

HOW CONNECTING WITH GOD'S PEOPLE  
UNLOCKS UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S WORD

# FIVE YEARS WITH ORTHODOX JEWS



BOB O'DELL

*with*

GIDON ARIEL



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**Five Years with Orthodox Jews:  
How Connecting with God's People Unlocks Understanding of God's Word**

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II. Five Years with Orthodox Jews: How Connecting with God's People Unlocks Understanding of God's Word

## DEDICATION

For Paul and Virginia O'Dell,  
and their visit to Israel in 1977



## ENDORSEMENTS

A page-turner. A must-read. You will laugh, cry and maybe even repent. Five Years with Orthodox Jews will take you on a riveting journey into a revolutionary new mindset: that building relationship is far more important than winning the argument. When I first went to Israel more than forty years ago to study the roots of our faith with Jewish scholars, I quickly learned that the Christian world was not yet ready for the piercing challenge to the heart that this book humbly speaks. But the time for this book's message has come. Hear, think, study, pray, and decide for yourself what you will do in response.

### **Brad H. Young, PhD**

Professor Emeritus in Judaic Christian Studies in Biblical Literature at The Graduate School of Theology, Oral Roberts University, and Bible Translator, *Hebrew Heritage Bible Newer Testament*

If you are a Christian interested in learning more about Israel and the Jewish people, "Five Years with Orthodox Jews" is the most important book – besides the Bible – for you to read this year. I am so grateful that God would raise up such a faithful friend to Israel, in our generation. I pray that every Christian would read Bob's book to better understand the heart of a Jew, and in doing so, we could finally move past our bitter history and bring about our shared destiny articulated by the Prophet Zephaniah (3:9), "For then I will make the peoples pure of speech, so that they all invoke *Hashem* by name and serve Him with one accord."

### **Rabbi Naphtali "Tuly" Weisz**

Founder of Israel365 and Publisher of *The Israel Bible*, Beit Shemesh, Israel

I couldn't put it down! Relevant and meaningful, this was one of the greatest literary experiences I have ever encountered in thirty-seven continuous years of pastoring a congregation. Every pastor needs to read it.

### **Rev. David Swaggerty**

Senior Pastor, Charismallife Ministries, Columbus, Ohio

Grab a cup of Israeli coffee, pull up a chair in a Jerusalem café, and get to know these two fine men as I have known them both for years. Through Bob's expert guidance and Gidon's thoughtful framing of Jewish tradition, you will see Judaism through a Christian prism, yet without judgement or forced conclusions.

### **Jonathan Feldstein**

President, Genesis123 Foundation and Columnist, Townhall.com and Charisma News, Efrat, Israel

This work is a strikingly original read that provides, without acrimony, fresh insights on what Christians can learn from Jews and Jews from Christians. Candid, honest and personal, this work reads like a gripping adventure story, not a tedious textbook. Moving from discovery to discovery in the Bible, archaeology, history, economics, and Jewish life in Israel, the reader listens in on an inspiring and informative dialogue between friends. Yet ultimately this book reveals in surprising ways, the greatness and awesomeness of God. I pray this book creates an insatiable hunger within all Christians to eagerly explore their Jewish roots and to visit the land of Israel, ASAP.

### **Marvin Wilson, Ph.D.**

Professor Emeritus, Gordon College, Department of Biblical Studies, Author of *Our Father Abraham* and *Exploring Our Hebraic Heritage*

Not only does this book boost my faith for a promising future between The People of Israel and believers from the Nations, this book is a reflective mirror for us, allowing us to see ourselves as we are seen. Sincere yet modest, so many passages touched my heart. From this book we gain a deeper understanding of what Hashem expects from The People of Israel and His chosen Jerusalem as a light to the nations. I pray we are worthy of this assignment.

### **Rabbi Yehudah Glick**

President, Shalom Jerusalem Foundation and former Member of Knesset



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## PREFACE

“Would you be willing to travel to Israel?”

