



# Oasis

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## SHOFAR 2008: A Pilgrim's Perspective

By Ron McDaniel<sup>1</sup>

As my wife Jan and I were preparing for our trip many of our friends asked us the same question: "You went to Israel last year, so why do you want to go again?" The answer is simple: During the Esther's Call conference early in 2007, we were richly blessed as we learned what God was doing in and through the Messianic Congregations in Israel. This year we felt drawn back to see first-hand how God has been moving there.

Tents of Mercy's network of ministries partnered with Revive Israel to plan and host Shofar 2008, based on Israel's great need of revival. The prophet Joel wrote that revival would come as God's people would do three things: 1) blow a shofar in Zion, 2) gather the people in a sacred assembly, and 3) intercede as priests (see, Joel 2). Accordingly, the conference invitation went out for people to "... join us in nine richly-packed days of worship, touring, insight from God's word, on-site intercession, and a knitting of our hearts and yours."

### Worship Services

It is difficult to find words to adequately describe how wonderful it was to worship with the Messianic Congregations. In every service, the believers in Yeshua warmly welcomed us and made us feel that we were part of their family - We really sensed the Lord's presence in the Scripture-based worship and prayer, singing sometimes in English, sometimes in Hebrew, and sometimes in the Spirit, we felt a special bond of unity in the Lord. Talented, totally committed, sold-out-to-the-Lord young people ministered alongside their elders; the anointed worship aboard the boat on the Sea of Galilee...And we will never forget the celebration of Rosh Hashanah (Feast of Trumpets) at Tents of Mercy with the glorious praise, worship, dancing, and Shofar blowing.

### Touring

**Yad Vashem Holocaust History Museum.** With each visit I have gained a deeper understanding of the horrors of the Holocaust, and that anti-Semitism existed long before Adolf Hitler came to power. During a group discussion afterwards, we all had a chance to share our thoughts and feelings about this tragedy and how we had been affected. Katya Morrison helped us to understand that the impact of the holocaust still reverberates through Israel and the Jewish people - many people are still suffering and need our help.

**Western Wall/Temple Mount.** I believe this is the most significant place in the universe. We know it is the site of Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple, and according to Jewish tradition, this is where God created the universe, God created Adam, and Abraham placed his only son Isaac on an altar of sacrifice. On the southern steps leading up to the Temple Mount, I stood in awe, knowing that Jesus climbed those very steps many times as He and his family came to Jerusalem to celebrate the feasts.



Marty Shoub with the Korean contingent



Western Wall, with Golden Dome of the Rock visible at top

A total of 135 pilgrims from 8 nations; Canada, the United Kingdom, Germany, Japan, Singapore, United States, Norway, and South Korea all answered this call.

I am excited to report that the Lord has been at work in wondrous ways too numerous to detail in the short space allotted here. But I want to share just a few of my most cherished memories, starting with photos taken during our times of worship.

<sup>1</sup> The author expresses his heartfelt thanks to his wife Jan and fellow pilgrims Frank and Relda Castles, Ken and Sue Henline, and Susan St. Clair for their encouragement and substantial inputs to the preparation of this article.



Top, left to right: worship, starting with blowing of Shofars, at Revive Israel (1,2) and Tents of Mercy (3,4). Bottom, left to right: intercession for youth (5) and Torah reading (6) at Tents of Mercy, worship during boat ride on Mediterranean Sea (7), praying for Leon Mazin and his staff at Return to Zion (8), and worship at Harvest of Asher (9)

## INSIGHT FROM GOD'S WORD

**Seminar by Dr. Dan Juster: "Where in the World are Israel and Her Neighbors Headed?"** Dan presented convincing evidence that there are no good, man-made solutions for Israel's ongoing conflict with the Arab/Muslim world in general or the so-called 'Palestinians' in particular. The good news is that the Jewish people are asking what to do, and the Messianics have the answer—revival!

