



# THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

SPECIAL EDITION

AUGUST 2024



Path to Peace درپ الى السلام



THE TIME FOR  
**REBUILDING**  
IS NOW

# The Heroes of Moshav Netiv HaAsara

October 7, 2023

Dear friend in the Messiah,

I visited Israel recently to spend time with our staff, hear their stories, pray with them, and encourage them in the great work they are doing to reach our Jewish people in Israel during these very difficult days.

Our staff gathered to try to get away from the stress of war and travel around on a brief Jeep tour in the Judean Hills.

During the trip we were able to get to know some of our drivers. One of them was Avi, who lived on a *moshav*<sup>1</sup> a few hundred feet from the border with Gaza. This community is called Netiv HaAsara, which means “the path of the ten” and reflects how the community was formed. The name comes from the ten soldiers who tragically lost their lives in a helicopter crash in 1971 in the Gazan town of Rafah. Netiv HaAsara is known for its various peace initiatives, and prior to October 7, many Gazans lived in the village and worked alongside the locals in different capacities.



The border wall separating the moshav from Gaza.

## MOSHAV NETIV HAASARA

This moshav was created so families who wanted to make peace with Palestinians could intentionally live on the border to be close to their neighbors in Gaza. The families of the moshav created something called “The Peace Wall” (pictured on the cover), where people could paint bright colors as a symbol of their hopes for peace in the region.<sup>2</sup> The moshav was established in 1982 and had close to 1,000 individuals living on the land owned by the community. In 2005, with the disengagement of Israel from Gaza, it became the closest Israeli community to the Gaza Strip.

The story of what happened at the moshav on October 7, 2023, is well known: thirty-five Hamas terrorists attacked the community and killed at least twenty people. Their security team fought valiantly, but three of them were murdered during the attack. The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) were able to save the rest of the people on the moshav once they arrived, about six hours after the attack started. They either arrested or killed the remaining Hamas terrorists.

Our new friend Avi, who drove one of the vehicles for our staff, was one of the first to see the paragliders land in the center of the community.<sup>3</sup> We kept in touch with Avi after our staff trip, and he invited us to visit the moshav to hear his story. He showed us around to see where the gliders came in and the homes where his neighbors were killed. Avi even took some time to tell us the story of this morning of terror.



Avi gave us his permission to record and tell the story of what happened at Moshav Netiv HaAsara on October 7. You can read his story in the following pages or **use the QR code to watch the video.**



Avi (left) with one of our Israel staff members (right).

**This moshav was created so families who wanted to make peace with Palestinians could intentionally live on the border to be close to their neighbors in Gaza.**

1 A moshav is similar to a kibbutz but allows for private ownership of property among some other key differences.

2 “Another inspiring project in Netiv Ha’Asara is ‘The Path to Peace’ project led by artist Tsameret Zamir. The project transformed a once-plain security wall into a colorful canvas of hope by placing colorful brushstrokes bearing positive messages on the wall. Each stroke of paint symbolized hope for a peaceful future. It was a poignant reminder how, even in the shadow of conflict, the people of Netiv Ha’Asara were dedicated to the pursuit of peace, one brushstroke at a time” (Kim Paffen, “Life near the Gaza Border: Living amid Ongoing Gaza-Israel Conflict,” Our Planet in My Lens, October 8, 2023, <https://ourplanetinmylens.com/life-near-the-gaza-border/>).

3 Hamas terrorists used paragliders on October 7, 2023 to get over the border fence into Israel.

## AVI'S STORY OF OCTOBER 7

Now, please take a few moments and try to imagine what it was like for the members of this moshav on the Gaza border, surrounded by security walls and barbed wire fences as well as lush terrain growing beautiful roses, olives, and fruit trees. It was very sad to hear how their hope for a peaceful resolution to the conflict with Gaza was crushed by the brutality of the attacks of October 7.

### HERE IS AVI'S STORY IN HIS OWN WORDS:

*At 6:00 in the morning, like always, I woke up to take the dog for a walk. At around 6:20, I heard the sound of small firearms. There was also the sound of rocket fire, and not the typical ones you hear. It's usually one rocket or two rockets, but now there were a lot of rockets.*

*I thought it was a reaction, maybe to an IDF operation where maybe we took out one of the leaders like Sinwar,<sup>4</sup> and they're upset, so they're firing. But it was something very unusual, something unexpected, this amount of rocket attacks. It didn't stop. It just kept coming and coming and coming. Normally, we have a rocket or two, or maybe four or five, and then it stops, but it was wave after wave after wave.*

*Then I understood. I heard the sound of a motor of some kind of aerial vehicle. The first thing I did is I called the security manager for the moshav, but he didn't answer, so then I called the local IDF coordinator, but he also didn't answer. And then I*

*heard another motor from another aerial vehicle coming up. So I said to myself, "I have to do something. I'm going to film it." And so, I started recording it.*

*So when I started filming the second glider, I realized the first terrorist had already landed and was walking around in the moshav. I wanted to see where the terrorist was going to land so that I could report it to the security squad protecting the moshav. But the terrorist saw me and changed his direction so that I wouldn't be able to identify where he landed. He probably thought I had a weapon, but I didn't have any weapons at the time.*

*I continued to try to call and inform people, and the only one I could reach by phone was my neighbor who said, "I'm not at home, I'm up at the Sea of Galilee." So I came home and I told my wife and kids to stay home, to stay inside. I didn't tell them that there were terrorists loose in the moshav. I didn't want them to be stressed by the situation.*

Remnants of the havoc Hamas unleashed on the moshav on October 7.