That’s what they asked me. I was interviewing for a job at a high-tech company in Austin, Texas in 1988. The team I had just met at Motorola in Austin, Texas was working closely with another team in Tel Aviv, Israel. There, the Israelis were readying a new kind of microprocessor (which is a kind of “semiconductor chip” or “integrated circuit”) for the communications market. I quickly realized that this new microprocessor could become the “next big thing,” and I wanted to join! But they had one last question to ask me, which had been a sticking point for other applicants: would I be willing to travel to Israel?

That was not a trivial question in 1988. Those were the days of a new kind of Palestinian uprising — *The First Intifada* — and that turmoil in Israel was showing no signs of abating.

“Before I answer, I will need to speak with my wife,” I said.

I’ll never forget that uneasy feeling I had on the drive home while I pondered the conversation that I was about to have with Marisa. Since first meeting her two years earlier at our church, we had discussed every possible topic imaginable — or so I thought! As a Christian, the stories of Israel were planted deeply into my faith, and the unlikely success of that young country was intriguing. But on the drive home I realized that my wife and I *had never discussed the topic of Israel* even once!

After telling her about the exciting interview, I then asked, apprehensively, how she would feel about my working with Israeli Jews and taking business trips to Israel. Her response is one I still remember word for word:

“Oh, I’ve always loved Israel,” she said.

Those five words changed the direction of my life. I took the job! And her next five words would change both of our lives:

“Can I go with you?”

That microprocessor would take the market by storm and become known as the very first “communications processor.” Then our team would begin riding the

wave of an even bigger storm, the Internet. In 2000, I left Motorola to start a new Israeli company, Wintegra, with an Israeli Jew named Kobi Ben-Zvi. He led Wintegra from Israel, while I led marketing and sales from Texas. Wintegra sold for a large profit in 2010. Then in 2013, after working with Israeli Jews daily for twenty-five years, I left high-tech to hear what God wanted me to do next.

God incredibly blessed me through my association with all those Israeli Jews. I was free — I would never need to work again. But wait, something felt incomplete! I hadn't lived the pattern about which Paul wrote:

*For if the Gentiles have shared in their [the Jews'] spiritual things, they are indebted to minister to them also in material things. ROMANS 15:27 (all references are NASB unless otherwise noted)*

In fact Paul's statement was the *opposite* of my experience! I had received significant *material blessings* from my Jewish colleagues, rather than spiritual ones.

Therefore, in 2013 I decided to *attempt to give something back to Israel*, the country that had given me my economic freedom. However, instead of continuing my work with secular Jews, I decided to *try to make connections with the Orthodox Jews of Israel*. Why the Orthodox? Because while Christians and Jews have many differences, we have something critically important in common: we see the Old Testament (the Hebrew Bible) as God's word.

So in January 2014, I went to Jerusalem as a Christian business consultant to look for Orthodox Jews who might want advice about starting new companies. Once there, I found myself standing on top of the walls of the Old City of Jerusalem listening to Gidon Ariel, an Israeli Orthodox Jew share his idea to use the Internet



Bob and Gidon standing in front of the walls of the Old City where Bob heard God say, "That's your man!"

to teach Jewish insights about the Old Testament to Christians. When he shared this, it was as if God spoke to my inner ear and said clearly and powerfully, “*That’s your man!*” A new organization, *Root Source*, would soon be born.

Over the next five years, Gidon would help me meet and befriend dozens of Orthodox Jews over the internet and during regular visits to Israel — more than fifty visits to Israel since 1990.

While my original motivation was to be a physical blessing to Israel by teaching Orthodox Jews *what I knew about starting businesses*, God had a surprise in store. As I opened my heart and allowed myself to truly connect with Orthodox Jews without any agenda towards resolving our differences, God began to unlock new understanding of the Bible for me. Yes, some of this understanding came from the direct teaching and insights of Gidon and many other Jews, as you will soon see! But that alone did not explain the unlocking. For God was adding an unexpected ingredient into the mix — He was adding Himself!

This book is not just my story, it is also an *invitation!* Allow your heart to open towards the Jews in unconditional love, and see what God unlocks for you!