**Seminar by Eitan Shishkoff: "The Place of the Gentiles in Israel's Salvation."** Eitan recalled how Joseph worked with the Egyptians to save the world from famine, and how King Cyrus of Persia enabled the Jewish people to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the temple. Citing verses from Isaiah 60, Eitan described how Jews and Gentiles will partner to bring glory to God and fulfill His purposes in the Land.

**Seminar by Avishalom Teklehaimanot: "If You Extend Your Soul to the Hungry."** Avi related how the local Jewish community has responded positively to Tents of Mercy's humanitarian outreach efforts. In fact, the local government social service agencies have invited Tents of Mercy to help meet the needs of people that the agencies cannot support!

## ON-SITE INTERCESSION

**City of Akko.** During a walking tour of the port city of Akko, we paused at strategic points to sound the shofar and intercede on behalf of the city and nation of Israel. The inset in the photo above captures the blowing of the shofar and intercession in the courtyard of the Khan al-Umdan, the hostel of the pillars, built in 1784-5.

**Har (Mt.) Yonah.** Atop a mountain named for the prophet Jonah, Leon Mazin taught that Jonah recognized that Nineveh was a heathen



Intercession and sounding the shofar at the Khan al Umdan, the hostel of the pillars, in Akko

city in great need of repentance. But because he knew that Israel also needed to repent, Jonah was afraid that, if Nineveh repented first, the Lord would then turn his wrath on Israel! Following a time of intercession, the sound of the shofar rang out across the Jordan valley to the east and toward Nazareth to the west.



Sounding the Shofar at Mt. Yonah

## A KNITTING OF HEARTS TOGETHER

It is always amazing to see how people from many nations can come together and, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, immediately begin to experience 'instant camaraderie.' A special bond of unity and oneness grew stronger as we worshipped, broke bread, toured, and interceded together.

We were touched time and time again as each congregation greeted us with a warm welcome, gracious hospitality, and appreciation for having come to be with them. At Shavei Tsion in Haifa, we were feted to an unforgettable evening on the rooftop, overlooking the city and the harbor. We enjoyed fellowship



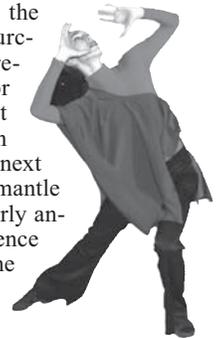
Brass band playing dinner music atop the roof at Return to Zion

and delectable food, with music provided by a Israel's only Messianic orchestra, many of the musicians were members of the congregation.

Our evening at Return to Zion concluded with very professional performances by the congregation's dance troupe. How did congregational leader Leon Mazin and his team pull all that off?

## THINKING BACK... LOOKING AHEAD

On our flight back to the United States, I reflected on what we had seen and heard—how God has supernaturally set the stage for revival in the Land, and provided resources to the Messianic Congregations, given them favor in local communities, knit their hearts together in unity, and inspired the next generation to take on the mantle of leadership. As we eagerly anticipate the next conference we can scarcely imagine what God is going to do in the days ahead! ✨



Modern dance being performed after dinner

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### Our Vision:

