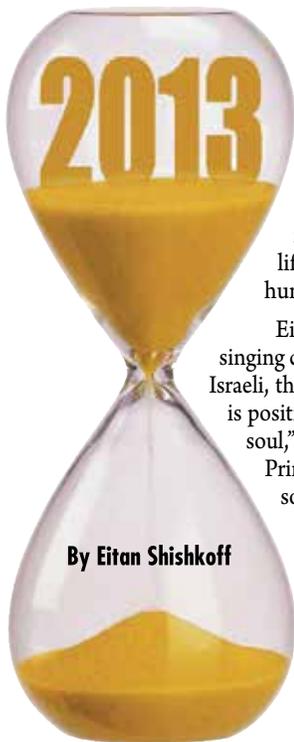




THE Question... *Reflections on Mortality*



Two of Israel's most beloved entertainers, Arik Einstein (74) and Sefi Rivlin (66), died recently, within a week of each other. Their passing unleashed national grief. Both represented the generation of Israelis who were born here in the land and grew up during the early years of statehood. For many in our country, it is hard to imagine life without the music of Einstein and the humor of Rivlin.

Einstein, known for his lengthy acting and singing career, has been said to epitomize the modern Israeli, the sabra. "His music contained much of what is positive and beautiful in the contemporary Israeli soul," wrote Steven Plaut, in *TheJewishPress.com*. Prime Minister Netanyahu called Einstein's songs "the soundtrack to the country."

Rivlin starred as a comedian who helped Israel laugh for decades, on stage, screen and television. He was eulogized by former Knesset Speaker, Reuven Rivlin (a family relative), as "a member of the generation that shaped the Israeli experience." Netanyahu described him as "a beloved artist who made generations of Israelis laugh with his witty humor."

The passing of these Israeli cultural icons reminds us that, in the physical sense, no one is immortal. Our treasured, lifetime friend and Tents of Mercy co-founder, Katya Morrison, just went to be with the Lord at the age of 63. The loss of those we've been close to and/or well-known personalities with whom we identify, raises the existential question of mortality. Maybe it is THE question. One day life as I know it will end. Yes, I am assured that I will enjoy eternal, unbroken intimacy with my King, Yeshua, and with all those who choose Him. But what bearing does this fate have on my day to day life now? How then shall I live, to paraphrase the Apostle Peter?

This month I turn 66. What if I had only one more year to live? I've been thinking about it. What are the most essential things I want to do, want to give myself to, before "taking off my boots?" My list won't be the same as yours. But I'm recommending that you give it some thought and prayer. Maybe even make a list of your own.



Arik Einstein



Sefi Rivlin

Adios to 2013

As we say "Adios" to 2013 and walk into the yet unknown days of 2014, it is fitting to reflect on the brevity of this life. My dear father, Nicholas, called it "The Inevitable." He made up charts and extensive instructions to guide my sister and me when the time should come. And we knew that time would come. Thankfully, he and Mom "waited" until they were 94.

If the corridor from life to death to life is inevitable, in what am I investing my life's unrenowable energies? What will last when I am gone? Am I living in the light of eternity, or am I frittering away priceless days on trivial pursuits and petty resentments? What does the Holy One say about ultimate priorities during our brief sojourn on earth?

"He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God." (Micah 6:8)

"This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Yeshua HaMashiach, whom you have sent." (John 17:3)

"Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, let not the mighty man glory in his might, nor let the rich man glory in his riches; but let him who glories glory in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, exercising loving kindness, judgment, and righteousness in the earth. For in these I delight, says the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:23-24)

I'm sure you can add your own favorite statements from the Source. What's important is to live intentionally. Being thankful brings everything into perspective. Our days are a gift, not to be wasted. Yet neither do we want to live under a cloud of condemnation: "I'm not doing enough. I'll never measure up." Life is to be enjoyed to the full, not spent wallowing in guilt. Loving relationships—especially within the family, life's beauty in all its forms, and being conduits of Yeshua's love, healing, and deliverance—these are all richly to be enjoyed.

I like the simplicity of Mother Theresa's statement: "At the moment of death, we will not be judged by the amount of work we have done but by the weight of love we have put into our work... If only we could make people understand that we come from God and that we have to go back to Him!"