### **About the Author**

*Bob O’Dell was raised in the evangelical and charismatic traditions, and has been an ardent follower of Jesus/Yeshua for more than fifty years. He believes Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah and Son of God, who is returning soon. He supports gospel sharing around the world, prays fervently for revival of nations, and has read widely in Christian and Hebraic Roots literature. Then he spent five years with Orthodox Jews.*



## INTRODUCTION

Contained herein are forty essays filled with surprises, new insights, new thoughts, or new spins on old ones written by me, but with a concluding twist! Each chapter is followed by my direct questions to **Gidon Ariel** to get his reactions to what I just wrote! In addition, many footnotes are added along the way to allow a reader to easily go deeper and wider on a multitude of topics.

Regarding my interaction with Gidon, one thing I have learned is that even though God said to me about Gidon, “That’s your man!,” Gidon is fully his own man. And he is not a broken record. No matter how many times I interact with him, I keep getting surprised. They say “you can’t put God in a box,” and neither have I seen anyone put Gidon in a box. Yes, I suppose I could have taken all my asked questions, and spread them around to a dozen Orthodox men and women to answer, and in each case picked the answers I liked the best. But then you would only read the information that I wanted you to read. Instead, by asking each question to *one person*, Gidon, you will receive a more authentic and nuanced look at a *real person*.

**In the Prologue that follows you will meet Gidon for yourself.** Gidon is a good baseline for our readers to gain understanding in Jewish thought, because he is at the same time both traditional (meaning that he does not walk outside the bounds of normative beliefs and behaviors within the Jewish community), but is, at the same time, his own person with his own ideas. I think you will see what I mean as the book progresses.

But what about the insights themselves? What is my goal?

Over the last five years of working with the Orthodox community, I began to keep notes of things that I had seen and learned through my interaction with the Jewish world, things that I had never read or seen anywhere before.

**Therefore, my goal — I hope I can mostly achieve it — is to offer you a new insight in every single chapter,** something you have never considered before, something you have never thought about before, even if you have spent many years studying the Hebraic/Jewish roots of your faith. That is my goal, but my **hope** is even bigger. My hope is that as you read this book, you whisper “ooh” or “ah” or “wow” from time to time, giggle occasionally, and every so often catch yourself with your mouth hanging open. My hope is to *deliver that feeling* to you,

because that is the feeling I often had during my five years with the Orthodox Jews of Israel. Whenever it happened, I made note, and have now circled back to write on those very topics, visits and experiences.

Many of these thoughts were originally published as a set of Root Source columns, one every week for a year: insights from the intersection of the Jewish and Christian worlds. We have selected thirty-six of them to edit and enhance, written four brand new ones, added footnotes galore, and arranged them all in an order that makes for a very nice flow. We begin with some new takes on some very old topics. Some chapters interlaced between chapters 14 through 24 take on the great issues which divide us. And the last half of the book presses the boundaries in many different directions that I hope will inspire and increase your awe of God. The book ends with what the future may hold.

What you are about to read was not always easy to write, but I felt urged by the Lord not to hold anything back. You will hear some very personal stories. Also, what I have written is not always easy to read, whether it be my opinions, or that of Orthodox Jews. Sometimes I propose answers to tough questions. Other times I take ideas to a certain point, and then leave you with the questions I'm still pondering. Once in a while, an essay ends with a suggested prayer. But what I hope doesn't happen ever, is that you find any chapter boring.<sup>1</sup>

This book is primarily *for* Christians, believers, those who believe in and follow Jesus/Yeshua,<sup>2</sup> and it is intended to offer insights that can enrich Christians. It is not intended to convince Jews of these beliefs, although some Jews may find this book interesting from the standpoint of "how what they do" can positively impact us, as Christians. Yes, the topic of Yeshua/Jesus does arise in multiple chapters, but always as a Christian assumption, never as a topic of debate.

My email is [bob@root-source.com](mailto:bob@root-source.com). Be in touch by email or at [bobodellauthor.com](http://bobodellauthor.com).

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<sup>1</sup> One of my most treasured quotes was the first time my wife ever turned to some new friends over dinner and said without hesitation, "He doesn't like to bore people."

<sup>2</sup> While I grew up calling Him Jesus, my work with Messianic and Hebrew (or Hebraic) Roots Movement believers has caused me to very much enjoy saying and praying with the Hebrew name, Yeshua, depending on the situation. Since this book addresses all manner of Christ-followers, both terms are used in various ways throughout, but in this introduction I purposely used both.



