

עדת אש קודש Adass Aish Kodesh

A TRIP TO OUR HOME *Harav Y. Reuven Rubin Shlita*

Where to start? I just don't begin to know. It's been like experiencing the opening of a sealed and shaken bottle of fizzy water, my feelings have been exploding about in all directions.

Wait, I forgot to even mention what I'm on about, that's how explosive my emotions are. I'm in Eretz Yisroel for the first time in five years, and the first time without my sorely missed Rebbetzin A'H. It has taken some time but I have finally worked up the courage to attempt such a trip.

My son, the Rav of Scotland offered that we go together for just a few days, he had a communal simcha and was hoping I would go with him.

I admit, I was hesitant, I needed to go to Eretz Yisroel like a thirsty soul needs spiritual hydration, but without the Rebbetzin? Could I revisit those sweet holy places where we shared so many memories together? The quest we shared of giving our children and grandchildren a taste of unadulterated Yiddishkiet, the sights and sounds of holy Yidden scurrying along the stones that were first treaded upon by our great ancestors? Taking them to see tzadikim, sharing Shabbosim in the environs of our greatest spiritual leaders?

All these snapshots of wondrous times jumbled in my mind at first mention of this pilgrimage, it tumbled like a vast washing machine, making it close to impossible to focus on what I needed to do. Truth be said, I knew I had to face this challenge sooner or later, and my stalling was just a mechanism to hide from what was inevitable. A yid must see and breathe Eretz Yisroel, it's what our neshomah needs no matter where our golus sends us.

The days leading up to our departure had a certain emotional fog, I have never packed for a trip to Israel without the hashgacha of my Rebbetzin. Tickets sorted, packing enough stuff done, gifts bought, suitcases found, all these steps felt a

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לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
כ"ק מרן אדמו"ר מפיאסצנה
הרב קלונימוס קלמן שפירא
זצוקלה"ה



לזכר ולעילוי נשמת
הרבנית הצדקנית
חיה שרה בת הרב שלמה
יחיאל רובין ז"ל



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bit dull when done for one. Underlining all this was the edginess of apprehension, how would I face walking in Yerushalayim without the wry commentary of the one soul who knew my every nuance. But I'm here, in this cherished holy place, and although memories whisper in my ear at every turn, I am amazed at the exciting new memories I see all around me. We are a holy people, and we share a bond that goes way beyond all the politic that trumpets our divisions constantly.

From the very first moment we stepped on the plane, you could feel the difference. The plane was fully booked and every inch was used for all the paraphernalia that comes with traveling as a frumah Yied. Hat boxes abounded, together with gemorahs, talis bags and packed lunches. Just as we were settling into our seats, I noticed that scattered among us was a group of special-needs teens with their devoted teachers and carers. They were from Israel and had been on a trip to England to attend activities sponsored by the Kisharon School. For a week these neshomas would probably never experience again, invited by Yieden in faraway England, who had no connection other than they were Yieden, and hence their brethren. My son and I made some changes in our seating so these kids could be together, and the love and care they were shown by everyone was amazing. So yes, I was truly now on my way to Eretz Yisroel, where sweet brethren seek to care, despite the size or length of tzitzis.

Things have changed since I last visited. Ever more buildings have blossomed and each floor seems teaming with ever more Yidden. I was astounded at how many hiemisha young men and women are working at all levels of society. The hotel we are staying in is connected with the admiral work of Yad Sarah, an organisation that reaches out to those with medical needs. Everyone, from the cooks to the desk managers are hiemisha young people, working to build a society where a torah Yied need not compromise when seeking to be part of a thriving economic society. As always one meets Jews from all over the world. Friday night hotel experience is always fascinating, a French family is offering glasses of fine French wine, others smile with l'chiam on their lips. Someone ambles over to me and extolls the Jewish Tribune, and compliments my articles. I always appreciate such casual remarks, a writer's art is a lonely one in that you never know if there is anyone out their reading your efforts, so thank you Reb Yid for the chizuk.

A visit to the Kosel was always going to be a difficult moment. I sit down on one of those white plastic chairs, and start to say tehillim, I soon find myself stumbling over the words, 'Eibishter it has been five years, Eibishter, I need Your comforting caress.' I look around, hundreds are stroking the stones, some with tears wrought from troubled tortured hearts. This huge wall which is held together with the tears of Hashems Children, how much pain these stones have soaked up, how many dreams have been scribbled on those white paper letters to Hashem? It all spills out, Klall Yisroel is in Golus, but Hashem holds us close and weeps with us. In the background I see a Daf HaYomi shiur start up, the magid shiur speaks up over the din of the prayers, he is teaching the words of Hashem's eternal Torah. It all comes together, the streams of Yidden from every corner of the world, gathering, seeking, praying, as the warmth of our connection with the Shechinah holds us all together. I sit on my white chair, praying for Yidden who are part of my Shtieble, thinking over their tzurous, their hopes and dreams. There is a line I heard once from a poet in America. There the floors of high buildings are called stories, so the poem read:

*"Everybody gets lonely sometimes
Guess a stranger is a friend in need
In the shadow of this New York skyline all these stories looking down on me....."*

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Sitting on a Motzie Shabbos by the Kosel, all the stories looking down on us all. The People from Har Sinai, striving, sometimes with great pain, to come close to Our Father. I get up and walk closer, tears of release and hope blur my vision, I step closer and kiss the eternity of what it means to be a Yied, and I just feel I can't leave.

The next few days were filled with chizuk, visiting Gedolim, thriving in the throngs of Jews around me.

On the last day of my all too short trip I went to a particularly poignant place. In the middle of all the hustle and bustle of Yerusholayim there is a very humble building wherein lay the two Gerrer Rebbe's The Imrai Emes ZTL and his son the Pnai Menachem ZTL . No plaques, no huge stone, just a humble pile of rocks and candle light. One is struck by the humbleness of the place. People seem to be coming in and out at all hours, some to say a quick prayer, others to grab inspiration just from the unassuming sense of humble kedushah that rests in the air. A chosson stands in his wedding attire, praying for a Torah future. A business man slides into the room, slipping a kvital under a stone. This is the majesty of our Holy Land, at every corner we can find strength, our Tzadikim rest in our midst so as to allow our prayers to pour out.

My readers will wonder where or when this narrative of a mundane trip will end. Rabbi Rubin what is the purpose of this narrative? In answer, I am not sure myself, The Title on the top of the page says, 'A Rabbis Journal,' and this Rabbi is doing just that. May we all find ourselves soon in Yerusholayim together with the Moshiach, and well, thank you for allowing me to indulge myself with these thoughts.