

IV
EDITION

AFRICA-ISRAEL JOURNAL

Exploring Africa Israel Relationship



AFRICA - ISRAEL INITIATIVE



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EDITOR'S DESK

As we embark on 2021 mixed sentiment weigh on people's mind after having an unusual year crossing over to yet another unusual year. Caution seems to be taking centre stage in planning.

But in Genesis 8:21-22 The LORD smelled the pleasing aroma of burnt sacrifice from Noah and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done while the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night shall not cease – Genesis gives an assurance of continuity therefore Africa Israel Journal seek to continue with A.I.I mandate of comforting and blessing Israel through 2021 and beyond.

Editors desk

Geoffrey M Sosingot.



HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE SERVICE.

We managed to observe the International Holocaust Remembrance Day with services held from 24th January in several of our A.I.I Nations within the continent. This are South Africa, Botswana .D.R.C, Kenya, Ethiopia, Sierra Leone, Nigeria and Central Africa Republic.

The purpose of observing the Holocaust Remembrance Day as A.I.I is to first of all comfort Israel.

Holocaust was an unfortunate event across Europe in the resent past that led to the formation of the state of Israel in 1948.

Another reason to have the Remembrance Day is to bring awareness to counter anti-Semitism, racism, and other forms of intolerance that may lead to group-targeted violence.

The silent aspect, which is not list, is to expose the church to historical facts and biblical truths in relating with prophecy in regards to Israel and God's convent with man and the church.

With the help of Yadvashem the programme was very easy to manage in reference to activities and information shared.

Kenya managed to hold its event in Nairobi at a venue provided for by CITAM church (Christ Is the Answer Ministries) Valley road. The event was well attended and was graced by the Israel Ambassador to Kenya his Excellency the Ambassador Oded Joseph, among other dignitaries present.



AMB Oded Shairing II



Amb and the Children

The event started 3;00 pm and ended at 5:30pm. Due to time constrains few adjustments were made to the programme whose highlights were as follows.

Beginning was the playing of both National Anthems for Israel and Kenya, followed by reading of the poems and lighting of candles by 6 children (3 girls 3 boys age between 8-13) Followed by a moment of silence. After this were speeches from A.I.I president Bishop Joshua Mulinge and his Excellency the Ambassador Oded Joseph. Next was the airing of the video provided for by Yadvashem that was only 16min duration but very educational based on a true story of holocaust survivors who fled and took refuge in Kenya Africa. Bishop Boniface Adoyo gave an evangelical preaching to crown the service.



Congregation following



Speak out for Israel banner and mask

In Nigeria the service was held on 24th January at the Grace Cathedral 88 East/west road port Har court.

Botswana held theirs service on 24th Jan at the Assemblies of God main hall Gaborone.

Sierra Leone held the service on 30th January Venue was Israel Friendship Hall 71 Street Freetown



Serra Leon

Ethiopia had the service held on 24th January Venue BEZA Church Addis Ababa Gerji.



Ethiopia

South Africa held their Service on 30th January at Jesus the Redeemer Apostolic Ministries.

DR Congo the service was held at MBIZA Hotel in Goma on 30th January 2021.



Mbiza Hotel



All DRC

CAR also had a service in remembrance of Holocaust.

This has gone a long way in A.I.I fulfilling it's core mandate of comforting and blessing Israel. As the scripture says Isa 40:1 Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, says your God.

And Gen:12-3 those who bless you I will bless and those who curse you I will curse Gen:12-3. We believe as Africa stand with Israel we will continue to enjoy God's blessings coming our way and the gospel of Jesus reaching out to our people like never before.

Shalom.

PST. Geoffrey Sosingot Mabwai.
A.I.J Editor.

ANTI-SEMITISM: NEW OR OLD?



Anti-Semitism is a *specific prejudice against the Jews*. It is an idea or type of behavior that is hostile towards a person or a group just because they are Jewish. The hate may be expressed in speech or writing or visually. Depending on legislation in a country it may be considered criminal if the attitude progresses to hate crime, such as vandalism and violence.

In some countries denying the Holocaust is a criminal act. The Holocaust is the mass murder or Genocide of six million Jews of Europe, which took place during the Second World War. The Holocaust was an end-result of existing hate. But the truth is that anti-Semitism has always existed.

Background of anti-Semitism

Anti-Semitism is not a modern idea. Have you ever wondered, why Paul wrote in Romans 11:16-18 the following words: *“For if the first fruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches...you were grafted in...do not boast against the branches...remember that you do not support the root but the root supports you.”* Paul was telling the church in Rome, in the capital city of then known world, that this church should not look down on the Jews. We need to understand that historic context.

Roman Emperors expelled the Jews from Rome several times. In the Book of Acts we see that this happened during an Emperor Claudius. Acts 18:1-2 says: *“After these things Paul departed from Athens and went to Corinth. And he found a certain Jew named Aquila...who had recently come from Italy... (because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to depart from Rome) ...”* So, Romans 11 was written to a church that in the absence of Jews (who had been expelled) was becoming anti-Jewish and wanted to take pride in its Gentile character.

The roots of anti-Semitism are deep and wide from the Antiquity to our days. We have instances of hate in Alexandria, Egypt in the Antiquity. Even today hatred against Israel borrows from ancient accusations. During the latest plague, that is COVID-19, serious expressions of hatred have invaded the Social Media.