## PROLOGUE

Before we begin we have one final matter to accomplish. You need to meet someone. You need to meet my friend, partner, co-founder and CEO of Root Source, Gidon Ariel. I don't believe I have ever written such a long title of Gidon before this moment, and neither has he read one! He simply goes by "Gidon,"<sup>1</sup> which is the Hebrew form of "Gideon." The "Gi" rhymes with "key," and the "don" rhymes with "tone." Thus, "Gidon" rhymes with "keytone," and I usually put the accent on the "tone".

Gidon's story will help you understand who is answering the questions at the end of each chapter. Also, I hope you will notice that Gidon is a *very* open person. Later in the Prologue, and again in his very first answer to my first question, you will see his email address listed. I *assure* you that he would genuinely love to hear from you, and that he *will* answer your email personally.

The rest of what follows is Gidon's story told in his own words, as adapted from an earlier book. The footnotes you read below, and throughout the book are mine.

### **We Are Living In Momentous Times**

*by Gidon Ariel*

I was born in Queens, New York to a traditional but not strictly observant Jewish family. In the 1960s and the 1970s, this was not out of the ordinary.<sup>2</sup>

I went to a private Orthodox Jewish day school (called a *yeshiva*) until fifth grade, when my parents decided to enroll me in a local public school. I assume this was for financial reasons. Even though the majority of kids in the public school were Jewish, I felt that the Jewish focus was missing. To paraphrase Joni Mitchell, I didn't know what I had 'til it was gone. During that year, I made a conscious decision to actively pursue and adopt my Jewish identity.

Sure enough, my parents saw how miserable I was out of the yeshiva, so they

---

<sup>1</sup> Israelis are very informal. First names are fine. Even the word Rabbi is often shortened to "Rav."

<sup>2</sup> If you want to see him tell this story, rather than just read it, here is a link to a 58-minute interview with Al McCarn which can be found on YouTube: <https://youtu.be/2jQJcEHoYE>

put me back for sixth grade. Thank God a local youth group leader from Bnei Akiva, the world's largest religious Jewish Zionist<sup>3</sup> youth movement, introduced himself that year, and I was hooked. The idea of attaching myself to timeless values of Jewish identity — the religion of Israel, the Nation of Israel, the State of Israel, the Land of Israel, and above all the God of Israel — was so vitally attractive to me that, although I was barely twelve years old, I knew that I had found my life's calling.

For the next three or four years, I spent more time in the youth movement's club house than my own home. So much so that my parents invited me to discuss where I would attend tenth grade. The high school I was in was not a very good one; it closed soon thereafter. They surprised me and asked, "Gidon, have you ever considered going to Israel for high school?" Well, I jumped at the chance!

I landed in Israel a few days before the start of tenth grade. Luckily, as was traditional back then, Israel was having its annual teachers' strike to start off the school year.<sup>4</sup> This gave me an opportunity to hang out with my newfound friends and learn Hebrew.

But beyond Hebrew, I was overjoyed to learn something else: *Torah*.

This multifaceted word encompasses a number of things. It includes the Pentateuch (the Five Books of Moses), the entire Tanakh,<sup>5</sup> and the orally transmitted laws, stories and ideas given to the Jewish people at Mount Sinai together with the Written Torah. It also includes any idea that any student comes up with related to any of these, from the time of Moses some 3,400 years ago to this day.

After finishing yeshiva high school in Jerusalem, I continued on to an advanced Jewish Studies academy, also called a yeshiva. This program was unique: it was a combined study-military program for soldiers in the Israel Defense Forces. Instead of spending three years in the army, participants in this program spend five years in the army, but only eighteen months or so in active training and

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<sup>3</sup> Zionism was a primarily secular movement begun by Theodor Herzl in the 1890s that ultimately led to the reestablishment of the Jewish State in 1948. Religious or biblical Zionism is the belief that God, through His biblical prophets, supports the return of the Jewish people to and the development of Israel, and Bnei Akiva is one of the leading organizations for Jewish youth. While not all Orthodox Jews in Israel are biblical Zionists, the majority of the Orthodox Jews with whom Bob O'Dell became friends are, and believe that their living in Israel is a fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

<sup>4</sup> In the early years of Israel's existence, strikes were very common.

