

Donatella Della Ratta



**ASK ME FOR THOSE UNBORN
PROMISES THAT MAY SEEM UNLIKELY
TO HAPPEN IN THE NATURAL..
#4 2025**

But if you can learn to pray bold prayers and big prayers, and expect big and believe big, that allows God to do big things in your life. And some of you have a dream deep down on the inside, but you've never asked God for it. You pray for everyone else, but you need to start asking God for what he's put in you. It's not wrong to ask, it's not selfish to ask. God expects us to ask. In fact, the Scripture says in Psalm two, verse eight, "ask of me, and I will give you the nations". God is saying: "ask me for big things. Ask me for those hidden dreams that I planted in your heart. Ask me for those unborn promises that in the natural don't look like it's ever gonna happen".

PART I – OF FLOODS, TEMPLES ... AND HEIFERS

In September 2022, five extraordinary passengers boarded American Airlines flight 777—a journey unlike any other. Five perfectly unblemished red heifers were flown from their hometown in Texas to Ben Gurion Airport in Israel.

A cow is a bovine that has given birth; a heifer has not—a crucial distinction in this story. Even more essential is the fact that the five first class passengers were fully reddish-brown, had no physical blemishes, and had never been yoked. Upon arrival, the heifers were transported to their new home—a metal shed in Shiloh, a small village in the West Bank, about 45 km north of Jerusalem. Organized as a religious community settlement, Shiloh was built on Palestinian land in violation of international law. Just four years before the heifers' arrival, in 2019, Benjamin Netanyahu had planted an olive tree there, marking it as a symbol of Israel's claim to the land—an act commemorated by a plaque that proudly accompanies "our hold on the ground of our homeland." In biblical times, Shiloh was Israel's first capital. Today, it is at the center of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—now further complicated by the presence of the five red heifers.

The red heifer, or *para aduma*, is mentioned in the Book of Numbers—the fourth of the five books of the Jewish Torah: *"...speak to the sons of Israel that they bring you an unblemished red heifer, in which there is no defect and on which a yoke has never been mounted..."*

For Byron Stinson, a Texas-based entrepreneur and self-proclaimed Judeo-Christian, these ancient verses hold profound significance. Stinson, who recalls his first divine encounter as a teenager—when God foretold his destined bond with the Jewish people—has since become a passionate advocate for the fulfillment of the prophecy. In numerous YouTube videos, he unpacks the red heifer's role in purification rituals. The animal's ashes, mixed with spring

water, would be essential for cleansing those who have come into contact with the dead—anyone who has lost a loved one or visited a cemetery: an inevitable condition in a land of perpetual war.

Stinson, an international fundraiser and advisor for Boneh Israel ("*Building Israel*"), a nonprofit dedicated to "*bringing the Bible to life*" and "*actively bringing the redemption closer*," is the mastermind behind the red heifers' journey to the Holy Land. In a 2024 podcast, he appears smiling with the heifers roaming behind him. His T-shirt, featuring a large blue&white Israeli banner, unmistakably declares: "*From the river to the sea, that's the flag you're gonna see*".

In another clip, Larry Borntrager, a farmer from northern Indiana, is seen tending to the heifers in their new Shiloh home. "*It's a lot of fun to be involved in something that I see God is doing behind the scenes. Ideas are becoming reality*," he declares with satisfaction, feeding the animals while awaiting a group of tourists eager to bear witness to a prophecy in the making.

The red heifer sacrifice is central to a deeply held belief: the construction of the Third Temple in Jerusalem. In Judaism, particularly within Orthodox traditions, the Third Temple is the most sacred place of worship, following Solomon's Temple and the Second Temple, both of which were destroyed. For many believers, its reconstruction is seen as a precursor to, or a sign of, the arrival of the Messianic age.

Without the heifers, the purification rituals necessary for building the Third Temple cannot take place. The red heifer sacrifice is the final sign, marking the moment when the long-awaited construction of the Third Temple can finally begin.

Yet there is a troubling detail: the location. For over 1,300 years, two of Islam's holiest sites—Al Aqsa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock—have stood on the Temple Mount, the very ground where the Third Temple is meant to rise. For

decades, this sacred space has been one of the most explosive flashpoints of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Rebuilding the temple would mean erasing what’s already there, displacing, destroying these Islamic landmarks, central to the faith of millions of Muslims worldwide.

Despite this, organizations like the Temple Institute, which actively campaigns for the Third Temple, present the project as a divine necessity rather than a political or religious provocation. *“Building the Holy Temple, ‘a house of prayer for all nations’ (Isaiah 56:7), is the only peace plan that can and will succeed,”* the Institute boldly claims. Once considered a fringe movement, its vision has gained credibility as Israel’s government—and many others worldwide—shift further to the extreme right.

