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WHAT DO WE TELL THE CHILDREN?

Guest September 14, 2026 Jewish Life

By Mark Ginsberg

Your reporting on the Boulder Valley School District settlement, concrete measures after real harm, arrives at the question every Jewish parent now meets sooner or later: what do we tell the children? I write from Efrat, where my children practice walking to the shelter alongside their math lessons, and where that question stopped being hypothetical two years ago. Israeli families have been forced to develop scripts for these conversations, and the ones that work may be worth trading across the water.

The Lessons That Arrive Early

Israeli schools teach the siren the way American schools teach the fire drill, as routine rather than alarm, and the routine is the first lesson for parents too. Fear with a procedure attached becomes a task; fear without one becomes a mood that follows a child home. When the war began, the guidance that circulated among parents here was to answer the question asked and not the question feared. A child who asks whether the sirens will come tonight wants to know about tonight, not about the region's future. Short true answers, calibrated to the age in front of you, beat thorough ones every time.

The second lesson took longer to learn. Children absorb far more from what we do than from what we say, and a parent who checks the phone with clenched shoulders is teaching a class of one. The families I know

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who have held up best gave their children jobs: packing the shelter bag, learning the neighbor's name, being the one who reminds everyone where the flashlight lives. Psychologists who study communities under rocket fire keep finding the same pattern, that belonging and usefulness are the armor, and the pattern works in ordinary hard times as much as in wartime.

The Dinner-Table Version

The hardest conversations are not about the sirens at all. They are about the hatred behind them, the ones a child hears about from a classmate or sees on a screen. Here the Israeli instinct is to name the thing plainly and then widen the frame: some people hate us for what we are, and what we are is a family with a table, a holiday coming, a history we love telling. The hate gets one sentence. The table gets the rest of the evening. That ratio, one part naming to five parts living, is the closest thing to a vaccine we have found.

What Travels to Boulder

What would I offer a Boulder family reading about the settlement and wondering what to say at dinner? The same blueprint with local materials. Name what happened honestly, since children will hear it anyway and secrets teach shame. Give them a role, since a child who helps make the household ready stands a little straighter. And keep the ratio: one sentence for the harm, the rest of the evening for the joy, which is the family's own and cannot be settled away. The measures your district agreed to matter, and the belonging you build at the table matters more. Our two communities are proof of the same sentence: children do not need the danger hidden. They need the love to be visible.

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THE BLOGS

Mark Ginsberg

The Remarkable Story of Israel's Christian Citizen



Church in Nazareth - courtesy of Shutterstock

For decades, Christians in the United States have been among Israel's most steadfast friends. They have visited the country, supported Israeli communities and charities, defended the Jewish state in public life, challenged antisemitism and understood the Jewish return to the ancestral homeland as an event of profound historical and religious significance.

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Israel has long recognized and valued this friendship, building important relationships with churches, pastors, Christian organizations and faith leaders across the United States. Today, Israel's public diplomacy is increasingly highlighting another powerful dimension of that relationship: the remarkable success story of Christians in Israel itself.

This is both timely and necessary, because Israel's enemies understand the strategic importance of Christian support. Anti-Israel activists are making a concerted effort to penetrate churches, Christian universities, religious conferences and younger Christian audiences. Their aim is to turn a natural constituency of support for Israel into one that is divided, uncertain or even hostile.

They frequently employ the language of human rights, liberation theology and social justice to present Israel as an enemy of Christianity. Some attempt to separate Christianity from its Jewish roots, portray Jesus as a "Palestinian," erase the Jewish history of the biblical landscape and suggest that Israel is responsible for the struggles of Christians throughout the region.

This is not merely a distortion of history and theology. It is a deliberate political strategy. Israel's opponents know that American Christians represent one of the strongest and most consistent sources of support for the Jewish state. Weakening that bond would be a significant victory for the international campaign to isolate and delegitimize Israel.

One of the most effective responses is to tell the truth about Christian life in Israel.

Israel is the only country in the Middle East in which Christians enjoy full civil, political and religious rights within a robust democratic system. Christian citizens vote, organize politically, criticize the government, petition the courts, practice their religion openly and participate in every area of national life.

Christians serve as judges, diplomats, doctors, academics, business leaders, journalists, members of parliament and senior public officials. Christian schools are among the country's strongest educational institutions, while Christian communities make contributions to Israeli medicine, education, commerce, culture and public service far beyond their numerical size.

