



# Oasis

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Between the years 1970 and 1976, my wife Katya and I lived on a farm in Maryland, about an hour's drive north of Washington, D.C. We had moved there after living for a year in San Francisco. Our desire and aim was to live the "good life," to get away from civilization and return to nature. I built an apartment in the barn and we heated and cooked with wood, got our milk and eggs from our own goats and chickens and did not have running water or an indoor toilet.

Part of living this way is an intense focus on the purity of diet. Now it is certainly true without any question that junk food is extremely detrimental to one's health and should be avoided. Also, a balanced and nutritionally sound diet will go a long way to keeping us well in body and mind. However, while whole and healthy foods are important to our quality of life, they will not give us the ability to live forever or make us more spiritual.

Although we didn't believe the part about living forever (but we did believe in reincarnation), we were sure that we were on the path to enlightenment and that nutrition was as much a part of it as meditation. (Becoming followers of Yeshua in 1972, brought about some major alterations in our theological perspectives.)

One of the foods whose virtues were sung loud and clear in the world



**By  
Bean  
Sprouts  
Shall No  
Flesh Be  
Justified**  
**By Moshe Morrison**

of hippie spirituality was the humble sprout. Multitudes of glowing testimonials could be found of wondrous things wrought by the power of the sprout. Almost any grain or bean can

be sprouted and when the tiny green protrusion begins to push its way out of the shell, all sorts of miraculous nutritional goodies become available for the ingesting. (This is actually true.)

Generally, Katya sprouted mung beans and alfalfa sprouts. A small amount of the beans or seeds to be sprouted would be put in a jar. Each jar had a thin piece of material stretched across its mouth through which water was poured over the contents and then drained, leaving the beans in a moist and airy environment conducive to sprouting. In a relatively short time the jar interiors were a jungle of intertwined miniature vines of varying thicknesses, from the thin wispy threads of alfalfa sprouts to the plump presence produced by mung beans.

The sprouts were a nice addition atop a salad or a serving of lightly sautéed vegetables, but were not substantial enough to serve as a main course. However, Hippy Moshe was focused on getting super healthy (and probably ascending to a higher level of consciousness as well). I figured that if one or two varieties of sprouts were good then how much more magnificent would a multiplicity be. I found several more jars and put in each one whatever other beans and seeds were around. Katya warned me that in spite of the fact that any seed or bean could be sprouted; they might not be very good. I would not be dissuaded. Soon my harvest

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was ready. I grabbed my plate and filled it with a heaping pile of each variety of sprouts - surely a cosmic combination. A little lemon juice sprinkled on top and I was ready to rock.

With every mouthful I could almost feel energy and enlightenment saturating my being. However, also along with every bite came a growing awareness of how unpleasant this stuff tasted. I got the distinct impression that I was grazing in the grass. I couldn't go on. The whole thing was just a revolting mess of weeds. Nauseated, I tossed it out the door onto the lawn where it belonged. It would be years before I could look at another bean sprout.

While abusing bean sprouts and abusing Bible spirituality may seem miles apart, the underlying problem is the same. If this much is good, then this much more is better. And the more excessive one gets, surely the rewards will be reaped proportionally. While the fallacy was exposed in the bean sprout story relatively quickly, it often takes years before we really take a hold of the truth found in the Scriptures.

Much of the book of Romans deals with the contrast between the righteousness of man and the righteousness of God. Simply put, the latter is a gift received by faith while the former is an attempt to achieve the acceptance of God by self-effort. i.e. If I just read the scriptures more, if I put more time in to prayer, if I give more money to the poor, if I tell more people about the love of God, if I keep all the commandments of God, then I will be righteous and the Lord will love me even more. So I must keep trying harder and harder.

All these things are good and there are benefits connected to them for us

and for others, but our righteousness is not one of them. If Yeshua paid such a high price (His own suffering and death) in order to secure for us a righteous standing before our Father, how can we think that we can earn it (or maintain it) ourselves by doing stuff, no matter how good it is?

