



# Oasis

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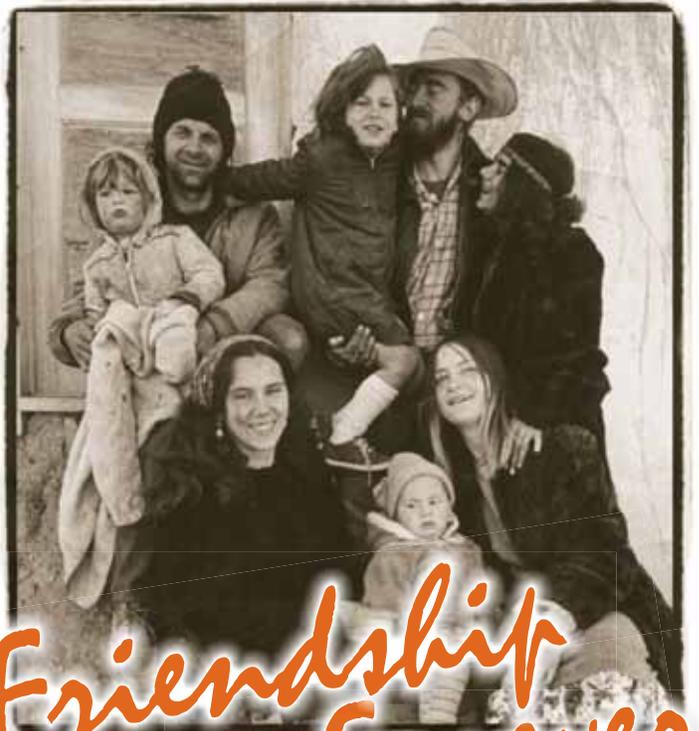
When we first met, at the University of California, Santa Cruz, I was 17. That means I've known Rube for 44 years. He conducted our wedding ceremony on January 28, 1969, wearing a Jewish prayer shawl, a Muslim haj and a Colt 45 revolver. Rube always did have a flare for history. We played blues together, committed crimes together, blew our minds together, herded goats together and grew veggies together. Then, when the Lord, in His infinite mercy, stepped on the scene, we discovered the Messiah and He led us both back to our roots as Jewish disciples.

Together with our wives, Connie and Shari, we are "friends forever." In my month long trek across the U.S.A. this summer, I've been heavily blessed by a feast of friendship - renewing ties, looking in the eyes of dear, dear friends. Some of them I've known for more than 40 years, others more recently through the favor of the King.

With Russell and Jane Resnik we sharecropped, irrigated hay fields, almost burned down a national forest (Oops!) and experienced the joys of new faith in Yeshua. With Don and Debby Aaker we celebrated their hippie wedding ceremony, felled forest logs and had our first Bible studies by kerosene lantern. The memories are priceless, but more so the relationships that have endured for decades. When we see each other, it reminds us of the totally amazing grace of God that He rescued us from the pit of our confused desperation. What a cause for rejoicing! It reminds me of a line from a western gospel song we sang in that era: "Hallelujah, I'm saved, saved, saved by the blood of the lamb..."

**Friendship is foundational.** Without its prominence in our lives, we cannot faithfully reflect God's image, nor be able to birth His kingdom on earth. When God describes Abraham as "my friend" (Isaiah 41:8), He is making a huge statement about the centrality of intimacy in relationship. This year Connie and I are celebrating 40 years of marriage covenant. The key to our intimacy is not that for those 40 years we have shared the same bed, the key is that for 40 years we have continually grown closer as friends. From our friendship, our four most precious friends have come into our lives - our children: David, Hannah, Avi and Sigal. Now those friendships have been amplified and multiplied by their spouses and their children, our grandchildren.

Do we think friendship is a luxury we haven't time for? Or is the only vehicle for friendship our facebook account? If so, we need to think again. Yeshua placed such emphasis on friendship that He said "I no longer call you servants...but I have called you friends." (John 15:13) In the verses that follow the Master presents four traits of loving friendship.



Friendship is Forever

By Eitan Shishkoff

- 1) Laying down your life for your friends (v.13)
- 2) Doing your friends' commands (i.e. serious requests - v.14)
- 3) Knowing private, intimate things about your friends (v.15)
- 4) Bearing the enduring good fruit of friendship (v.16)

**The Tents of Mercy vision become a reality through friendship,** validating this fourth attribute from John 15. There is no way we would exist and be flourishing as a work of God without the fundamental dimension of friendship. This family of ministries came into being through two modes of friendship: new friends and old. The old Quaker lyric goes: "Make new friends and keep the old; one is silver and the other gold." When we arrived in Israel God

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The only person still in the hallway was a little black girl, maybe seven or eight years old, standing in front of the doors. She was running her hand over the bumpy tacks, enjoying the feel of them under her fingers. What was so striking to me was that I could remember doing the exact same thing when I was a young boy. She entered the sanctuary and I quickly ran my fingers over the Star of David before I too opened the door and went in. I slipped into a seat in the back, the same pews that I had sat on as a child.