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Their educational achievements are particularly impressive. According to Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 87.7 percent of Christian 12th-grade students were eligible for a matriculation certificate in the 2023–24 school year. Arab Christian graduates continued to first-degree studies at a higher rate than graduates in both the wider Arab and even Jewish education systems.

Christian women are also especially prominent in higher education, accounting for more than 60 percent of Christian students.

On several important educational and social measures, Christians in Israel do not merely participate successfully. They outperform the Jewish majority.

This is a tremendous Israeli success story, and it deserves to be far better known.

This reality stands in sharp contrast with much of the surrounding region. Across the Middle East, ancient Christian communities have been devastated by war, political instability, Islamist extremism and religious persecution. In some countries, communities that survived for nearly 2,000 years have been reduced to a fraction of their former size.

In Israel, Christians can worship freely, receive an excellent education, build successful careers and participate fully in public life. Their achievements demonstrate not only their own determination and talent, but also what becomes possible when a religious minority is granted freedom, citizenship and democratic rights.

This story is starting to be at the center of official Israel's outreach to the Christian world. It is not being told merely by government spokespeople, but by Christian Israelis themselves. Christian educators, doctors, entrepreneurs, judges, students and community leaders are the most credible witnesses to their own experiences.

American Christian visitors should have opportunities to meet these communities directly. Christian universities and churches should hear from Israeli Christian speakers. Social media campaigns should introduce younger Christians to the people behind the statistics. Israel's

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Christian citizens should be presented not as symbols in a public relations campaign, but as proud and accomplished Israelis with their own voices, identities and stories.

This engagement is especially important for younger Christians, many of whom encounter Israel primarily through social media. They are frequently shown emotional images without context and slogans without history. They need more than political talking points. They need direct encounters, credible testimony and a deeper understanding of the realities of the Middl East.

The effort must also extend beyond the United States. Christian communities across Latin America, Africa, Europe and Asia represent an enormous and diverse audience. In many of these regions, affection for Israel remains profound, but anti-Israel movements are working aggressively to undermine it.

Israel's expanding effort to highlight the success of its Christian citizens therefore comes at ar important moment. It strengthens the relationship between Israel and the Christian world while countering one of the most persistent falsehoods promoted by Israel's opponents.

The truth is powerful: in the Jewish state, Christians are free, fully enfranchised and increasingly successful. That is not a slogan or a public relations invention. It is a measurable reality and one of Israel's most compelling stories.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Ginsberg is an Israel-based digital marketer and commentator on technology and artificial intelligence, with over two decades of firsthand perspective on the country's innovation economy. Originally from South Florida and now based in Efrat, he analyzes the growth of Israel's tech ecosystem and the broader implications of AI on business, policy, and society.

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GardenFleur
30 July, 2026

Perhaps American support is fading because we don't like our churches bombed, our clergy spat upon or our Christian women harassed and called cruel and foul names.

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zoglmannnicole
30 July, 2026

The social media platform "X" is responsible for very effective antisemitic content. It is responsible for some of the baseless comments made right here. These people take "X" as gospel truth. Perhaps they should lean on the Bible, if they are actually Christians. Instead, they lean on propaganda, ...

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The Price of Protection: Missile Defense and the New Currency of Dependency

18/09/2026 COMMENTARIES 6 Mins Read

By Mark Ginsberg

When Greece signed for a complete Israeli air-defense array at the end of August, the contract read like an arms sale and behaved like something else.



Mark Ginsberg

The Achilles Shield package, David's Sling interceptors, SPYDER batteries, Barak MX modules and the radars that knit them into one sky, is worth some three and a half billion dollars, and Athens is now the first European Union state to own a national missile-defense dome built entirely of Israeli systems. Arms deals used to be the receipts of alliances. This one, and the pattern forming around it, suggests the order has flipped: the hardware is now the commitment itself, signed in interceptors rather than communiques.

The Greek Signature

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Greece did not buy a widget. It bought a relationship with the country that runs the world's only continuously tested multi-layer air-defense system, live-fired in war for two years against everything from drones to ballistic missiles. Buying Israeli means plugging into that operational legacy: the software updates written overnight during real barrages, the doctrine that only a state under fire can write. For Athens, watching Turkish drone production expand and the eastern Mediterranean thicken with threat, a communique from Brussels promises debate; a dome over the national sky promises survival. The choice tells you which currency Athens now trusts.

