



אחרית ותקווה • A FUTURE AND A HOPE
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NEWSLETTER NO. 20

Monday, 15 April, 2013

Memorial Day for Fallen Soldiers and Victims of Terror, 5773

IS RACHEL STILL WEEPING FOR HER CHILDREN?

In the Book of Jeremiah the prophet, we read: *"Thus says the LORD, 'A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.' Thus says the LORD, 'Restrain your voice from weeping and your eyes from tears; for your work will be rewarded,' declared the LORD, 'And they will return from the land of the enemy. There is hope for your future,' declares the LORD, 'And your children will return to their own territory.'"* (Jer. 31:15-18)

While "in Ramah" could be interpreted in Hebrew in different ways, the most reasonable understanding would be that it relates to the city HaRamah, which is located in the area given to the Tribe of Benjamin, which was the center from which the exiles from Jerusalem and Judea were taken to Babylon following the destruction of the first Temple. (see Jer. 40:1) The picture that is presented in the quoted passage portrays the unrelenting, bitter weeping and wailing of Rachel, whose tears are shed over the loss of her sons, who were taken away and are now gone. The pain and anguish are so great, that she refuses to be comforted (a situation similar to that of her husband, Jacob, when he mourned over the believed death of his son, Joseph, and although all of his sons and daughters tried to comfort him, he refused to be comforted). (Gen. 37:35) The incredible feeling of grief that accompanies the loss of a child, a precious gift, a longed-for and expected blessing, cannot be put into words.

Rachel is presented here as the mother of Joseph, her first born, whose reverence for, and obedience to, God was rewarded in many ways, not the least of which was with wisdom and understanding. God used Joseph, in a sense, to deliver Egypt from the consequences of a severe drought and famine, and caused him to be esteemed by Pharaoh, who not only exalted him to a position of power in Egypt, but honored his father, Jacob, along with all of the latter's family. About 3,500 years ago, a Pharaoh arose, who did not know Joseph and enslaved the children of Israel. It was, therefore, necessary to deliver them from Egypt, through Moses, who would be used by God to deliver the children of Israel out of physical bondage in and to Egypt and bring them to the promised land.

Now, Joseph's sons, Ephraim and Menashe, were representatives of the entire northern Kingdom. Similarly, Benjamin, the second son of Rachel, is also the name of a geographical region in the south of Israel from where the Babylonian exile began. Thus, Rachel's children are understood to be those descendants of her offspring through Jacob (whose name was changed to Israel) and encompass both the northern and southern kingdoms, whose sons were carried off to Babylon and were not expected to return. These sons were youths and young men, a generation who had been gifted with understanding, talents and abilities, as can be seen from the examples of Daniel and his companions.

And then, Rachel was said to weep again, when, in an attempt to prevent the coming of the Messiah, an order was given by King Herod to kill all of the male children, who were in and around the region of Bethlehem, who were two years of age and under. (Matt. 2:16) This was said to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: *"A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children; and she refused to be comforted, because they were no more."* (Matt. 2:17-18) Those who were killed were under the age of understanding and unable to discern between right and wrong. Unlike those who were carried off to Babylon, these children had not yet developed talents and abilities, and remained dependent upon their parents to supply their everyday needs.

"כי אני ידעתי את המחשבות אשר אני חושב עליכם נאום יהוה מחשבות שלום ולא לרעה לתת לכם אחרית ותקווה". (ירמיה 29:11)
"For I know the plans that I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope". (Jer. 29:11)

Today, we see another form of slaughter taking place "from Dan to Beersheva", i.e., from north to south and all throughout Israel. It is abortion, the taking of the life of the unborn child, while still in the womb of his mother. The official numbers are bad enough. But, when we add illegal abortions and chemically-induced abortions, the numbers exceed what the mind can reasonably imagine. This offense becomes even more of a spiritual concern, when we consider that this is occurring in Israel, the Promised Land of blessing. Our society has become overly permissive and calloused. As a result, we have taken for granted and abused the freedoms that we have been granted and use them to commit acts that would have been unconscionable during the time of our ancestors. Now, the children whose lives are snuffed out have no opportunity to learn, no opportunity to develop and to contribute to our society. They are considered to be a mistake, unwanted, unaffordable, an inconvenience, not the right gender and for a host of other reasons, they are deprived of the right to be born.