Today anti-Semitism is growing in the very nations that once fought the Nazis. It is not limited to verbal attacks but includes vandalism and terrorist actions. Almost every nation-state in Europe is seeing an increase in the frequency and severity of anti-Semitic incidents in the recent years.

But today the world is increasingly interconnected and hate travels far and wide. The traditional anti-Semitism against the Jews now also has a variety of hating the State of Israel. Whilst criticizing an incident is not anti-Semitism, we cannot be naïve. Criticism is often just a mask for anti-Semitism. This attitude is even present in Africa including some university campuses and the BDS movement. That is why all Christians need to be aware of these issues.

Virus as an Image

In times past, Jews were shown as evil, as murderers of Jesus and thus to be punished. Christian (traditional) anti-Semitism never went away but other forms of hatred were added to it. During the Enlightenment Era approximately 1680-1780 human rights and civil rights were discussed and achieved in Western Europe. Jews were able to leave the ghettos. Anti-Semites now blamed the Jews for societal changes they

did not like. Around the 1850's racial ideas became exceedingly popular. Jews were at the bottom of the racial scale. Racism and anti-Semitism are related although each hatred has its own characteristics.

Most of us know that Jews were shown as lice and rats by the Nazis. This meant that whereas previously the Jew had been the Other – he had been a grotesque fat banker or evil-looking sinister character, he had nevertheless been a recognizable human-being. When Nazi racial anti-Semitism was born, a Jew became *Untermensch*, sub-human, that is he was now less than a human. This is a very visual presentation – Jews are now shown as worms for example. This way of presenting them would obviously lessened any link a person might have felt to them. They were separated from human race.

The end-result of this was the Holocaust where six million Jews of Europe were systematically murdered. Later, when we look at Rwanda and the genocide of a million Tutsis, we see that this too was preceded by massive propaganda. The Tutsis were said to be cockroaches.

Right now, mankind is still in the middle of a crisis. Anti-Semitism has always been something very adaptable. It is then no surprise that we can speak about COVID-19 anti-Semitism. It is not surprising that it is very visual. After all, we are in the age of Social Media of soundbites and short clips. Pictures of viruses with "Jewish faces" are now all the rage on Social Media. Jews are shown as viruses. Another recurring motive is Israel spreading the virus. In an apparent contradiction, we can still celebrate virus deaths occurring in Israel. Outside the Social Media, in the so-called anti-mask demonstrations, signs have been seen saying: "*This is the real problem*" whilst showing the Israeli flag. But, instead of Star of David, a rat is shown in the middle of the flag.

Progressing anti-Semitism

Many people, perhaps even most people, would never admit to being anti-Semitic. Whilst posting questionable images, they still deny any such motivation. It is indeed possible that one shares posts carelessly without thinking about the content. But there are people who post these things with malicious intent. That is why it is particularly important to understand that *anti-Semitism is not defined by the person, who expresses it*. Anti-Semitism does not require your or my consent to be anti-Semitic.

Anti-Semitism has been defined by *International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)*; many governments are part of the alliance and have signed the definition. It has been repeatedly defined by the EU as well as many Holocaust scholars, memorials, and institutions. Anti-Semitism in other words is not defined in a specific moment because we do not like what a person posts or says. This is after all hatred, which has existed for thousands of years. This means that there are ways to recognize

anti-Semitism and to define it.

Much of the anti-Semitic and anti-Jewish worldview and associated imagery now targets the Jewish State. It is as if hatred was transferred from post-Holocaust Europe to the State of Israel. As defined by governments, using anti-Semitic myths and accusations against the State of Israel is anti-Semitic. Israel as a state is very often blamed for the same things a medieval Jew would have been blamed for. This is anti-Semitic. During the past decade, much violence has been in evidence against the Jews. The violent incidents have happened in places like France, Denmark, or the USA – all countries that once stood against Nazi Germany. We have already seen that anti-Semitic expressions easily progress to violence and death. When people are spreading hatred and lies online, are they ultimately responsible if a violent incident takes place inspired by their posts?

Nazi anti-Semitism has been defined as *Genocidal anti-Semitism* because in the Nazi world view there was no room for the Jews. All the Jews of Germany, and Europe, would have to be eliminated. Today some have argued openly that the State of Israel should not exist. If there is no room for the State of Israel in the worldview of a person/ movement, then this too should be defined as Genocidal anti-Semitism. The goals of Nazi anti-Semitism and this anti-Israel attitude are the same if these things are taken to their logical conclusion.

Challenge to Christians

Right now, fear is felt by every segment of the society. Christians are no more experts on pandemics than anyone else. It is the uncertainty of the situation that drives us to look for explanations. The explanation needs to be simple enough that anyone can understand it. It is the easiest to revert to age-old anti-Semitic ideas where there is a clear scapegoat. Maybe it really is true: *"It is not a plague until it is blamed on the Jews."*

So, what should be our response? Is there an appropriate Christian response? The challenge to us is clear. We are not called to prejudice, hate and scapegoating. Clearly, we need to stand with those who are being blamed. In addition, we are called to offer hope. So, may be that is what we need to spread on Facebook and Twitter. We may not have an explanation for COVID-19 but there is hope.

Hope. Not hate.

Dr. Susanna Kokkonen

Dr. Susanna Kokkonen, originally from Finland, has her Doctorate in Holocaust Studies from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of 'Journey to the Holocaust. Anti-Semitism, the Bible and History'.

