

# Oasis

## UNDERCOVER RESCUE

**T**he Battle of Dunkirk was fought between the German army and the Allies on the French coast from May 26 to June 4, 1940. The German troops outnumbered the Allies by 800,000 to 400,000. The combined French and British forces were caught from both sides and pinned to the Dunkirk seaport. For some mysterious reason that historians still debate, Hitler and his high command did not immediately “finish off” the Allied armies in their helpless condition. On May 29 a dangerous, massive sea evacuation began under low cloud cover - conducted by ships of all sizes, many of them small private vessels. More than 338,000 men were rescued from certain slaughter.

Throughout the Battle of Dunkirk, Rees Howells and his Bible College of Wales were engaged in focused, unrelenting prayer. Regarding Dunkirk, Howells wrote in his prayer journal: *“From a worldly standpoint there is no hope of victory (survival).”*

Norman Grubbs, author of Rees Howells: *Intercessor*, recalls the “...terror of those days... the miracle of Dunkirk, acknowledged by various leaders to be an intervention from God - the calm sea allowing the smallest boats to cross...how thankful we are that God had this company of hidden intercessors whose lives were on the altar day after day as they stood in the gap for the deliverance of Britain.”



Dunkirk rescue with small boats

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Queen Esther by Edwin Long (1878)

Was it coincidence that on the very days the Allied troops had their backs to the sea, waves of intercession were going up from Howells and his dedicated students? The irrational pull back of German forces and massive provision of sea craft came to be known in British history as “The Miracle of Dunkirk.” Of what are miracles made?

Intercession played an undeniable role in the outcome of Dunkirk. How does **intercession** influence events? Just what does this now commonplace word mean? For Rees Howells, intercession meant “... **identification, agony, and authority.**” The Englishman’s tearful passion in prayer, both for individuals and for nations, reflected Yeshua’s intimate identification

with us. The Messiah was “**numbered with the transgressors**” (Isaiah 53:12). He tasted death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9). The Intercessor’s authority in interceding for all mankind was gained by humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death (Philippians 2:7-11).

## One Woman Rescued a Nation

In that same spirit of self-sacrifice, the courageous intercession of one woman rescued the Jewish nation. *It’s ironic that Purim is celebrated as a light-hearted party, while at the core of the story is one woman willing to give up her life to save her people from certain death.* I offer no criticism of our gaiety in commemorating victory over genocide in ancient Persia. It should not escape our notice, however, that certain descendants of those same Persians (today known as Iran) still want to erase Israel from the map. Could it be that Esther’s intercessory response contains a clue for a modern day rescue?

Clearly, the key moment was Esther’s appearance before the King. Of what did her intercession consist? She literally positioned herself between the King - who had unknowingly authorized the wholesale destruction of his queen’s people - and the potential victims of destruction. That is what intercession is. Derived from the Latin, the word means to “go between.” At the risk of her life (“If I perish, I perish”), she appeared in Ahashuerus’s court to plead for deliverance. She was not obligated to reveal her identity. Her own life was secure, guaranteed. But, challenged by Mordechai to respond with her conscience, Esther fasted three days, emptying herself of human strength. She allowed herself to be burdened by the plight of the Jews across the huge empire, and stood as their representative. Esther subjected herself to potential execution and exposed her own true identity. The King granted her entrance to his court and released the Jews from death.

## Will I Intercede?

I have a confession to make. I don’t always want to pray for the people of Israel - my country, my neighbors. I don’t always like them. Some Israeli cultural and behavioral traits even turn me off. But that’s not the issue: It’s not about whether I like my people or approve of what they do. It’s about God’s eternal covenant. It’s about His sure promises. It’s about the salvation that Yeshua purchased. And it’s about the necessity of end-time, impassioned intercession that will bring the Kingdom of God to all the earth.

Moses said, “...**forgive their sin—but if not, I pray, blot me out of Your book which You have written**” (Exodus 32:32).

Paul declared his willingness to be “**accursed from Messiah for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh**” (Romans 9:3).

