



WORD

FROM JERUSALEM



...
**HELP FOR
HOLOCAUST
SURVIVORS**

(PAGE 8)

**ISRAEL STILL YOUNG AT
73**



The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem was established in 1980 in recognition of the biblical significance of all of Jerusalem and its unique connection to the Jewish people. Today the ICEJ represents millions of Christians, churches, and denominations to the nation and people of Israel. We recognize in the restoration of Israel the faithfulness of God to keep His ancient covenant with the Jewish people. Our main objectives are:

- To stand with Israel in support and friendship;
- To equip and teach the worldwide church regarding God's purposes with Israel and the nations of the Middle East;
- To be an active voice of reconciliation between Jews, Christians, and Arabs, and to support the churches and congregations in the Holy Land.

From its head offices in Jerusalem, the ICEJ reaches out into more than 170 countries worldwide, with branch offices in over 90 nations.

Our vision is:

- To reach every segment of Israel's society with a Christian testimony of comfort and love, and
- To reach and actively represent to Israel the support of denominations, churches, and believers from every nation on earth.

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK



Dear Friends,

We just passed through another season of national holidays. After the recent biblical festival of Passover, Israel then commemorated *Yom HaShoah* in memory of the more than six million Jews brutally murdered during the Holocaust. The whole country came to a standstill when the nationwide siren sounded. One week later on *Yom HaZikaron*, the siren rang again when Israel honored the 23,000 fallen soldiers who have died in various wars and terror attacks since the establishment of the state of Israel in May 1948. In ceremonies across the country, parents stood in front of their children's graves—children who lost their lives defending their homeland. That same evening, seamlessly, the sober atmosphere changed into joyful celebrations of *Yom Ha'atzmaut*, Israel's annual Independence Day, which was observed this year on the 73rd birthday of *Medinat Israel*.

These remarkable days are not just national holidays, but they express an important part of Jewish culture—a culture of remembrance and identification. At every Passover dinner, families and friends reaffirm that they should consider themselves to have personally taken part in the exodus. The late President Ezer Weizmann, addressing the German parliament in a remarkable speech in 1996, said the following:

I was a slave in Egypt. I received the Torah at Mount Sinai. Together with Joshua and Elijah, I crossed the Jordan River. I entered Jerusalem with David, was exiled from it with Zedekiah and did not forget it by the rivers of Babylon. When the Lord returned the captives of Zion, I dreamed among the builders of its ramparts. I fought the Romans and was banished from Spain. I was bound to the stake in Mainz. I studied Torah in Yemen and lost my family in Kishinev. I was incinerated in Treblinka, rebelled in Warsaw, and emigrated to the Land of Israel, the country whence I had been exiled and where I had been born, from which I come and to which I return.

In light of these powerful words and their underlying strength, I am not concerned that Israel will forget the atrocities of the past. However, I am concerned that future generations of people in the nations might forget the lessons they desperately need to learn from our long, tragic history of anti-Semitism.

Passover is behind us this year, but now I am reminded of how the apostle Paul adapted this Jewish culture of remembrance and identification in his message to gentile believers:

Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life . . . Likewise you also, reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:4, 11)

This means that every believer has walked with Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection, and because of this, we can also expect to walk with Him by faith in the fullness of His resurrection power—even today! What a powerful truth that is for all of us!

With this, I want to thank you for all your prayers and support for the ICEJ and wish you the fullest blessings from Jerusalem.

In Christ,

Dr. Jürgen Bühler
 President
 International Christian Embassy Jerusalem

COVER PHOTO:

Jewish children hold an Israeli flag ahead of Israel's 73rd Independence Day at a kindergarten in Moshav Yashresh, April 13, 2021. Photo by Yossi Aloni/Flash90



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CONTENTS

MAY 2021 USA EDITION



4 THE DAYS OF ELIJAH



7 STAND UP FOR ISRAEL AT THE ICC



8 HAIFA HOME RESIDENTS GLAD TO COME TOGETHER AGAIN



12 KEEPING HOPE ALIVE FOR ISRAELI ARABS



14 WALK THRU THE BIBLE PODCAST

“Indeed, Elijah is coming first
and will restore all things.”

- MATTHEW 17:11A -

THE DAYS OF ELIJAH

BY DR. JÜRGEN BÜHLER • ICEJ PRESIDENT

Art credit: christianpublishinghouse.co

ELIJAH WILL COME!

For many Jews and Christians, Elijah is the most prominent prophet to ever minister to Israel. He is the most mentioned prophet in the New Testament. When Jesus was transfigured on the mountain, He had a visitation with Moses and Elijah, who talked with him about “His departure” (Luke 9:31, NASB).

One of the great expectations in Judaism is that Elijah will come as a forerunner of the Messiah. It is God Himself who announces through the prophet Malachi: “Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the great and awesome day of the Lord” (Malachi 4:5 NKJV). That’s why every Passover *Seder* Jews hold a chair open for Elijah. Thus, it is no surprise that many considered both John the Baptist and Jesus to be the Elijah who was to come (Luke 9:19; John 1:21).

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah in the temple and announced the birth of his son (John the Baptist), he informed the stunned priest that his son would go before the Messiah “in the spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17). And Jesus Himself affirmed this ancient tradition of the coming of Elijah. When returning from the Mount of Transfiguration, His disciples asked for His opinion on this ancient Elijah tradition. Jesus responded clearly:

“Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. (Matthew 17:11–13)

Jesus seems to speak about two comings of Elijah, one that lies in the future “to restore all things” and another in their immediate past concerning John the Baptist.

Finally, the book of Revelation speaks about two witnesses that will appear in the last days with a special end-time ministry. Their ministry, as described in Revelation 11:1–14, bears the hallmarks of Elijah and Moses. They are referred to as the two lampstands and two olive trees (v. 4), imagery symbolizing the church (Revelation 1:20) and the “one new man” Paul spoke of in Romans 11:17ff—the olive tree of noble and wild branches. But they can also represent the ministry of unique individuals who will minister in Jerusalem in the power of Elijah.

The above passages indicate a ministry will manifest itself in the last days before the

return of Jesus that will prepare the people for the coming of Messiah. And this ministry is needed today as much as it was needed in the times of the kings of Israel.

THE DAYS OF ELIJAH

When Elijah started his ministry in 1 Kings 17:1, Israel had reached the pinnacle of ungodliness. In many ways, it was the worst of times—not economically or politically but spiritually—regarding Israel's relation to her God.

