

Snapchat from Israel

The ride on the El Al Dreamliner was, well, a dream. The 787-9 produced by good old Boeing, certainly makes the trip easier. Of course, traveling to Israel meant all kinds of paperwork, a PCR test before leaving and a PCR test at the airport upon arriving. It also meant giving some blood from my vein upon arrival in Israel. Now I know how many antibodies I have per whatever the measure is. Apparently, that was not enough and I was sent to quarantine jail in the apartment where we were staying at least. After sending a copy of our vaccine certificate from the States, there was still some other checkout procedure. Finally, after 2 ½ days or so, we received an e-mail that we were free at last! The first thing I did, even though it was 11:00 at night, was take a nice walk through Be'er Ya'akov.

Speaking of Be'er Ya'akov, it is the quintessential Mizrahi, Sephardi, Israeli city. This apartment is in the new section, recently developed. Be'er Ya'akov was originally off limits for development since it is the furthest north that Egyptian tanks achieved in the 1956 war of attempted annihilation against the Jewish state. However, Israel now only has to worry about thousands of incoming missiles directed against its civilian population. Most of Be'er Ya'akov seems to be occupied by very friendly, warm, hardworking Israelis just going about their business trying to make a living and coexisting peacefully with their neighbors.

I got into the habit of going to morning Minyan at the local Chabad Synagogue. One morning I looked around and I realized that I was the only genuinely European White person in the room. The guy in front of me was a young Ethiopian guy and the person to my left was an older very distinguished looking Yemenite man. Everyone else undoubtedly were ancestors of people who have lived in Israel for hundreds or thousands of generations as well as the ancestors of Jews who were driven out of Iran, Iraq, Syria, and the entirety of North Africa. Those million or so Jews dispossessed of their possessions, homes and lives who, of course, were never compensated and never will be remediated. They were taken in, thankfully, by the land of Israel.

For me, the most enjoyable thing about the Sephardi service is the Israeli pronunciation. I was lucky as a young man to have a teacher named Chaim Gerlitz, who was born in the Holy Land and fought in the 1948 War, when six Arab countries tried to murder all the Jews and drive the remainder into the sea. That was a tough war as well. The British had turned over all of their arms to the Jordanians. The Americans, while recognizing the right of Israel to exist, imposed an arms embargo. Israel had to fight with obsolete weapons from Eastern Europe and France. Even so, Israel managed to hang on to the edge of the country, while Jordan killed every Jew in the old city of Jerusalem and burned down or destroyed all the Synagogues. From 1948 until 1967, when Israel liberated Jerusalem, no Jew was allowed in the city by the Jordanians. In the 1948 War, Egypt illegally occupied Gaza, until once again liberated by Israel in 1967. Of course, the world never made a peep about the improper, illegal conduct of Egypt, Jordan or the other countries that violated all the rules.

Be'er Ya'akov is hardly the big city. While it is a growing community of lovely apartments, many green areas and playgrounds, it is still something of an outback compared to Tel Aviv, Jerusalem and the other great cities of this growing nation state. One could easily never leave Be'er Ya'akov, mingling with the friendly people, hearing the cries and laughter of young children, and shopping in the more than adequate local stores.

The peacefulness of life within the borders of Israel is deceptive. It is easy to forget that this small nation of 9 million people, 24% of whom are Arabs, is surrounded by crazy people who seek the blood of the Jews who live in this land. Terrorist organization like Hamas to the south, Hezbollah to the north, and every other sort of nasty folks plot daily against the people who live here, the Jews, Christians, fellow Arabs, Druze, Bedouins, you name it. The unstable Arab regimes that exist a stone's throw from tiny Israel, are unreliable U.S. allies, who do not hesitate for a moment to play the Americans against the Russians.

It is hard to imagine from this perspective why anyone in Washington would think of doing business with Iran whose goal is to kill every Christian in the Middle East, drive out the Jews and export revolution around the world. Nevertheless, America seems to have lost its direction when it comes to a full and intelligent understanding of the dangers that lurk at the feeding trough of Western Democracy. Democracy should not be an excuse to permit our enemies open access to our free institutions and stable way of life. Democracy has the right to defend itself and to demand peaceful coexistence with an emphasis on "peaceful."

That having been said, the state of affairs in Israel is good. A new government headed for the next two years or so by Naftali Bennett seems to be intent on continuing the necessity for safety and security of this nation. While the so-called "alternative" Prime Minister Yair Lapid is a labor party leader, he hopefully will not sell out to the enemies of western civilization based upon vague worthless promises. Only time will tell.

Could anyone imagine the government in the United States made up of the kind of diversity that exists in this county? The answer is no, no way!

In the coming days we will head up to Jerusalem and hopefully spend a Shabbat there. One of the interesting aspects of being in Israel where the country is officially opened, is the lack of foreign tourists. In spite of that lack, Israelis are out in the streets, the stores, the malls, and at the beaches. Perhaps the people of this tiny nation have taken back their own lifestyle and heritage, not to be sold or diluted to anyone else in the world.

The United States could learn a lot from the fortitude, loyalty, dedication and family values exhibited by the people in this remarkably resilient country.

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