*I continued to try to reach people unsuccessfully, and then suddenly there was no water or electricity. And of course, no internet either. The telephone was hardly working, but WhatsApp<sup>5</sup> was somehow working. As soon as*

**As soon as the terrorists landed, within a few minutes, there was constant gunfire. I heard the firing all around me.**

*the terrorists landed, within a few minutes, there was constant gunfire. I heard the firing all around me and at houses nearby and at the house across the street.*

*I left the bomb shelter because I thought if they're going to come toward me, I could interact better with*

*them outside than inside the bomb shelter where I can't do anything. So I left with a knife and a fishing spear gun, as that's all I had. For some reason the terrorists didn't come to my house.*

*The children of my landlord who lived nearby called me because their mom, my landlord, wasn't answering the phone. They were concerned for her. So, I went to her house. I tried to hide because I wasn't well armed. So, I was trying to get over there without being seen. The reason I was hiding was not because I was afraid of being seen by the terrorists. I was afraid of being misidentified by the army as a terrorist, so I was hiding. I totally expected the army to be here already, but they didn't come for hours!*

*I arrived at my landlady's house, but she wasn't there. I didn't find her in the house, and I didn't think to look in the bomb shelter. I looked on the street because she's an older woman. I thought maybe she had fallen or something, but I didn't see her, and I didn't want to cross the street. I didn't want to be out exposed for too long. I was sure that the army was coming, and they would interact and engage these terrorists, but the army didn't come so I came home.*

**I was sure that the army was coming, and they would interact and engage these terrorists, but the army didn't come.**

*When I got home, I was able to finally reach the IDF security coordinator for the area, but our connection was in and out. Sometimes the phone lines would drop, so I used a combination of phones and WhatsApp messages back and forth, and I finally got ahold of somebody. Then I started to relax a bit.*

*I knew or at least had some idea of what the terrorists were doing because first of all, you could not only hear it, but you could also smell it. But also on the WhatsApp messages, I was getting updates from the security squads about where the terrorists were going and what they were doing. And so I knew more or less what was going on around me as they burned a few houses, and you could smell the smoke.*

*At 9:00 or 10:00 AM more terrorists arrived, in addition to the original thirty. They were armed. One of them even had a bulletproof vest; they came*



**The Nir Press observation deck, which overlooks Gaza.**



**A rocket shelter at the moshav.**



**A room with bullet holes in the wall from October 7. The Israeli flag in the corner and candles on the table honor those killed here.**

4 Yahya Sinwar has been the leader of Hamas in Gaza since 2017.

5 A mobile application popular in Israel and many other countries, WhatsApp supports instant messaging and phone calls through the internet.

to steal and then to kill. The security team of the moshav captured them but didn't kill them. They transferred them for interrogation.

Tactical units and the border patrol came in the afternoon, and I understood that the situation was more or less under control, but they didn't leave because there was still fighting all around them in some of the other towns in the area. And we stayed in our bomb shelter until 5:30 or 6:00 at night, so for about twelve hours.

I heard (but can't verify the authenticity of it) that the IDF listened to the recordings of the conversations between the terrorists and their leaders back in Gaza, and that they had originally planned to destroy the border wall and completely take over our moshav and kill all of us.

But when the terrorists came and started killing people, they found hardly anyone in their homes or walking the street and reported back that they killed everyone that was here, and that the village was now unoccupied. And so, they decided not to break the wall and completely invade. About 1,000 people were in their bomb shelters. So when the terrorists came, they didn't see anyone, but whenever they

## **I found out the terrorists had all taken a particular drug (Captagon) that removed their fear.**

found somebody in a safe room, or a bomb shelter, they threw grenades inside and kept going.

I found out the terrorists had all taken a particular

drug (Captagon)<sup>6</sup> that removed their fear. It also affected their reasoning and their logic, which

is why they may have reported that the town was empty, when in fact, they did meet people, and they knew they were in bomb shelters, but they reported that the town was empty. This drug is big business for Hezbollah in Lebanon. They sell it all over the Middle East. It's a cheap drug to make, and they make a lot of money on it, and it's very popular in the West Bank. So it's hard to know what really happened and why we seemed to be protected from additional murders.

All of this is very unfortunate as I worked regularly with Gazans, and they work really hard. One Gazan worker equaled three regular workers. I don't know if there's going to be peace or not, but I don't hate them. Okay, those who committed atrocities, like murder and rape, there's no question they just need to be eliminated. But at the end of the day, there's still going to be two million Gazans.