<sup>5</sup> Tanakh is an acronym (TNK) that stands for Torah, Nevi'im (Prophets, including Joshua, Isaiah, and Zephaniah) and Ketuvim (Writings, including Psalms, Job, and Proverbs).

duty. The rest of the time we sit and study Torah. By the way, that is what yeshiva means — to sit and study.

My experience in the high school yeshiva was wonderful, but this advanced yeshiva was literally out of this world. From dawn to midnight on average, we would sit with a study partner, reading and explaining to each other a text, trying to understand it and, when appropriate, disagree with it. Respectful disagreement with sources and teachers is an inherent, substantial component of Torah study. As the Jewish Sages say in *Chapters of the Fathers*:<sup>6</sup> “*The timid cannot learn, and the strict cannot teach.*”<sup>7</sup>

Each day I had a lineup of some dozen study partners, studying something different with each one. Over my six years at that yeshiva, I must have spent time studying with over a hundred different people! This experience of pitting my mind and personality against so many others’ made for especially sharp wits and sensitive personalities. As taught in PROVERBS 27:17: “*As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.*” (NLT)

During a break one day from studying to run some errands in Jerusalem, I spotted a sign on an apartment building across the street. Now it was a hobby of mine to read the signs in Jerusalem. Did you know that you can get a degree in Jewish history just by reading Jerusalem’s street signs?<sup>8</sup> In any case, upon crossing the street and looking closer at that sign, I saw that it said ICEJ — The International Christian Embassy Jerusalem.

Now THIS was a surprise. I mean, I am just a regular, garden-variety Jew. We are pretty keep-to-ourselves-in-a-friendly-to-others-sort-of-way kind of folks. I mean, over the past few thousand years, we’ve learned a lot, but mostly that everyone who isn’t a Jew is an antisemite. Jewish history is pretty much a thread of horrors: prohibition of fundamental Jewish practices such as Shabbat, circumcision, kosher food, and learning Torah; blood libels; forced conversions; destruction of synagogues; burning of the Talmud;<sup>9</sup> the Crusades; the Inquisition; pogroms; and the horror of horrors — the Holocaust.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>6</sup> A classic compendium of Jewish teachings compiled around the third century.

<sup>7</sup> <https://bit.ly/Avot2-5>

<sup>8</sup> This is one of Gidon’s favorite jokes. Jerusalem street signs cover a lot more than just Jewish history. For example, Jerusalem may be the only city outside of the United States that has a street named “Martin Luther King.”

<sup>9</sup> The Talmud is the full body of Jewish literature that comprises clarifications of, discussions about and commentary on the written word of God. Much of what is in the Talmud today was passed down orally for centuries until it began to be written down after the destruction of the Second Temple. Most of the Talmud was written down between the second century and the eighth century, most in Babylonia but some within the Holy Land.

<sup>10</sup> This important topic will be covered in chapter 5.

Yet here I was, facing a sign testifying to another kind of Christian. I walked inside.

After collecting some of the fliers, I started looking into this phenomenon of pro-Israel, philo-semitic (Jew-loving) Christians. I walked around Jerusalem and surfed the Internet, and discovered other pro-Israel Christian organizations: Bridges for Peace; Christian Friends of Israel; Friends of Israel; Christians for Israel; Christians United For Israel; International Fellowship of Christians and Jews.

I dared to step out of my comfort zone and began attending events hosted by these organizations in Jerusalem, at first as a wallflower, but little by little introducing myself and finding my place as a speaker at their events. I have found that, while I am happy to offer to teach Christians about the Jewish roots of their faith (that is, Torah), more and more Christians are more interested in simply having a friendly relationship with me.

