



March 2021

*From the President's Desk***Rebuilding After the Corona Virus****By Daniel Gwertzman*****„And let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them.“ (Exodus 25:8)***

There are many proposals about the changes that need to be made in the post Covid world. There are those that want to build back better, those who want a global reset and yes those who simply want to return to everything as it existed before Covid. There are proposals that existed before the global pandemic of Covid19 which did not gain traction such as eliminating money and shifting to digital currency, replacing meat by consuming insects, elimination fossil fuels and switching entirely to green energy which are increasingly being promoted. The world seems to be headed for a global upheaval.

We are facing a situation in which past history is being cancelled or rewritten according to the dictates of political correctness and freedom of speech is being limited. This new world which seems to be emerging reminds us of George Orwell's novel 1984.

Books and articles not in line with current thought are not allowed to be published or disappear from the shelves. The very nature of freedom in our societies is being threatened by those who control, the press, the Internet and the mass media.

We may be headed to a world dominated by artificial intelligence but people are now being told what to think without being consulted about their opinions nor are their beliefs taken into consideration. The world seems headed in the direction of a Tower of Babel experience.

„And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth.“ (Genesis 11:4)

Where should we look for guidance? To begin with we must look to the truth of the Word.

What was the world like before Creation? What the Scripture tells us is that chaos prevailed. In Jewish mystical thought this was a state of primal evil in which the Lord was not present.

„In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.“ (Genesis 1:1-2)

What does the term Torah mean? Yes, it is translated as „law“ but it also means „teaching, instruction, guidance and direction.“ It is meant to be a light to our path and lead us in the way of the Lord.

„In him was life; and the life was the light of men.“ (John 1:4)

The Word also contains narrative it is the formative experience of people of faith in their walk with the Lord. This is the way the late former Chief Rabbi of England Lord Jonathan Sacks describes it: „...the formative experiences of a nation and the way that nation sought to live its collective life so as never to forget the lessons it learned along the way.“

Why then should Christians look toward the Jews and support them in their spiritual journey. The simple fact is that this journey is also their journey for ultimately salvation is of the Jews.

„It hath pleased them verily; and their debtors they are. For if the Gentiles have been made partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister unto them in carnal things.“ (Romans 15:27)

Blessing the Jews, studying the Word of God and living a spiritual life involves making real sacrifices in the secular world, but this is the spiritual foundation of the house of the Lord in our midst. It provides hope to all those who truly believe in the Word.

„Or saith he it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written: that he that ploweth should plow in hope; and that he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.“ (1 Corinthians 9:10)

The Ashlim solar power station in the Negev desert



I began this piece with a quotation from the Book of Exodus concerning the construction of the tabernacle. The details concerning this project take up approximately one third of the Book of Exodus. What is most interesting is that God provided the plan and endowed those who carried it out with the wisdom to complete it.

„According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it.“ (Exodus 25:9)

This was a collective project and each contributed in his own way. It was not left up to the rich nor was it based on taxes levied on the people. It was to use a Christian concept a „love offering“. The Tabernacle could not possibly contain God it was a representation of the work of Creation but the purpose was that God was at the center He was to dwell among them.

„Thus saith the Lord, The heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool: where is the house that ye build unto me? and where is the place of my rest? For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the Lord: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.“ (Isaiah 66:1-2)

Where do you see such a concept in Christian history of people called on by virtue of their bond with the Lord to accept responsibility not just for themselves and their families but for the spiritual state of the nation. We find it in the phrase „the priesthood of all believers“ this comes to us from the Puritans who took most of their principles from the Hebrew Bible. They sought to know their spiritual roots. That is the foundation of the Lord's House we should seek to build so that His presence will be in our midst. A house built on such a foundation will endure and will not be shaken for truly the Kingdom of God is within you. This is not a society based on exchanges of wealth and power. It is a society based in marriages, families, congregations, communities, charities and voluntary associations. It is a nation under God.

„And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever.“ (Daniel 2:44)

This is also found in the New Testament in the Gospel of Luke.

„And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.“ (Luke 1:33)

This Must Never Happen Again

By Ewa Jonsson, Sweden

The Book of Esther in the Bible tells us how King Xerxes, also known as Ahasuerus, and the agagite Haman decided to destroy the Jews because they prayed differently than all other people. Later on, the king changed his mind and the Jews were rescued at that time.

Not long ago the following conversation was heard on a street in Canada. A Jewish man parked his car and two boys were playing nearby. „Here comes a Jew,“ said one, „No, it's not a Jew, it's a human being!“ the other boy replied.

About 2,500 years have passed between these two events. From being a different people to not being considered human.