A Widening Ledger

The Greek signature is the loudest entry in a ledger that has been filling for two years. Germany's Arrow 3 purchase, anchored in the same Israeli-American industrial line, gives Berlin a capability no European program offered on any timeline. Barak MX has found buyers in Cyprus, Slovakia, India and Azerbaijan, with Morocco and the Emirates appearing in foreign reports. The buyers share no single bloc, religion or constitution. What they share is the calculation that protection from the sky is now a sovereign good, that the traditional guarantors deliver it slower and less surely than the small state that has been forced to live under the problem, and that writing the check is itself the alliance.

The Procurement Tail

Anyone who has bought a large system knows the sticker price is the beginning of the conversation, and missile defense is a textbook case. The interceptors are consumables: a single sustained barrage can burn through ammunition budgets built for peacetime assumptions, as the last two years demonstrated in public, and replenishment contracts arrive with their own diplomacy attached. The radar and battle-management software carry lifecycle costs that routinely reach multiples of the purchase price across a platform's service life: upgrades, spares, training pipelines, the certification of every firmware release. A state that adopts a foreign dome adopts its vendor's calendar, and the vendor's wars, as its own procurement rhythm. The three and a half billion euros Athens signed for is the entry fee; the subscription is the real product, renewed annually in a currency called dependence.

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The Price of Protection: Missile Defense and the New Currency of Dependency | World Geostrategic Insights

That tail has a political barbed tip, and it is worth stating plainly. Major Israeli air-defense exports of American co-developed systems run through Washington's export-approval machinery, which means every dome sold abroad carries a third signature, and the alliance being purchased is triangular whether the buyer planned for it or not. It means the supplier gains standing in the buyer's national security debates that no treaty formally grants: when Berlin or Athens weighs a policy that Jerusalem or Washington dislikes, the dome is in the room, silently, the way a mortgage sits in a household's decisions. Purchases at this scale are not transactions. They are constitutions of a small commonwealth, and constitutions are hard to leave.

The Debt Side of the Ledger

Strategic dependency compounds like financial debt, and the balance sheet has a way of arriving due at the worst moment. A client whose deterrent umbrella is maintained abroad has wagered its survival on the supplier's continuity: Israel's own war-driven production priorities this year meant customers waited on deliveries, even as the country's record exports kept climbing through the war, a small preview of what a real regional escalation would do to export commitments. One failed interception, anywhere in the chain, would devalue every contract downstream, and the supplier knows it; performance is the collateral backing this currency, and it has to be kept nightly. The buyers are, knowingly, underwriting that exchange rate.

There is a subtler cost, which the defense economics literature calls lock-in and which plainer language calls marriage. Training regimes, command software, interceptor stockpiles and doctrine all converge on one vendor's system, and switching costs rise every year after adoption. The Greek dome will make the next Greek procurement decision before any Greek minister does. Sovereignty is not lost in a signature; it is amortized across a decade of maintenance contracts, and the states now buying a piece of the Israeli sky have chosen, with open eyes, to spend it.

What the Ledger Means

Three consequences deserve attention. First, deterrence by procurement: a state that installs Israeli layers acquires a stake in Israeli survival, and Jerusalem acquires a stake in its clients' skies, an interdependency denser than any joint declaration.

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Second, the transatlantic geometry bends. European capitals that buy Israeli systems are hedging inside NATO, not leaving it, but the hedge itself redistributes influence from Washington's monopoly on reassurance toward a new supplier of it, with Washington's own signature on each sale as the quiet guarantee. Third, the precedent is exportable beyond missiles: whoever proves he can deliver the most urgent protection, cyber, drones, rocket warning, will collect the alliances of the next decade.

The currency of protection, like all currencies, is a promise, and promises have failure modes that treaties were invented to soften. The states joining this ledger are trading the old alliance machinery, with its endless consultation and its slow, reliable patience, for a faster instrument with sharper edges. They may be right to. But the deal should be read for what it is: not an arms purchase but a refinancing, in which the mortgage on national survival is transferred from a committee of allies to a single small country that must keep intercepting, nightly, to keep the currency good.

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Image Source: Israel Ministry of Defense (Israel's director-general of the Israel Ministry of Defense, Maj. Gen. Amir Baram, and his Greek counterpart, Maj. Gen. Ioannis Bouras, signing an approximately $3.4 billion defense agreement, on Aug. 31, 2026.).