In the years before Elijah arrived on the scene, the second great dynasty of the Northern Kingdom of Israel had just been established. The preceding dynasty of Jeroboam was brought to an end after four generations because they “did [what was] evil in the sight of the LORD” (1 Kings 15:34; cf. 16:2ff). After a series of short-lived kingdoms, Omri (as chief of staff) rose to power and established a stable kingdom for Israel again. The Bible testifies that Omri did more evil “than all who were before him” (1 Kings 16:25).

When Omri died, the kingdom was passed on to his son, Ahab, who set a new standard of wickedness, doing “evil in the sight of the Lord, more than all who were before him” (1 Kings 16:30). Not only did he exceed his father's rebellion, but he engaged in a fatal relationship. He married into a leading political and economic powerhouse of the region, the house of Etbaal, or Ithobal as he is known in history books. This Phoenician clan ruled over the city-state of Tyre and controlled much of the Mediterranean trade and established a famous trading post: the ancient city of Carthage. Ithobal also united in his person the office of king and chief priest of Baal and Astarte in his kingdom.

Ahab might have felt it would benefit his kingdom financially and politically to marry Jezebel, Ithobal's extravagant daughter. But what looked like a great political move opened

the doors of hell in Israel. The daughter of the king-priest and shipping tycoon brought a political cloud to Israel and a cloud of wickedness and ungodliness that Ahab could not control. Jezebel appointed 400 priests of the pagan gods Baal and Astarte in Israel, established shrines for these demonic gods, and persecuted the prophets of the God of Israel. It was Israel's darkest hour.

“JESUS ANSWERED AND SAID TO THEM, ‘INDEED, ELIJAH IS COMING FIRST AND WILL RESTORE ALL THINGS. BUT I SAY TO YOU THAT ELIJAH HAS COME ALREADY, AND THEY DID NOT KNOW HIM BUT DID TO HIM WHATEVER THEY WISHED. LIKEWISE THE SON OF MAN IS ALSO ABOUT TO SUFFER AT THEIR HANDS.’ THEN THE DISCIPLES UNDERSTOOD THAT HE SPOKE TO THEM OF JOHN THE BAPTIST.”

Matthew 17:11–13

The ancient ways of the God of Israel still existed, but they now had powerful competitors. Old biblical traditions were scoffed at, and ancient borderlines were overstepped. One of the profiteers of this ungodly rule of Ahab was Hiel of Bethel. Dismissing it as foolish talk, he defied the ancient warning of Joshua not to rebuild the city of Jericho:

“Cursed be the man before the LORD who rises up and builds this city Jericho; he shall lay its foundation with his firstborn, and with his youngest he shall set up its gates” (Joshua 6:26). So Hiel of Bethel was a double fool, as he rebuilt the city at the cost of his oldest and youngest sons (1 Kings 16:34).

THE GOD WHO JUDGES

According to rabbinical tradition, it was at the funeral of Hiel's youngest son when Elijah appeared. He approached the king who had attended the funeral and challenged him: “Do you see how God honors the words of his servant Joshua? How much more will He honor the words of His servant Moses who declared: ‘If you will not obey my words ... your heavens shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron’” (Deuteronomy 28:15, 23ff).

And here the biblical account continues:

And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word.” (1 Kings 17:1)

It is here, out of nowhere, that the prophet starts his mission, declaring God's judgment upon Israel. The drought that followed caused a season of unimaginable hardship on Israel. For three-and-a-half years, the sky was cloudless, and God withheld rain. From here, Elijah fled the wrath of Ahab—first to the river Cherith and then to a city called Zarephath, close to Tyre—and God provided for him.

This contains lessons for us today. First, we need to understand this initial start of Elijah's ministry in declaring that judgment was not just a typical trademark of a harsh Old Testament God, yet the book of Revelation also tells us that the end-time ministry of the mysterious two witnesses will portray exactly this authority to withhold rain from mankind (Revelation 11:6). It should remind us that the God we serve is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:29). He does not change but is the same yesterday, today, and forever! Jesus himself declared that everybody who does not repent is doomed for God's judgment (Luke 13:2–5). Jesus warned Capernaum, Chorazin, and Bethsaida of divine judgment because they refused to repent (Matthew 11:20ff).

When Peter preached his very first sermon to a gentile gathering in Cornelius' house, he made a remarkable statement. Speaking about Jesus, Peter said:

And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins. (Acts 10:42–43)

Peter states that Jesus explicitly instructed His disciples that He, Jesus, is both Judge and Savior. For our secular world today, the concept that Jesus came to save us is met with derision. “Save us?” they ask, “From what?” Today's increasingly prosperous societies, with full medical care and multiple retirement funds, do not think they need to be saved and feel they are better off without the limitations of old-fashioned religion.

Unfortunately, many believers also have forgotten that Jesus came to not only give us a more joyful and meaningful life but save us from the wrath to come (1 Thessalonians



The Transfiguration of The Christ by Pierre Paul Rubens, 1605. Museum of Fine Arts of Nancy. Wikimedia Commons

1:10). We have forgotten that without Jesus, a man does not just lack the comfort and peace found in Him but “the wrath of God remains on him” (John 3:36 ESV). They are doomed to eternal damnation.

This final judgment of God already cast a shadow in the days of Elijah. Three-and-a-half years of a God-sent drought spoiled the plans of economic growth for the people of Israel. God judged His own chosen nation.

Over this past year, I have heard too often that God definitely did not cause the coronavirus, that He would not allow it. While I have no divine revelation on who or what caused the COVID-19 outbreak, we do know for sure that God caused the drought in Elijah’s time. It is the prophet Hosea who calls upon Israel: “Come let us return to the Lord; for He has torn us that He may heal us; He has struck us down, and He will bind us up” (Hosea 6:1). And of the church in Thyatira, Jesus himself rebukes “that woman Jezebel” who infiltrated the church with her immorality: “Indeed I will cast her into a sickbed, and those who commit adultery with her into great tribulation, unless they repent of their deeds” (Revelation 2:22 NKJV).

Maybe God will use this coronavirus period to draw us back to Himself, closer to Jesus. I am encouraged that within our own ICEJ global family, prayer has dramatically increased during the coronavirus pandemic. A well-known pastor in Germany also told me that this past year he had been asked far more than ever to speak about the “fear of God.”