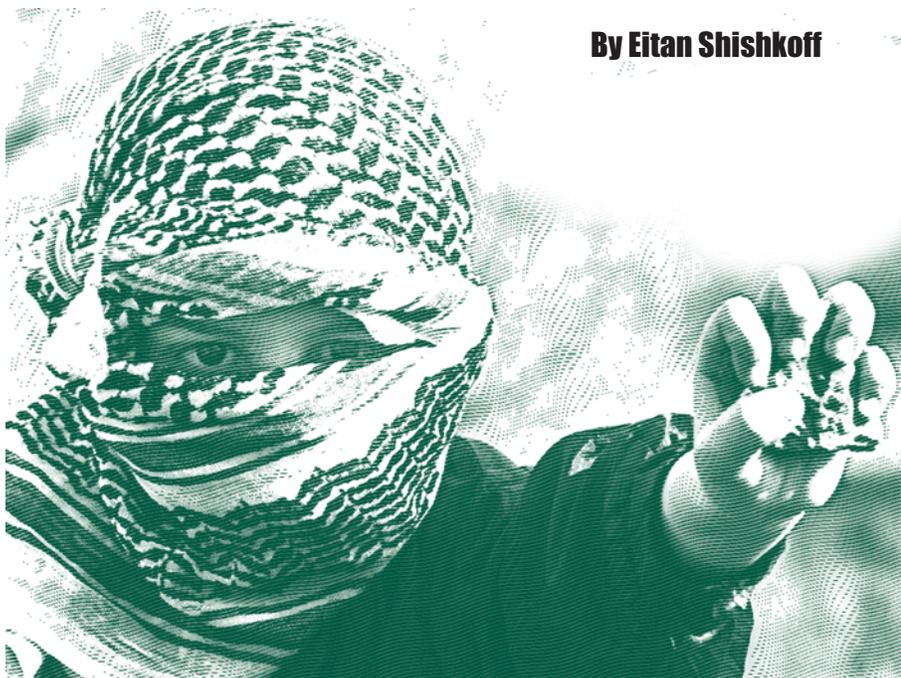
**Tents of Mercy** - to participate in today's historic exodus by assisting Israel's returning exiles.

**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.

# Reflections on the Akko Riots

By Eitan Shishkoff



per end of the Haifa Bay, Akko is the home of one of our daughter congregations, Harvest of Asher. I asked our congregational leader there, Guy Cohen, born and raised in Akko, "What happened?"

In the Jewish area of Akko, where my parents live, a large group of Arab Moslems came at the end of Yom Kippur, our holiest day, with their hatred, to destroy Jewish property. They started to break every car window in the street. My car was there also and thanks to God they didn't hit it. There were around 150 cars broken and other vehicles whose tires were punctured.

This happened because of one Moslem driving in a Jewish neighborhood the night before, at the beginning of the Day of Atonement. On the way he met some Jews who didn't like people driving in that area on this high and holy day. A fight started between them. He called his Moslem friends and they came from the Old City to protect the motorist. This became a mob of around 500 people. Suddenly everything went out of control and the Arabs started to break windows of the Jewish shops on the main street of the city, and to vandalize them.

For the whole day of the feast the Jewish people wanted to have revenge and it was the daily conversation in the synagogues. In the days following the attack two Arab apartments in the Jewish area were set on fire by the Jewish people. *(Fourteen Arab families were evacuated from that mixed neighborhood for their safety.)*

The spirit is still heavy. Both sides are ready to attack again. We have people who live close to the hot areas, so please cover them in your prayers. The answer is love...much more love for each other. Akko is an unusual town. Jews and Arabs live so close together. As Messianic Jews



Arab rioters in Akko Courtesy - Solomonia.com

we must pray that this incident will not change the atmosphere of the city, but that Yeshua will become known to Jew and Arab alike.

**I**n a peaceful Galilee forest, on the Shabbat between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur (October 4th), more than 1000 believers gathered to declare their oneness in Messiah Yeshua. Some 20 Jewish and Arab communities were represented (for the 20th straight year) as well as numerous international ministries. It was a celebration of unique and genuine unity in a portion of the world notorious for conflict between these two peoples. Songs of praise to the Living God echoed through the pines in both Hebrew and Arabic. An Arab pastor preached from the Hebrew Scriptures concerning repentance, emphasizing the traditional Jewish designation for this Shabbat (Shabbat Shuvah), returning to God. Prayers rose to heaven, lifted by hearts already graced by the peace the rest of the world longs for - a peace that defeats hatred by embracing God's Kingdom rulership.