YAD VASHEM, REMEMBERING THE PAST SHAPING THE FUTURE



Yad vashem Photos.

"My story of the Holocaust is different from most stories you have heard. One-and-a-half-million children were murdered for no other reason other than they were Jewish. I stayed alive. That makes me very different from one-and-a-half-million others."

So began Holocaust survivor Rena Quint recently during a "Zoom" conversation with hundreds of participants worldwide hosted by Yad Vashem, The World Holocaust Remembrance and Education Center in Jerusalem. (Y-1)



Yad Vashem Visitors Center and Holocaust History Museum, Jerusalem

Born on 18 December 1935 in Piotrkow, Poland, Rena's original name was Fredzia Lichtenstein. "When World War II started... life changed forever," Rena told the audience. Piotrkow was among the first ghettos organized by the German Nazis in Poland. Barbed wires soon surrounded the thousands of Jews imprisoned within this small section of the town. The ghetto became terribly overcrowded, starvation and disease were rampant and with denial of basic medicine there were widespread epidemics.

On 14 October 1942, in the middle of the night, the Nazis came pounding at the doors and ordered all the inhabitants to grab what they wanted and report to the synagogue within ten minutes. During the pandemonium, the shooting and beatings, Rena managed to escape through a back door of the synagogue and was smuggled to her father who was a slave laborer in a glass factory in Hortensia. To this day Rena doesn't understand why a young child aged five or six would let go of her mother's hand and run away, but her life was momentarily spared as that was the last time she saw her mother and two brothers, who were deported and murdered in Treblinka - an extermination camp in German-occupied Poland. The glass factory was closed and the workers were to be deported. Rena's father ensured her survival by giving her to one of the women on the transport. That was the last time she saw her father, as he was sent to Buchenwald concentration camp - where Nazi's imprisoned Jews, treated them with brutality and enforced slave labor - and murdered.

Rena arrived at Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, exhausted and dirty. Rena's only worldly possession was the family photo her father had given her. One of the soldiers spotted her holding dearly onto this precious image, and grabbed it from her hand. Rena told her listeners:

"To him it meant nothing, but to me it meant an awful lot, because I would now have known what my mother, father and brothers looked like."

Despite her weakened state due to contracting typhus, she gathered whatever strength she could muster to welcome the liberating British soldiers.

"But what was freedom? I had nothing left, no family,"

She was sent to a displaced persons camp in Sweden - in which Jewish survivors from around Europe who had little option to return to their previous countries of residence were placed - where she recovered. Every day a Christian couple came to visit her bringing her toys and candy. They offered to adopt her but those around Rena told her that she was Jewish and that she belonged with the Jewish people. She had no idea what it meant to be Jewish. She met Anna, who adopted Rena and together they boarded a ship to America.

During her life in the United States, she learned how to be Jewish and what a real childhood was like. Adopted by a family in Brooklyn, she was given the Hebrew name Rena which means joy, similar to her original Yiddish name. Rena's new parents cared for her deeply, providing her with a supportive home. She went to school, graduated and married Emanuel in 1959, and made Aliyah - moved to Israel – with their family of four children in the early 1980's.

At that time, Rena began guiding in Yad Vashem, here in Jerusalem. (r-1)



Rena Quint, guiding in The Holocaust History Museum

In 1989, Rena went back to Piotrkow with Yad Vashem in order to finally discover her roots. She needed to answer the question she had been asking her entire adult life: "Who am I, and where did I come from?" Yad Vashem helped her to uncover files and paperwork there, enabling her to begin the journey of piecing together her past. Rena set about trying to find out about her life before the beginning of the war and found documents which gave a window into her family's past, such as her father's application for a new identity card in 1936 which included the only photo she has of her father.

Rena reflected:

"For so many years, I wasn't able to answer these most basic questions. My memories from my childhood were a blur. But now I have clarity; now I know who I am and where I come from."

Through Rena's research and work together with Yad Vashem, she has not only been able to answer her own personal questions, but is also committed to telling the next generation her story from the Holocaust. By providing testimony to groups, (r-2) she and other survivors are able to keep the memory of the Holocaust – its victims and survivors – alive, for future generations.



Rena Quint, shares her Holocaust experiences with a group visiting Yad Vashem

Rena's legacy continues having been blessed with a large family including many great-grandchildren, most of whom live in Israel. Her story is only one such story.

Tswi Herschel, was born on 29 December 1942, in the town of Zwolle in Nazi-occupied Netherlands. In January 1943, the family had to leave and were forced to move into the ghetto built in the Jewish quarter of Amsterdam. Tswi's father contacted non-Jewish Dutch friends and asked for help for his newborn son. In March 1943, a Protestant Dutch family took in baby Tswi caring for him and raising him as their

own child until the end of World War II. Tswi recalls the deep love his parents had towards him that enabled them to entrust him to strangers, hoping that he will be saved and how profoundly difficult it must have been to give him up: "You cannot imagine what it means for parents to give away a child." Tswi's parents were transported to the Dutch transit camp of Westerbork in June 1943. One month later they were deported to the extermination camp of Sobibór, where they were murdered shortly after arrival. (T-1)



Tswi Herschel with Margie de Jong, the foster mother who saved him

Tswi's grandmother, his only surviving relative, took him from his foster family after the war in order to give him a Jewish education. Aged 8, Tswi found a box with family papers that his grandmother kept. Tswi started to reconstruct his tragic family story. He learned about his father's deep dedication to Israel and developed the same attitude: love for the Land of Israel and the wish to live there as a free people. "My father wrote ten diaries, and there's no page where he doesn't write something about Zionism.....I could have never expressed myself much better than after reading one of the sentences from my father's diary: 'A people without a country doesn't have a future.' "

In 1986, Tswi, his wife Annette and their two daughters fulfilled their dream and immigrated to Israel. He has planted the seeds for the continuity of the next generations with his grandchildren being born in Israel. Since 1991, Tswi Herschel has told his story to many young people and adults in Israel and Europe.