January 27th is Holocaust Remembrance Day. Persecutions against Jews have been repeated over the centuries and millenniums and in our time culminated in the Holocaust. A poison has been spread, generation after generation, across land and sea that the Jews should not have the right to live. Just as often the expression „This must never happen again“ has been repeated and here we are today anno 2021, again, with antisemitism rising in an alarmistic way.

Politicians, the ordinary people, representatives of different religions stand united on the 27th of January. They participate at various events to show solidarity with the Jews. To participate in different memorial services is good but it is even more important how we all act the other 364 days of the year.

Combating antisemitism is a work that must be done, every day, every minute.

The Auschwitz extermination camp is synonymous with this genocide. My first visit there a few years ago left a deep mark on me.

My husband and I entered through the main entrance under the sign „Arbeit Macht Frei“ and a bar with the text „Halt“ was lifted and paved the way for us. As I walked forward, I thought about how many people had walked in broken shoes, feet





wrapped in cloths or barefoot on their way to another horribly long day or death.

The watchtowers were many and I asked myself „How did they think when they sat in the towers and were prepared to shoot, to kill, as soon as someone turned a few centimeters from the line or, even worse, sat down to rest for a while? Did they go home to their families and friends after their work shift was over? Did they have children with whom they prayed the evening prayer in the evening?

We entered a large room where we were shown only women's hair. It was dark, brown, blond, curly and straight hair from the women who had their heads shaved either on arrival or before entering the gas chamber. Who were these women, what had their lives looked like? Some may have been little girls with braids, others were in love and planning their weddings while others might have lived a whole life and looked forward to an old age together with loved ones.

We continued until we arrived at a large chimney and the guide explained to us that this was a gas chamber and crematorium. He told us to go into the gas chamber. All I wanted was to shout NO!!! How am I supposed to walk into a gas chamber? I'm not worthy! Here thousands, millions, have taken the painful steps that cannot be described and now I shall go in here to „study“! I felt that it was not right but at the same time I felt that it was necessary. It took a few minutes to enter the gas chamber and get out again. Just outside grew large, beautiful trees.

The Holocaust is a crime that was carried out amid a 'civilised' Europe. On a large map in one of the exhibition rooms were marked the various countries occupied by the Nazis or in

collaborated with them. Two countries were completely white, namely Switzerland and Sweden, which were described as „Neutral countries“. I was ashamed!

We travelled by bus to the Birkenau Extermination Camp, which is right next to Auschwitz. Here we walked along the long railway tracks where a constant stream of freight wagons stopped to drop off the prisoners who had been transported there for one purpose: to be murdered. The platform was about 3 km and when we stood there, we saw a small parade on the other side of the tracks. I discovered the Israeli flag and some of the people did wear the Israeli airline's El Al uniform. A little further on came a group of Jewish youths with kipot on their heads and Israeli flags.

I shivered and thought that all these millions of Jews who were murdered in the death factories might have died thinking that this was the end of the Jewish people. Imagine if they had known that about 70 years later, Jewish youth groups from all over the world would visit this place and lay down flowers at special memorials. Imagine if they had known that representatives from the Jewish state of Israel would honor their memories with ceremonies right where the railway tracks ran out.

The liberation came in early 1945 and some prisoners could be saved. Our visit was necessary and has been followed by many more. It is the task of all of us, for the sake of the Jewish people, but also for the sake of our own civilization to never to forget or deny!

This must never happen again!

In Memorium

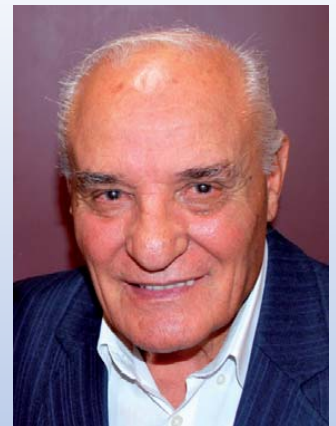
Yitshak Cohen 1922-2021

Yitshak Cohen passed away in Jerusalem on the eve of the Hebrew month of Adar (February 11, 2021 at the age of 98 surrounded by his wife, children and grandchildren. Many of our friends who came to our Study Tour Seminar in Jerusalem heard his testimony of how he survived in the death camps.

He was from the city of Salonika (Thessaloniki) which had the largest Jewish community in Greece. At the time of the German occupation there were around 56,000 Jews living there. By the end of the war nearly 98% of the Jewish community from Salonika had perished from gassing, forced labor and disease in the Auschwitz- Birkenau concentration camp in Poland. He was one of the approximately 1,100 Jews who returned from the Nazi death camps. He lost all his family: grandparents, parents, brothers and sisters. As a result of all his difficult experiences he thought about ending his life. He heard prisoners during the Feast of Hanukkah singing the famous song "The Rock of My Salvation". At that moment he resolved to survive and come to the Land of Israel and rebuild his life because of his deep faith.