Mark Ginsberg Military Strategy

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Political Polarization in Pakistan

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THE BLOGS

Mark Ginsberg

The Myth of Israel's Isolation: The World's Moving Closer, Not Further Away



Israel Day parade - courtesy of Shutterstock

One of the most frequently repeated claims since October 7 has been that Israel is becoming increasingly isolated on the international stage. Headlines often focus on diplomatic disputes, hostile demonstrations, critical UN resolutions, and disagreements with some Western governments, creating the impression that Israel is steadily losing friends around the world.

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The reality, however, is considerably more complex.

While criticism of Israeli policies has undoubtedly intensified in some international forums, many governments have simultaneously chosen to deepen their practical relationships with Israel. Defence cooperation has expanded, trade agreements have grown, diplomatic ties have strengthened, and new strategic partnerships have emerged across Europe, Africa, Asia, Latin America and the Middle East. Far from being abandoned, Israel is increasingly viewed by many countries as an indispensable partner in areas ranging from defence and cybersecurity to agriculture, artificial intelligence, water technology and energy security.

The contrast between the political narrative and the diplomatic reality has rarely been more striking.

Key Takeaways

- Claims that Israel is becoming internationally isolated overlook significant diplomatic developments occurring around the world.
- Several governments that adopted strongly anti-Israel positions have recently lost elections while others are falling behind in opinion polls.
- European countries continue expanding defense cooperation with Israel.
- The Abraham Accords countries continue strengthening relations despite the Gaza war.
- India, Nigeria and several African nations are deepening strategic cooperation with Israel.
- Latin America has witnessed important political shifts favourable to stronger ties with Israel.
- Increasingly, governments are separating disagreements over the Gaza conflict from long-term national interests.

Politics Changes—National Interests Endure

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One of the biggest mistakes in analyzing international relations is assuming that today's political headlines represent permanent diplomatic realities.

Governments change. Elections alter foreign policy. Public opinion evolves.

In recent months, several governments that adopted some of the world's strongest anti-Israel positions have either lost power or suffered significant political setbacks. Slovenia, Colombia, Bolivia and Ecuador have all experienced electoral changes that weaken governments whose foreign policies were among the most hostile towards Israel.

Meanwhile, governments in Spain and Norway—two of Israel's sharpest European critics—are currently trailing in opinion polls.

These developments do not guarantee dramatic policy reversals.

They do illustrate that diplomatic trends are rarely static.

Europe Is Buying Israeli Security

Perhaps the clearest evidence against the narrative of isolation lies in defense cooperation.

Countries do not entrust their national security to partners they consider internationally isolated.

Germany, Slovakia and Romania have all signed major defense agreements with Israel, reflecting growing confidence in Israeli military technology and operational expertise. Greece and Cyprus have continued strengthening their strategic defense partnership with Jerusalem, recognizing Israel as an increasingly important pillar of Eastern Mediterranean security.

These agreements involve more than commercial transactions.

They represent long-term strategic partnerships that often extend over decades and require extraordinary levels of political trust.

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Governments purchasing advanced defense systems are making decisions based upon national security rather than temporary political debates.

The Abraham Accords Continue to Grow

One prediction made repeatedly after October 7 was that the Abraham Accords would collapse

The opposite has largely occurred.

The United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Morocco have continued expanding economic, technological and security cooperation with Israel despite enormous regional pressure. Investment, tourism, business partnerships and strategic dialogue have continued because all parties recognize that the long-term benefits of cooperation outweigh short-term political tensions.

This represents an important transformation in Middle Eastern politics.

For decades, the Palestinian issue effectively determined Arab-Israeli relations.

Today, many regional governments increasingly pursue foreign policies based upon their own national interests rather than ideological expectations.

That shift appears increasingly durable.

New Partnerships Across the Global South

Israel's expanding diplomatic footprint is not limited to Europe or the Middle East.

Across Africa and the developing world, numerous countries continue strengthening bilateral relations. Estonia, Fiji, Guatemala, Uganda and El Salvador have all upgraded various aspects of their relationships with Israel, recognizing the country's expertise in agriculture, healthcare cybersecurity, water management and technological innovation.

At the same time, India and Nigeria have implemented highly significant new cooperation agreements covering strategic sectors important to both countries' long-term development.

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These partnerships reflect a broader trend.

Many governments increasingly evaluate Israel through the practical lens of technology, innovation and economic cooperation rather than exclusively through the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Latin America Is Changing

Political developments across Latin America also challenge the narrative of growing isolation.

Argentina has emerged as one of Israel's closest partners in the region, with President Javier Milei continuing to deepen bilateral relations and promoting what has become known as the "Isaac Accords" as a framework for expanded cooperation.