In Romans 10:2,3, Rav Sha'ul exclaims that his religious Jewish brethren **"have a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God."** However, this problem is not limited to religious Jews who reject Yeshua. It also afflicts the followers of Yeshua.

Part of the danger of this way of thinking is that it inevitably leads to discouragement. We never seem to achieve the standard to which we aspire because **"by the works (self-effort in the performance) of the Torah shall no flesh be justified."** (Romans 3:20) The ensuing discouragement then leads to the throwing out of the baby with the bean sprouts.

**"God made Yeshua, who knew no sin, to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him."** (2 Corinthians 5:21) It is only as we embrace this truth about who we are in Messiah that we are able to walk as He intended. **"In order that the requirement of the Torah might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit."** (Romans 8:4)

Interestingly enough, sprouts do carry a very powerful confirmation of

this message in themselves. A sprout is a picture of resurrection. Out of a dead and dry shell comes new life with marvelous potential. But the method is not scarfing down platefuls of every variety we find, but in embracing the One who literally came forth from the grave. Our new life of righteousness and our continued living hope has come through the resurrection of Yeshua (1 Peter 1:3). He is the shoot that sprang from the root of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1). He is the tender suckling that came like a root out of parched ground (Isaiah 53:2). He is the rod of Aaron that not only sprouted, but put forth buds, blossoms and ripe olives (Numbers 17:8). When we embrace Him we receive all the benefits that come from that resurrection life. We do get "spiritual" and we do live forever!

And when Israel embraces that message the whole world will benefit. **"In the days to come Jacob will take root, Israel will blossom and sprout; and they will fill the whole world with fruit."** (Isaiah 27:6) ✨



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**Our Vision:**

- Tents of Mercy** - to participate in today's historic exodus by assisting Israel's returning exiles.
- No spectators in the Kingdom** - to be a worshiping, sharing community based in homes, equipping each one for service.
- Come back Yeshua** - to welcome Yeshua home to Israel, by restoring the Jewish roots of New Covenant faith.

# WHO'S COMING TO DINNER?



## A Tribute to my Mom on Mother's Day

By Leora Mazurovsky

Erev Shabbat approaches and the table has been opened to its full capacity, encircled by 16 or maybe 17 chairs of various size and sturdiness. (Don't sit down hard on a few of them - they might collapse!) The table is mostly set, though some silverware may still be waiting to be washed. In the kitchen there are good smells and "organized chaos" as Katya finishes the cooking and directs any willing guest (or unwilling) family member in the last minute preparations.

Soon the rest of the guests arrive and the noisy activity subsides as everyone finds their seat. Moshe leads in prayer and singing the blessings over the wine and challah bread. Once the prayers are finished Katya gets up to serve the food and may not sit down again until everyone else has almost finished. She laughs about being the slowest eater. This is actually true, but the deeper truth is that she is not there for the food. **Her desire is to open her home that people might come and be blessed in both simple and profound ways.** This is the essence of my wonderful mother and when I "grow up" I want to be just like her.

You see, during the time that my father was seeking spiritual enlightenment and overdosing on bean sprouts, my mother was tending a large vegetable garden, keeping house and caring for a small flock of chickens and goats. After art school and a year in San Francisco the two of them came to live the hippie life on my grandparents' large property. Together they made a home out of the old bank barn, had a baby girl (me) and found the great enlightenment they had been searching for in the person of Yeshua.

Both Moshe and Katya became believers within a few days of each other. She is proud of the fact that she was the first to accept as truth the wonderful witness brought to them by her younger brother. Katya smiles when she says that those first few weeks were the only time she could claim to know more about the Bible than her husband. I have often laughed with her because she is still in the September or October section of her "Read it Through in a Year" Bible when the New Year rolls around. But do you know what? She just starts in January and reads the two sections in parallel! Many of us (me for example) would just throw up our hands and say, "Forget it!" Yet her slow and steady approach to Bible study (and everything else) personifies who my mother is and in the end she accomplishes much.