Soon enough I discovered the linchpin: the Knesset Christian Allies Caucus.<sup>11</sup> This official Knesset caucus assembled the most comprehensive list of Christian leaders with a heart for Israel. Little by little, I began to make friends with many of these leaders. The fact that I was a member of the central committee of the Likud political party didn't hurt.<sup>12</sup>

One of those leaders was Christine Darg. Christine is a mighty woman of God. She divides her time between the USA, England, Arab countries (where she evangelizes Muslims to Christianity), and Israel, where she shares her love for Israel with her Christian friends from all over the world, and her Jewish-Israeli friends, amongst whom I am humbled to be counted. I frequently address the groups she brings to Israel through her organization Exploits Ministries, sharing this story of my own new-and-growing relationships with pro-Israel Christians, and introducing Jewish concepts, to the delight of my Christian audience.

I started slowly, consulting with my rabbi if I ever felt I might be floating into uncharted waters, and cautiously sharing my hobby with only a few of my religious friends. I think there is no use in pursuing topics with friends who can be antagonistic to them. That being said, I think that more and more Jews in Israel are lowering their defenses like I did

<sup>11</sup> The Knesset is the legislative body of the Israeli government, analogous to the United States Congress.

<sup>12</sup> Likud is the large center-right political party led by Benjamin Netanyahu, who has been Prime Minister of Israel longer than anyone in Israeli history.

with regard to Christian Zionists, as they have proven their bona fides.

One brisk winter's day in January 2014, I decided to share with Christine's group an idea I had. Since I enjoyed teaching Christians so much, and so many of them enjoyed learning from me, what if I would do that, just on the Internet? A Christian online yeshiva, if you will. Well, there was a collective gasp that came up from the group, followed by one word: "Hallelujah!" Afterward, many people came up to me to encourage me in this new endeavor, including one, Bob O'Dell, who told me that he wanted to be the first sign-up in the venture.

Well, as they say, the rest is history. Bob, an unassuming, ever-smiling high-tech executive, had recently completed an "exit" (an Israeli word that means "a sale of a startup to a big company for a lot of money") and after a few initial meetings with me, we created Root Source, the first online platform of Israeli Jews teaching Christians about Israel, Jewish concepts, Torah, and the Jewish/Hebrew roots of their faith.

I had always believed that Jews teaching the world about the God of Israel is a prophetic commandment, as Isaiah spoke: For out of Zion shall come the Torah, and the word of God from Jerusalem.<sup>13</sup> The Jewish people had been mandated thus in the Sinai Covenant: You shall be for me a Nation of Priests.<sup>14</sup> Israel's priests, the sons of Aaron, are commanded to teach the rest of the Jewish people as it says in MALACHI 2:6-7: For the Torah of Truth was in the Priest's mouth... and the people will ask to learn Torah from his mouth.<sup>15</sup>

So the analogy is clear. If Aaron's sons are commanded as priests to teach their brothers, the Jews, Torah, and the Jews are the priests among the nations, then the Jews are commanded to teach Torah to the nations. This is not to mention the explicit mandate that Abraham was given by God to spread the knowledge of Him throughout the world.

But we Jews had a slight handicap in executing this requirement for 2,000 years or so. We were a bit preoccupied trying to survive. We must thank our friends, the Christians, for picking up our slack and spreading the good news of ethical monotheism throughout much of the pagan world in our absence. And now that we Jews have come back to our Homeland, thank God, we can and must once again pick up our job of teaching the world about the God of

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<sup>13</sup> Isaiah 2:3, paraphrased for clarity.

<sup>14</sup> Exodus 19:6

<sup>15</sup> Paraphrased for clarity.

Abraham.

Since I knew that there were many Christians who would appreciate such teaching, I thought that I could do my little part with a few blog posts and online videos. But Bob saw things quite differently. “This is a tremendous way for Christians to bless Israel!” he exclaimed. And in fact, Christians, like all nations of the world, are promised a reward of being blessed if they bless Abraham and his people.<sup>16</sup> “By blessing the teachers of Root Source, prolific teachers who step out of their comfort zone to teach Christians, our students will be doubly blessed — empowered with new knowledge of God and His plans for the world, and biblically rewarded for this fundamental commandment!”<sup>17</sup>

I was a bit surprised by Bob’s vision.<sup>18</sup> Surely, blessing Israel today can take many forms: advocating for the besieged State of Israel in op-ed pages, campuses, and parliaments; supporting poor Jews in Israel and worldwide; visiting Israel and strengthening the economy while enjoying the sights; and in general being a good person *vis-à-vis* the Jews. But Bob truly discovered a new facet to this Christian commandment as written in ROMANS 11:18: “*Do not be arrogant toward the branches. If you are, remember it is not you who support the root, but the root that supports you.*” (ESV)