To arrive at anything close to the intercessory passion and commitment of Esther, Moses, or Paul we must lose ourselves. My personal likes and dislikes are not significant. In fact they tend to get in the way. The question is: Am I willing to lose my life for the salvation of my people? It is this heart alone that generates traveling, prevailing, history-changing prayer. It will cost a lot, but the outcome will be of unequalled worth. May we learn to enter in, to stand between the destruction of our people, and the King who alone can stop it. He is waiting for us to take our place.



Tomb of Esther and Mordecai - Hamadan - Western Iran

“**Blow a shofar in Zion, consecrate a fast, call a sacred assembly; gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders...Let the priests who minister to the Lord [with the burden of Israel’s iniquity on their hearts--Exodus 28:29,30], weep between the porch and the altar; Let them say ‘Spare your people, O LORD...’ Then the LORD will be zealous for His land, and pity His people.**” (Joel 2:15-17) ✡



By EITAN SHISHKOFF

# Pillar of Fire

The vision of our congregation is to be lights of Yeshua to the darkening world around us and to the Jewish people who don't yet know their Messiah. We want to be a spiritual lighthouse in downtown Haifa and to the ends of the earth. The ark that houses the Torah scroll in our congregational sanctuary is modelled after the pillar of fire. The one-of-a-kind design is highly symbolic of our vision and is the visual focus of our sanctuary. It was created by our dear friends and founding members of Return to Zion congregation. They are a husband and wife artistic team. Ephraim is a sculptor and graphic designer, and Ivetta is an architect.

Leon Mazin - Congregation Leader



Ephraim & Ivetta



Removing the scroll from the ark

“The Word was with God...” (John 1:1)  
The Torah scroll is housed in our Pillar of Fire.

“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...” (John 1:14) We take the scroll out of the ark. We read, and the Word becomes alive in us.

The light of the Word of God spreads all over the world to those who already know Him and to those who do not, *shining into the darkness*. Like the waves of clouds going forth from the Pillar of Fire, the Word of God goes forth and spreads throughout the world. The words “**For out of Zion shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem**” (Isaiah 2:3) are engraved in the wood around the top of the ark.

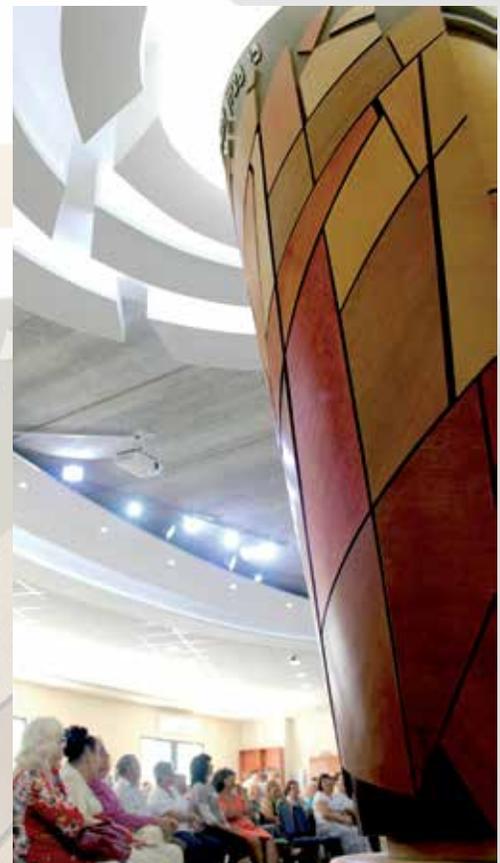
The pillar of fire moved. It moved forward. We too should not stop, but move forward, seeking the answers for many questions.

This world is far from being perfect. It is not time for us to sleep. *Tikkun olam*, the correction and restoration of this world, is underway. We still have a lot of creative work to perform, together with the Great Artist, the Creator of the whole Universe. Amen. ✡

When the Israelites left Egypt, *God Himself led them through the desert in the pillar of fire and cloud*. He was the light shining in the darkness by night, shielding them from their enemies. By day, He showed the way and refreshed them with shade. In the midst of His people, *God's presence was connecting heaven and the earth*. He was molding His people into a nation, by His commandments and by His presence.

