

Shifting Seasons



As I write, winter rains have finally arrived in earnest, here in the Galilee. And though few areas of Israel experience truly cold weather, we are bundled up in our apartments, enjoying a soaking rainfall so desperately needed.

While the meteorological winds bring shifts in season, geopolitical winds bring shifts in the climate of nations. Without question, we are living in times of shifting relationship among countries. One example is the recent thaw between Israel and Saudi Arabia. “Who’d a thunk it?”

Along with these shifts, as if feeling the early tremors of an approaching earthquake, our own psyche absorbs and responds to change in varied manifestations. We’ve been wired with numerous physical-emotional sensors that signal new data impacting our lives. That new data could be as distant as a natural disaster or war we see on the internet. Or it could be as close and personal as a family crisis.

Are you sensing a shift in the world, in your spiritual community, in your own life? I am. It may be the logical consequence of reaching a major life milestone. I’ve hit the big “Seven-Oh.” Like modern Israel, I was born in 1948. So in 2018 we both celebrate seventy years. In addition, there are substantial shifts going on in my ministry roles. While I’m still a pioneer at heart, this season is more about mentoring, coaching, fathering.

It’s a good shift. I’m liking this season. At the same time it’s weird. There are unanswered questions, occasional uncertainty and unfamiliar territory relationally. *Where is the Lord* in all of this? *Where am I* in the process of His design for me? And *how can I give myself* fully to His Majesty, the Pierced One?

Our patriarchs provide pertinent patterns:

MOSES: “Where are you, God?”

In the remote wilderness, Moses’ God spoke to him from a burning bush. In the Exodus description, the shepherd Moses **“turned aside...(to see) why the bush does not burn.”** He was not expecting a divine encounter. The Lord proceeded to strike up a conversation, informing the future deliverer of his assignment to free all Israel from slavery. Moses asked God, **“Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and...bring the children of Israel, out of Egypt?”** (Exodus 3:11). God’s answer sounds indirect: **“I will certainly be with you”** (Exodus 3:12). But it answers Moses’ unstated question: “Where are YOU gonna be in all of this, Lord?”

This is my question in a shifting season: “Lord, where are you? I need you right here next to me. I don’t always feel your nearness. My insecurities are leaking out. Help!”

Continued on page 6

This is the very moment God waits for. He undoubtedly steered the interview with Moses to this very revelation. So often in Scripture His servants faced intimidating situations. His standard reply is one I need to hear when I'm asking (with desperation), "Where ARE you, Lord?" God said then, and He says now, "Here I am. I am with you. Fear not. I will be with you."

JOSEPH: "Where am I?"

An innocent man, imprisoned for years on end, Joseph must have wondered, "Will this ever end. Where am I? How could this have happened? What are you trying to do to me, Lord?"

The answer would not come before delay after delay wrought a steel-like character within Jacob's rejected son. He could not possibly have foreseen the outcome. Yet he somehow trusted the process he was being taken through. Knowing that our Designer has a sure design, a fine-tuned purpose for our life, makes a *huge difference in uncertain times*.

Early in my walk with Yeshua, I was introduced to this lasting wisdom from Solomon: **"Trust in the Lord**

with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct your paths" (Proverbs 3:5). As the seasons of life and history shift, I'd best not lean on my understanding. But I can return to the Lord and ask, "Where do you see me in relation to the destiny you have for me? What is this season about? How can I cooperate with your hands as the Potter shaping my life?"

ABRAHAM: "Here I am."

"Here I am." These are the words Abraham said to God just before the Lord instructed him to sacrifice his son as a burnt offering. This is a level of surrender to which I *honestly cannot relate*. That wasn't all. Then, Abraham repeated the same words to Isaac, before his son asked him where they would find the lamb to slaughter. By this time my insides are quivering, even as I write this 4000 years later, knowing that Isaac was rescued and didn't have to become a burnt offering!

I believe there's a profound and practical message here for me and for

you. Over and over, men and women of God have responded to bewildering, overwhelming, shifting circumstances by surrendering all to the Master of Life, by trusting the God Who Sees all (Genesis 16:13). After all, we ourselves quite obviously see only a very small part of the total picture. I think of Esther, of David, of Paul the Apostle.

When I feel unsafe and off balance, that's the very time to turn toward my God with a wide open heart. It is the time to renew my awareness that He is the Potter and I am His clay. It is the time to come before Him with radical listening. **"Here I am, Lord,"** as young Samuel said, **"Speak, for your servant hears"** (1 Samuel 3:10).

Here, there is power amidst our weakness. Here, there is peace in the storm of season's change. Yeshua bids me to return to Him with fresh surrender. Standing still, we will see Him. Discerning where we are in our journey, we will gain wisdom. Surrendering before His sovereign love, we will rise to meet the winds of change.

EITAN SHISHKOFF, *Pastor Emeritus, Tents of Mercy Congregation*

Save the Date!