I then asked Avi about his view of the future of the moshav. He continued,

First of all, we have to eliminate Hamas. That's the first thing. And then whatever happens, it's politics. We can't know. But what we do know is we have to eliminate Hamas. They're fanatics and they're murderers, and they need to be removed.

I further asked Avi if he believed the moshav would return to normal and the hundreds of people who used to live there would return to their homes. He simply answered, "Yes, I hope so!" I was greatly moved by his hope and by his bravery. He is a hero and shows the determination of Israelis to survive and thrive even when facing seemingly unsolvable conflict.

6 Joseph Pergolizzi Jr., et al. "The Emergence of the Old Drug Captagon As a New Illicit Drug: A Narrative Review," *Cureus* 16 (2), Feb. 2024, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC10977473/>.

Avi (left) with another of our Israel staff members (right).

# A CALL TO PRAYER

So, how can we pray for Avi, his family, and the members of this beautiful moshav where its members were so hopeful to create peace between Gazans and Israelis?

We can pray for the families of those who were murdered. We can pray God will keep terrorists from attacking once again. And most of all, please pray Avi, his family, and many others at the moshav who dreamed about peace will find true and lasting peace through the Prince of Peace, Jesus our Messiah.

As the psalmist wrote, *“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: ‘May they prosper who love you’”* (Psalm 122:6).

Thank you for your support, which enables us to help friends like Avi and our workers in Israel and around the globe in all their many efforts to bring the good news of hope and peace through the Messiah Jesus *“to the Jew first”* and also to the Gentiles (Romans 1:16)!

We would like to have additional funds to help members of Netiv HaAsara, as well as Israelis who cannot yet return to their homes in towns near the Gaza border or on the border of Lebanon. Your gift of any amount to the Israel benevolence fund will support Israelis in this dark time. We so appreciate your partnership.

We want to help Israelis practically and find ways to tell them about the Prince of Peace who brings peace to the hearts of all who call upon Him! He specializes in solving the unsolvable.

Blessings,



Mitch

# Invite A Speaker to Your Church!

Our staff are available to present important topics related to Israel, the Jewish roots of Christian faith, and Jewish evangelism. To better understand the conflict in Israel and how to respond biblically, have a speaker come talk on one of these topics:

## God's Roadmap for Peace in the Middle East

The Middle East's turbulent history continues to manifest today, and the entire world feels its effects. The conflict originates in the Bible, and thankfully, its solution is there, too! The Word of God is our "roadmap" for peace in the Middle East. However, unlike a traditional road map, God's pathway to peace is a one-way street. Diving into this very biblical topic will leave your church with a worldview perspective for peace.

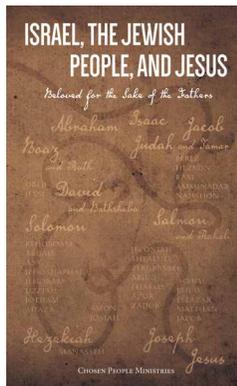
## The Future of Israel

What is the future of Israel? God's plan for the Jewish people is presented through the exposition of various Old and New Testament texts. We also preach a message on the future of Gentiles and their role in the redemption of Israel. A combination of these messages makes a wonderful series well suited for either a Sunday morning or evening service.



CHOSEN PEOPLE MINISTRIES

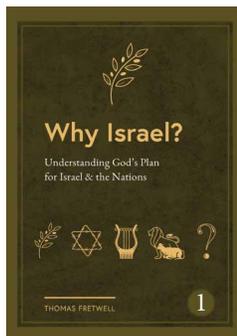
# Messianic Resources



## "Israel, the Jewish People, and Jesus"

In this booklet, you will discover God's promises to Jewish people and what they mean today. See how God has preserved His people throughout history and brought them back to their own land. Learn how to pray for Israel and be part of proclaiming the good news of Messiah among Jewish people.

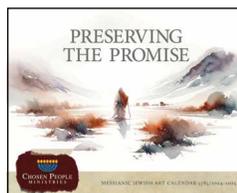
Price: \$10.95 US



## Why Israel?

*Why Israel?* explores the topic of Israel through the lens of Scripture, bringing clarity to a controversial topic. Has the church replaced Israel in the plan of God? Does ethnic Israel still have a future? What about Israel today? These questions and more will be answered by providing readers with an outline of a biblical theology of Israel.

Price: \$9.95 US



## "Preserving the Promise"

Our new 2024-2025 Messianic Jewish Art Calendar tells the story of Jewish people in the land of Israel. From the promise given to Abraham, through exiles and returns, and then statehood—yes, even on October 7—God's hand has been evident. This eighteen-month calendar follows the Jewish year 5785, includes weekly Torah readings, and notes major global holidays.

Price: \$12.95 US

Order using the enclosed card or call 1-888-2-YESHUA in the United States. For more resources, visit us online at [store.chosenpeople.com](http://store.chosenpeople.com).