The ark that held the Torah scrolls was gone, as was the “ner tamid” (everlasting light) that had hung above it. Gone too was the railing enclosed reader’s desk, which had stood in the center of the sanctuary, and from which the scrolls were read. Everything else seemed unchanged. Of course, the Hammond organ and drums (sounding a bit like Booker T. and the MGs) and a 30 voice, white-robed choir singing gospel songs were not exactly in the style of the former Beth Isaac Congregation, Lubawitz Nusach Ari Synagogue.

## Chabad and the True Messiah

The term, **Nusach Ari** refers to any liturgical prayer rite following the usages of Rabbi Isaac Luria, the *AriZal*, (1534 – July 25, 1572) a mystic whose name today is attached to all of the mystic thought emanating from the town of Safed in 16th century Ottoman Palestine. But more specifically, Nusach Ari is the version of that liturgy used by the Lubawitz Chabad Hasidim. Founded in the late 18th century, by Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi, Lubawitz takes its name from Lyubavichi, the Russian town that served as the movement’s headquarters for over a century. Rabbi Yosef Yitzchok Schneerson, who arrived in New York in March 1940, planted the seeds of the movement in the United States, and his son-in-law, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, began turning the movement into a powerful force in Jewish life worldwide. Rabbi Menachem Mendel, succeeded his father-in-law as the 7th Chabad Rebbe in 1950 and served until his death in 1994.

While Chabad is known for its outreach activities and service to the

broader Jewish community, in many ways these things have been overshadowed by the fervor which gripped the movement, proclaiming with ever-increasing intensity that their rebbe was soon to reveal himself to the world as the long awaited Messiah, King of Israel. Of course, he wasn’t and he didn’t. Instead, he died like any other man. Many of his disciples pray and maintain a watch at his gravesite in Brooklyn, New York, awaiting his imminent resurrection. (They’re still waiting after 15 years.)

When I became a bar mitzvah in this Chabad synagogue, Menachem Schneerson had been the rebbe leading this movement from his headquarters in Brooklyn for 10 years and all the messianic fervor was still in the future. Almost 20 years later, it was picking up momentum among his followers as I was sitting and reminiscing in what had been the synagogue of my childhood. Here I was, thinking about the past from a future that I never could possibly have imagined. I also had been gripped by a Messianic movement, but one that long predated the founding of Chabad. One whose origins were not in Russia, but in Jerusalem. (Actually, according to Micah 5:2, my Messiah’s “goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.”) And the Messiah who had come into my life had only been in the grave for three days and nights before he arose.

## Happy New Year!

We are now entering this season of the fall festivals. Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. Rosh Hashanah is called the head of the year, because it is the anniversary of the creation of the world. Like most birthdays it tends to bring a heightened awareness of the passage of time. Another year has passed, a new one begins. The sound of the shofar grips our consciousness and calls us to prepare ourselves for what lies ahead.

The Day of Atonement is a day of fasting and reflection. Sitting in that little former shul I remembered the strong odor of smelling salts. Many of the older men carried little bottles of smelling salts in case the fasting on Yom Kippur caused them to become faint. The water fountain was disconnected on that day lest someone should forget and mistakenly take a drink. The long services stretched

into the afternoon; when we could take a break for a couple hours we would go home and take a nap, then return to the services until they ended after sundown. In my mind I saw the sukkah that was built outside of the synagogue, where we could gather for wine and honey cake after services and then a pleasant little walk back home.

I’m still a Jew who worships in a congregation with an ark and a Torah scroll. I still follow the same yearly cycle of celebration as a Jewish disciple in Yeshua but the familiar pattern is invigorated with the life giving witness of the Holy Spirit.

## The Amazing Journey

My experience in the Pentecostal church demonstrated again to me, how God was leading me on an amazing journey. I filled out a visitor’s card and mentioned that I was the leader of a small Messianic congregation. I was invited up front to sit on the raised area along side of the pastor. They asked me to share a word of testimony. I told the people that I had been there nearly 20 years before as a 13-year-old boy, becoming a bar mitzvah (son of the commandments). Now, I was a 32-year-old man, and a follower of Yeshua. Yet much that I had absorbed in my younger years was and still is precious to me. And by the hand of God’s Spirit, these foundations are woven into who I am.

During the fall festival season, someone would always come to our Baltimore synagogue and make a strong appeal for purchasing Israel Development Bonds. Now I contribute to the development of Israel, not by buying bonds, but by investing my life and the life of my family in this land. (Ironically, I never would have considered moving to Israel before Yeshua got a hold of me and showed me my destiny was here.)

Here in Israel we also look back and remember, all that the Lord has done. We also press on with confident expectation for the future because we know that Israel will yet hear the sound of the heavenly shofar, they will embrace the atonement of Yeshua. Then He, the rightful king of Israel will come and take up His throne in Jerusalem and the Tabernacle of God will be in the midst of His people. ✨

# Moshe's Messianic Musings at the Onset of the Fall Festivals

By Moshe Morrison

In August of 1979, I was just under 32 years old and we had moved to Baltimore from Long Island, New York, where we had been part of a Messianic ministry for three years. In Baltimore I was to take over the leadership of a small Messianic congregation that paid me \$50 a month for my services, obviously not enough to live on. Within a couple of weeks I found a job working for a man who owned many old houses throughout the city. He would call me every morning and give me my assignment for the day. (Your mission, Mr. Morrison, should you choose to accept it...) I would be sent to a house, sometimes vacant, sometimes occupied, and would repair whatever needed to be fixed. It might be to shore up a sagging porch, tile a floor, repair a broken window, or any number of other things.