All of the blessings I listed above — and more — assume the Christian blesser has something that the Jewish lessee does not have. Think about that: there is a measure of arrogance in this position. When Christians take their spot at the feet of their teacher, much as Mary did in LUKE 10:39, they are assuming a position of humble student. Now the last thing my fellow teachers and I want is to be venerated. We just want to teach what we like to teach, to people who want to learn what we want to teach them. But it is clear from the hundreds of unsolicited comments and accolades that we receive that we have clearly struck a nerve.

I do not suggest that Root Source students refrain from other methods of blessing Israel. If there is one thing I have learned from my interactions and relationships with Christians, it is that there is no limit to the human spirit, to the Christian spirit. I sincerely believe that following your *yetzer hatov* —

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<sup>16</sup> Genesis 12:3

<sup>17</sup> A new model for blessing Israel is presented in chapter 10.

<sup>18</sup> Bob says, “Root Source was Gidon’s vision not mine. And he had already come up with that name before I met him. I just suggested he extend the vision by bringing on multiple Jewish teachers at once. I also saw that “Christians learning from Jews” would be both a blessing to Jews, and an act of humility for Christians.”

your good inclination, your conscience — is listening to the divine spark in you. And everyone's spark is different, suited uniquely to them. Some people contribute money to the poor, some volunteer to teach English, some battle on Facebook. But we challenge you to challenge yourself! And browse our offerings at [root-source.com](http://root-source.com).

Today, we are witness to countless miracles: the Industrial Revolution; the information age; worldwide independence of nations; educational and political democracy. All these and more are signs of the maturing of the human race. Many of these can be traced back to the first revolutionary, our aforementioned father Abraham. And so his most important innovation — belief in the One True God — must also be included in this list, because more and more people are coming to a considered, deep understanding of the importance of that belief. And when people consider the greatest miracle of all — the return of the Jewish People from the depths of their exile to their Promised Land, as detailed in the Prophets<sup>19</sup> — it is no wonder that so many of these thoughtful believers in the God of Abraham are drawn to His miraculous nation, the Jews, and their miraculous country, the modern State of Israel.

But of course, this development was plainly prophesied in ZECHARIAH 8:23:

*Thus proclaims the Lord of Hosts, in those days, it will happen that ten people from each of all of the languages and cultures of the nations will hold tightly and grab on to the tzitzit (the ritual cloak fringes) of a Jewish person and say we are going to go with you Jews, because we understand that God is with you! (original translation)*

I do not know what the future will look like, but for the foreseeable future I think we must all respect each other and allow each other's faith and life story. Just as each of us got to where we are at our own pace, I think that it is up to God to guide all people to where they belong, when they belong there.

*Gidon Ariel, lives in Ma'ale Hever, Israel, a Jewish suburb of Hebron. Together with Bob O'Dell he founded Root Source ([root-source.com](http://root-source.com)), the Internet's first platform for Jews to teach Christians Torah and the Jewish roots of their faith. Gidon also is the director of Root Source Press, a publisher of books by and for pro-Israel Jews and Christians. Gidon served in the IDF reserves as a Captain in the Military Spokesperson's Office after spending over twenty years in the Armored (Tank) Corps. In Israeli politics, Gidon is a delegate to the*

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<sup>19</sup> Isaiah 11:11-12; Jeremiah 29:14; Ezekiel 20:41-42; and many more. See this short video clip: [root-source.com/dry-bones-clip/](http://root-source.com/dry-bones-clip/)

*Likud Party Central Committee (the Merkaz) and once ran for the Ma'ale Adumim city council. Today, he is a member of the community council in Ma'ale Hever. Gidon is married to Devra, who was born in Kansas City, MO. They are the happy parents of Elisheva, Akiva & Rivka, Shira Rina & Ori, Chayim Zvi & Liel, and Moriyah. Gidon can be reached at [gidon@root-source.com](mailto:gidon@root-source.com).*





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