To this day, Tswi has kept in contact with the Christian families in the Netherlands that saved his life. They chose not to be bystanders, but were active in saving a Jewish life for no reward. Yad Vashem recognised them as Righteous Among the Nations (an honorific used by the State of Israel to describe non-Jews who risked their lives to save Jews during the Holocaust for altruistic reasons) and inscribed their name in the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations. (T-2)



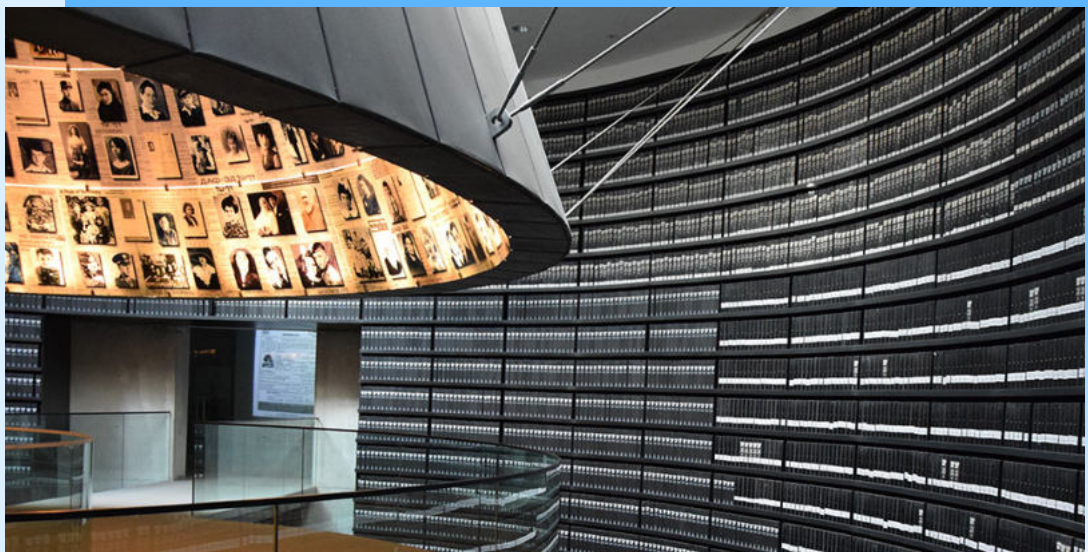
Tswi's grandchildren in the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations

Tswi reflects "You mustn't forget the past; you have to learn from it and stop discrimination. If we want to live in a better world, we start now: Not to discriminate anymore. If we want to live in a better world for the next generation to come, we have to do that."

Yad Vashem made a short film about Tswi's story used as part of an educational unit taught in the International School for Holocaust Studies in Yad Vashem. Many important topics are taught and discussed in the school such as: The Holocaust, Antisemitism, Righteous Among the Nations.

The story of these two survivors encapsulate what Yad Vashem is about. By telling the Jewish experiences of the Holocaust, Yad Vashem educates people at all levels of society, globally, inspiring action in the place of silence or apathy, knowledge in the place of dangerous ignorance. Yad Vashem, established in 1953 by an act of the Israeli Parliament emphasizes the stories of individuals, ensuring that the six million Jewish victims – and our treasured survivors – will not remain nameless and dehumanized like the Nazis had intended, nor will the perpetrators be blameless, and the courageous Righteous Among the Nations who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust will be honored and remembered admirably. These courageous righteous men and women serve as a model for our responsibilities as citizens of the world to speak up and combat racism, prejudice and xenophobia. Yad Vashem ensures that the victims' and survivors' voices are heard and that their legacies will continue to resonate.

Yad Vashem is entrusted with the task of commemorating, documenting, researching and educating about the Holocaust. As Rena Quint acknowledges, documenting the past, was not so much a choice but a duty. She has contributed to a vital part of Yad Vashem's 70-plus-year effort to compile "pages of testimony" of those killed, housed in the Hall of Names,(H-1) which is a memorial to each and every Jew who per-



Hall of Names

ished in the Holocaust – a place where they may be commemorated for generations to come. Rena filled out four pages, one for each of her murdered family members, noting name, age, and circumstance of death.



Page of Testimony by Rena Quint

(H-2) There are families, where no-one survived to record and remember their legacies. The Central Database of Shoah (Holocaust) Victim's Names, visited by millions each year, now contains information with approximately 4.8 million of the six million Jews murdered in the Holocaust, based upon the information collected over the years, with efforts continuing to collect the names and stories of each and every victim.

(H-3)



*Mara,
born in 1936
in Romania.
Mara and her family were
interned in the Chisinua ghetto,
where she and her mother
perished
(date of death unknown).*

High on a wall, close to the entrance of the museum the following prophetic words from the Bible are engraved: "Has the like of this happened in your days or in the days of your fathers? Tell your children about it, and let your children tell theirs, and their children the next generation." (1 Joel, 2-3).