So, if during 2013 you've lost a loved one, or observed the brevity of life, or sensed yourself drifting from ultimate purpose, take these reflections as a timely reminder. ✡



Baby Eden



Baby Miel



Zahava

Congregational Life Cycle Events Gallery

Over recent months we had a joyous series of life cycle events. We have welcomed and dedicated several new babies. In October and November, our congregation celebrated four Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. It is a blessing to be a part of these wonderful occasions and to share them with you. ✡



Baby Shiya



Shaul



Diana



Keren

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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 worshipping, 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.



Harvest of Asher Messianic Congregation

in the City of Akko –
part of the Tents of Mercy Network

AKKO – CONTESTED GATEWAY CITY

By Guy Cohen, Congregational Leader

Strategic Access to Galilee and Israel

Harvest of Asher Congregation is located in the ancient city of Akko in northern Israel. Jutting into the Mediterranean Sea, Akko boasts the best natural harbor in Israel and served throughout much of history as one of the most strategic cities in the world – a central axis point connecting East and West, Asia and the Mediterranean. Numerous empires fought for possession of this key access city into the northern heartland of Israel and major land routes of the Near East. This article gives context and background regarding the city and the spiritual/human dynamics with which the Messianic congregation there interacts today.

The city of Akko is one of the oldest continuously inhabited sites in the world, starting about 5000 years ago. Among those who ruled it were: Phoenecia, ancient Israel, Tyre, Greece, Persia, Egypt, Rome, the Byzantine Empire, Mamluk Muslims, Crusaders, Ottoman Turkey, Britain, and now modern Israel.

The fortified city of Akko is mentioned in the Bible several times, first in Judges 1:31 as belonging to the territory of

Asher. Israel was not able to conquer it at the time of Joshua. Later King David conquered additional areas of the Promised Land, including Akko. His son, Solomon, inherited the kingdom and built the temple in partnership with Hiram, king of Tyre. In exchange for Hiram's help, Solomon gave him 20 cities including Akko.

Akko is referred to in the New Testament in Acts 21:7 under the name Ptolemais. The Apostle Paul entered the city by way of the sea and met with believing brothers there.

It was from Akko, in the year 67 A.D., that Roman generals Vespasian and Titus staged their attack on the Great Revolt. The battles continued from there through the Galilee and eventually culminated in the tragic seige of Jerusalem prophesied by Yeshua in Luke 19:41-44.

King Richard the Lionheart also came to Akko, and made it the capital of the crusader kingdom in the Holy Land in lieu of Jerusalem, which he failed to conquer. Many times throughout history, controlling Akko was the key to defending Jerusalem. Control of Akko dictated control of the bay coast line now called the "Krayot" where the Tents of Mercy mother congregation is located. The

Photo by I. Grinberg



Jeze'el Valley curves past Nazareth and Megiddo ("Armageddon") ending at this same bay. So we see a future connection with Armageddon and the events leading to the conquering return of King Yeshua. This gives us additional motivation to embrace the challenge of spiritually preparing the way of the Lord in this strategic city.

Jewish - Arab Coexistence and Akko Today

When the modern state of Israel was established in 1948, there was much tension



between Jews and Arabs in Akko. Since that time, relations between the two communities have steadily improved, resulting in the formation of joint cultural and business ventures. Remarkably, now there are some neighborhoods which have integrated populations of Jews and Arabs. Today Akko is one of the few cities in Israel inhabited by large numbers of both Jews and Arabs.

There is still some tension and distrust which occasionally erupts in episodes of violence, as happened 5 years ago, when hundreds of young Arabs took to the streets with

clubs, destroying cars and property. However, in general, most of the Arab and Jewish populations of Akko desire to live in peaceful coexistence. The local tourist economy has prospered in recent years due to the many Christian, Bahai, Muslim and Jewish visitors.

Harvest of Asher Congregation opens its doors to all who live in Akko and the surrounding region. Due to the city's contested history, one can often feel a certain heaviness upon its residents. The Lord invites all who are thirsty, weary and heavy laden to come to Him, and He will give them rest.

Our place as believers is to proclaim freedom for the captives through prayer and intercession. We seek to share the good news through friendship and a helping hand to the needy. This includes serving the local population via a soup kitchen, humanitarian aid, and pro-life ministries. We also seek to strengthen our congregants by teaching the Word, establishing foundations of faith and creating vibrant children's programs. We appreciate your prayers for all the peoples of this strategic city. ✡