At the same time, electoral changes elsewhere in the region have weakened several governments that previously positioned themselves among Israel's harshest critics.

Foreign policy throughout Latin America remains dynamic.

What appears today as diplomatic confrontation can rapidly evolve following democratic elections.

Recognition Through Partnership

Perhaps the most important development is qualitative rather than quantitative.

Countries are increasingly choosing to deepen relationships with Israel not despite its challenges but because of its capabilities.

Whether the issue is missile defense, cyber resilience, artificial intelligence, water scarcity, precision agriculture, emergency medicine or intelligence cooperation, Israel has become an increasingly valuable strategic partner for governments confronting complex twenty-first century security challenges.

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Even Somaliland's celebration of closer ties and recognition by Israel illustrates a broader point.

Many emerging governments increasingly view relations with Israel as an asset rather than a liability.

The Difference Between Headlines and Reality

None of this means Israel faces no diplomatic challenges.

It plainly does.

International criticism remains intense. Several governments continue adopting highly critica positions. United Nations forums remain deeply contentious, and public opinion in parts of Europe and North America has shifted significantly.

These realities should not be ignored.

Neither should the equally important reality that beneath the headlines, governments continue signing defense agreements, expanding trade, investing in technology partnerships and strengthening diplomatic ties with Israel.

International relations are ultimately driven less by slogans than by national interests.

On that measure, Israel's position remains remarkably strong.

Conclusion

Predictions of Israel's growing international isolation have become a recurring feature of commentary throughout the Gaza war.

The evidence suggests a far more nuanced picture.

While political criticism has undoubtedly intensified in some quarters, many governments have simultaneously chosen to strengthen practical cooperation with Israel across defense,

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technology, intelligence, trade, agriculture and regional security. Electoral changes in several countries, expanding strategic partnerships in Europe and the Middle East, deepening ties across Africa and Asia, and the continued growth of the Abraham Accords all point toward a more complicated diplomatic reality than the narrative of isolation suggests.

Israel is not universally embraced. No country is. But neither is it isolated.

Increasingly, governments around the world appear to be distinguishing between political disagreements over specific policies and their long-term national interests. In doing so, many have concluded that Israel remains one of the world's most valuable strategic, technological and security partners.

Diplomatic headlines may suggest isolation.

Diplomatic actions increasingly tell a different story.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Mark Ginsberg is an Israel-based digital marketer and commentator on technology and artificial intelligence, with over two decades of firsthand perspective on the country's innovation economy. Originally from South Florida and now based in Efrat, he analyzes the growth of Israel's tech ecosystem and the broader implications of AI on business, policy, and society.

