

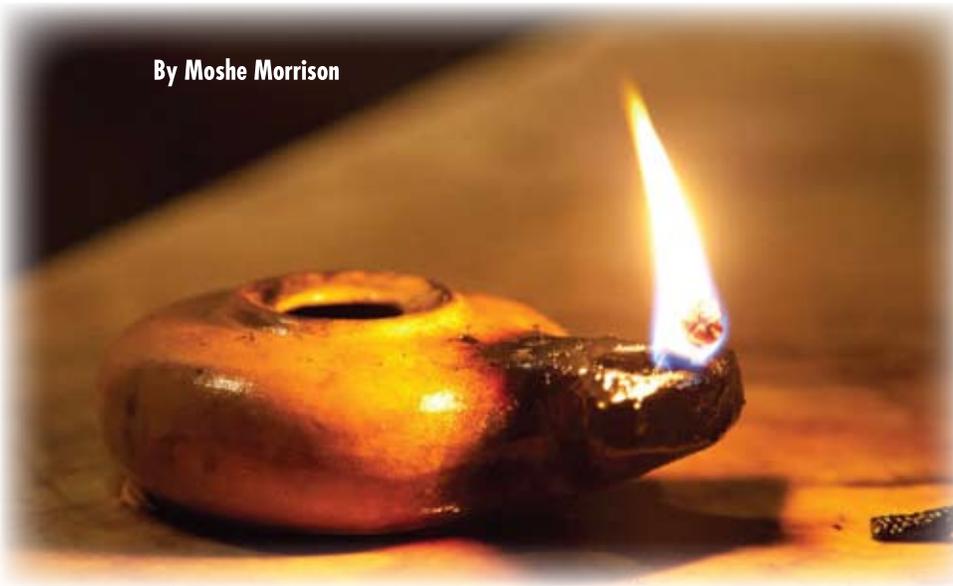


# Oasis

A Publication of Tents of Mercy Congregation (Ohalei Rachamim) - Volume 12, Issue 12

## THE CHANUKAH LIGHT THAT ILLUMINATED THE WORLD

By Moshe Morrison



“Abba! Emma! The sun is going down. It’s time to light the Chanukah lamps. I’ve prepared them; they all are filled with fresh oil and clean wicks.”

Eli and his wife Anna came into the small room and smiled with deep tenderness at their lovely young daughter standing by the window where she had lined up nine small clay lamps on the sill. Miriam was a child of their old age; a miracle gift from God.

When she was born, their great joy was tinged with some apprehension over whether they would live long enough to raise her. But those fears proved groundless. At the age of 14 she already was a woman and betrothed to a fine man whose family lineage could be traced to King David.

Yosef was the resident carpenter in the small Galilean village of Natzeret where all of them lived. He was twenty four years old and ordinarily would have been married years earlier. However, when his father tragically died young, Yosef took over the carpentry business which kept him too occupied to think about marriage. Too busy up

until the day Miriam accompanied Eli to Yosef’s shop to order a table. When they saw each other there was an immediate sense that the Spirit of God was going to bring them together.

It was not long before Yosef approached Eli to request his daughter’s hand in marriage. Seeing their affection for each other and discerning the Lord’s favor, Eli gladly gave his blessing. They were betrothed in a small ceremony witnessed by close family and friends. Now they were waiting out the year that she would still live at home, after which Yosef would come and take her to the wedding celebration as his bride and then to his home.

This would be the last Chanukah that Miriam and her parents celebrated together like this. Though the betrothal was as binding as marriage itself, their

little girl was still living under their roof. Eli took a smoldering bit of wood out of the hearth and lit the first lamp called the “shamash,” the servant lamp by which the other eight would be kindled.

Tonight was the eve of the eighth and last day of the holiday which commemorated the liberation of the land and people of Israel from their Hellenistic oppressors and their local sympathizers. It had taken place 160 years previously and the freedom that had been won was lost to Rome after only a hundred years. Nevertheless, it was important to remember, because it gave hope that the Roman boots that trod the holy land the last sixty years would also soon be gone.

