



AVIV MINISTRY – for Victims of Addictions and Sexual Abuse
THE NEGEV MINISTRY – Evangelization and Church Planting

MINISTRY UPDATE: OCTOBER 2022

Anton's story

“On 1 June 2001, a Hamas-affiliated Islamist terrorist blew himself up outside the Dolphinarium discotheque on the beachfront in Tel Aviv, Israel, killing 21 Israelis, 16 of whom were teenagers. The majority of the victims were Israeli teenage girls, whose families had recently immigrated from the former Soviet Union.” (Wikipedia)

One of the teenagers who came to that discotheque was **Anton**. He accompanied two girls, his close friends, who were sisters, and both died before Anton's very eyes. Anton was wounded and survived only due to the fact that another girl, whom he also knew well and who was taller than him, took the brunt of the blow and also died.

Anton was only 16 then, and to this day he can hardly cope with the guilt that overwhelms him. He blames himself for inviting those two sisters to the disco, and also for surviving, while they did not. According to many experts, these feelings are very common among survivors of accidents and terrorist attacks.



The guilt haunted Anton so intensely, that at some point he started having suicidal thoughts. He was afraid of the usual methods of suicide, so he decided that he would commit it with the help of drugs. All his attempts, however, were unsuccessful. Several times he took very large doses and passed out, but each time he was found and rescued. Then he decided to overdose in a place where no one would look for him, but still someone found and saved him. After that incident Anton started seriously wondering if there was Someone who protected him - first during the terrorist attack, and then from dying as a result of overdoses.

We met Anton for the first time when he was about 20 years old. By that age he had already become a homeless and hopeless drug addict. He started coming to Aviv Center and during one of the Bible readings there he heard a call to repent and felt as if someone was literally pushing him to step forward! After Anton had prayed the sinner's prayer, he could not hold back his tears...

For some time after that day Anton continued to abuse drugs, but he did feel God started changing him from the inside. At some point, Anton and his girlfriend, who later became his wife, came to his mother's house and asked her to close them in a room and not let them out until they had gone through the withdrawals.

After that, Anton's life began to change. He went to church regularly, got married, found a good job and had two children. Life was great until, sadly, he started gradually moving away from God and drinking a little. As a result, he eventually became an alcoholic, divorced his wife and lost absolutely everything. During all those years I kept in touch with Anton. One day he called me and said that he no longer wanted to live like that. I told him: "Leave everything and come to our rehab center."

According to Anton, the most difficult part of his rehabilitation is restoring his relationship with God. I think that anyone who has ever fallen away from the Lord will understand that. Recently I have asked Anton: “What does our rehab center mean to you?” - and he replied: “It has become my home!” Please pray for Anton and his full restoration!

News and prayer requests

The ministry in Tel Aviv continues. We are very happy for all our volunteers – both local and from abroad. Please pray that God would keep sending helpers for our volunteer teams and that more street people would take the decision to leave the streets and go to rehabilitation centers.

Thank you for praying for **Betty*** from our **Women's Shelter**. She keeps doing well, goes to church and youth meetings regularly and studies in Israel Bible college. She has become stronger spiritually and emotionally, more open and communicative, and wants to help and serve others. We are grateful to the Lord for her growth! Keep praying for her health and for her family (as you may remember from one of our updates, Betty*'s father is in our rehab center now).



Also please keep praying for **Maya***. She has lived in our Shelter for almost three months already and is doing quite well. It is hard for her to trust and communicate with people, but she is becoming more open with Tatyana seeing her loving and caring attitude. Maya* gladly attends our church services and likes to cook for other ladies in the Shelter, as well as for our Shabbat meals after the church services. Please pray for her salvation and also for her teenaged son who lives in a boarding school and started abusing cannabis.

When Maya* became an alcoholic because of her violent husband, the social services took the child from her, when he was only three years old...

Another Shelter's resident, **Martha***, is making a good progress too. She is working, improving her Hebrew, attends the church and wants to go to a Bible school. Still, it is clear she is traumatized and in need of healing. She also asks to pray for restoration of relationship with her adult children. Pray also for **Nina***, who is still unstable emotionally and whose physical condition (she has got Multiple Sclerosis) has worsened recently. Please pray for her salvation and emotional restoration. She attends the church, but not regularly.

Eduard is telling that the flow of **immigrants from Ukraine and Russia** continues, and many decide to come as tourist first, and change their status already in Israel (it is especially common among those who come from Russia, since the Jewish Agency's activity there is largely paralyzed, after the Russian authorities announced their intent to shut the organization down and court hearings regarding the Agency's future began). As a result, many immigrants who have no relatives in the Land find themselves in need of help, housing, etc., which is not provided by the government as long as they are still "tourists". Eduard and his team are helping these families around the clock. Please keep praying.

Thank you for all your care and prayers!

Yours in Him, Dou and Olga Bikas

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