THE TROUBLE OF ISRAEL

When Ahab finally met Elijah at the end of the drought, he greeted him: “Here you are, you troubler of Israel.”

In our post-modern world of “woke culture” where everything goes and no absolutes are allowed, it is the believer in the holy God of the Bible who is the modern troublemaker. A God who places radical demands upon His disciples is not compatible anymore with a world that defies absolutes and celebrates “openness,” “diversity,” and

“AND HE COMMANDED US TO PREACH TO THE PEOPLE, AND TO TESTIFY THAT IT IS HE WHO WAS ORDAINED BY GOD TO BE JUDGE OF THE LIVING AND THE DEAD. TO HIM ALL THE PROPHETS WITNESS THAT, THROUGH HIS NAME, WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL RECEIVE REMISSION OF SINS.”

Acts 10:42ff

“inclusion.” But it is in exactly this time that Elijah’s voice needs to be heard again.

A MINISTRY OF POWER

Elijah’s main calling was not to release judgment upon Israel, but it was the means to turn the hearts of his people back to their God. Elijah’s ministry—and after him that of Elisha (upon whom rested the spirit of Elijah)—brought forth one of the greatest seasons of signs and wonders in Israel. Only the Messiah Himself later exceeded it.

Both Elijah and Elisha demonstrated the miraculous power of God more than any other prophet before or after them. They raised the dead, healed the sick, defied laws of gravity, divided the river Jordan, multiplied food, blinded the eyes of the enemies, and opened the eyes of God’s people. It was a singular time when God revealed Himself

to His people in unparalleled ways. This was not a ministry of “cheap grace” but one where God challenged His people to make up their minds whom they wanted to serve—the God of Israel or Baal.

Jesus then announces that Elijah will come and he will “restore all things.” When Jesus said these words, I believe he did not have the Romans or Babylonians or any other worldly empires in mind but His own people, the people of the kingdom of God. This means we can expect God to conclude His purposes with Israel and the Church—even in the midst of turbulent times.

THE GOD BEFORE WHOM I STAND

One last point. We might ask ourselves: What was the secret behind Elijah’s power and ministry? Elijah himself reveals it to us in the very first words he utters to King Ahab: “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand . . .”

In Elijah, we meet a man who took his stand before God. The words he spoke were not formed by the theological schools of his day, nor by the great orators. They came straight from the throne of God.

And here lies the challenge for us all. The times in which we live need people who will stand before God. People who will respond to the call of Jesus from Gethsemane: “Can’t you watch with me for one hour?” We need to remind ourselves that all the great revivals were birthed by prayer. Azusa Street had a praying William Seymour; the Welsh revival had the prayers of Robert Evans; and the prayers of two older women birthed the revival of the Hebrides.

Our world today urgently needs people who can say “As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand!” In a time when millions of babies are being sacrificed on the altar of prosperity, family values are being trampled upon, and both Israel and the church are being marginalized, we are encouraged to have hope. As the world seemingly grows darker, Jesus encourages us that He will build His church. And as we take our stand before Him, the gates of hell shall not overcome us. Instead, He wants to empower us for a ministry in the spirit of Elijah. 🌍

STAND UP FOR ISRAEL AT THE ICC JOIN THE ICEJ PETITION!

The International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague has an important role to play in world affairs: to fairly and independently guard against impunity for war crimes, genocide, and other atrocities that “shock the conscience of humanity.” However, the ICC has recently diverted from this mission by opening an official probe against Israel for alleged war crimes committed during and since the 2014 rocket war with Hamas in Gaza and Israel’s actions to build and maintain Jewish communities in the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem.

In response, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has launched a global petition that allows you to express your opposition to this ICC war crimes probe against Israel. The results of this petition will be presented to the member states of the ICC and the judges and prosecutor of the Court.

BACKGROUND

The ICC made a highly politicized decision to investigate Israel for war crimes, basing the move on spurious claims. And in the process, it has unlawfully expanded the Court’s jurisdiction. The probe was prompted by an overzealous chief prosecutor, Fatou Bensouda, who harbors bias against the Jewish state, as seen in her extensive private consultations with Palestinian Authority officials on this matter over recent years.

The Palestinians, in turn, are seeking to exploit the Court to deprive Israel of its right of self-defense, while also criminalizing the legitimate rights of Jews to live in peace and security in their ancient homeland.

Therefore, this probe against Israel must be opposed by all those concerned with fairness and justice in world affairs. Christians especially have a historic, moral duty to stand up against such discriminatory actions against Israel.

MAKING THE CASE

The ICC is considered a “court of last resort,” which can only exercise jurisdiction over criminal cases expressly assigned to it by the Rome Statute, its signatory member states, or the United Nations Security Council. Thus, its current actions against Israel are improper and flawed for several reasons:

- 1 Israel is not a signatory to the Rome Statute governing the ICC, has not consented to the Court’s jurisdiction in this matter, and has its own long-established and respected judicial system for investigating and trying such crimes.
- 2 The Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state under the Rome Statute, and under the Oslo Accords, they have no authority to assert or confer criminal jurisdiction over Israelis in the West Bank and Gaza.
- 3 Therefore, the Court has no legal standing or authority to investigate and indict Israelis for war crimes in the “occupied territories”—a view held by numerous Western democratic states and international legal scholars.
- 4 The ICC’s chief prosecutor, Ms. Fatou Bensouda, has exhibited bias against Israel through her extensive and secretive consultations with Palestinian Authority officials on this matter since 2015. This bias is further evidenced by her dating the period for the formal probe back to June 13, 2014—the day after three Israeli teenage boys were kidnapped and murdered by Hamas—thus deliberately focusing on Israel’s response to a heinous crime and not the original crime itself committed by Palestinians.
- 5 In the Oslo Accords signed with Israel, the Palestinians expressly agreed that they have no criminal jurisdiction over Israelis in the West Bank, Gaza, and eastern Jerusalem, which also means they have no authority to delegate that criminal jurisdiction to another body. Thus, the ICC itself is flouting the Oslo agreements and undercutting this critical source of stability for the region.
- 6 The ICC is sullyng its impartiality and prestige while also weakening the prospects for peace in the region by unlawfully intervening in a bilateral political dispute on the side of the Palestinians, right when Israel has made historic advances in peace and normalization with several Arab nations. 🌐



Cour
Pénale
Internationale
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Court



Help reverse this illicit and unjust war crimes probe against Israel by signing our petition to the International Criminal Court.

