



May 2021

*From the President's Desk***When the Masks Come Off****By Daniel Gwertzman**

"When righteous men do rejoice, there is great glory: but when the wicked rise a man is hidden. He that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy." (Proverbs 28:12-13)

On Sunday April 18, 2021 the requirement to wear a mask outdoors was lifted in Israel. However, masks will still be worn in closed areas such as public transit and shopping centers. One is reminded of the Jewish concept of the revealed Torah and the hidden or mystical Torah. What we see is often only a small part of the truth we experience. Our choices in life will determine how we live our lives.

"But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, and death and evil;" (Deuteronomy 30:14-15).

This same idea is found in the New Testament.

"But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach;" (Romans 10:8)

The Word of God is meant to change our lives not just to be memorized on parroted but to be lived in the deepest hidden sense it is your wisdom.

"Behold thou desirest truth in the inward parts: and in the hidden part thou shalt make me to know wisdom." (Psalms 51:6)

Studying the word of God is meant to change you as person for the better.

"For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." (Hebrews 4:12)

Now that the masks are coming off in Israel it will be possible to see each other face to face. The benefit of the masks was to reduce the spread of Coronavirus. According to Professor Nancy Agmon-Levin, Head of the Clinical Immunology and Allergy Unit at The Sheba Medical Center, because of the masks there has been a 65% drop in severe asthma in Israeli hospitals as the masks also blocked infectious agents and definitely pollen. There was also a 49% drop in urgent visits to emergency rooms by asthma suffers in 2020 versus 2019. This is again an example of the revealed and hidden benefits. In a religious sense we only partially understand the meaning of the events we are experiencing at this time. Only at the end of this process will the hand of God be seen.

"For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." (1 Corinthians 13:12)

There was a period like this in the history of the Jewish people during the Persian period which is recorded in the Book of Esther, which mirrors our age and the challenges facing us.

In the entire Book of Esther we find no mention of God. However, the word for King appears approximately 200 times. It appears that Ahasuerus who was the Persian ruler and ruled over 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia was the central character in the story. However, it is God who is really in control and acting behind the scenes, who is the true King. Ahasuerus may have all the glory and power but it is God who is in charge.

Ahasuerus literally has the power of life and death over his subjects. Instead of the nations of the world coming to the Temple in Jerusalem to serve the Lord (Isaiah 2:2-4) they go to Ahasuerus's Palace in Shushan to see his wealth and glory and to attend his drunken feasts.





It is Ahasuerus who sells his Jewish subjects and decrees their destruction and drinks to this bargain (Esther 3:11-15). He decrees genocide for his Jewish subjects in return for a sizeable cash payment. According to one authority Haman's bribe amounted to 58-68% of the annual income of the Empire.

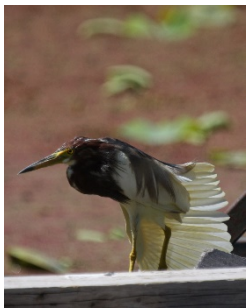
The Jews are allowed to defend themselves and do not plunder their enemies despite having been given permission by Ahasuerus to do so (Esther 8:11). The Jews celebrate their victory by sending gifts to each other and giving charity to the poor (Esther 9:16-28). Ahasuerus takes advantage of the new situation to tax all of his subjects on the land and upon the isles of the sea (Esther 10:1).

The real victory is that of the Lord and is demonstrate not by glory and power but by those who invest their resources in the Kingdom of Heaven.

"And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

It is time to prepare a way for the Lord in the midst of all the spiritual challenges coming in the wake of the Corona virus. People should not be blinded by the glory, power and unbelief of the secular world.

"Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God. (1 Corinthians 4:5)



Rare Visitor

Text & Photo: Ingrid Willner

In the middle of April, 2021, many birdwatchers were heading to see a Chinese Pond heron in Jerusalem. This was the first time ever that this species appeared in Israel. In order to record it the Society for the Protection of Nature in Israel gave it a Hebrew name "*Anafit Sini*" (Chinese heron). How it flew from China all the way to Israel is unknown.



“Salvation is of the Jews” as Jesus said (John 4 : 22)

By Agaath van Ommen

We are living in a very special and turbulent time! How should we understand this all?

For that we have to go back to the beginning:

God has a plan with His world; and for that plan He chose His people, the Jews and will **never** forsake them. (1 Samuel 12: 22). He will use them to bless the world.