He survived working as a Sonderkommando in the crematoriums and also survived a death march. Despite the fact the ship he was coming to Israel on sank, he continued the journey. He studied pharmacy became a pharmacist, married and built a life and family in his homeland. He fulfilled the vision of the Psalms:

"Save thy people, and bless thine inheritance: feed them also, and lift them up for ever." (Psalms 28:9)





Letter from Jerusalem

By Prof. (Emeritus) Meron Medzini (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

It took a month before President Joe Biden made the long awaited phone call to Benjamin Netanyahu. The prime minister of Israel was number 12 on the list of heads of states called by the 46th president of the United States, and the first in the Middle East. The call was described by both sides as warm and friendly. It lasted an hour and Iran was probably the central issue under discussion. Iran has long bedeviled American-Israel relations. Why is that and what could be the outcome?

Israel objected vehemently to the Obama policy of negotiating a nuclear agreement with Iran six years ago. Netanyahu even made a highly unusual step by addressing the U.S Congress as a guest of the Republican Majority leader, a move seen as highly unfriendly by the Obama Administration. Netanyahu argued that Iran could never be trusted to abide by an agreement, that only gave Iran more time to build nuclear weapons, that did not prevent Iran from building missiles capable of carrying such weapons and hitting Israel. The agreement said nothing about Iran's support for terror emanating from Lebanon by its proxy Hezbollah and by Hamas in Gaza. It did not prevent Iran from sending weapons to both organizations through Syria. Israel also argued that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) would never be able to ensure that Iran abided by its commitments. The 2015 agreement known as the JCPOA said nothing about ending the daily broadcasts emanating from Iran calling for the destruction of Israel.

The agreement left a noticeable dent in Israel-American relations. The very same Obama Administration officials who negotiated the JCPOA, are now playing major roles in the Biden Administration, mostly in the Department of State and the National Security Council. Even prior to the inauguration, the Biden team stated that it would return America to the agreement from which the Trump Administration withdrew. Apparently, Israel was not consulted on this major move or even informed in advance of the decision being made.

What can Israel do? Given the desire by the Netanyahu Administration to maintain close ties with the Biden team, it can ask to be consulted in advance of new measures taken to revive the JCPOA. It can do so through normal diplomatic channels or by going public. The latter course could invite a backlash from the Biden team. Israel could seek to improve the proposed agreement through its contacts with the Russian Federation and perhaps even with China, who were parties to the previous deal. Israel could also seek to align its position with that of its new friends in the Persian Gulf such as the United Arab Emirates and Bahrein. But the key problem is that Israel must make up its mind and determine what its policy should be. Can it live with a new agreement or must it seek other means to destroy Iran's nuclear progress?

On the eve of the March 23rd Knesset elections this is almost impossible. There are voices in Israel who feel that the Jewish state must pre-empt and launch an aerial attack on nuclear facilities in Iran before that country will achieve its stated goal of producing nuclear weapons. This view was expressed last month by General Aviv Kochavi, the Israel Defense Forces Chief of Staff. He feels that Israel may be running out of time and it must present the Biden Administration with new facts on the ground.

But this means risking a war in the Middle East at the time when the European nations who have been asked by Washington to mediate between America and Iran, are far from ready to follow such a risky option. China and Russia also seem to be highly reluctant to support a military move, especially at a time when the world is deeply enmeshed in trying to put down the Corona Virus pandemic that has devastated the economies of many nations. If it acts alone, Israel could find itself alone in a war that would never be understood let alone tolerated.

An attack on Iran at this time would be seen as a major affront to the American efforts to re-start talks about an improved JCPOA. Israel will find it hard to defy America at this highly sensitive time. Most likely it will have to wait for the next government in order to formulate its policy, and only then embark on talks with Washington to achieve a highly improved agreement that can be verified and supervised.

Israel has another option – to go public and announce that it has the means to retaliate in kind and that Iran is risking massive destruction in case it goes nuclear, a situation which Israel cannot tolerate. This will be one option that the new Israeli government will have to consider after the next elections.



Bank Account Information :

UBank, Keren Hayesod St. 32, Jerusalem, Israel

AMI Jerusalem Center, Account No. 33133-3, IBAN: IL78026288000000331333, BIC: FIRBILIT



AMI – Jerusalem Center for Biblical Studies and Research
International Headquarter: 25 Hovevei Zion St., P.O.Box 8017, Jerusalem 91080
Phone +972 2 6312 800 ✨ jerusalem@amijerusalemcenter.org