

Kazanlak Bulgaria

The Rose Valley in Bulgaria, near the town of Kazanlak, is among the major producers of fragrance from roses in the world. The flowers are **renowned** for their **fine fragrance**, and are **commercially harvested for rose oil** (either "rose otto" or "rose absolute") used in perfumery and to make rose water and "rose concrete".

The **flower petals are also edible**. They may be **used to flavor food**, as a garnish, as an **herbal tea**, and preserved in sugar as gulkand. Gulkand is a sweet **preserve of rose petals**, used as a flavoring in many parts of South Asia.

Harvesting of flowers is done by hand in the morning before sunrise and then the oil goes through an extraction process on the same day. When we consider that the **Damask rose grows to 2.2 metres (7 ft 3 in)** tall, and the stems are densely **armed with stout, curved prickles** and stiff bristles then we soon realise **the physical cost** of the hands of those who are harvesting.

Why am I drawing your attention to the Damask rose,

I'm simply saying that within this Valley of the Roses, where it's fragrance reaches the ends of the Earth, it is the Roma Gypsies who are used to Harvest the Rose Fields.

Those who are **despised and outcast** and cannot enter a **hotel or coffee bar** without being told to leave are the ones who are **harvesting the Roses so that people can adorn themselves with a fragrance.**

1 Corinthians 1:27

27 But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong.

And from this Illegal Roma Gypsy Village, where there is poverty and lack, where **one Water Standpipe serves the 5000 people**, where there are no drains or sewage provider and where the majority of people look traumatized are the very people who are harvesting a fragrance for the world to enjoy.

Gypsy Church Bulgaria.

Demitar Basanov is a Pastor who lives in the village and is trying to make a difference.

His **Father would sweep the floors clean** of a Gambling Casino in the early hours and while he worked and gathered the rubbish he would **pray**.

And God heard his prayers and eventually this **Gambling Hall became a Church Hall**.

Each night the people gather to worship and pray.

- Why? Because Jesus is **all they have** and they need him.
- They are **hungry** for God's Presence.
- And the **people came** and other Pastors came and a missionary heard and came.

And a **Baptist minister came** who was tortured and imprisoned for many years for his Christian faith under the former Bulgarian Communist regime.

He told the Pastor that he was so blessed to see 3 Pastors moving in the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Zechariah 4:6

6 So he answered and said to me:

***“This is the word of the Lord to Zerubbabel:
‘Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,’
Says the Lord of hosts.***

Notes written by Rev Steve Sheppard 14 /11/ 24