Unlike the promise given in Jeremiah, that Rachel's "children will return to their own territory", those who are aborted will not return to this land.

Is Rachel still weeping for her children? If she isn't, she should be - not because they are no more, but because they were not at all. On this date, 15 April, 2013, as our nation mourns the loss of our sons, who gave their lives that we might live freely in our own land, should we not also mourn the loss of those whose lives were taken in the ongoing battle between darkness and light?

Thankful for New Life

We are truly thankful for the opportunities that have been given to us to be able to encourage women, young as well as not so young, to follow through with their pregnancies and to allow their children to be blessed with life and to be a blessing to their parents.

O is came to us in her 20th week of pregnancy. She wanted advice and guidance, after being told by her gynecologist that her child's protein was not good and that it would result in the baby being deformed. One of the great things about providing Biblical counsel, irrespective of whether the one receiving counsel has a personal relationship with God or not, is that we are free to share about life and the blessings and joys that come from living by faith. We were able to pray with *O* and within a short time thereafter, she decided not to abort her child. Her faith was rewarded with the birth of a completely healthy baby. We all rejoiced!

*We are thankful to all of you who **prayed, encouraged and played a practical role in helping us to help them.** If they could express themselves, they would thank you, as well.-*



P is a delightful young woman of 20. Her husband is serving in the military, they have one child and she was pregnant. But, their economic situation was close to disastrous, as they were living on army pay, along with a little help from parents on both sides. Another child at this point could not even be considered. *P* called us on the advice of her grandmother, who kept Orit's private telephone number from **20 years ago**, when she, herself, called to ask if we could help her daughter, who was involved with prostitution and drugs. We met with her daughter, the mother of *P* and discovered that she was pregnant and facing a difficult, single-mother situation. Still, we encouraged her to seek a new life for herself and give life to her child. We met with her once or twice after that and then lost contact with her.

“כִּי אֲנִי יֹדֵעַתִּי אֶת הַמַּחֲשָׁבוֹת אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי חֹשֵׁב עֲלֵיכֶם כֹּה־נָאֻם יְהוָה מִחֲשָׁבוֹת שְׁלוֹם וְלֹא לְרָעָה לָתֵת לָכֶם אַחֲרֵית וְתִקְוָה.” (ירמיה 29:11)

“For I know the plans that I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, to give you a future and a hope.” (Jer. 29:11)

When we asked *P* about her mother, we learned that she was encouraged by the counsel and accepted the advice. Not only did she give birth to *P*, she also left prostitution and drugs behind her and, for many years, has been working with drug addicts to help them to shake their dependency on drugs, and to realize their own potential as human beings, despite all of the pressures and pains of life in our society. We encouraged *P* and are doing what we can for *P*, and she is receiving assistance through *A Future and A Hope's* "First Year of Life" program. As part of this program, we supply all of the basic, first-year needs of a newborn and continue to help them after that, to the extent that we can. We also provide monthly food vouchers, which help to ease the economic burden that accompanies the birth of a child.

She just wanted to get out of the cold.

Every month, a number of mothers come to our office to receive diapers and food vouchers, as part of our "First Year of Life" program. *R* is one of the many single mothers whom we help. She came with her six-month old son on a particularly cold day. She sat down and spoke with one of our counselors and said she hoped that it wasn't an inconvenience, but she just wanted to warm up a bit. After having a hot drink, she was about to leave when she asked whether there was a chance that we had another small heater, like the one we were using to warm our office. We didn't have another one, so Irena gave her the one we had. The only thing that was missing was a picture of the amazement on her face and the smile and thanks that followed.

Haifa has the most single-mother families and the second largest number of abortions.