In 2018, U.S. Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth, who was at the time a Fox News host, declared to the *Times of Israel*: “There’s no reason why the miracle of the re-establishment of the temple on the Temple Mount is not possible.” That very same year, Israel minted a Trump Temple coin to commemorate the president’s official recognition of Jerusalem as Israel’s capital. What once seemed like an extreme, unattainable dream now inches closer to reality, backed by a growing political and ideological movement with the power to shape history -both locally and globally.

Everyone seems pretty serious about the Third Temple, the role played by the red heifers in triggering its reconstruction, and the unspoken fate of the Islamic holy sites that currently occupy the site where it is supposed to be built. Everyone—including Hamas.

Muhammad Deif, then commander-in-chief of Hamas’ military wing, the Al-Qassam Brigades, explicitly referenced the red heifers in the statement claiming responsibility for the Al-Aqsa Flood operation on October 7 2023.

“The occupiers crimes have increased beyond all limits, especially in Jerusalem and the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque”, Deif declared. “They do not hide their intentions to build their purported temple on the ruins of the site of the Night Journey of our Prophet Muhammad, prayer and peace be upon him. The occupiers have brought their red cows to sacrifice them and sprinkle their ashes mixed with water to announce the demolition of Al-Aqsa and the construction of their temple. They have dared to insult our Prophet Muhammad, prayer and peace be upon him, inside the compound of the blessed Al-Aqsa Mosque”.

Al-Aqsa flood resulted in the deaths of approximately 1,200 people in Israel, and the kidnapping of around 250 Israeli hostages, sparking yet another catastrophic war – a genocide- on Gaza that has, since, claimed more than 65.000 Palestinian lives, including 444 deaths for starvation (as of September 22, 2025)-- and still counting.

The red heifers and the Third Temple resurfaced in Hamas’ statements in 2024 when the group’s spokesperson, Abu Obeida, referenced them in a speech marking the first 100 days of Israel’s war on Gaza. He denounced the symbolism of the heifers as a “detestable religious myth”, claiming it was “designed for aggression against the feelings of an entire nation, striking at the heart of its Arab identity.”

Why would Hamas, in the first place, code-name a military attack targeting southern Israel “Al-Aqsa Flood”, if not to defend Jerusalem? To many of us, this term meant very little, and was largely ignored. But devout Muslims understood it to be a rallying cry – a call to “flood” Jerusalem.

From their side, Jewish believers understood it, too. “The war we are waging is a war for the Temple Mount”, as an Israeli mother of a fallen soldier has declared.

Meanwhile, the red heifers graze peacefully in Shiloh, unaware that their fate has been written in ancient texts, and modern war plans alike.

For some, their sacrifice will mark the beginning of a new era, the rise of the Third Temple. As for what already occupies that sacred ground—the Islamic holy sites—the idea is to “move them into a beautiful museum somewhere,” preserving them as relics of the past. A sentiment that echoes hauntingly in other proposals: that Gaza’s population, too, should be “relocated” to some undefined place, where they can “live without disruption,” while their homeland is transformed into the new Riviera of the Middle East.

PART II – SPECULATIVE VIOLENCE

I am no expert in heifers, biblical sacrifices, or prophecies of a returning messiah.

I do not follow debates on the rebuilding of temples or on eschatological visions of Judeo-Christian movements.

What I study are images. And it was through an image that I went down this rabbit hole.

One day, I came across a picture—completely by chance, or maybe not. Maybe it was algorithmic design that placed it on my feed, retweeted by a friend of a friend of a friend. Then came another image, and another. Before I knew it, I had spiraled into a deluge of them—dozens, hundreds.

At first glance, they seemed harmless. So cheap in their digital polish—too crisp, too smooth, too obviously computer-generated. But their innocence was deceptive. These images weren’t just picturing a world that didn’t exist; they were conjuring one. They weren’t documenting violence, but anticipating it. Speculating on it.

Training the eye to accept a future that had not happened yet—but one that artificial intelligence was already making feel inevitable.

Generative AI has painted that future in vivid strokes, shaping visions that, until now, had existed only in whispered prophecies and febrile imagination. In this algorithmic dreamscape, the red heifers have already been sacrificed, their ashes scattered in a ritual long foretold. The Third Temple is under construction, rising stone by stone. And Al Aqsa is already burning.

I have seen the flames flicker across my timeline - fueling elation, rage, despair.