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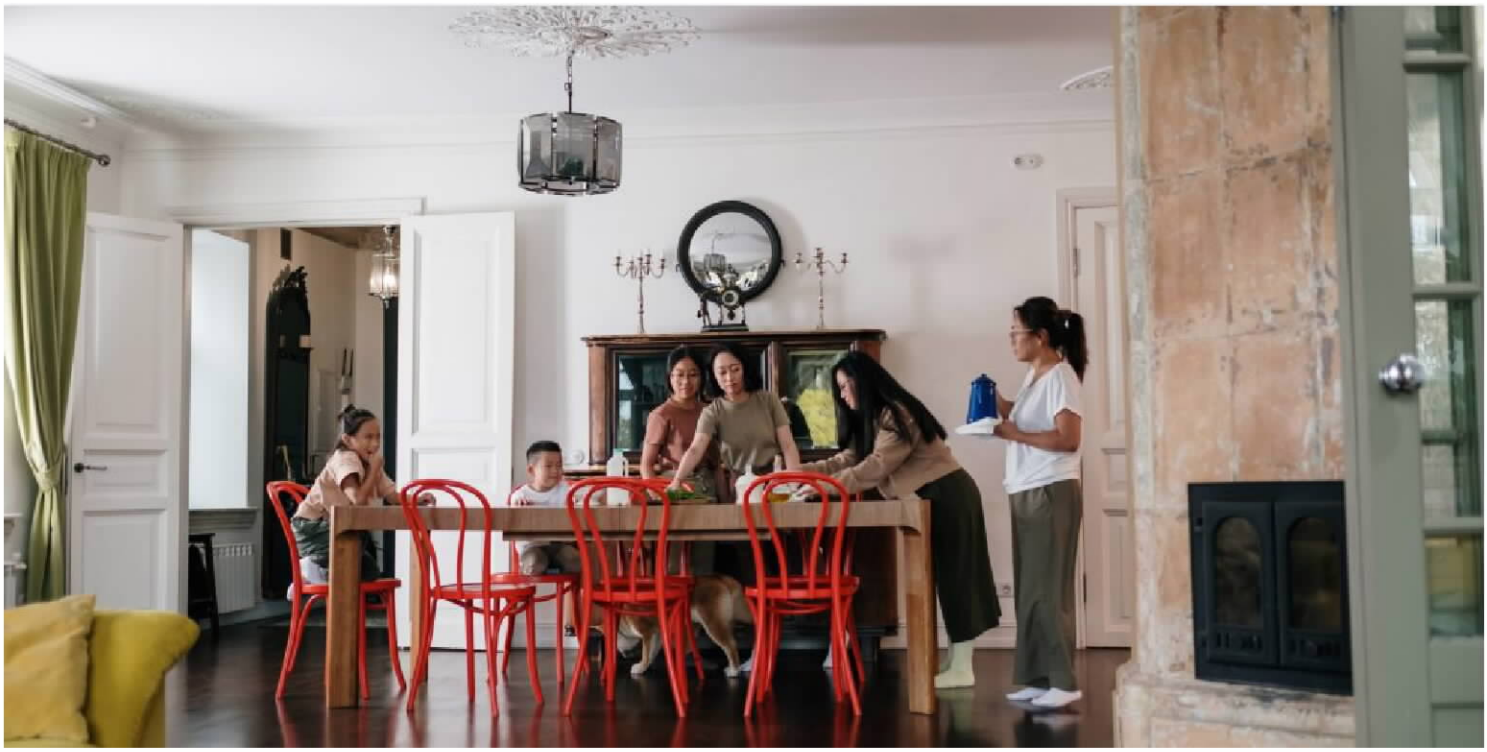


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THE GUESTS WHO COULDN'T COME

Guest September 17, 2026 Jewish Life

By Mark Ginsberg

Every Jewish holiday table is a census, and wartime Israel has learned to read the count the way one reads an x-ray, for what is present and for what is not. This year, across the holidays just ended, households set their tables with a new arithmetic: the chair for the son on reserve duty, who may or may not make it home by candle-lighting; the chair that stays empty for the hostage, set by families who are not his; the chairs of the murdered, filled by relatives who now sit twice as close to each other. I want to describe this quietly, from my own table in Efrat, since it is the piece of the war that never makes the news and the one your readers' tables have the most in common with.

Setting for the Missing

The customs differ by household and none of them are official. Some families pour the wine cup for the missing the way one does for Elijah, a placeholder with prophetic patience. Some leave the chair with its coat draped over the back, the coat that went to the base in October and has not come home for a holiday since. One mother I know photographs the empty place at each festival and sends the picture to her son at the front, a message that needs no caption: we kept it for you. The rabbis never had to rule on any of this.

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The practices invented themselves, the way liturgy does, from the ground up, and by the second year they had hardened into tradition, which is what grief does when it plans to stay.

The Table as Census

There is a harder kind of counting, and honesty requires it. The war added names to the community's permanent list, and the holidays are when the loss recalculates itself. The friend who used to carve is carved out of the evening now; his joke survives at the table, told in his cadence by someone else, and the first time each joke lands, the room holds still for half a second, a moment of silence nobody announces. New faces appear too: the lone soldier whose family is abroad, the widow brought in by the neighborhood, the friend of the fallen who has become a seventh child to a family of six. When a community absorbs a blow, it reconfigures its tables rather than merely mourning at them, and the holiday version of that reconfiguration is the most visible inventory the country takes.

What the Empty Chairs Teach

What the table teaches, two years in, is a theology of the placeholder. The empty chair is not denial; nobody at these tables believes the missing are merely late. It is a statement of account: this person belongs here, the seat is held, and the holding itself is the family's answer to everything the war tried to take. The world kept coming to celebrate in Jerusalem through every season of alarm, and the tables did the same in miniature, refusing to subtract the missing from the guest list even when subtraction was the honest arithmetic.

For readers who set their own tables with absences, medical wings, distant cities, chairs that will not be filled again, the Israeli version is not exotic. It is the same tradition arriving at the same answer under harder pressure: the table is a promise, and a promise does not depend on everyone being present to keep it. We lit the candles, sang the songs that go too high for us, and passed the food toward the empty places, which is how a family says, out loud, in the only liturgy it has: next year, complete.

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