As He gave them His Word with His guidelines for humanity. They preserved and taught it all along, so we could receive it too. Even with the Psalms, which we read, to comfort us, and to sing to glorify Him. And the Prophets, to warn and to point out His future. Israel kept and keeps the worship, and the singing, going on! Israel is God's witness among the Nations, having to be a Light and a priesthood to them. He entrusted this special task to them; not always easy, but He guided them in it, for He is faithful! He gave them (and us) the Messiah, a Jew, born in His Land, for the utmost salvation! The Word became flesh and in Him God shows His heart for Israel and the world. HE will fulfill all the promises, and become the King in Jerusalem, where once all the Nations will go up to Zion. That is why Jerusalem is so important and *"...a burdensome stone for all people..."* (Zech. 12: 3)

We see how our future is connected with what the Lord is doing with and in Israel.

After a long 'silent' period of 1900 years, in which the message of His coming Kingdom went around the world, now, in our

days, His prophesies are coming to fulfillment. After all these years we see the return of His people back to the Land, HE gave to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. For hundreds of years the land of Israel was barren and desolated. Around 150 years ago some Jews started to come back to Israel, wishing to prepare the Land for the coming Messiah. One of them was Shlomo's family, as he told us several times. Now more and more Jews are coming back and look what we read in Isaiah 11: 11,12:

“He will gather His people from the corners of the earth; and set up a banner for the nations.”

HE is restoring His people, as in the Vision of Ezekiel of the valley of the dry bones. It is happening now!

And we see them making the desert blossom, building up their cities, welcoming thousands of immigrants from several





countries and above that they bless the world with their knowledge, expertise, medicines and medical help abroad, agricultural help, several inventions, digital systems, chips for telephone, etc., etc. They bring many 'fruits' and blessings to the world!

However: it is clear that in many ways the enemy wants to destroy the Land, the People, the City, to prevent the Kingdom of God and the realization of His plan! Most of the world is criticizing Israel, telling lies about it and twisting the truth, even denying their history. Even Churches do not stand up against these false rumors which fill the world undermining God's morals and Plan. The place He choose for Himself: Jerusalem has already become *"a burdensome stone for all people"*, as we see, with all this aggression. (Zech.12:2-3)

But His plan will become reality! Despite the threats, the undermining, the false accusations, the lies, HE will fulfill His Masterplan. What a comfort!

Wake-up call

Did not Daniel write in Chapter 12:4b, that in the endtime *"...knowledge shall increase..."* and in verse 10: *"...none of the wicked shall understand, but the wise shall understand"?! So: let us belong to the wise and look properly! Read His word, look up what God is revealing to us, and getting 'eyes to see'. Look to His footsteps, what HE is doing in Israel. That gives us hope in this difficult time!*



On the evening of the 16th of March, just before going to sleep, the TV-News told me, they found fragments of a 2000-year-old Biblical Scroll in the 'Cave of Horror', near the Dead Sea, in the Judean Desert, where refugees hid around 1900 years ago. It was the Scroll, written in Greek, from Zechariah,

Nahum, and other minor Prophets. An immeasurable gift for mankind.

Why now, again, after 70 years? What does God want to remind us in these days? Let us look to the text they identified:



Zechariah 8:16, 17: *"...these are the things you shall do. Speak the truth to one another, render true and perfect justice in your gates. And do not contrive evil against one another, and do not love perjury, because all these are things that I hate' declares the Lord..."*

How relevant, nowadays! Amazing, eh?

They identified another text from Nahum 1, verse 5,6:

"The mountains quake because of Him, and the hills melt, the earth heaves before Him, the world and all that dwell there-in. Who can stand before His wrath? Who can resist His fury? His anger pours out like fire, and rocks are shattered because of Him."

Let this be wake-up call and warning for us. HE is a Holy God! Let us, Christians, reconcile with Israel, our elder brother; after all these years of false teachings, wrong translations, arrogance and replacement-theology. Let us humbly confess our guilt, and restore our views, returning to the truth of His in Word!! Let us look up to the God of Israel, listen to His footsteps; and let us expect together His Kingdom! Helping and staying beside our elder brothers; blessing them where possible, being a light together for the world, and praying for the Peace of Jerusalem. Then:

"Out of Zion shall go forth the Law and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem" (Isaiah 2:3b)

May our Lord bless you!

"Hakol Yachasi" - The Relative Voice Choir

By Amit Hizak



"Hakol Yachasi", called "The Relative Voice Choir" in English, is allowed to meet again in the AMI Center for the weekly rehearsals. The choir is very happy to announce that they can plan their concert program again.

The Jerusalem Singing Ensemble was founded in 2007 and has been an independent organization since 2015. «Hakol Yachasi» cultivates folk songs and dances.

Those interested can find recordings on the homepage:
<https://www.hakolyachasi.org>

"Hakol Yachasi" - The Relative Voice Choir singing with Moshe Leon, the Mayor of Jerusalem in Miskenot Shaananim, one of the first neighborhoods outside the Walls of Jerusalem.