I bear witness to the digital chorus, voices rising in support, in condemnation, in grief. Threads unraveling beneath AI-generated images, punctuated by emojis—a standing ovation, a bleeding heart, a cascade of tears. And then, the watermelon, that quiet symbol of a nation, Palestine, whose very existence is put on trial in the comment sections, debated by faceless users from across the planet, in total disregard of what its population would want or need.

AI has already carved out a place for them, too—this time, a future not conceived by anonymous users but drafted at the highest levels of power. In May 2024, the Israeli Prime Minister’s office released Gaza 2035, visually rendering the *Riviera of the Middle East* long before Trump’s administration even spoke the words.

The images gleam with promise—sleek towers piercing a cobalt sky, crystal-clear water flowing through green avenues, a utopia of consumption and technology. Shoppers move placidly through a world built for them, clad in the flowing whites of an aristocracy dressed in Gulf traditional clothes.

This is no longer Palestine. This is a *prolongment* of NEOM, the high-tech Saudi *cognitive city* stretching 170 kilometers from desert peaks to the Red Sea.

A vision so seamless, that it no longer feels like a possibility but, rather, a destiny.

Like NEOM, Gaza 2035 is not a plan—it is a blueprint for erasure, a template for a new Middle East, one that unfolds not in the hands of history, but in the cold, silent logic of machines.

And while the ‘civilized’ world voices its outrage, condemning the crude reality of ethnic cleansing dressed up as waterfront properties, new jobs, and promises of peace and stability—we have already *SEEN* it. The future has already been rendered.

The glossy, AI-generated images, so polished, so harmless in their digital perfection, have already reworked the present.

By looking at them, we have naturalized them. By visualizing them, we have, in some ways,

accepted them. What has not yet happened in the material world has already taken place in the realm of the seen by virtue of visualization.

AI has done more than imagine—it has packaged a reality before us, like a foregone conclusion.

What was once a mere idea now exists in photographic-like *proof*. A possible vision of the future that has been already accepted in the present, in silence, through our eyes.

The optical unconscious, Walter Benjamin called it.

Images that bypass rational thought, slipping into the depths of perception—half-seen, emotionally undigested, too problematic to be consciously acknowledged, yet impossible to unsee.

What has already been seen, however faintly, prepares the mind for its arrival. Generative AI is the perfect accomplice, rendering into shareable images the visions once too audacious to be dreamt, too dangerous to be spoken aloud. In the realm of synthetic realism shaped by AI-generated visuals, every scenario—no matter how violent—can be rendered into existence.

“A geyser of new image-worlds hisses up at points in our existence where we would least have thought them possible,” Benjamin wrote. He saw in photography not just a tool of documentation but a gateway to collective fantasy, a portal where the distortions of the psychotic and the dreamer could take visual form and be absorbed by the masses. A way of sculpting the unconscious of a society—its fears, its obsessions, its boldest and unspoken desires—into tangible visions.

Generative AI is the quintessential embodiment of the *optical unconscious*.

Thanks to Generative AI, the red heifer prophecy, the vision of the Third Temple, the destruction of Al Aqsa, no longer remain confined to whispers of the believers, or the margins of esoteric forums.

AI renders them, and feeds them into the collective eye, turning what was once an obscure fantasy into a globally shared project. The violence it triggers is silent, unspoken, and nearly invisible.

It is speculative violence—a violence that does

not explode, does not bleed, does not scream, yet seeps into the subconscious, preparing the mind for a future that has not yet arrived but has already been seen.

Benjamin thought that photography allowed the past to return and haunt the present.

Generative AI reverses the process: it is the future that now haunts the present.

“Image worlds, which dwell in the smallest things—meaningful yet covert enough to find a hiding place in waking dreams.”

Now, they no longer hide. They are rendered, shared, searched, circulated.

Gaza 2035. The Third Temple. The Riviera of the Middle East.

Speculative violence bypasses the censors of social media. It does not trigger alarms, because it does not depict explicit horror. It presents the destruction *before* it happens, wrapped in high-definition serenity. A future of gleaming towers, pristine streets, and artificial waterways.

But whose absence makes these spaces possible?

PART III – SURVIVAL IN CODE

The morning after I first read this text in public, a message wakes me up in my hotel bed.

A friend tells me: the Riviera of the Middle East has gone viral. It has interrupted sleep, broken into breakfast bowls, cut through gym routines and makeup mirrors, disrupted evening scrolling, flooding millions of screens.

A chorus rises—disbelief, outrage, disgust.

Words like : ‘unconceivable, grotesque, shameful’ spread around.

Memes go viral.

Some call the Riviera video an AI orientalist fantasy—palms, dancers, and beaches cleansed from memory.

Then, the noise fades.