SIGN THE PETITION TODAY AT:
icejusa.org/iccpetition

Holocaust Survivors enjoy the first concert at the Haifa Home post-lockdowns.

HAIFA HOME RESIDENTS GLAD TO COME TOGETHER AGAIN

BY ICEJ STAFF

In the last week of February 2021, the community dining hall at the ICEJ's Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors was reopened. After a year of eating separately at home due to coronavirus health rules, the day finally arrived that everyone had been waiting for. The dining room was buzzing with the sounds of happy voices; people greeted each other with excitement, elated they could enjoy dining together again. Having to dress up and walk to the dining room to see friends' smiling, familiar faces helped make residents feel happier and, in the long run, healthier.



Haifa Home residents eat together again.

Only those residents who had received their full doses of vaccinations were allowed into the room, which was almost everyone. Then, at the

beginning of March, we also started to serve the evening meal in the dining hall. Residents were overjoyed at the new look of the room, as we were able to buy new dining chairs that are much more comfortable for our aging residents and that also give some color to the hall.

PASSOVER WITH DIGNITY

The *Pesach* (Passover) celebration, which marks Israel's redemption from slavery in Egypt and freedom to serve God, had added meaning this year. Unlike last year, families and friends could again gather around the Passover *Seder* table. Unfortunately, many Holocaust Survivors are homebound and do not have a family with whom they can celebrate this important festival.

Recognizing this need, the ICEJ joined hands with an initiative called "*Pesach with Dignity*." Five top Israeli chefs gave their time and brought their coworkers along to cook a gourmet meal in a large kitchen at a hotel in Tel Aviv.

"I'm always trying to join a project that reaches out to those in need," said top Israeli chef Benny Bezza. "This year it is an honor to be part of this wonderful initiative. We will work as long

as it takes so that thousands of people will be able to enjoy a nice meal during *Pesach*."



Yudit Setz with Israeli top chef Benny Bezza.

Volunteers from all walks of life helped to distribute the delicious meals to the homes of Holocaust Survivors all over Israel. At least 1,000 Survivors enjoyed a delicious, cooked meal this Passover through this special project.

RESIDENTS BECOME CELEBS

A film crew from Israeli TV, *Reuters*, or some other media outlet is a fairly common sight at the Haifa Home. Yet just before Israel's annual Holocaust Memorial Day on the April 8, 2021, a rush of TV channels and journalists visited the Home to hear stories from the residents about

their lives and to catch a glimpse of their daily life in the Home.

These stories were then featured on television and in newspapers in a special way on *Yom HaShoah* (Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day). For instance, the Israeli daily newspaper *Ha'aretz* published an especially warm article, "German Volunteers in Israel Find Themselves 'Welcomed and even Loved' by Holocaust Survivors." Referring to the ICEJ's three German Christian volunteers serving at the Home (Debora Wanner, Natalia Ochs, and Kerstin Hoffman), the report quoted Survivors as expressing deep appreciation for their love and care.



"I am happy I can speak to her—not everyone knows German," 93-year-old Sophie Leibowitz told *Ha'aretz* about her German Christian nurse Natalie Ochs. "They are not guilty of anything. It was their parents or grandparents. It's been almost 80 years. We're already past that here in Israel . . . We don't think about their religion. We need their help, and they help us."

Meanwhile, another Survivor, 92-year-old Fanny Zelekov, said of Debora Wanner: "She is like family, like a sister. She has a heart of gold."

When asked what she thought of all the media attention, resident Naomi answered: "It is not that I am in any way looking for media attention for myself, but I feel it is my obligation to share my story. We are the last that have gone through it and can give witness."

A crew from *Channel 13* in Israel filmed segments for a special two-hour telethon held to raise money for the Haifa Home. For the occasion, Vesna Bühler was on hand to give the first concert in the Home since COVID-19 hit the country. Being together and hearing the sound of beautiful music was like balm

to our residents' souls. After the concert, they thanked Vesna and her husband, ICEJ President Dr. Jürgen Bühler, for being there. They also shared their hearts about the difficult year and the blessing our ICEJ team has been for them.

REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

Sadly, the numbers of the remaining community of Holocaust Survivors in Israel are dwindling. In the past year since Israel's Holocaust Memorial Day in 2020, records show that 14,264 registered Holocaust Survivors have died—about 41 every day. Presently, 31,000 are older than 90 years old, and more than 900 are over 100. Roughly 25 percent live under the poverty line.

We still have the privilege of knowing them and taking care of some of them.

Our Haifa Home residents are invited to many different places to talk about their past during this time of remembering the Holocaust. Even though it is difficult to share about the trauma in their lives, it weighs heavily on their shoulders, knowing that they are the last witnesses. Mordechai, a Polish Survivor, exclaimed: "If we do not do it, who will remember?"

The heaviness on *Yom HaShoah*, Israel's annual Holocaust Remembrance Day, is tangible. At 10:00 a.m., the siren is heard all over Israel, and the nation pauses and stands to remember the six million Jews who perished in the Nazi genocide. It is difficult day for the Survivors, but as Sofie—a Survivor from Transnistria—said, "It's like we go to visit the grave of our parents, who perished. It is a time to be together and to remember. We need it."



On *Yom HaShoah* this year, a solemn ceremony was held once again in the street outside our Haifa Home, and those attending included hundreds of local Survivors and their families, as well as Israeli cabinet minister Eli Cohen,

members of the Knesset, dignitaries from Haifa, and many soldiers and police.



Yudit Setz, ICEJ Haifa Home Coordinator, was invited to be the first speaker—and she spoke to the Survivor's hearts with words of love and comfort on this difficult day:

I know that even after about 80 years, the pain of loss is still very deep every day with you. Thank you so much for sharing your story these past few days on TV, radio, to school classes, and to army units. I know how hard it is for you. You are our last witnesses, and the next generations need to hear and learn from you in order to appreciate this beautiful country even more and protect it. . . . As [the] ICEJ, we will continue to stand with you and take care of you. We will continue to teach the next generations about the Holocaust and the lessons from it, so we can stand for what is right and fight against the growing anti-Semitism. May God help us all.