In the years that followed life on the farm, my mother's hospitality and stubborn persistence were honed and developed. She assisted Moshe in pastoring a congregation which started by meeting in our living room in Baltimore. At the same time our family grew from two children to ten in the space of as many years. Three of those siblings were teen-age girls welcomed into our home when their family situation was no longer tenable. My



A portion of the Morrison Clan

sister, Z'hava was born with chromosomal abnormalities and only lived 10 months. Her loss was hard to bear but the needs of the rest of the family were not neglected in the midst of Mom's grief. Undergirding our family was her constant service to us and to those around us. **We grew up knowing that she and my father loved us and that love could stretch to include many others.**

By now you are thinking that my mother is a saint. Yes, but she is far from perfect. Mixed in with Mom's patience is a strong will and a temper that is almost always kept in check. One memorable incident of righteous anger resulted in her tossing our little black and white TV out onto the frozen front yard. We had not had a television before and the next one entered our house only after we moved to Israel many years later! Another response (provoked by a stubborn teenage me) ended with her having to clean up a gallon of white paint from the basement floor. Sorry Mom!

Then came our move to Israel. The knowledge that we would make aliyah was present in our family as long as I can remember. In her practical way, between babies and other duties, Mom took Hebrew language (Ulpan) courses in an attempt to prepare for this drastic change. She was faithful in her class attendance but once back at home there was rarely time to complete the homework. Living in Israel the situation was the same. Yet slowly she has learned to speak Hebrew (albeit simply and with mistakes) and has even added a large number of Russian words to her vocabulary.

In 1994 most of our family was packed up and transplanted to the city of Haifa. As you can imagine, the transition was not an easy one. Mom's strong will and persistence stood her in good stead. She could have settled in and focused solely on her home and family during this upheaval. This she did, but she also looked to see what was happening around her in our new neighborhood and congregation. And once again she started inviting people over every Friday night for erev Shabbat dinner.

In Israel as in Jewish communities around the world, the Sabbath begins at sundown on Friday. The majority of the population does not work on Friday afternoon and on Shabbat. Gathering together for a special meal with family and friends is a traditional way of welcoming in the Sabbath and marking the transition from the busy work week. When we moved to Israel we brought all our furniture including an expanding oak dining room table. (It was actually built in Maryland by an Israeli who ran furniture manufacturing business there.) Each Friday night the chairs around it were filled. And if someone needed a place to stay (on that night or any other) a place would be found for them to sleep. This tradition has continued and blossomed through 3 moves and consecutively smaller apartments.

When I look at my Mom I see a beautiful woman who cares greatly for others. She does not draw attention to herself or to

what she does. She seeks out the things that need to be done and sets herself to do them. Often these are monotonous but necessary tasks which are not particularly gratifying and bring little recognition. She is constantly thinking of creative solutions: from encouraging the congregation's children to read, to helping develop a children's Shabbat School curriculum which will serve our multi-lingual community throughout the country.



**Around Katya's table, but Katya's in the kitchen!**

Katya is the director of the Shabbat school at Tents of Mercy which serves 100 children from babies to teens, involves the parents in teaching, works with the women's ministry and takes home dirty tablecloths from the congregation to be washed. In this way she has connected herself to almost everyone in our community and has had most of them over for dinner too!

Mom is both thrifty and extremely generous. She will scold Moshe or one of the kids for "wasting" a few shekels by calling her with the wrong cell phone but then she'll turn around and give away hundreds to a family that she knows is in need. She will avoid spending money on some small "frivolous" thing but is totally unconcerned about how much money is spent on feeding the multitudes every erev Shabbat or holiday. (There were 25 at our Passover seder this year. On the Feast of Tabernacles there are people over every night of the 7 day holiday. And one memorable evening we hosted a tour group of twenty from Canada in our Sukkah!)

As I reflect on all that my mother has accomplished and is still doing, I am encouraged to look deeper at myself – to ask, "What is my place? Who does God want me to be as a mother, wife and servant in His community?" Katya has chosen to use the simple giftings that she has been given to bless and serve others. I exhort you to do the same. **Don't be intimidated to open your hearts and homes. Lives will be changed and enriched as a result! ☆**