I keep watching.

I check the Temple situation daily, refresh my feed to see if al Aqsa still stands, defying gravity and prophecy alike.

I follow the red heifers too—their grazing

peaceful and unaware.

Meanwhile, the president of the country grins from tunnels beneath al Aqsa. He speaks of investments in tourism, but something darker lingers in those old stones.

Pesach video-wishes solemnly announce: *Next year in Jerusalem.*

Someone adds in the comments section:

Inshallah - the Arabic for 'God willing'

The mosque is on pixelated fire again—.

I reach out to the author of *The Third Temple*, an Israeli novel once shelved under speculative fiction.

He writes:

"In 2015, when the book was published in Israel, some readers and critics saw it as science fiction, an imaginary dystopia. They could not believe that modern Israel, the 'start-up' nation, could ever transform into such an extreme and isolated kingdom".

...meanwhile, Gaza starves to death.

I'm told that those who manage to survive there, do so via networks.

If you have a phone. If you can connect. If you can send digital crumbs—flour, rice, milk—through Pay Pal.

Peter Thiel, the man who helped design the pipeline between hunger and payment, this survival in code that controls Palestinian calories and lives, once wrote:

"The destiny of the postmodern world... will be either (...) limitless violence or the peace of the kingdom of God."

Thiel believes that we have stopped moving. That somewhere between the moon landing and the touchscreen, the West abandoned its promising future.

For him, this is no accident. It is the fallout of an Enlightenment gone soft -'an atheist-liberal project' -he calls it- that forgot the hard questions.

What is man? What is violence? Who is God?

Then 9/11 came and, suddenly, the sacred forced its way back in.

"When you get rid of faith," Thiel warns, "you end

up in a world with no reason."

Back in 2003, he co-founded Palantir to apply Pay Pal's fraud-detection algorithms to the War on Terror. A palantir is a seeing stone from *Lord of the Rings*, a crystal orb that grants visions of what lies hidden in the mind. Spot the anomaly. Predict the threat. All under the banner of preserving civil liberties.

Today, Palantir is one of the most powerful data firms in the world. Since Donald Trump's return to power, the company has secured over \$113 million in new federal contracts. It has deals with the Department of Homeland Security, the Pentagon, and a contract with the Israeli military to assist with AI its "war-related mission" in Gaza.

Thiel calls AI "the biggest exception to stagnation." An antidote to stability and inertia.

"If all we have is AI, I will take it."

"We should lean toward danger", he says.

After all -- "it can't get worse"...

Let us leave good sense behind like a hideous husk and let us hurl ourselves, like fruit spiced with pride, into the immense mouth and breast of the world! Let us feed the unknown, not from despair, but simply to enrich the unfathomable reservoirs of the Absurd!

- F.T. Marinetti

"Beit Hanoun is disappearing from the face of the earth," an Israeli journalist says, commenting real-time destruction from Gaza.

On the other side, a Palestinian poet echoes: "...my hometown, Beit Hanoun,...the place where i was born, raised and grew up, where i felt sorrow and joy....

I stand with only my pen beside me -alone, like Gaza and its children.

I never imagined, when i first began writing poetry, that one day i would be writing about my own death -about the death of my entire hometown'....

Written By Donatella Della Ratta

Visual Research

Donatella Della Ratta Tommaso Campagna

Jordi Viader Guerrero

Production And Editing

Tommaso Campagna Jordi Viader Guerrero

Production Assistant

Giulia Timis

Music

Daniel Leix Palumbo

SOURCES

Intro

Joel Osteen, Praying Bold Prayers, Feb 2, 2023

PART I

Book of Numbers (19:2).

Isaiah (56:7).

Mohammed Deif, official statement on al-Aqsa Flood operation, 7 October 2023.

PART II

Walter Benjamin "News about Flowers" (1928).

Walter Benjamin "A Little History of Photography" (1931).

PART III

Yishai Sarid "The Third Temple" (2015).

Peter Thiel "The Straussian Moment" (2007).

Filippo Tommaso Marinetti "Manifesto Futurista" (1909).

Omar Hamad "To Be a Poet From Gaza",
Instagram post (14 July 2025)

Peter Thiel "Why We Stopped Progressing",
a conversation with Jordan B. Peterson (31
March 2025)

THIS VIDEO IS PART OF DONATELLA DELLA RATTA'S RESEARCH PROJECT "INTELLIGENZA ARTIFICIALE E NUOVE FORME DI VIOLENZA: ETICA, ESTETICA E POLITICA NELL'ERA DEL REALISMO SINTETICO" SUPPORTED BY THE ITALIAN COUNCIL (2024-25).