After the ceremony, our residents engaged with groups of IDF soldiers. Naomi, a Survivor from Romania, said: "It so helps us, all this attention. It makes this difficult day easier, so we don't have to sit alone with our memories at home behind the TV."

Please help support the ICEJ's continuing hands-on work and care for Holocaust Survivors in Israel. 🌍

GIVE TODAY AT:
WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/
HOLOCAUST-SURVIVORS



SUPPORT OUR HOME FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Over the past decade, the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem has expanded our outreach to struggling Holocaust Survivors in Israel in an urgent effort to meet their needs and bring dignity to their lives before they pass into history. The primary focus of this work has been our truly unique assisted-living facility—the Home for Holocaust Survivors in Haifa.

In recent weeks, residents of the Haifa Home finally came out of their isolation caused by the coronavirus pandemic and are now meeting and eating together for the first time in a year. The community dining hall is bustling again at mealtimes, and the activity room is hosting music concerts, art classes, and movie nights once more. The Survivors were especially glad to celebrate Passover together and then observe

Israel's annual Holocaust Remembrance Day ceremonies on *Yom HaShoah*.

When we interact with the Holocaust Survivors under our care, two things always seem to come to the fore. First, they are grateful for the support they are receiving from Christians around the world. And second, they worry that no one will remember what they suffered through during the Nazi genocide against the Jewish people. We continually try to reassure them that our support and care will be there for as long as they need us, and their memories will live on with us beyond their years.

This is the challenge of our generation—for Christians to bring hope and dignity to the Holocaust Survivors still among us and to ensure their life stories will live on. 🕊️

Please join us in supporting our vital hands-on work and care for Holocaust Survivors in Israel.

GIVE TODAY AT:

WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/HOLOCAUST-SURVIVORS

CARING FOR HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

Israel is now home to around 175,000 Holocaust Survivors, but their numbers are dwindling every day. In just the past year, records show that 14,264 registered Holocaust Survivors have died in 2020. That is over 40 Survivors passing away each day. Perhaps the most disturbing statistic is that 25 percent of the last victims of Nazi cruelty are now living below the poverty line.

This is why the ICEJ has invested so much time and effort—and endless resources—into the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors—Israel's only assisted-living facility solely dedicated to caring for needy Survivors. The residents of the Haifa Home are taken care of every day, but they still carry a heavy burden. Even though their memories are painful to recall, they feel the stories of what they suffered during the *Shoah* must be told, as they are the last living witnesses.

The ICEJ is committed to caring for needy Holocaust Survivors in Israel and teaching future generations about the *Shoah* and its lessons for the whole world. Join us in meeting their daily needs and supporting their worthy cause. Send your best gift toward the ICEJ's Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors. 🕊️



ICEJ HONORS YUDIT SETZ AS LONGEST-SERVING STAFF MEMBER

BY DAVID PARSONS

In May, Yudit Setz will mark 36 years of service with the International Christian Embassy Jerusalem, where she helped pioneer our Social Assistance Program (SAP)—today known as ICEJ AID.

Yudit Setz-Bokma comes from Holland, the daughter of Dutch Christian dairy farmers. Her grandparents hid a Jewish girl during the Holocaust who later became her mother's close friend. So Yudit grew up with a love for the Jewish people.

After completing her studies as a social worker, Yudit wanted to gain more life experience and discover God's purpose for her life. So she joined YWAM and spent six months in war-torn Lebanon in 1983 working with local Arab churches.

The next year, Yudit made her first trip to Israel to attend the Feast of Tabernacles. She came on an open ticket with little money, not knowing what lay ahead. She was staying with friends in the Negev when she met Margaret Breuness, an ICEJ board member who told her the Embassy needed a social worker. Sensing this was God's call, Yudit took up the position on May 8, 1985, and has been faithfully serving with the ICEJ ever since.

"I recall my first day," she says. "There was a desk, a phone, and a filing cabinet. There also was a small 'care closet' with clothes for the needy. But there was no one to train me, so I literally started from scratch."

In those early years, Yudit needed help preparing the Social Assistance Program's display table at the Feast. A young Dutchman named Will Setz, who was studying anthropology at Haifa University, came to help her

for a few hours every Feast. Although these encounters were brief, by 1987, it became clear they were meant to be married. Will soon came alongside Yudit, and they began to expand SAP's impact together.



Yudit and Will Setz (with son Avi) overseeing the SAP display table at the Feast 1992.

"In those days, we found Israelis were friendly, but after mentioning the word 'Christian Embassy,' an invisible wall went up," says Yudit. "The history of Christian anti-Semitism was deeply engraved on many Jewish people, and we were the first evangelical Christians they met."

"Slowly, Israelis came to trust us. The breakthrough really came when the staff stood firmly by Israel during the most difficult periods, such as the first and second Palestinian intifadas and the 1991 Gulf War."

"We made sure to always work through local Israeli social workers and charities. And we tried to be where Israelis were hurting most, in the midst of wars and disasters."

Raising two young sons, Avi and Yaron, also allowed Yudit to connect with Israelis in an even deeper way in tense times.

"I've seen such a change," she adds. "Israelis started to understand better who these Christians were that had come to love them."



One of her most memorable AID projects was funding Muslim Arab women near Hebron to embroider pillows with biblical scenes and emblems of our Israeli charitable partners, which were then delivered as gifts to the Israeli charities on Israel's 50th Jubilee in 1998.

She also vividly recalls paying visits to Israeli families shattered by terror attacks. And Yudit will never forget showing up with aid and encouragement to Israeli communities under rocket fire from Gaza, even when warning sirens were still blaring.

Over recent years, Yudit has focused on assisting Holocaust Survivors, a work that she and then ICEJ AID Director Nicole Yoder began to emphasize more after public protests in 2007 highlighted the plight of thousands of destitute Survivors in Israel. Out of that came the Haifa Home for Holocaust Survivors, which ICEJ began funding in 2010. Some three years ago, Yudit and Will decided to move to Haifa to oversee the Christian volunteers working at the assisted-living home and to host visiting groups.

