



Monthly Missions

Focus: Israel

Location: Middle East, bordering the Mediterranean Sea, between Egypt and Lebanon

Area 20,700 sq.km. – slightly smaller than New Jersey

Population 6,276,883

Capital: Jerusalem 670,000. Israel proclaimed Jerusalem as its capital in 1950, but the US, like nearly all other countries, maintains its Embassy in Tel Aviv

Peoples: Ethnic groups: Jewish 80.1% (Europe/America-born 32.1%, Israel-born 20.8%, Africa-born 14.6%, Asia-born 12.6%), non-Jewish 19.9% (mostly Arab)

Literacy 95.4%. Official languages Hebrew, Arabic.

Religion: Jewish 76.5%, Muslim 15.9%, Arab Christians 1.7%, other Christian 0.4%, Druze 1.6%, unspecified 3.9%



Negev Bedouins of Israel

In the tradition of her Bedouin tribe, Saleen and her cousins prepared a generous hearth for their guests. Hospitality is what these Negev Bedouins are known for, along with their love of good music, good food and ready conversation. And when guests are available, why not enjoy all four? With a flip of his right thumb, Ali shoveled a juicy piece of mutton and curd into his mouth. The guest complimented the food before diligently licking each finger on his right hand to signify a satisfying end for his meal. Named by the French, the Bedouins of Israel's Negev Desert have stayed close to the home of their forefathers, seasonally pastoring their flocks while maintaining age old Islamic customs and authentic hospitality, nomad style. Few believers live among these Muslims, though some do exist, perhaps silently due to possible persecution. (*Global Prayer Digest – May 14, 2005*)



Answers to Prayer

🌐 The increase in the number of born-again believers among Jews. There has also been a steady increase in the number of Arab believers and new churches in the last 20 years.

🌐 Globally there has been a significant response among the 15 million Jews

Challenges for Prayer

🌐 The intense half-century of conflict between Arabs and Israelis urgently needs resolution. Both sides lay claim to the land. Pray for a just, lasting and adequately guaranteed settlement.

🌐 Animosity against Christianity is a barrier to be overcome in Jewish minds. 'Christian' nations are seen to be destroyers of the Jewish nation whether by persecution (as in the Holocaust) or by proselytization. Pray that the gospel may be understood as a fulfillment of their Jewish heritage and that a widespread turning to their Messiah might come. Pray also that all attempts to limit freedom of religion and to deny the Jewish identity of Messianic believers may fail.

🌐 Israeli Evangelicals are largely Messianic Jews, and Arabs who are Israeli citizens. Pray for boldness in witness despite difficulties.

🌐 Major outreach challenges: the ultra-Orthodox Haredi, the Russian and Ukrainian Jews, the Ethiopian Jews (Falasha), the Arabs (97% are Muslim), and the Druze community.

Why we cast away sins on Rosh Hashana

By MATTHEW WAGNER

On the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashana, millions of Jews all over the world will search out a river, a sea, even an aquifer or a reservoir. Some will even settle for an aquarium. First preference will be given to a body of water that contains fish. Once there, pockets will be turned inside out, special prayers will be recited, and sins will be symbolically "cast" away. The custom, tashlich, is loosely associated with the verse in Micah, "And thou will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." As Dr. David Zafrani of Tel Aviv University's Hebrew Culture faculty points out, "Nowhere in Micah is Rosh Hashana mentioned. It is just a prophecy that at some later date God will expiate our sins." Nevertheless, about 700 years ago in what is now France and Germany, Jews began the custom of tashlich. Rabbi Ya'acov Molin Segel (known by the acronym Maharil), the most important halachic authority of Ashkenazi Jewry in the 14th century, first mentions the custom, says Rabbi Dr. Haim Talbi of Bar-Ilan University's Talmud department. "Jews went to the seas and the rivers to symbolically 'dispose' of their sins so that they should not be remembered." (*jpost.com – October 2, 2005*)