

## MINISTRY UPDATE: MARCH 2025

### ***Dear Friends and Partners, shalom!***

Thank you for your prayers for us and our ministry!

When I think about the lives of street addicts in Tel Aviv – their miserable state and desperate conditions – it feels as if many of them are already living in hell. There is so much suffering, hopelessness, and total darkness... But! – unlike real hell, from which there is no escape, – here, on the streets of South Tel Aviv, the Good News is still being proclaimed and people can still be saved and restored by God's grace. Please keep praying for them!

In this issue, we share a story about one of the visitors to our soup kitchen (as told by our volunteer Igal), as well as a description of an unexpected encounter that our leader Sergey had, together with a ministry friend from abroad, near our Rehab Center in Beersheva.

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### **“I FEEL WARMTH AND A PEACE I CAN'T EXPLAIN”**

On that evening, while serving at Aviv Center, I glanced through the windows and noticed a woman in a wheelchair sitting quietly outside, hesitant to come in. I stepped outside and invited her to enter the center and have something to eat, but she seemed too embarrassed to do so.



So, I took a few chairs, set up a small table outside, and brought her a plate of food along with both hot and cold drinks. Another volunteer, Ruth, joined me.

"Can we sit with you and have a chat?" I asked.

The reply was positive and we started talking.

"My name is Rachel," said our guest. "I'm from the north, from Kiryat Shmona. I am divorced, and I have four grown children. When the war began, I had to evacuate from Kiryat Shmona because it's so close to the border with Lebanon, and Hezbollah was constantly attacking the area."

She paused and lowered her gaze. "I was struggling with depression, and the doctors gave me a prescription for medical marijuana. It helped for a while, but after two months, it stopped working. Then someone from the north told me I could find stronger drugs in Tel Aviv."

Her voice grew quieter. "So, I came here and started using drugs. Slowly, it got worse — I began injecting them. One day, I injected into the wrong spot, and my leg swelled up. I didn't go to the hospital because I didn't want to reveal my drug use. But eventually, the pain became unbearable, so I had no choice but to seek medical help. The infection was so severe that the doctors had to amputate part of my leg."

She sighed deeply. "It's been six months since the surgery. Now I live on the streets."

My heart broke for her. "Rachel, I understand you more than you think," I said and shared part of my own testimony with her.

"Yeshua (Jesus) knows you and the pain you've been through. God loves you so much that He gave His Son for you!"

Rachel's eyes filled with tears. "I feel like nobody wants me anymore. I feel completely rejected."

I leaned closer and hugged her. "God will never turn away from you," I said. "He's always waiting for you to come to Him."

Ruth and I explained about our rehabilitation centers and how we help people struggling with addiction and homelessness.

Rachel shook her head gently. "I'm not ready yet," she said.

Then we prayed together, and when we finished, Rachel wiped her tears and said, "I feel warmth and a peace I can't explain."

I smiled and hugged her again. "That's because the Word of the living God is filling you with His warmth. Please keep coming to Aviv Center. You're always welcome here — to eat, talk with others, and hear more about Yeshua."

Let's keep Rachel in our prayers — that God's Word will continue to work in her heart.

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## AN ENCOUNTER OVER DINNER

That day, my good friend Pastor Nicholas (who had come to participate in our rehab ministry) and I were having dinner at a small café in Beersheba when a young man in dirty clothes approached us.

"Can you give me some money?" he asked, his hungry eyes fixed on our plates.

We could see he was starving. "Why don't you join us?" I said, motioning toward the empty seat at our table.

He hesitated, then sat down. We gave him food, and as he ate, he began to open up.

"I made Aliyah to Israel, full of hope," he began, "but things didn't go as planned. One failure after another... and now I'm on the streets, just trying to survive."

His voice dropped to a whisper. "Alcohol helps numb the pain."

We listened, then shared our own stories – how Jesus saved us and gave us new lives.

"Would you like us to pray with you?" I asked gently.

He hesitated for a moment, then nodded. We led him in a prayer to surrender his life to Christ. As he repeated the words, I saw something change in his eyes – focus, maybe even hope.

At that moment, the café owner came outside and gave Alex (that was the young man's name) a stern look.

"Is he bothering you?" the owner asked sharply. "I'll make him leave."

"No, everything's fine," I assured him.

I pulled the owner aside and explained, "We're believers, and we're just trying to help him."

His expression softened. A little while later, he returned.

"My nephew is addicted to drugs," he said quietly. "I don't know how to help him."

I told him about our ministry. "Only God can truly change a person's life," I said.



He sighed. "It's so bad that it doesn't matter how – as long as it helps."

We exchanged phone numbers, and he promised to send his nephew to our rehab center soon.

As for Alex, he said he couldn't come to the center just yet because he had things to take care of, but he took my phone number.

We said goodbye, and on the way home, Pastor Nicholas and I prayed for him, thanking the Lord for the amazing encounters He gave us that day.

#### **MORE NEWS AND PRAYER REQUESTS:**

- Please pray for the residents of our rehab center. Currently, there are seven of them. We recently took in two new people, but one couldn't withstand the withdrawal from drugs and returned to the streets of Tel Aviv after three days. The other, Roman\* — who knows the Lord but fell back into alcohol addiction due to life's difficulties — stayed for three weeks and made good progress. However, his former employer called him and offered him a job with housing, and Roman\* accepted the offer. We're sorry he didn't stay in the program, but we made it clear that if he wants to return and continue his recovery, the center's doors are always open. Please pray for him.
- **Women's Dance Class.** Our free women's dance class, featuring Israeli and Messianic songs, which we started in the middle of last year, is growing steadily. It already has 15 participants – most of them are not believers. A close and warm relationship is developing between the class leader and the participants. The class is held in the building of our church, *Desert Flowers*, and some women show interest in Christian literature there and are asking questions. Please continue to pray for the participants, that God would touch their hearts and draw them to Himself.
- **Leadership Training for Our Ministry Leaders.** One of our ministry friends recently led a seminar for the leaders of our projects, sharing many valuable ideas and techniques on working with people who struggle with addiction. We hope that, after adapting them to the Israeli context and our ministry's capacity, we will be able to implement them with God's help – and serve those in need even more effectively.

Thank you for supporting our ministry and please feel free to share your prayers requests with us too anytime!

*Yours in His Service,*

*Dov and Olga Bikas and Aviv Ministry Team*

For more information and for donations please visit our website:

[www.avivministry.com](http://www.avivministry.com)



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