Yad Vashem continually strives to meaningfully impart the legacies and teachings of the Holocaust to future generations. In doing so, some of our many ongoing vital challenges include gathering testimonies from



Tree planted in Yad Vashem, honoring Corrie Ten Boon, Righteous Among the Nations

survivors; recognizing new Righteous Among the Nations (N-1);

collecting and receiving beloved possessions and artifacts from survivors and their offspring to preserve them for generations to come; conducting virtual tours of Yad Vashem; publishing books and papers; opening temporary exhibits in Israel as well as many locations throughout the world; educating international students, educators and leaders in many different languages; among many other things.

Christian Friends of Yad Vashem:

The Holocaust profoundly affected the way that Christians from across the theological spectrum perceive their Jewish brothers and sisters. After World War II, Christianity was forced to confront its passive role in allowing the mass demonization and slaughtering of Jews to take place.

In 2006, given that our relationship had never been closer, and in spite of our difficult past, Yad Vashem together with its Christian friends decided to build bridges of understanding, cooperation and friendship between the Christian and Jewish worlds and established the Christian Friends of Yad Vashem. Our goal is to teach Christian communities worldwide about our mutual past, antisemitism, the dangers of discrimination, the lessons of the Holocaust, and how we can affect our futures together. The Holocaust began with years of false teachings and hateful propaganda and unfortunately today these forms of hatred are on the rise at an alarming rate. We need the support of our Christian brothers and sisters to continue with our vital mission and help ensure a better future for our children.

For more information contact:

Sara (Sari) Granitza - Director Christian Friends of Yad Vashem,
sara.granitza@yadvashem.org.il

Visit the website which was developed exclusively for Christian friends of Yad Vashem: CFYV.US



GHANA COUCUS

STATEMENT MADE ON THE FLOOR OF THE HOUSE BY HON REV JOHN NTIM FORDJOUR, MEMBER GHANA ISRAEL ALLIES PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS On **Strengthening Ghana-Israel Diplomatic Relation** AND A MINI LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE GHANA ISRAEL ALLIES PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS (GIAPC) ON WEDNESDAY 4TH NOVEMBER 2020.

STATEMENT

Mr. Speaker, I must thank you for the privilege granted me to make this statement on Strengthening Ghana-Israel Diplomatic Relations.

Mr. Speaker, nearly 82 years ago on November 9, 1938 in Kristallnacht was the sad and regrettable phenomenon of the Night of broken glass - the destruction of over 1,400 synagogues and Jewish establishments commenced. This was a critical moment that systematically triggered the Nazi Holocaust which sadly claimed the lives of six million Jewish people. Without a doubt, the Holocaust was an event which indelibly grieved and threatened the narrative of the Jewish people as a race, and thus its wide condemnation cannot be overemphasized. Such a horrific and horrendous phenomenon must never again be countenanced on any race and in any part of the world, without prejudice to ideological, race, religion nor geopolitical considerations.

Mr. Speaker, parliamentary diplomacy in our contemporary era has proven cogent in driving successful and sustainable bilateral and multilateral relations and hence my persuasion that an enhanced collaboration between The Parliament of Ghana and The Knesset (The Parliament of the State of Israel), shall prove instrumental in the deepening of the spiritual and religious connection, and mutual interests of the two countries.

Mr. Speaker, the bond of friendship between Ghana and Israel, extends beyond spiritual and religious connection, and transcends deeper into tourism, trade, agriculture and economic interests. The history of Ghana-Israel ties predates our independence. Ghana is acclaimed as the first country in Sub Saharan Africa to establish diplomatic relations with the State of Israel in 1956. Ghana-Israel relation was enhanced post inde-

pendent by the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir to Ghana, at the instance of Prime Minister Kwame Nkrumah in 1958. Mr. Speaker, just when Ghana-Israel ties began to blossom on mutual respect and mutual interests, the 1961 Casablanca Conference, the 1973 OAU Resolution and other notable events in the international system, occasioned strained relationship.

Indeed, over the years, despite setbacks, Ghana-Israel relations by and large, triumphed and culminated into a renewed direct diplomatic tie. It is worthy of note that this resilience exhibited by both Ghana and Israel, clearly resonates with the admonishing posited by the then young and prolific legislator in Ghana's Second Parliament of the Fourth Republic; Hon OseiKyei-Mensah Bonsu, Member for Old TafoSuame in March 1998 in a commemorative statement on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the founding of the State of Israel, and precisely captured by Hansard, and I quote:

"In international diplomacy, it has become axiomatic that nations must maintain permanent interest, not permanent enemies." [4th Series, Vol.19, No.7, Column 349, 21 March 1998].

Furthermore, during the period of strained relations, the Israeli people beyond a doubt, demonstrated benevolence and openness. In that, without hesitation, they shared with other countries and in particular Ghana, their renowned and peculiar knowledge and technology of turning their desertic land into a land flowing with milk and honey. Of course, Israel, through the Israeli International Development and Cooperation Agency (MASHAV), did not withhold from Ghana, development assistance and technology transfer in key sectors.

