. Halbfinger / NYTimes.com

Dozens of presidents, premiers, and potentates descended upon the Holy City to commemorate the liberation of Auschwitz 75 years ago in an extraordinary show of collective resolve to fight anti-Semitism. A 95-year-old Holocaust scholar warned them that such hatred threatened their countries with a “deadly cancer.”

The gathering in Jerusalem focused on the present day, with anti-Jewish violence and rhetoric spreading across Europe and North America.

At a state dinner, King Felipe VI of Spain — whose inherited titles include the Crusader-era King of Jerusalem — urged other world leaders to show an “unyielding commitment to fighting the ignorant intolerance, hatred, and total lack of human empathy that permitted and gave birth to the Holocaust.”

### PA Daily: Israel is Always Guilty — Even of Natural Disasters

By Itamar Marcus and Nan Jacques Zilberdik  
PalWatch.org

In January, Israel and its surroundings — including the PA (Palestinian Authority) and the Gaza Strip — experienced extremely heavy showers, which led to flooding in many areas. Following its custom to blame Israel by default, the PA hurriedly accused Israel of “flooding the civilian lands in eastern Gaza”:

*“The occupation forces yesterday [Jan. 18, 2020] opened the dams gathering rainwater in the direction of the civilian lands in eastern Gaza City, which caused the flooding of hundreds of dunams (1 dunam = 1,000 sq. meters) in agricultural areas.”*

[Official PA daily *Al-Hayat Al-Jadida*, Jan. 19, 2020]

The official PA daily even came up with “an eyewitness” who appar-

*(continued next page)*



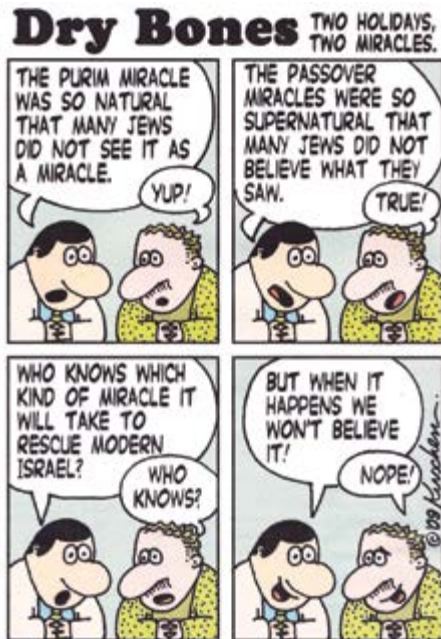
NON SEQUITUR BY WILEY

GOCOMICS.COM/NONSEQUITUR



ently stated that Israel “deliberately opened...rainwater dams and gutters, which caused the flooding of hundreds of dunams of wheat, barley, and legume crops, and other crops.”

This “eyewitness” must have extraordinary vision because Israel has no dams in southern Israel that can be opened!



This is not the first time that Palestinians have disseminated this libel. In 2015, Al-Jazeera printed false claims from Palestinian sources that Israel had deliberately flooded Gaza by opening alleged dams. But realizing that Israel has no such dams, Al-Jazeera retracted the claims the next day:

*“Editor’s note: An earlier version of this page hosted an article which stated that Israel had, without warning, opened a number of dams, which had resulted in a part of Gaza being flooded. This was false. In southern Israel, there are no dams of the type which can be opened. We apologize for this error.”*

[Al-Jazeera, Feb. 25, 2015]



Apple Siri icon

## Apple Corrects Siri Calling Israel “Zionist Occupation State”

By Benjamin Kerstein / [Algemeiner.com](http://Algemeiner.com)

Apple’s virtual assistant app Siri ran into controversy one weekend in January when it began responding to the question “Who is president of Israel?” with the answer “Reuven Rivlin is the president of the Zionist occupation state.”

The tech giant quickly corrected the problem, with Siri now responding, “Reuven Rivlin is the president of Israel.”

