Oasis
Tents of Mercy Network of Congregations and Humanitarian Aid

Swallowed by the Sea

EITAN SHISHKOFF

This morning I threw my sins into the sea. It felt good—really good! Of course they were just stones, not my actual sins. But Micah 7:19 provides an extraordinary opportunity that I like to take advantage of, during this time of year. The biblical feasts of Trumpets and Atonement invite us to prepare our hearts to meet the King. Jewish tradition calls this ritual "tashlich—you will cast/throw," which is taken directly from Micah's text.

"He will again have compassion on us, and will subdue our iniquities. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea."

As I threw the stones, one by one, into the Mediterranean waters of the Haifa Bay, I felt the weight and shape of each one. Jagged or smooth, heavy or light, chunky or flat—each stone reminded me of the variety of ways I fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

It was not discouraging to deal with sin. Rather, releasing each stone, first with contemplation, then with enthusiasm, was wonderfully freeing!

It was so freeing that I wanted to shout for joy at the toss of the final stone (I used seven, for completeness). Restraining myself, lest those walking along the beach would look my way, I felt my face brightened, smiling and unburdened. How is it that I take this miraculous, heaven-sent liberation for granted much of the time? **"Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no deceit"** (Psalm 32:1,2).

So, what's the takeaway? Our compassion-filled God and Father has chosen to forgive those who come to Him with a contrite heart. The gruesome execution of the Perfect Man cleanses my heart. And repeatedly, by the gift of repentance, I can be made pure and new. Is this not an inestimable gift? He bids us come to the sea, where our sins sink forever to the bottom, never to be dredged up again.

By the way, it's an easily do-able activity that needs no religiosity. I'm drawn to the simple, physical demonstration of God's very radical promise. He throws all my selfish, egotistical, insecure, lustful, rebellious, unforgiving, judgmental willfulness into the depths of the sea?! To the natural mind this seems too good to be true. But this is exactly what the Gospel is—the great news of our complete and permanent deliverance from the ravages of sin.

Try it some time. At any time of the year! Find any natural body of water. A small stream or pond will do. Take a few stones, with some weight. Pause. Weigh them in your hand, as if assessing their stubborn tendency to stick to your hand. Then pitch them as far and deep as you can. Doesn't that feel good?

HARVEST of ASHER קציר אשר IN THE CITY OF AKKO
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Free at Last!

GUY COHEN

When Moses stood in front of Pharaoh and ordered him to "Let my people go," it was not Moses' words but the words of God voiced by Moses and Aaron. Pharaoh looked upon Moses with disrespect and used his magicians to imitate the mighty work of the hand of God through Moses. Pharaoh was mocking Moses in his heart, too blind to see that it was the Spirit of God working through Moses, the same One who had created the world.

We Also Felt as though We were Standing before Pharaoh

Recently we shared about a situation we've had for years with the Akko Municipality. While continuing to unfairly demand that our congregation pay property taxes, they at the same time expected us to help the children of Akko.

We acted not according to the old law of "an eye for an eye," but rather according to the New Covenant which reflects Yeshua's teaching, example and command, to go the extra mile and to turn the other cheek. This way of responding to negative situations is a mighty key in opening doors and changing not just physical but also spiritual situations.

Last week we received a final notice from the CEO of the Akko Municipality telling us that as a House of Prayer, we are now free at last and exempt from paying property taxes, and that they are sorry for any inconvenience that has been caused. He also said that they are happy the right decision was reached on our behalf.

We have been on this journey since we purchased our building twelve years ago in 2007. Now the Lord has released us, and the victory is His.

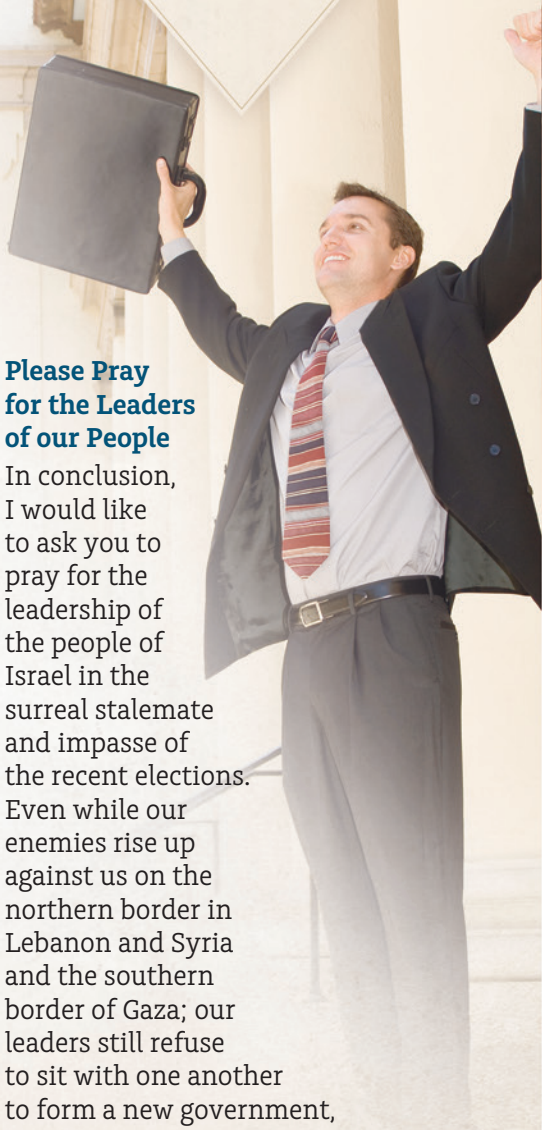
I personally struggled with this situation in my heart. Throughout this journey, this is the verse which has been before me: **"For whatever is born of God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that has overcome the world - our faith. Who is the one who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Yeshua is the Son of God?"** (John 5:4-5)

We, the believers in Yeshua, have the victory.

