



## **SIVAN RAHAV MEIR**

### **ISRAEL'S MOST BELOVED JOURNALIST, AUTHOR OF "THE DAILY THOUGHT"**

Sivan Rahav Meir is married to Yedidia and a mother of five. She lives in Jerusalem. A journalist in the Israeli media since she was six, Sivan has interviewed thousands of people on television, radio, and in print. Globes named her Israel's most beloved journalist, Forbes listed her as one of the most influential women in Israel, and The Jerusalem Post ranked her among the fifty most influential Jewish people in the world.

Sivan lectures in Israel and abroad on topics such as Judaism, Zionism, and new media. She also writes the "The Daily Thought," a brief commentary on current events that is circulated in Jerusalem and translated into 17 languages for global distribution. This volunteer-run project provides spiritual uplift for Jews and non-Jews all over the world.

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## **Just Look Around**

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I am writing these lines from Jerusalem. I need no scientific or philosophical proof of God's existence. All I have to do is go to the window and look outside. Millennia ago, Abraham and Sarah – among the most influential figures in human history – trekked thousands of kilometers to this land where I live. Here they raised the first Jewish family and heard God's words: Your descendants will depart for a long exile in Egypt, but they will return. So it was: Their grandson, Jacob, went with his children to Egypt, where their offspring endured centuries of hard labor.

The Jews' liberation from Egypt and journey to Israel became one of human history's most influential stories. The word "exodus" has come to define a mass departure, especially of emigrants. Moses's demand to Pharaoh, "Let my people go," inspired millions of Jews behind the Iron Curtain during Communism and the struggle of African-Americans for freedom in the United States.

The Israelites' 40-year-long desert trek also became a symbol for us all. As God promised, they arrived in Israel, lived their lives, and built the Temple, which gave light to the entire world. But then they were exiled – twice.

They kept faith for thousands of years. Everywhere they lived, they prayed facing Jerusalem. At weddings, they swore: "If I forget you, O Jerusalem." Every Shabbat, they read the ancient verses that promised return. The world mocked this tiny group and predicted its disappearance. But despite pogroms, the Crusades, the Inquisition, and the Holocaust, the connection held firm.

Well, it happened. We're here. Outside my window, I see the Jewish state thriving, just as the prophets promised millennia ago: "Old men and women will sit outdoors in Jerusalem... and boys and girls will play in its streets." Yesterday's verses have become today's headlines. Boys and girls play outside, children and adults study Torah in safety, technological developments benefit the whole planet, and we are signing peace agreements with our neighbors (although we still have enemies who refuse to acknowledge this).

Millennia after we received the mitzvah of Shabbat, I see the noisy Mahane Yehuda market shut down every Friday afternoon. Once, we did not light fires on Shabbat; now we don't turn on our smartphones. But the feeling of freedom and sanctity on the day of rest is still the same.

Millennia after God commanded us to observe Passover and Yom Kippur, we do so as eagerly as if we had received these mitzvot just yesterday, and we feel their holiness all over the country.

This is just the beginning. Fulfilling the prophecies of redemption will require much work, on the national and the personal level, but we draw inspiration from how far we have come and what we have built here.

If we believed in God for millennia in times of darkness, we will certainly believe in God in a generation where the light has begun to shine.