At one point we broke up into small groups to pray in repentance for the sins of our communities and to ask God to send revival to the Galilee, Yeshua's home during most of His ministry. As we prayed the atmosphere changed. An unusual, magnetic calm settled over the earnestly interceding clusters. We were truly united as we came before the Throne of grace on behalf of the entire region, asking God to reign over both Jews and Arabs. It was a taste of heaven.

## AKKO RIOTS – A NATIVE SON COMMENTS

Sadly and ironically, only a few days later, a mere 30 minute drive from this scene, the mixed Jewish-Arab city of Akko, on Israel's northern coast, erupted in four consecutive nights of riots (October 8-11). Rioting between Jewish and Arab residents of Akko left 14 injured and 64 arrested. Located just 15 minutes north of us, at the up-

## COEXISTENCE - AN ELUSIVE GOAL

Why were police efforts unable to quench the flames of indignation felt on both sides? This theme of coexistence was addressed by Arab-Israeli journalist, Zohar Bahalul:

“Akko was never a model of coexistence as many people claim. This was no more than a virtual declaration. Not only in Akko, but all over the world, there is no model of coexistence. Arabs and Jews were never able to find the winning formula and were never able to bridge the immense gaps, which leaves both sides close but far; neighboring but suspicious. In essence, the abyss separating both sides is still there. It is lethal and destructive: The evidence of that is the latest outburst of fury and the violent clashes... Unfortunately, we have been unable to identify the missing formula for coexistence.” (Y-Net News, October 13, 2008.)

The same despairing note was sounded by movie-maker Julie Gal, director and co-producer of “October’s Cry”, a documentary on the Arab-Israeli riots in 2000. “I fear that situations like Akko will continue because we tolerate such an artificial coexistence. On both sides there are instigators, irresponsible politicians, (and) extremist religious leaders who will promote this type of behavior... True coexistence is still artificial, and a slight mistake, innocent or not, by either Arab or Jew can escalate into racial violence.”



**Arab and Jewish leaders praying together**



**The crowd of believers at Levi Forest**

Arab leaders in Akko have published a manifesto condemning the driver who sparked the riots and decrying the violence. “We are facing trying times. We must display responsibility and maturity. Such a lengthy and blessed pact of coexistence is not to be destroyed in one day (Ibid).” Yet civic leaders and politicians, policemen and journalists admit that there are no easy answers. Akko will be hard-pressed to put the genie of mistrust, suspicion, betrayal and resentment back in the bottle. They do not have the key to true reconciliation. Does anyone?

## WILL ARABS & JEWS EVER LIVE SIDE BY SIDE?

To answer this question, I would like to conclude with some thoughts and a prayer I gave at the Arab-Jewish gathering on October 4, 2008:

We are gathered today as an act of intercession...even as spiritual warfare. Since the powers of darkness delight in death and hatred between our peoples, we must respond with true brotherhood. Reconciliation is not merely the lack of hostility, but the reality of friendship. We are not here for a superficial display of unity, but as shepherds in the Galilee, we have invited you to join us in appealing to Almighty God for a breakthrough in the heavens.

How dare we approach His throne? Only if our hearts are clean toward each other. If, as Arab and Jewish disciples of the same Lord we can truly say-“You are my brother, my sister. My heart is broken for what you have suffered.” Then God will hear us. I want you to know, that as a Jewish follower of Yeshua, I place a high value on you, my Arab brothers and sisters in the Lord. I affirm you as co-heirs of the kingdom of God, and more than a neighbor...as a member of the same family, with a common Father. There are **NO SECOND CLASS CITIZENS IN THE KINGDOM OF GOD**. I commit to walk out this kingdom brotherhood under the Lordship of Yeshua.

Therefore, we come to your throne to intercede for all the Galilee, from the Jordan River to the Great Sea. SEND the RAIN of your REVIVAL. Make our hearts right before you. We repent and turn back to you on behalf of our peoples. Take us farther into your righteousness, justice and love. Release your power with signs and wonders in this, the original scenery of your earthly ministry. Amen. ✡