According to a recent report released by the Central Bureau of Statistics, there has been a 60% increase in the number of single mothers in the last decade. In 2011, there were 5,050 single women, who live alone, who gave birth, compared to 2,600 in the year 2000. The number of single-parent households (*i.e.*, a household where one adult resides with one or more children under the age of 17, whether the adult was never married, divorced or separated) also increased during that decade and Haifa ranked number one on that list, followed by Jerusalem, then Tel-Aviv and others.

On the other hand, the largest number of abortions takes place in the southern portion of the country (Beersheva and its environs), followed by Haifa and then Tel-Aviv. While the figures relating to the number of women who have "legal" abortions (*i.e.*, those approved by the Committee for Cessation of Pregnancy) remains fairly constant, *the number of chemically-related abortions (e.g., "the morning after" pill) has considerably increased.*

Preserving ovaries of aborted females for the purpose of?

It's not a new story. In fact, it's about 10 years old. But, it's making news again, this time on a wider scale. Back in 2003, the work of Israeli researchers was revealed at an annual conference of the European Society of Human Reproduction and Embryology, which was held that year in Madrid. Dr. Tal Biron-Shental, from Meir Hospital in Kfar Saba, Israel, along with others, had reported on the successful cultivation of ovarian follicles, which are part of the female reproductive system that produces the ova, and which had been kept alive for several weeks. The issue which gave rise to the controversy that followed was the revelation that these cultivated ovaries came from babies, which had been aborted between 22-33 weeks in gestation. While acknowledging that such research was controversial, Dr. Biron-Shental said then that "probably, in some place, it will be ethically acceptable...There is a shortage of donated oocytes (eggs) for IVF - oocytes from aborted fetuses might provide a new source for these...There are a huge amount of follicles in the fetal ovary."

If the purpose of using the eggs of aborted children is to help in IVF treatment, then we would end up with a situation where a child is born from a biological mother, who, herself, was never born. Apparently, this procedure has already worked in experiments and produced baby mice. But, human beings are not mice, nor should we be guinea pigs. Also, there is a clear line that should not be crossed, namely: causing someone to become a mother against her will. If a female child is aborted, for whatever reason, she obviously cannot consent to becoming a parent. How then can an aborted child, who is not considered to be alive, end up having her body parts used to be part of the life-generating process? There is a tremendous inconsistency in logic here, not to mention the traumatic consequences for a child when he learns that his biological mother was killed before she was born.

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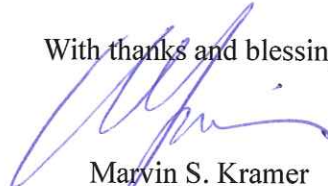
But, if the purpose of using the eggs is to help produce clones, then we are looking at an entirely different sphere of bio-ethics, which, when combined with genetic engineering, will catapult us into the realm of science fiction, with cold, uncaring Brave New World scientists and physicians, where there is no longer any code of ethics, if one even really exists anymore.

Our website: <http://hope4u.co.il> is only in Hebrew at this time.
Please pass this Newsletter on to others (remember: we lost our entire mailing list).
If you have a comment about this Newsletter, please drop us a note (Prov. 15:23).

Prayer requests:-

- 1 - For health for our staff.
- 2 - For regular, monthly finances for our "First Year of Life" Program, and for food vouchers for needy mothers.
- 3 - For salvation for the unsaved women whom we counsel.
- 4- For the post-abortion workshop that we are planning for this summer.
- 5- For wisdom to counsel with love and grace, to help cleanse this land from the shedding of innocent blood.

With thanks and blessings,



Marvin S. Kramer
General Manager

*If you would like to help support this ministry in Israel, you may do so by sending a personal or bank check in any currency to: **A FUTURE AND A HOPE**, 6 Derech HaYam, Haifa 34741, Israel. Checks should be payable to: **A FUTURE AND A HOPE**. Alternatively, a bank transfer can be sent directly to our account at Union Bank of Israel Ltd., Account No. 11594-08, Bank No. 13, Central Carmel Branch 083, Swift Code: UNBKILIT, at 4 Mahanaim Street, Haifa, Israel. We will acknowledge every monetary gift with a receipt.*