"I felt I was born for this work with Holocaust Survivors," says Yudit. "All the years we invested in building Jewish-Christian relations just seem to be coming full circle in the way Jews and Christians and even Arabs are working alongside each other day by day to care for these deserving Survivors. It is a tremendous privilege for Will and me to work together again as a couple on this. And we are driven by the thought there are only a few years left to bless these Survivors before they pass away." 🕊️

ICEJ ENABLES DRUZE TEACHERS TO CONTINUE NURTURING DREAMS

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

Zoom meetings and online teaching are par-for-the-course these days, but how can a teacher educate online without the proper tools?

Recently, the ICEJ responded to a request to supply teaching equipment to a Druze school in the Israeli town of Usifiya near Haifa in northern Israel. The Druze inhabited this town in the early eighteenth century—and today, it is still 77 percent Druze.



Answering a need for a traditional religious school in this Druze community, a special school in Usifiya opened seven years ago with 105 students. Today it has expanded to its maximum capacity of 400 students, and boys and girls learn in separate classes. The students are highly dedicated and eager to achieve. Some students received some of the highest marks in their matriculation examinations in the country, making their teachers proud!

Showing motherly love toward her students, the school's principal focuses strongly on building

good relationships with the students and tries to instill good values. Principal Nuwal teaches them to appreciate those who are different from themselves and encourages them to give back to their community and country. Speaking from the heart, Nuwal shared her desire to prepare her young students—particularly the girls—to continue their studies and complete academic degrees in professions like medicine, business, and high tech.

Despite the students' academic successes, it was evident to the ICEJ AID team on a recent visit that the school could use some extra assistance to upgrade the learning environment. As Israelis faced extended coronavirus lockdown periods over the past year, the teachers at this school found themselves in an extremely challenging situation. Teachers were expected to run online classes, but a lack of proper equipment prevented them from teaching online effectively. When the ICEJ received their urgent plea for assistance, we stepped in to meet the need without hesitation.

"Thanks to our wonderful friends around the world we were able to give an incredible gift, which enabled us to supply seven sets of projectors, screens, speakers, and five laptop computers for the teachers to use in the classrooms," remarked Nicole Yoder, ICEJ Vice President for AID and Aliyah.

The AID team also met two of the students, who thanked the ICEJ for helping them continue their studies even in these difficult times of coronavirus.

"We could see that the students love their school and were happy to be remembered and assisted by Christians from around the world who don't know them personally but opened their hearts to help them, nonetheless," said Nicole. "Naturally, this donation came as a great reinforcement of the valuable lessons of 'giving and accepting others' that no doubt will be utilized by the teachers in the future!"

Principal Nuwal and her faculty of teachers warmly welcomed the ICEJ with incomparable Druze hospitality when the AID team came to dedicate the educational tools. "We are so thankful for the investment that you have made in our students," she said enthusiastically.

While nurturing the students' dreams, Nuwal has a big dream of her own: she hopes that one day they will be able to move to a bigger and newer school so they can accept some 300 additional students they can't accommodate now.

Through your faithful giving, the ICEJ can continue to support and lift all sectors of Israeli society. Before the new school year, the ICEJ will also provide academic sponsorships so that Druze students can fulfill their hopes and dreams currently being nurtured and instilled by teachers like Nuwal and her team.

Thank you for making an impact in the lives of these Israeli Druze students. Please continue to support the work of the ICEJ. 🌍

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WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/AID**

KEEPING HOPE ALIVE FOR ISRAELI ARABS

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

Several ICEJ staff recently packed various food items into 164 care packages earmarked as gifts for Israeli Arab families struggling due to the coronavirus crisis. The ICEJ AID team then drove all around Israel—from Jerusalem to Nazareth and back to Bethlehem—to meet with local Arab pastors and deliver food packages to desperate families.

"One Arab pastor in Jerusalem was [greatly] encouraged by our support at this time," said AID assistant Jannie Tolhoek. "After a year of dwindling attendance in his church, the ICEJ food packages for families in his congregation meant he had a way to help them in difficult times and to invite them back to church."

In Nazareth, Nicole Yoder, ICEJ Vice President for AID and Aliyah, felt so humbled as she recalled encounters with each family and their warm hospitality. "We came with a gift but didn't go away without being offered something in return," she commented. "The most precious part, though, was our prayer time together."

Heading to Bethlehem, the AID team met with Pastor Naim Khoury, who shared about his 42 difficult days in the hospital with COVID-19 and his miraculous recovery. The AID team was invited to a special church service focused on giving thanks for his recovery, and

ICEJ Staff relax after packing hundreds of Passover gift packages.

BRINGING SMILES TO MANY AT PASSOVER

BY LAURINA DRIESSE

Just before Passover in March, huge boxes with holiday supplies arrived at the ICEJ headquarters in Jerusalem. Nicole Yoder, ICEJ VP for AID and Aliyah, oversaw the staff's effort to sort the contents into hundreds of Passover gift bags. Within hours, a sea of blue ICEJ gift bags filled the large assembly room. Each one contained a sparkling new cooking pot and dish towels, accompanied by a Passover greeting card with a food voucher, so those desperately in need could cook their Passover *Seder* meal.

The AID department's jam-packed vehicle began delivering the gift packages across Israel. Clocking hundreds of miles, the AID team drove between Jerusalem and Ashdod, Beit Shean, Kiryat Gat, Netanya, and other Israeli towns. Working together with local Israeli social workers to identify those in dire straits, they brought the gift bags and food vouchers to dozens of homes or central delivery points.

While delivering the gift bags in Ashdod, Jannie Tolhoek of our AID team came across Esti who was living in a run-down building. She is a single mother of five grown children—two who are disabled. Grabbing Jannie's hand to express her gratitude, Esti said: "Thank you

for coming. Thank you for thinking of me. This year *Pesach* will be special because I know that you gave us food on the table!"

The next visit was with Yitzhak, who wept while showing Jannie and his social worker, Ram, the moldy, broken cupboards about to fall off his kitchen wall. Ram noted that requests for Passover help more than doubled compared to last year due to coronavirus. Yet each family smiled and their faces lit up as they received the holiday gifts and food vouchers given on behalf of Christians around the world.

The economic challenges have not spared local congregations either, so together with Pastor Birlie Belay, we also gave Passover assistance to Ethiopian Jews in need. "The Christian Embassy is our family. You look after and support us," assured Pastor Belay.

Through your generous donations, you can be a part of bringing hidden smiles to light for needy Israeli families! 🌍

PLEASE GIVE TODAY AT: WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/AID

then the AID team handed out the care packages to needy Arab families.