Mr. Speaker, indeed reference to the institutional memory of Parliament and lending credence to the veracity of Parliament as a House of records, twenty two years ago, in the Second Parliament of the Fourth Republic, the venerable and seasoned legislator and the current Leader of the House, Honorable OseiKyei-Mensah-Bonsu, Member for Suame on March 21, 1998 stood boldly on this very floor of Parliament and prayed the House for Ghana to renew direct diplomatic ties with the State of Israel as a matter of urgency and I quote:

"Whilst congratulating Israel on attaining 50 years, let us use the occasion to reflect on our relation with that country and move quickly to normalize relations for the mutual interest of the two countries." [4th Series, Vol.19, No.7, Column 349, 21 March 1998].

Consequent upon this noble call by the Hon OseiKyei-Mensah Bonsu, Ghana and Israel renewed direct diplomatic ties in September 2011, with the reopening of Israel's Embassy in Accra and the opening of Ghana's Embassy in Ramat-Gan, Tel Aviv in reciprocity.

Presently, Ghana-Israel diplomatic ties have blossomed to result in the recent trend of rapid growth in patronage of Ghanaian pilgrims and tourists traveling to Israel, with vast majority of those travelers, visiting and sojourning in Jerusalem. The Temple Mount in Jerusalem, the City of Truth, continues to be the principal tourism and religious attraction as it is believed to be among the topmost sacred and prestigious holy sites for the estimated 2.3 billion Christians and 1.8 million Muslims across the world.



*Bishop Dussan Pobee
Vice Chairman, IGFA and Chairman
for Counsel of Elders,
Africa-Israel Initiative*

Mr. Speaker, the rapid growth in patronage of Ghanaian pilgrims and tourists who visit Jerusalem in particular, may have meritoriously informed the laudable initiative of the Government of Ghana to increase sponsorship and patronage of Ghanaian Christian pilgrims to Israel as spearheaded by the Ministry for Chieftaincy and Religious Affairs in 2019. Mr. Speaker, undisputedly, the rising patronage of Ghanaian pilgrims and tourists to Jerusalem in the past few decades, has occasioned the necessity to ensure that the welfare and consular needs of our citizens who visit Jerusalem for economic, religious and tourism pursuits, are catered sufficiently and in close proximity. This urgent need, must gain the attention of the House. Mr. Speaker, while exploring avenues for strengthening Ghana-Israel diplomatic ties, let us consider the opening of a Consulate General in Jerusalem in order to serve the tenable welfare and consular needs of our citizens, in close proximity. The opening of a Consulate General in Jerusalem to complement the objectives and functions of Ghana's Embassy in Ramat-Gan, Tel Aviv,

is a tenable call and may not be viewed as a novel venture. As a matter of fact, premised on the same principle, it shall be in line with a worthy precedent set in the opening of the Consulate General in Jeddah, in close proximity to Mecca, as a complement to Ghana's Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

Cognizant of her antecedents, both in ancient records of world religions and contemporary political history, the State of Israel is clothed with great significance. Given the steady blossoming of Ghana-Israel ties in the past decade, it would be worth the while to reposition Ghana's Foreign Policy decisions concerning the State of Israel both locally in Parliament and internationally at the United Nations (UN), to reflect the enhanced diplomatic ties creditably nurtured over the years by both States.

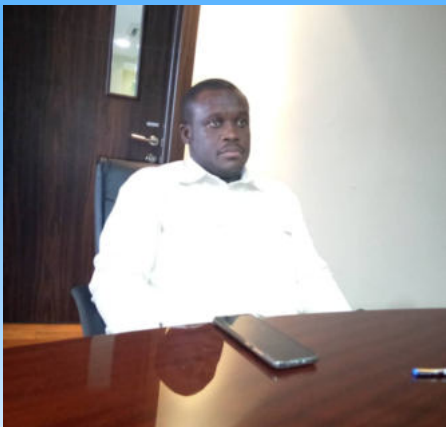
Thank you for your indulgence, Mr. Speaker.

Reaction to the speech and other contributions in support of the statement were made by Mr. Richard Mawuli Koku Quashigah (NDC – Keta) and Ms Joyce Adwoa Akoh Dei (NPP- Bosome-Freho) who also applauded the Speaker, for allowing their contribution to be an additional voice to the statement.

THE MINI-LAUNCHING CEREMONY OF THE GHANA PARLIAMENTARY ISRAEL ALLIES CAUCUS GPIAC

ATTENDANCE

Hon Joyce Adwoa Ako-Dei	: Chairperson, GIPFA
Hon Rev John Ntim Fordjour	: member GIPFA
Hon Sam George Nartey	: MEMBER GIPFA
Mr Peter Telfer	: Desk Officer, GIPFA
Rev Michael Papaye Nyave	: MEMBER IGFA
Rev Dr Lawrence Tetteh	: MEMBER ISRAE GHANA FRIENDSHIP ASSOCIATION IGFA
Rev Dr John B Ghartey	: CHAIRMAN IGFA
Bishop Dussan Pobee	: VICE CHAIR, IGFA
Rev Kennedy Okosun	: MEMBER, IGFA
Rev Kofi Agyemang Prempeh	: MEMBER, IGFA



*Hon Sam George Narteh,
Member of Parliament and a member
of Ghana Israel friendship Association*

The mini-launch was organized under the auspices of the External Director, Apostle General Sam Korankye Ankrah.