Tradition held that when the victorious forces of Israel under the leadership of a priestly family called the Maccabees took back the holy Temple in Jerusalem, they found it polluted and defiled. They cleansed and consecrated the sacred site and lit the “menorah,” the golden seven-branched lamp. Though there was only enough oil to last for a day, the Lord miraculously caused the lamps to continue to burn for eight days in time for more oil to be prepared.

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Each evening of the holiday in every home, lamps were lit corresponding to which day it was. On this last and final night, all eight lights would radiate their lovely glow. Eli, Anna and Miriam sang the blessings, thanking God for the privilege of participating in this commemoration of the great miracles He had done for their ancestors and affirming that He was a God of miracles for them as well.

The three of them took turns lighting the lamps all through the week, but on this last evening Miriam's parents, sensing that somehow this would be a significant night for her, asked her to light all eight of them herself. She took the shamash lamp and went down the line, touching the burning wick to each new wick, setting it ablaze. The sun had set, intensifying the shimmering lights in the otherwise dark room.

Eli and Hannah lingered for just a few minutes, kissed their daughter and then retired to their own room. Miriam remained, gazing into the bright radiance. "I've never seen the Chanukah lights glow with such brilliance as they do tonight," she thought. It was fascinating – as if with each passing moment the light grew more intense. Suddenly, Miriam realized this was no trick of her imagination, the lights were starting to glow ever brighter.

Miriam began to tremble as the entire room was swallowed up in light and knew that something extraordinary was taking place. She knelt down with her face to the floor because she could no longer bear the brightness of the light. Yet even with her face down and her eyes shut, she could not escape it. Suddenly from the midst of the luminosity a voice spoke.

"Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

Miriam's trembling intensified. She was confused and frightened by this strange greeting. Though still kneeling, somehow Miriam found the courage to lift her head and gaze at the figure who had spoken to her. Before her stood the angel Gabriel speaking to her from the midst of the light she could not block out.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Miriam, for you have found favor with God.

And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Yeshua. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

When Miriam heard those words, she intuitively sensed that this was to be a supernatural conception. It was going to happen now - not after she and Yosef were married and had consummated their union.\* Trying to make sense of all she was thinking she asked, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

Gabriel responded, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God. And now, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son; and this is the sixth month for her who was said to be barren. For nothing will be impossible with God."

Then Miriam said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

At Miriam's acceptance of God's promise, the figure of Gabriel disappeared from the midst of the light. Though it seemed impossible for the radiance to increase any more, it did. However, Miriam was no longer fearful but joyful as her entire body began to absorb the light until it filled her entire being. The next thing she knew, the morning sun was trickling over the window sill, across the empty oil lamps. Miriam knew in her heart that something holy and wonderful had taken place.

Almost immediately after, Miriam left to visit her cousin Elizabeth of whom Gabriel had spoken. As soon as she entered the house and greeted Elizabeth, Miriam's pregnancy was confirmed by a miraculous sign. The baby in Elizabeth's womb (none other than the appointed forerunner to the Messiah), leapt at the sound of Miriam's voice - recognizing that she was carrying within her the one whom he would be heralding. And Elizabeth was filled with the spirit of God and prophesied. For the three months Miriam stayed and

helped Elizabeth, she could feel the new life growing within her. After the birth of John, she returned to home and family to await the birth of her own son, Yeshua.

Spring turned to summer; summer turned to fall. The holy city was jammed with pilgrims arriving to celebrate Succot, but Levi and his fellow shepherds were watching their flocks in the hills, far from the noise and clamor of the crowds. The sheep had bedded down for the night and Levi gazed up into the Judean sky - brilliant with stars. The light from the heavens began to glow, becoming piercingly bright and he felt his chest spasm with fear. Then a majestic voice shocked Levi into peaceful astonishment...

**"Don't be afraid, because I am here announcing to you Good News that will bring great joy to all the people. This very day, in the town of David, there was born for you a Deliverer who is the Messiah, the Lord"** (Luke 2:10-11 CJB).