The Baruch HaBa Intercessory Conference and Tour will take place during this 70th year anniversary of the State of Israel.

Oct 15-26, 2018

Jointly sponsored by all the Tikkun-related Israel ministries.
Registration will open in February.

For more information write to baruch.haba2018@gmail.com



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THE TRUE LIGHT

In the first chapter of John we read of a man sent from God to *bear witness of the Light*. Yeshua is the **true** Light which gives light to every person in the world. We go on to read that the world did not know him and that even His own did not receive Him (John 1:10-11).

Yeshua proclaims in John 8:12, **“I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”**

These words speak of enlightenment, of illumination. How can we who are called His sons, receive His power and *bring the light* of the Kingdom of God here in this dim earth? How is it possible for us to accomplish this when Yeshua Himself walked on the earth but the world did not know Him, and His brothers did not accept Him (John 1:10-11)?

How can we be the salt and light of the Lord in a dark city, or at least in our own neighborhoods, workplaces and homes? We find an answer in Matthew 5:16, **“Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.”**

So by the good deeds that we the believers are doing we will be a light in the darkness. What good deeds and works are we talking about?

“For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth)...” (Ephesians 5:9)

It sounds simple. However, as we all know, it is not always so easy to walk this way day in and day out in a world where darkness is growing. It can be a challenge when corruption and selfishness are all around us. We need to find our identity in our Lord in order to bring His light to this world. It is not by our power or ability or anything we have done or are capable of doing in and of ourselves.

John 1:12 makes it clear—and we must never forget it—that Yeshua gives us power. That power is through the Holy Spirit which dwells in us. Let us not be found asleep and unprepared like five of the virgins in Matthew 25. May we always be found with oil in our lamps, oil which to my understanding is the indwelling Holy Spirit. How?

Let’s be filled again and again. Let’s worship, pray and seek His will. Yeshua will give us the power to be a light to this world. He who is the true light, will shine through us.

GUY COHEN



Shalom dear Friends,

With the arrival of the New Year, we have been reviewing our New Immigrant Welcome Project activities from the past year and a half. *The past 2-3 years have been marked by a renewed wave of Aliyah (immigration of Jews) from the former Soviet Union. In that time, Israel received more than 100 thousand new immigrants!* And in response, our congregation provided aid (with your participation) to more than 5,000 people. We are not able to keep in touch with all of them since we do not have the needed human resources. But we continue to reach out to hundreds of new immigrants and to serve them.

Over the past year and a half we organized numerous events geared to these newcomers, and now we are *starting a discipleship training course for new immigrants.* Of course, this is a spiritual work, requiring more than just the effort of mind and logic. *This letter is first a request for your prayer.* This is a request to intercede especially for them: for people that are burdened with the fear of not being able to adapt to life in a new country, a new homeland. They are frightened by the reality of the needed adjustments and by their lack of knowledge and wellbeing. The prophet wrote about these moments:

“They will come with weeping; they will pray as I bring them back. I will lead them beside streams of water on a level path where they will not stumble, because I am Israel’s father” (Jeremiah 31:9).

These new immigrants are going through a process of purification. We all know that purification is painful. In the years since I came to Israel as part of the Aliyah wave of 25 years ago, many immigrant families throughout Israel have fallen apart. There has been much suffering and tears. We ourselves as immigrants who returned to Israel many years ago, are able fully understand and empathize with those who have come recently. It is not humanly possible to



prevent these sufferings and tensions. And, actually, this transitional time is a key stage of open hearts and an opportunity to ask for God's help. It was for these “days” and “for such a time as this” that He equipped those of us who have already returned.

However, this outreach is impossible without a spiritual covering, and we need your intercessory prayer more than ever!

Recently we have organized different events specifically geared towards new immigrants:

- ☆ Biblical feast celebrations
- ☆ Educational trips throughout Israel



- ☆ Friday evening Shabbat celebrations
- ☆ And starting in early March, a discipleship training course.

Additionally, *Shavei Tzion (Return to Zion) is arranging new aid packages including food baskets, winter necessities (bedding sets, heaters and kitchen accessories).* Therefore this letter is also a request for you to please prayerfully consider helping with this financial need. We estimate that the approximate cost of the next phase in this project will be \$42-45,000.

Our goals are to prepare:

1. 300 food baskets, together costing \$ 17,000
2. 100 bedding sets, together costing \$ 10,000
3. 100 heaters, together costing \$ 7,000
4. 100 sets of kitchen accessories, together costing \$ 7,000

A famous proverb says: “*A stitch in time saves nine*”. In our case, *a timely outreach effort can prevent bigger problems down the road.* Also, together we will warm many hearts by providing warm clothes for the winter...If the Lord speaks to you please give using one of the donating options.

We are praying for you, for your wellbeing, and for Shalom of the Lord for you and your families.

Sincerely,

LEON MAZIN