So even though we felt betrayed in this situation, we continued with hope for God's intervention. We looked for His deliverance in the situation even as the pressure of "Pharaoh's hand" was upon us. This gives us a picture for the life of a believer in the end times and prepares us for the struggles ahead. (Matthew 24:21)

We are grateful that by God's grace we were able to stand and do His will in the face of the assault of the enemy. We were able to help the children of Akko – God's children – while facing the accusations of the municipality which challenged our legitimacy as a House of Prayer.

Hallelujah, He is victorious!



Please Pray for the Leaders of our People

In conclusion, I would like to ask you to pray for the leadership of the people of Israel in the surreal stalemate and impasse of the recent elections. Even while our enemies rise up against us on the northern border in Lebanon and Syria and the southern border of Gaza; our leaders still refuse to sit with one another to form a new government, and seem only capable of pointing the finger in blame.

Where are the shepherds, the leaders of the flock? May God raise them up!

Enemies stand ready to attack our people – gathered from many nations into the land that was restored from the sword (Ezekiel 38:8).

Pray also for us as believers living here in the land in the midst of this chaotic political/military situation, knowing the next war may be coming soon.

CULTURAL OUTREACH
AIMING FOR REVIVAL

Most of us remember the very first days when we seriously decided to devote our lives to the Lord. One of the strongest desires in our heart was the desire to share the Creator's love with other people.

Of course, there are various ways to do this. The language of creativity is perhaps the most ancient and universal way. The Return to Zion Ministry initiated and runs the "Keshet Tslilim" School of Music and Arts in order to testify about our Creator through creativity, as a cultural outreach, with the aim of revival in Israel.

In almost ten years of work, the school has come a long way – from 5 teachers to 15 and from 20 students to 180. The school has 12 different creative educational programs, including drawing and media. The age of the students ranges from small children to adults, but they all share the desire for beauty, planted in us by the Creator.

Many of the students are new immigrants from low-income families. It would be difficult, if not impossible, for them to pay for their studies in a regular music school in Haifa. Therefore, our school has set up an assistance program. In fact, nearly 50 percent of the costs are subsidized by the ministry.

Continuous growth requires much strength and wisdom. The school administration is constantly faced with new challenges. The rooms in our building, which were enough for 100 students, for 180 already seem insufficient. The musical instruments require constant repair and updating. Teachers spend more time preparing lessons. But the results are definitely worth it!

Over the past half a year, the school held 4 concerts, one of which was for Holocaust survivors and one for new *olim* (immigrants). The school also took

an active part in organizing and conducting a summertime children's camp with the Return to Zion Congregation.

When you see children from our music school who have become part of worship groups in local congregations, and when the sounds of music touch the hearts of Holocaust survivors or new immigrants at our concerts, you understand how important this ministry is!

This ministry needs ongoing prayer cover and ongoing financial partnering. We invite you to become part of the vision.

Please join us in helping spur revival through this cultural outreach.

Thank You, Leon Mazin

RETURN TO ZION
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WE BECAME A FAMILY

"We became a family."
"It was a taste of heaven."
"A real sense of community."

You may think these descriptions exaggerate,
but we've heard them so many times that we agree. Coming from as many as 19 nations,
spending 9 days together on two buses, those on the Baruch HaBa tour really mean it.

And speaking personally, my own heart is joined to our friends from the nations who literally become part of our lives in a most direct and concentrated way. We pray, worship, learn, laugh, and love as we experience Israel: the land and its people, the history and its places, the Bible and its central Actor – Yeshua Himself.

It is my distinct joy to extend a personal invitation for you to join us from May 5-14, 2020.
Based on the tours we've taken since our first one in 2005, I can promise that you will be able to:

- ***WALK*** *in a faith adventure that will change your life…*
- ***TOUCH*** *Yeshua's land* ***TODAY*** *– at a pivotal intersection of History*
- ***TASTE*** *Israel's modern spiritual awakening*
- ***SEE*** *the words of the Prophets being fulfilled before your eyes*
- ***BUILD*** *Lasting Relationships with your Israeli Messianic brothers and sisters in a way that impacts both your home nation AND Israel*
- ***INTERCEDE*** *with awareness of the Facts on the Ground*

I am eager to show you our vibrant home, and for you to become a part of the story of Israel's resurrection.
Baruch HaBa (Blessed is He who comes…) is not only a biblical quote (Psalm 118:26; Matthew 23:39).
It is also the way we greet someone who is arriving from a journey.
So, I say to you, friends whom I hope to see in May 2020 – **Baruch HaBa! Welcome!**

- Eitan Shishkoff

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