*\*Chanukah begins on the 25th day of the month Kislev and ends on the 2nd of the month Tevet. Two hundred and eighty days (forty weeks) after the eve of the last day of Chanukah brings us to the 15th of Tishrei – the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles - the birthdate of Yeshua HaMashiach. How fitting that he who is the Light of the World was conceived on the Festival of Lights and then "became flesh and tabernacled among us" on the Feast of Tabernacles (John 1:14). ✨*

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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.

# DIRT ROADS AND TENDER HEARTS

By Eitan Shishkoff



**T**he streets of Arusha, Tanzania have well-worn paths on both sides. These dusty paths are used by people on foot, people on bicycles, men pulling carts and women carrying heavy loads on their heads. Cows and goats commonly travel these “side” roads. Lining the highway there are also many improvised stands, their proprietors offering wares ranging from used shoes to mass-produced African art for tourists.

If a visitor were not careful, he could buy the notion that this country is simply undeveloped, or underdeveloped. While there is truth to this conclusion, and locals do not deny it, it does not tell the whole story. To really know the people of Tanzania, we need to move beyond externals – what our eye sees on the surface. Our time in Arusha gave us a window into the heart of this nation. We experienced a portion of the Tanzanian soul that will remain with us. That portion was the deep, warm passion for God and His purposes.

## Passing through Civil War

Taking part in the annual Africa-Israel Prayer Conference, gave us a much different impression than our rides through the streets and highways. To attend the four day event, believers came from several nations: Tanzania, Kenya, Malawi and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Some of them had to ride rough roads for thousands of kilometers and pass through live fire civil war to arrive. Such seriousness about the Kingdom of God on earth is a rare jewel. Perhaps this is what Yeshua was talking about when He told the parable of the man who sold all he had to buy one pearl of great price. Not only were we in the midst of dedicated disciples of Yeshua, following Him when it was not convenient, but they looked to us as the elder spokesmen from Israel.

I have not seen such eagerness to search out the truth of the Scriptures regarding the covenants of the Almighty with the seed of Jacob. My Tents of Mercy teammate, Marty Shoub, and I presented many teachings during the course of the conference. Preceding a number of these sessions was sincere, tearful repentance on the part of African believers for the anti-Israel policies of their governments. They knelt in abject sorrow for the African Church’s failure to grasp

God’s choice of Israel to bring world salvation, and His undying commitment to the Jewish people. Some told us that our teachings gave them a “new Bible.” Church leaders and intercessors, long taught that the Church had replaced Israel, were now able to embrace God’s unbroken love for her. Many said that the continuity of biblical revelation had now become understandable, inspiring, unifying and joyfully satisfying.

## Humbled

Marty and I were humbled by all of this. It’s challenging to describe the sensation of being so honored and appreciated. Messianic Jews are not accustomed to such treatment, especially not in Israel. Here, we are citizens, loyal to our country and thrilled to be a part of God’s end time plan. Yet we are not regarded as biblically knowledgeable, spiritual leaders or reliable representatives of the God of Israel. On the other hand, our precious friends in Tanzania and her neighboring nations, received us as heaven-sent messengers!

Loaded down with gifts of colorful cloth, regal African garments, elaborately hand-carved wooden bowls and radically sacrificial offerings, we headed back to Tel Aviv and the rapid paced Israeli race for progress. Don’t get me wrong. There are many advantages to living in a technologically advanced society. Quality medical care, rapid transportation and easily available education are only a few of the blessings we take for granted – while many of our African neighbors live without these advantages. As one mundane example, I feel fresh gratitude now, when I travel on Israel’s newly constructed super highways. The strong picture remains, however, of the uninhibited receptivity of the African believers. Their devotion to Yeshua, and their singleness of focus on His Kingdom provoked me.

May the Creator, who invented every tribe and nation, teach us about His own vibrant characteristics through all the peoples of the world. And may we be strengthened and energized by the current, unprecedented movement on every continent among Yeshua’s followers – the essential movement to pray for Israel’s national embrace of her King, Yeshua the Messiah. ✨



Color on the road



Pushing a load



Greetings from Tanzania



80 year old Bishop leads in prayer



Eitan leading the people