According to *Business Insider*, users began posting screenshots of the “Zionist occupation” answer on social media mid-weekend, with many of them expressing astonishment and outrage. One of the users, Michelle Sindukov, said, “I was honestly shocked because Siri’s response is so offensive, I felt like I had to share it with others and tag Apple, so they’d correct the mistake.”

*Business Insider* posits that the likely explanation is vandalism on Rivlin’s page on Wikipedia, from which Siri often sources information. ★



# 2,000-year-old Roman “Ketchup Factory”



ARCHAEOLOGY: BY ROSSELLA TERCATIN (r) JPost.com



credit: Asaf Poretz, Israel Antiquities Authority

The Byzantine-era kilns that produced wine jars at the Ashkelon site.

Almost two millennia before tomato ketchup made its appearance on tables, ancient Romans had their own mouth-watering condiment that turned every dish into a delicacy: garum, a fermented fish sauce that bears some resemblance to the modern Asian one. A recent discovery announced by the Israel Antiquities Authority (IAA) revealed that the popular dressing was not only consumed but also produced in ancient Israel: fermenting vats employed for its preparation were discovered in Ashkelon.



credit: Anat Pasulke, Israel Antiquities Authority

IAA archaeologist Dr. Tali Erickson-Gini (right) examines a marble tray from the altar area of the Byzantine church near Ashkelon

used as a basic condiment for food in the Roman and Byzantine eras throughout the Mediterranean basin. The strong odors that accompanied its production required its being distanced from urban areas, as was the case here, since the installations were discovered over a mile from ancient Ashkelon,” she explained.

According to *National Geographic*, **garum was prepared using the guts of fermented fish and salt, sometimes adding wine, pepper, oil, or vinegar.**

*(continued next page)*

“This is a rare find in our region, and very few installations of this kind have been found in the Eastern Mediterranean,” IAA’s Tali Erickson-Gini explained. “Ancient sources refer to the production of Jewish garum. The discovery of this kind of installation in Ashkelon is evidence that the Roman tastes that spread throughout the empire were not confined to dress but also included dietary habits.”

“Long before pasta and pizza, the ancient Roman diet was based largely on fish sauce. Historical sources refer to the production of special fish sauce that was



credit: Asaf Poretz, Israel Antiquities Authority

Byzantine-era winepresses at the Ashkelon site



Amphorae (jars) with garum traces have been dated as far back as the 5<sup>th</sup> century B.C. A vast network of commercial routes developed for trading garum, whose prices could reach stellar levels for the most exquisite qualities.

In the 5<sup>th</sup> century A.D., a monastery stood on the very site of the garum production plant. Once again, the area proved to be very beneficial for the ancient culinary world, this time because of its favorable condition for viticulture and wine making. Three wine presses and a kiln complex were uncovered next to the remains of a richly decorated 5<sup>th</sup>-century church.

According to the IAA researchers, wine exporting likely constituted the monastery's primary income.



credit: Anat Rasluk, Israel Antiquities Authority



Work in the Ashkelon excavation

"The site, which served as an industrial area over several periods, was again abandoned sometime after the Islamic conquest of the region in the 7<sup>th</sup> century A.D., and later, nomadic families, probably residing in tents, dismantled the structures and sold the parts for building material," said Erickson-Gini.

Students from a nearby school and kibbutz participated in the excavation, begun while preparing for a new Eco-Sport Park. "Ashkelon is one of the most ancient cities in the world, and occasionally we find proof of that.

The recent excavation in one of its beautiful new neighborhoods produces a combination of the city's rich past, its present development, and its future progress," said Tomer Glam, the city's mayor. ★



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# Selective Opponent of “Settlers”

BY EUGENE KONTOROVICH (r) *The Wall Street Journal*



Hypocritical attacks on Israel are common, but Sarah Leah Whitson takes them to a new level. As Middle East and North Africa director of Human Rights Watch (HRW), she is one of the sharpest critics of the Jewish state’s presence in the West Bank, promoting boycotts and international prosecution for the supposed crimes of “occupation” and “settlement.” Yet elsewhere, Ms. Whitson strongly supports settlements in occupied territories.