Letter from Jerusalem

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

On April 8, 2021, we commemorated Holocaust Remembrance Day. There were many ceremonies and many speeches were made. One of the key points mentioned was the fact that beginning with the rise of Hitler to power in 1933, the world stood idly by when the Nazis began to enact anti-Jewish legislation, attacking Jewish businesses, removing Jews from positions in government, academia, media and the arts. Already in the 1930's, Jews fleeing from Germany, who did not want to go to then Palestine, were banned from most Western countries including the United States, Britain, Canada, South Africa and even Australia. A conference was held in Evian, France, in the summer of 1938, in which most nations claimed they did not want Jews as it would increase anti-Semitism. One country, Brazil, said there was no room for additional people.

Two countries stood out in the late 1930's and even during the Second World War, when the Holocaust was taking place in Europe. They were both Asian. One was Nationalist China headed by Chiang Kai-shek, the other was Imperial Japan, since 1940 an ally of both Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. While European Jewry perished in the Holocaust, some 40,000 Jews who found themselves living in China, Japan and countries under Japanese occupation such as Singapore, the Philippines, Burma and Indonesia, survived the war. How can we explain these rare phenomena? Why did China and Japan go out of their way not to target Jews?

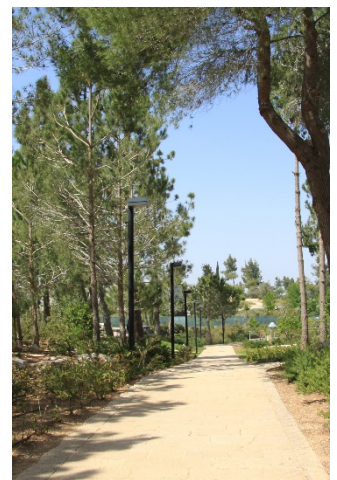
This question has intrigued me ever since I began to study the history and culture of these countries as a graduate student at Georgetown University in Washington and later as a doctoral student at Harvard. Years later I published a book called "Under the Rising Sun – Japan and the Jews during the Holocaust Era (Academic Studies Press, 2016). In it I tried to explain the reasons for the special attitude adopted by these two countries towards Jews. Since today Israel maintains very cordial relations with both the People's Republic of China and with Japan, it may be timely to ask why did the two pursue policies that enabled the Jews under their rule to survive and why is there, today, a great deal of philo-Semitism among the Chinese and Japanese who seem to admire the Jewish people and Israel.

The answer lies mostly in the absence of anti-Semitism in China and Japan. Jews began to settle in both countries only in the second half of the 19th century, coming mainly from India, America, Germany, Britain and mainly from Tsarist Russia. They were regarded as part of the foreign community and not as Jews. Since those Jews never bothered to learn the local language, they were not involved in the arts, media, academia and politics in China and Japan and thus did not draw attention to their separate existence. Until the 1930's there was no anti-Semitism in Japan or in China. Most Chinese and Japanese have never met Jews. Jews were not involved in social and political movements in both countries.

Anti-Semitic ideas began to filter into Japan in the 1920's when the Protocols of the Elders of Zion were translated to Japanese from Russian. Virulently anti-Semitic White Russians, who escaped the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia brought with them these sentiments and attempted to spread them. In the 1930's few Japanese showed interest in the Nazi racial doctrines, especially those of Alfred Rosenberg. To some educated people in China and Japan there grew a feeling that Jews were very successful in the West, that they wielded enormous influence in international finance, politics, the media, academia and even in Hollywood. Hence there developed some admiration for them.

The fact remains that a Japanese Vice Consul in Kaunas, by the name of Sugihara Chiune, issued some 2200 transit visas to Polish Jews that enabled them to travel via Japan in 1941 and to escape the Holocaust or long incarceration in Soviet gulags. In this manner Sugihara is seen as responsible to saving 6000 Jewish lives. A Chinese Consul in Vienna, Ho Feng Shan, issued thousands of visas to China in 1938, defying his government, thus enabling thousands of German and Austrian Jews to escape to Shanghai. During the Second World War, 27,000 Jews lived in Shanghai and survived the war, although many of them were relocated to a Designated Area in that city decreed by the Japanese occupying forces.

In both countries there was no knowledge of the Holocaust that befell European Jewry. This began to change in Japan with the publication of the Diaries of Anna Frank in 1955 and the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem in 1961. The latter event served to demonstrate to the Japanese people the need for a Jewish state. Both Sugihara and Ho were honored by Yad Vashem as Righteous Among the Nations. Jews and Israelis thus remember with gratitude those who helped Jews survive the Holocaust, chief among them China and Japan, but also Sweden, Spain and Bulgaria.



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