In nearby Efrat, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin warmly greeted the AID team. Together they distributed food care packages to 14 local Arab families whose members work at a religious school in the Jewish community.

Each care package included a message that Christians worldwide love and want to care for these Arab believers living in the Land of Israel. Thank you for making it possible for us to support so many struggling families as we reach out to all sectors of Israeli society in these challenging times. 🌍



ICEJ STAFF WITH PASTOR AND MRS. NAIM KHOURY

OUT OF ZION

WITH SUSAN MICHAEL

EACH GENERATION'S CHOICE

BY DR. SUSAN MICHAEL

Dr. Susan Michael is ICEJ USA Director and host of the Out of Zion podcast.

The world is changing rapidly around us, and our children and grandchildren are growing up in an America that is very different from the one in which we grew up. But if they turn to the Lord and dedicate themselves to Him, He will be with them, and they, too, can do mighty things in Him.

They can reach their generation and world. Our responsibility is to pass on to them a knowledge of God and His mighty works in history. We learn this lesson from the story of the Israelites.

God first revealed Himself to the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then the family ended up in Egypt due to famine. Centuries later God had to reveal Himself to a whole new generation of people—one that was broken and abused—and He freed them from slavery. Due to their disbelief, they had to wait and wander in the wilderness for 40 years until a new generation was in place with whom God could work.

Moses then reviewed the covenant with this faith-filled generation, and they dedicated themselves to it. After miraculously crossing the Jordan

River, they dedicated themselves again to both of God's covenants—the covenant with Abraham when God had promised the Land and the covenant given through Moses when they became the people of God.

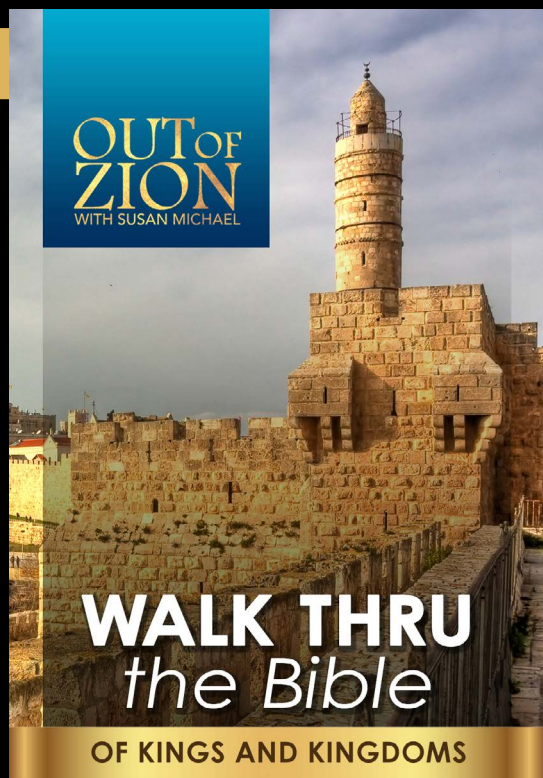
However, after all that, Judges 2:10 tells us the faith-filled, land-possessing generation had passed away, and the new one did not know God nor what He had done for Israel. They led the nation into apostasy and away from God for generations to come.

God clearly understood the need to reveal Himself to generation after generation. The problem seems to be that the previous generation had not prepared their young people with a knowledge of God who wanted to initiate a relationship with them. And they fell away.

The lesson for us is to teach the younger generations about God, His ways in history, and His desire to walk in fellowship with them. He is the same generation to generation.

To better understand how God deals with His people, join me for "Each Generation's Choice" on the *Out of Zion* podcast. *Walk Thru the Bible* with me each week by downloading our Bible reading plan, and get started reading right away! Invite your friends and family to join us! I can't wait to *Walk Thru the Bible* with you! 🌐

WATCH AND LISTEN TO THIS EPISODE AND MORE AT: WWW.ICEJUSA.ORG/OUTOFZION



JOIN

Susan Michael for *Walk Thru the Bible: Of Kings and Kingdoms* on the *Out of Zion* podcast. This second quarter of the *Walk Thru the Bible* series begins with David's rise to the throne and covers his reign through to the divided kingdoms of Israel and Judah. The past few months have set the stage; events which will soon unfold are the climax of the story.

Download the *Walk Thru the Bible* reading guide and get started today!

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Passion Week is a special five-part video teaching series filmed on location in Jerusalem to mark the Passover/Easter season, taking us on a journey from Palm Sunday through Resurrection Sunday. This video series brings to life the entry of Jesus over the Mount of Olives on Palm Sunday; His agony in prayer at Gethsemane; His trial before Pilate at Herod's Palace; His death on Calvary; and the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb on the third day. The videos include teachings by Dr Jürgen Bühler and Barry Denison, interviews with Rick Ridings, Chuck Cohen, and Avraham Ben Hod, and worship music by Israeli artists.

The *Passion Week* series can be viewed at: www.icejusa.org/passionweek



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HOMECARE HELPS TROUBLED HEARTS FIND RELIEF

BY MAXINE CARLILL

The city of Jerusalem is suddenly awakening. Though still missing the usual throngs of tourists, life is coming back to streets that are filling with excited people. While young people and families enjoy their freedom after a year of several coronavirus lockdowns, the elderly assisted by ICEJ Homecare are hesitant to believe that they can go out and about. They noticeably suffered from the year of isolation and are taking time to overcome the loneliness and find the courage to finally leave the house.

Among them is a group who suffered and survived the Holocaust. To make Passover special during a challenging time, Homecare prepared homemade holiday greeting cards and gifts, and visited each of the eighty people in our care. Ninety-four-year-old Luba from Russia was one of them.

Luba suffered many trials growing up in the former Soviet Union, and over the past year she has faced overwhelming anxiety as her only son and his wife both experienced serious health issues. Her beloved granddaughter in Germany was unable to visit to help her parents because of the pandemic. Luba did what she could to cook meals and visit, within the restrictions of the lockdowns. She is no stranger to challenges, as she sometimes asks in desperation: "Why do these things happen to me?"

Recently, however, a small gift gave her great joy. Despite her advanced age, she keeps in contact by internet with relatives living abroad. But



sitting hunched over a computer in her tiny apartment added to the pain in her back. When Homecare bought her a laptop table, she could not stop rejoicing over this gift. Now she can sit straight and in comfort.