God has brought our generation from the northern lands and from other lands all over the world. We were scattered for so long. Now we need to become a **united nation** once again, **to become His nation**. We need God in our midst. God will teach us and unite us, by His Word and presence. He will lead us, give us shade and scatter our enemies.

That is why the design of the Torah ark was inspired by the pillar of fire and cloud. It “breaks through” the concrete ceiling to the sky prompting us to **break through** in our prayers and in our lives.



By IVETTA KALISH

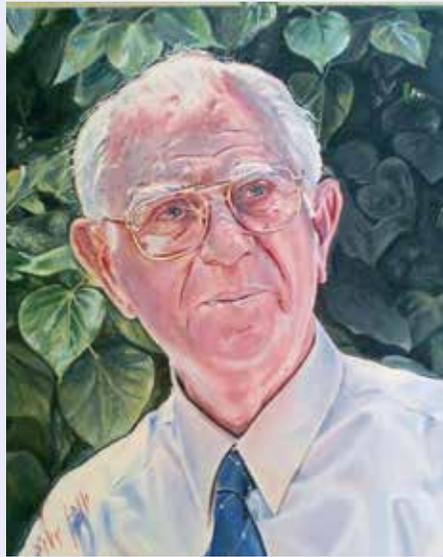


# STANDING ON VICTOR'S SHOULDERS

Victor and Suzy Smadja came to our home in suburban Maryland nearly 25 years ago, when we were preparing to make aliya (moving permanently to Israel). Enjoying an evening together, I was impressed with their deep strength—as of pioneers blazing a trail. Their eyes shone with passion for the restoration of Jewish faith in Yeshua, and a heart to support us soon-to-be Israeli immigrants.

Victor passed from this life into eternity on December 25, 2014. He was 83. I can think of no other Jewish believer in his generation who so influenced the resurrection of the national Messianic Israeli community.

Born and raised in Tunisia, Smadja discovered the Messiahship of Yeshua after reading the Bible for two years. At that time he was the only Jewish believer in Jesus in that largely Muslim nation. The Smadjas moved to Israel in 1956 motivated by the vision of enabling Jewish people to find Yeshua as Israel's Messiah. Though often persecuted for his (at the time) unheard of faith, Victor did not budge, but undertook numerous historical, practical initiatives: camps to train children and young adults in New Covenant



Victor

faith, a Messianic congregation in Jerusalem, a printing press to distribute Biblical teaching and testimony in Hebrew, and the vital concept of economic self-sufficiency for Israeli believers.

The last time I saw Victor, we pulled up in our van to receive thousands of books from his publishing headquarters in Jerusalem—at no cost. He stood erect, smiling in his printer's apron. With unmistakable pleasure he pointed to one stack of books after another—"Here, take these. And don't forget those; they'll be helpful to you." We and almost every Messianic work in Israel are still distributing books Victor printed—introducing Israelis to Yeshua and discipling believers to be fruitful. May we continue his legacy with the energy and devotion that became his hallmark. ✡



By EITAN SHISHKOFF



## VICTORIOUS AS A FAMILY

Several weeks ago Tents of Mercy Congregation celebrated Hanukkah by gathering our families together for a night of recognizing and empowering them. The original Hanukkah victory was sparked by one family in 167 A.D. as Mattathias and his five sons stood united against the idol worship the Greek oppressors were forcing upon Israel. Then many others rallied to them. Remarkable, miraculous victory was attained.

In our day as well, we believe that each family holds the key to victory. If our families are victorious, our congregations will be victorious. ✡



## YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Our jovial music composer/conductor/pianist Leonid continues to lead the congregation's choir and orchestra activities. It is a joy to see creative worship from elementary school aged children all the way up to golden retirement age singers, in unison making a joyful noise unto the Lord. ✡

See this Hanukkah segment on video:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_R475CFKQ0I](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_R475CFKQ0I)



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