The caucus had a healthy conversation and fruitful discussion on Israel and Ghana from Christian faith to Agricultural technology, Pilgrimage to Israel e.t.c during which Rev Michael Papaye Nyave explained that even though we have different kinds of pro-Israel organizations in Ghana, we see ourselves under one umbrella of IGFA but as far as Parliamentary issues are concerned it is the Ghana Parliamentary Israel Allies Caucus that is responsible for representing IAF in Ghana. Rev Mike reiterated that IAF has its headquarters in Zambia of which BISHOP Scott is the Africa Director, Hon JoyceAko-Dei as the chairperson and Apostle General Sam Korankye Ankrah as the External Director.



Rev Dr John B Gharthey
Chairman of IGFA

After which Rev Dr John B Gharthey the chairman of Israel Ghana Friendship Association (IGFA) then took his turn to do the launching and declared the official opening of the Ghana Parliamentary Israel Allies Caucus (GPIAC). A group picture was taken immediately after which the members were refreshed with snacks.

The meeting came to an end at about 12.50 pm.

Recorded by:

Rev Michael Papaye Nyave (Country Director)

Africa Israel Initiative



Cross section of some members of Parliament and some bishops at the mini-launch of GPIAC



Pictures at the mini-Launch of GPIAC



Group picture of Ghana Parliamentary Israel Allies Caucus



Group Picture after the mini-Launch of GPIAC

ABOUT YADVASHEM



“And to them will I give in my house and within my walls a memorial and a name (a ‘yadvashem’)... that shall not be cut off.”

(Isaiah, chapter 56, verse 5)

Established in 1953 by an act of the Knesset (Israeli Parliament), Yad Vashem, the World Holocaust Remembrance Center, is entrusted with the task of commemorating, documenting, researching and educating about the Holocaust: remembering the six million Jews murdered by the German Nazis and their collaborators, the destroyed Jewish communities, and the ghetto and resistance fighters; and honoring the Righteous Among the Nations who risked their lives to rescue Jews during the Holocaust. Yad Vashem encompasses 45 acres on the Mount of Remembrance in Jerusalem and is comprised of various museums, research and education centers, monuments and memorials. Among these are the Holocaust History Museum, Museum of Holocaust Art, the Hall of Remembrance, the Valley of the Communities and the Children’s Memorial.

Each year some one million people from Israel and abroad visit Yad Vashem, and millions more visit its website, which is accessible in eight languages.

With increasing interest being displayed worldwide in the events of the Holocaust, as well as its Jewish and universal significance, and dramatic changes in the basic tools for commemoration, Yad Vashem continually strives to meaningfully impart the memory and meanings of the Holocaust to future generations. In order to meet the challenges facing Holocaust remembrance more than seventy five years after the end of World War II, Yad Vashem has created an environment of multidimensional learning and commemoration.

For more information please visit the Yad Vashem website:
www.yadvashem.org

Christian Friends of Yad Vashem (CFYV):

"I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."
(Genesis, 3:12)

CFYV was established in October 2006. CFYV is active in many countries and works with a variety of denominations and Christian ministries.

Christian Friends of Yad Vashem:

- ✓ Acts as a facilitator in bringing the universal lessons of the Holocaust to the Christian world
- ✓ Builds bridges of friendship and understanding between Jews and Christians to fight antisemitism
- ✓ Teaches the history of Christian antisemitism
- ✓ Educates about the legacy of the Righteous Among the Nations
- ✓ Conducts online webinars on different topics, modifying each one appropriately for the varied audiences
- ✓ Arranges tailor-made visits including workshops on topics of interest to visiting Christian groups
- ✓ Runs seminars for senior pastors, Christian educators and Christian opinion shapers on Holocaust (Shoah) education
- ✓ The CFYV Director, Ms. Sara Granitza, will visit churches and communities worldwide with presentations, films and unique artifacts

Contact us at: Christian.Friends@yadvashem.org

PASSOVER, THE BIBLICAL FESTIVAL OF FREEDOM



This year, Passover will begin the evening of March 27, through April 4. These are the secular dates that correspond to the proscribed dates of the 15-22 of the Biblical month, Nissan.

Background

Passover (Pesach - PEH-sach in Hebrew), commemorates the Biblical account of the redemption of the Jewish people from slavery in Egypt and OUR exodus to freedom. Indeed, according to the traditional Jewish observance, we are obliged to observe the holiday experientially, as if we were also slaves. Our redemption from slavery is an underlying and ever-present element of Jewish history and for all the Jewish people today. The Exodus still shapes our prayers, consciousness, and values, even 3,400 years ago.

You know the scripture. Jacob went down to Egypt in the wake of a terrible famine in Israel. He brought his whole family, which was both lifesaving, but also a family reunion with Joseph who had been sold into slavery decades earlier. The Jewish people thrived in Egypt, and became numerous. But a new Pharaoh arose in Egypt who forgot about Joseph and all he did to save Egypt, and who feared the growing Jewish population. He enslaved them for hundreds of years, drowning baby boys and making life unbearable. God appeared to Moses, instructing him to be His emissary to free the slaves as He promised He would. Ten plagues later, millions of Jews began the Exodus that would take 40 years to reach Israel, with God provided countless miracles, showing His protection all along the way.

Passover recounts the struggle between God and His people on one side, demanding freedom for the Israelites, and Pharaoh, who symbolizes the hard-hearted forces of self-glorification, evil, and slavery. During the tenth plague, God “passed over” and protected the Jewish people’s homes which had been marked by lamb’s blood, known as the Pascal Lamb, giving the festival its name. Because we fled Egypt in a hurry, we did not have time for the bread to rise, and from which Passover’s most famous edible symbol is derived, matzah, the unleavened bread.