The majority of the neighborhoods in which I worked were formerly 98% Jewish; now they were 98% Afro-American. Consequently, the many buildings that were once synagogues had been sold to churches. One of the synagogues that was now a Pentecostal church, was the synagogue my family attended for several years when I was growing up, the same synagogue in which I had become a bar mitzvah nearly 20 years before.

## Visiting My Past

From the outside, with the exception of the name alongside the door, the building looked exactly the same. So one Sunday morning, I thought it might be an interesting adventure to attend services there at the former Quantico Avenue shul. I walked into the entryway just a few minutes before the service was to begin. It seemed that little or no changes had been made in that area and I stood

and let the sight of it sink in. The double doors to the sanctuary were on hinges that would allow them to swing in or out. Each one was covered in red leather, and each one had a little window as a precaution against collisions with those coming in and out. On each door below the window was a big Star of David made with large decorative tacks. Each tack was textured, about an inch across, about a half-inch high, and they were stuck in the door about an inch apart from each other, forming the pattern of the star.

gave me two extraordinary men as friends, Leon and Alek. They were both from the former Soviet Union. We could barely understand one another's Hebrew. Yet we made it through the awkwardness and have served Yeshua together for 15 years. The old and dear friends who joined us in the adventure of pioneering in Israel were the Morrisons (Moshe and Katya) and the Chopinskys (Marc and Leah). Without these stalwart and majorly gifted friends, we could never have pulled it off. Nor would Tents of Mercy bear fruit without your friendship, our supporters and intercessors. The faithfulness you have demonstrated as we serve side by side is of eternal significance. I am not exaggerating.

**Friendship is essential in touching a lost world.** The Master spoke not only of loving friendship among those "already in the fold." When He was accused of being a friend of sinners (Luke 7:34), He did not deny it. Rather, He immediately encountered the sinful woman anointing His feet with her tears and forgave her, winning yet another forever friend. Although everyone needs friends (God made us that way) so many people today are desperately alone - they are all around you. A small gesture, a sincere inquiry ("Are you OK? Do you need help? How may I pray for you?") can turn into a friendship which becomes a bridge from the heart of Yeshua to the broken, sin-stained heart of that lonely person. This is His priority at the end of the age. For "He is not willing that any perish but that all come to repentance." (II Peter 3:9)

**Friendship is Yeshua's brand of love.** He said "Love one another." Back in the 60's I thought I knew what love was. Weren't we called the "Love Generation?" But I knew nothing until I saw Yeshua hanging on a tree, tortured for me. That one revelation taught me more about love than everything I'd ever seen or heard. He is our first and foremost friend. Alive in us, through our hearts He is well able to engage in friendship with God, friendship with fellow disciples and fellowship with sinners. So go, be a friend. ✡

**Author's Note:** Many, many are the additional friends I could mention as those who have sown true friendship into our lives. In writing this article I repeatedly thought of you, our beloved friends. Lack of space in this newsletter prevents me from mentioning each one, including the stalwart servants of Tikkun and of the Tents of Mercy network congregations. In reading what I have written, if your name is not mentioned, please know that you are no less treasured and that we are forever grateful for your friendship.

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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.

## Teens Talk about Katzir Summer Camp

The 2009 Katzir (Harvest) national Messianic teen summer camp was a strong time of encounter for 85 teens and 20 young adult counselors. In their own words, here are only a few of the many heartfelt testimonies given on the last day of camp. Please know that these changed lives are the fruit of your prayers and gifts:

"The last few years I strayed from the Lord. I forgot how strong God is. From the first night I could feel the power in this room during the praise. It was so special. I grew every day during the camp. With the teaching on the authority of God and His gifts in us, we began to understand better. I didn't see one person who failed to praise God. You, my fellow youth, did it with all your strength. We learned about ourselves and about the Lord. The feeling is impossible to describe."

"How to hear the voice of God - that's what happened here."

"Before, I was scared. I didn't know how to share Yeshua with friends. What could I say? They really need the Lord. I am the only believer in my whole school. Here, I received the tools so that God can use me, to reach out to my not-yet-believing friends. From birth I am this way...God healed me this week in ways inside. He said, "I will heal them too. Use the hands you have." (from a young lady with special needs)

"I found the best family ever in you guys. My life is totally changed. I feel that God has a plan for each of us. Big miracles are going to happen. He's using us already. I want to thank everybody, you all are great. You did a wonderful job. Thank you for being my friends." (from a teenage Sudanese refugee)

"I saw areas I need to change. I cried about my relationship with my parents. After this tremendous camp I don't want to lose this heat. I know that God is with me and WILL BE with me." ✡