The settlements Ms. Whitson supports are in Nagorno-Karabakh, an area

that was within the borders of post-Soviet Azerbaijan until 1994, when Armenia occupied the region after a protracted war. Since then, the Armenian leadership in Yerevan has actively encouraged the movement of settlers into the area. Many Armenians regard Karabakh as their historic homeland. But the United Nations, international courts, and the U.S. all consider it occupied Azeri territory.

Ms. Whitson, who is from an

Armenian family, served as master of ceremonies at a 2018 fundraiser for the Armenian National Committee of America, a pro-settler charity that views Karabakh as an “integral part of the Armenian homeland.” Even as Ms. Whitson led HRW’s campaign to boycott Israeli economic activity in the West Bank, she took to Twitter to promote Armenian wines, including from the occupied territories. Asked about the inconsistencies between her positions, Ms. Whitson responded: “My personal support for Armenian diaspora organizations pertains to their charitable and educational work in Armenia and their efforts to advocate for recognition of the Armenian Genocide.”

This explanation is at odds with HRW’s approach to Israel, where the group calls for boycotts of entire companies because some of their work is in settlements. It is also at odds with the record: Ms. Whitson’s fundraising appeals for pro-settlement groups are in no way limited to educational issues. She has celebrated the work of the Armenian General Benevolent Union, which supports new settlement construction to encourage “young families to set down their roots.” She specifically praised the group for helping Syrian-Armenians who have “resettled in Armenia,” many in the occupied territory.

Nothing in international law requires boycotts or sanctions against such communities. But if HRW were serious about its opposition to “settlers” and “occupation,” it wouldn’t have a supporter of them heading its Middle East division.

**Ms. Whitson isn’t alone in opposing occupation and settlements only in Israel.** Nancy Kricorian, leader of a Code Pink boycott campaign against Israel, also turns out to be an Armenian settler activist. Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib urges a boycott of Israel while co-sponsoring a bill to normalize relations with Armenian settlements.

The double standard by supporters of sanctions on Israel suggests that they know the international law they claim to enforce against the Jewish state is not international law at all. ★



Human Rights Watch’s Sara Leah Whitson—one standard for Israel, another for Armenia.





## The Poor Tailor

Abe was a poor tailor whose shop was next door to a five-star restaurant. Every day, Abe would eat his simple lunch of black bread and herring in the small garden behind his shop. He would always smell the wonderful aromas emanating from the restaurant's kitchen next door.

One day, the restaurant sent Abe an invoice. Abe went to see the owner to ask why.

The owner replied, "You're enjoying my food, so you should pay for it."

Abe refused to pay, so the restaurant sued him. At the hearing, the judge asked the restaurant owner to present his side of the story.

He explained, "Every day, this man comes and sits near our kitchen and visibly enjoys the smell of our food while eating his. We are obviously adding value to his cheap meal and deserve to be compensated for it."

The judge asked Abe, "And what do you have to say about that?"

Abe said nothing but stuck his hand in his pocket and rattled around the coins inside.

The judge asked him, "What's the meaning of that?"

Abe replied, "I am paying for the smell of his food with the sound of my money." ★

### Answer Key for March 2020 Crossword (p.21)

#### Across:

- 8. Delivered
- 10. Servants
- 12. Trespass
- 13. Cursed
- 15. Anger
- 17. Inheritance
- 19. Mountain
- 21. Rent
- 22. Blessed

#### Down:

- 1. Whole
- 2. Divide
- 3. Altar
- 4. Achan
- 5. Peace
- 6. Ambush
- 7. Joshua
- 9. Instruction
- 11. Sanctify
- 14. Sun
- 16. Troubled
- 18. Cities
- 20. Israel



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