WALKING ALONGSIDE THOSE IN NEED

A visit with a single mother of nine in central Israel had a frustrating start, despite the blue skies and sense of spring in the air that day. Homecare nurse Corrie van Maanen could not find a spot to park her car safely, so the mother (who had one sick child that day) joined Corrie on the sidewalk. This woman is a Russian immigrant who has been through deep valleys



Homecare nurse Corrie van Maanen pays a special visit with Luba during Passover.

but has also seen that the God of Israel is able to make a way when there was no way.

After her husband left her and the children following an abusive marriage, she applied for a subsidized apartment to relieve her financial distress. It was a long wait, and then a change in policies again put her name further down on the list. Apart from Homecare encouraging and supporting her, she would have given up hope. When she received the telephone call of an available apartment much earlier than expected, she called Corrie immediately, saying: "You have been right, the God of Israel heard our cry!"

Often when she faces new, seemingly impossible situations, she reminds herself of that moment, beginning her sentence with, "I remember..."

During this sidewalk visit, as this struggling mom shared her problems and her blessings, she suddenly said: "I wish you could come more often. When I am with you, it all feels so different; life is not as difficult as it has been looking." As Corrie departed, she left her with some groceries and money to pay for bills, as well as gifts for the children.

This is the strength of Homecare—to walk alongside those in need; to stand with them with support and encouragement when life is overwhelming; and to listen and accept the person as they are. In this way, troubled hearts find relief. 🌍

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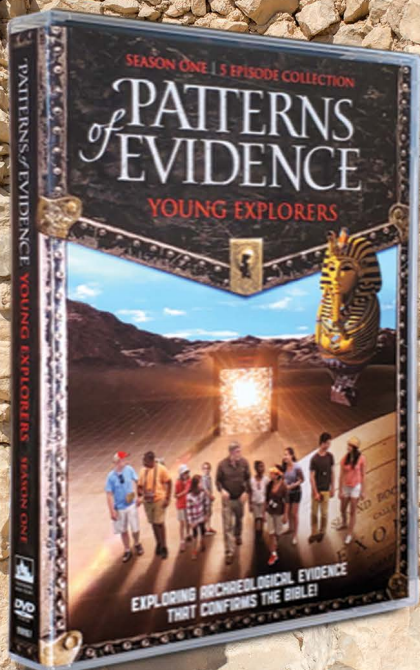
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YOUR ISRAEL ANSWER

Fourth Israeli Election Still a Draw

By David Parsons, Vice President & Senior Spokesman

When Israelis voted in late March in their fourth national election of the past two years, the results were closer than ever. Once again, the Center/Left failed to win enough Knesset seats to oust long-time Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. But he also lacks enough mandates so far to form a stable coalition. As we go to press, it looks like Netanyahu may not be able to form a government which makes it high likely a fifth election will be triggered.

Somehow, Netanyahu has managed to stay in office for more than a decade now, despite numerous determined attempts to unseat him. But the key to whether Netanyahu can remain in power this time lies within his own nationalist camp, perhaps with the cooperation of a maverick Arab party.

The election campaign wound down just as the nation was emerging from an extended coronavirus lockdown, thanks to the Netanyahu government's ambitious mass vaccination program. With almost 90 percent of Israeli adults now vaccinated, everyone was hoping for life to return to normal and for the economy to recover. This gave Netanyahu a last-minute boost, which kept his chances alive to retain the premiership. But he is also facing the dilemma that too many party leaders from his own Center/Right—namely, Naftali Bennett of Yamina, Gideon Sa'ar of New Hope, and Avigdor Liberman of Yisrael Beiteinu—are wanting to drive him from office.

What was at stake?

Israel's traditional political fault line of hawks versus doves has been increasingly irrelevant over these last four elections, taking a back seat

to the simple question “Bibi or not Bibi.” The peaceniks are still losing ground to the nationalist camp, but Netanyahu has been hemorrhaging support even among his own conservative base. Liberman abandoned his former ally in the last election, and Sa'ar just broke away from Likud to form New Hope on a promise to finally replace Netanyahu with a new prime minister. This has left Bennett in the critical position of deciding if Bibi stays put or not. Yet even with Bennett's support, Netanyahu still would only have the backing of 59 Knesset members, two short of the 61 majority needed to approve a government.

What is their beef with Bibi?

Many here contend that Israeli democracy was actually at stake in this election due to their perception of Netanyahu as corrupt, self-serving, and privileged. Fueled by the three corruption trials now underway against him, the drive to oust Netanyahu has become relentless. The “Black Flag” movement has staged boisterous weekly protests across the country for an entire year—despite coronavirus lockdowns and stormy winter weather. Even younger rivals on the Right, such as Bennett and Sa'ar, jumped onto the anti-Bibi bandwagon, perhaps exploiting the growing sentiment against him to accelerate their own political rise.

Bibi's rebuttal

This ignores Netanyahu's many lasting contributions to the country, such as his economic success in marketing Israel as the Start-Up Nation; his adept handling of Israel's many security challenges, including

the Iranian nuclear threat; his bold, proactive response to the coronavirus threat; and his many diplomatic achievements, such as the recent Abraham Accords.

New government or more elections?

For the first time in Israel's modern history, the Arab parties are a key factor in the post-election jockeying to form a coalition government. The main Arab party, the Joint List, is still refusing to join a Netanyahu-led coalition. But the small breakaway Ra'am—an Islamist faction led by Mansour Abbas—is taking a more pragmatic line, saying their top priority is to secure advances for the Arab sector. Thus, they could provide Netanyahu with the few extra Knesset seats he needs to form a government, perhaps as a coalition partner from outside the cabinet.

The problem is that the far-Right Religious Zionism faction refuses to join a government that relies on outside support from Arab MKs. Mansour Abbas is saying all the right things to ease their concerns, promising to work for Jewish-Arab coexistence in Israel, “based on mutual respect and genuine equality.” But it may never be enough for the implacable anti-Arab fringe on the Right.

Another option is for Netanyahu to pry a couple of defectors loose from Sa'ar or Liberman to join a Right-leaning government. There also is a slight chance Bennett will eventually team up with Lapid in a power-sharing deal. Otherwise, the alternative is going to yet a fifth election. The pressure to avoid that dreaded outcome will undoubtedly grow, and odds are someone will eventually flinch and break the logjam. 🌐



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