How We Celebrate... And Why

In the days before Passover, traditional Jews clean their homes thoroughly in order to remove any leavened food. During the eight days of Passover it is customary not to eat, or even possess, any food that may contain leaven (“chametz” Cha-MAYTZ in Hebrew). Any food that contains any grain product that has risen, could do so if not under close supervision, or has been in contact or prepared with such foods is considered chametz. Passover brings with it a variety of new recipes that are often based on simple food such as potato, meat, eggs, and matzah cooked in different ways.

The central Passover ritual is the Seder (SAY-der), a ritual meal that takes place on the first night of Passover typically with family and friends, or with broader the community. The Seder is both a sumptuous feast full of religious symbolism, as well as an interactive educational experience for all generations. We recount the story of the Exodus through Biblical readings, prayer, and song. During the Seder we read the Haggadah (Ha-ga-DAH), an ancient text recounting in detail the story of the Exodus. Teaching the next generation is central to the experience, so children play an active role. Usually telling the Passover story begins with the “Four Questions” which introduce the telling of the story and in which is typically a central role for children. *(For a free downloadable copy of the Haggadah in Hebrew and English, please register here.)*

An essential part of the Seder is eating foods that are symbolic of the physical and spiritual journey from slavery to freedom. These pillars of the Seder meal include: four cups of wine or grape juice as a symbol of our joy; bitter herbs which remind us of the suffering of our slavery, green leafy vegetables and/or eggs representing rebirth, and of course the obligatory matzah which represents both the bread of poor slaves and the symbol of our freedom.

The Relevance of Passover Today

The story of the Jewish people's Exodus from slavery to freedom in the Land that God promised us is the cornerstone of Jewish ethics, and of course one of the pivotal events in Biblical text. As we suffered slavery and suffering, we are obligated to care for others.

The Torah teaches "you were strangers in the land of Egypt," and contains over 50 references to the resident alien. There's an obligation to provide the stranger with economic security, basic food and clothing, prompt payment of wages, and equality before the law. Even the notion of slavery in the Torah protects rights, and is in a whole different category of the way the Jewish people were enslaved, or how many have been and remain enslaved today.

Jewish tradition teaches obligates us to create societies established on the principles of justice, righteousness, and compassion. Throughout generations, the story of the Exodus has encouraged Jews across the diaspora and in our homeland, to elevate justice throughout the world. In recent decades, the persecution of Jews in the Soviet Union reminds us that the struggle against enemies is ever present, and freedom is not to be taken for granted. Indeed, acknowledging that in every generation there is an enemy of the Jewish people is also central in the Seder. We never forget to thank God, with Psalms of praise, for his protection and deliverance.

In 1936, Israel's first Prime Minister, David Ben Gurion, gave testimony to the Peel Commission, tasked with investigating and finding a solution to the promise of a Jewish state in the Land of Israel. Ben Gurion was far from a religious man, but he knew his history, and he understood how that related to the present. Connecting the Jewish people's ancient dream to return home with the, then, modern need to make that happen, he spoke forcefully.

"300 years ago, there came to the New World a boat, and its name was the *Mayflower*. The *Mayflower's* landing on Plymouth Rock was one of the great historical events in the history of England and in the history of America. But I would like to ask any Englishman sitting here on the commission, what day did the *Mayflower* leave port? What date

was it? I'd like to ask the Americans: do they know what date the Mayflower left port in England? How many people were on the boat? Who were their leaders? What kind of food did they eat on the boat?

"More than 3300 years ago, long before the Mayflower, our people left Egypt, and every Jew in the world, wherever he is, knows what day they left. And he knows what food they ate. And we still eat that food every anniversary. And we know who our leader was. And we sit down and tell the story to our children and grandchildren in order to guarantee that it will never be forgotten. And we say our two slogans: 'Now we may be enslaved, but next year, we'll be a free people.' Now we're scattered throughout the world, but next year, we'll be in Jerusalem. There'll come a day that we'll come home to Zion, to the Land of Israel. That is the nature of the Jewish people."

That was Ben Gurion, a secularist. He understood Passover. The task of the Passover seder is to try and pass down those values to the next generation.

Regarding the Jewish people remembering and commemorating our past, Tisha B'Av, another "holiday" on the Jewish calendar, is the saddest day on the Jewish calendar. We commemorate many historical tragedies, most significantly the destruction of both Temples in Jerusalem. Two centuries ago, Napoleon walked by a Paris synagogue on this day, hearing the lamentations and loud weeping of the Jews. He asked what the Jews are crying about. After being told about the destruction of the Temple nearly two millennia earlier he commented, "A nation that cries and fasts for 2,000 years for their Land and Temple will surely be rewarded with their Temple."

May we all remember and overcome the challenges that we face, celebrate our freedom, and never forget to be thankful to the One to whom we must be grateful for all our blessings.

#

Jonathan Feldstein is President of the Genesis 123 Foundation, www.Genesis123.co, building bridges between Jews and Christians and Christians with Israel in ways that are new, unique and meaningful. He was born in the US and immigrated to Israel in 2004 where he lives in the Judean mountains with his wife, six children, and two grandchildren, so far.

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