



Israel – Recent Travel Experience

The Caleb-Report by Brigitte B. Nussbächer

*Despite everything going on, Israel remains a special land full of promises and fulfilled prophecies!
God's blessing is still tangible – He stands by the covenant with His people!*



We were very curious to see what we would find. For 3 years we had not seen this impressive country with its special people and all the tangible evidence of God's presence and blessings. Israel's closed borders during the Corona period and a cancer diagnosis of my husband last year had made it impossible.

Much had happened in and to Israel during that time: the effects and consequences of the lock down on society and economy, the Lapid-Bennet government, the new elections, Netanyahu's return as Prime Minister - and this year the horrific and frighteningly frequent terrorist attacks. In addition, in recent months the increasingly violent demonstrations, protests, refusals and threats.

As we sat on the plane on March 12, 2023, images ran through my mind, all of them worrisome. And then I remembered the impressions, with which the scouts, Moses had sent to the Promised Land came back with: they had no eye for the potential and the possibilities, but saw only frightening things. This assessment, which scared the whole people, had fatal consequences for the Israelites: 40 years of wandering in the desert and no one was allowed to enter the land. But there were also the two scouts Caleb and Joshua, who judged the land and the situation differently. Thus they became heirs of the promise.

Which images and which voices did I want to give space to in me - and what would I pass on myself? I wished to be a Caleb.

Below us, the coast of Israel became visible: green, cultivated fields and built-up towns. Then Tel Aviv: a bustling, pulsating metropolis, only about 100 years old.



This made me aware again of what a turnaround, what a miracle had taken place here: As late as 1876, Mark Twain had complained that there was not a bush, not an animal, not a human being to be seen on this strip of land. Today life was sparkling here. I remembered the Bible passage from Ezekiel 36:35: *"He who passes through you will say, 'This land was a desert; now it has become like the Garden of Eden!' The cities lay deserted and in ruins, now they are inhabited and well fortified!"*



At Ben Gurion Airport, everything went very quickly. An official came up to us and took us out of the line of people waiting to check in. He said, "You can go right through" and pressed appropriate papers into our hands. We didn't know what happened to us - what an unexpected VIP reception.

Shortly after, we were on the express train to Jerusalem, rolling through blooming countryside. I had always been very impressed to see plants and flowers in Israel - and next to them all the little tubes



that provided for their irrigation. We in Europe do not have to struggle so laboriously for each green, there is enough water. But here everything was wrested from the desert, from the swamps. Brilliant ideas had made it possible: Water desalination plants on the Mediterranean, the world's best recycling of wastewater and computerized irrigation!

Our boutique hotel "Bezalel" turned out to be a hit. Good location in the center, great service, delicious breakfast buffet and happy hour at 17:00. Absolute highlights: the garden and the brilliant roof terrace. But above all, very friendly, competent and helpful staff, especially Adi Gur, the Operations Manager.



And then we experienced a miracle!

My husband, Harald, had forgotten his backpack with money and many valuables on the train. We reported the loss and we went to the Lost & Found office at the station - no trace. After 2 days of unsuccessful searching we were told that there was no chance to get it back. Thereupon Harald wanted to lock his iPad (which was also in the lost backpack), with the help of his cell phone to prevent data misuse. Suddenly, he saw via the virtual location service that the iPad was in Herzliya. Since he couldn't get any information by phone, he took the train there the very next morning. And indeed, the backpack with all its contents, including the money, was in the train station 60 km from Jerusalem. Someone had found it and left it there, untouched, with the station manager. Unbelievable, but true! For us this was a very great encouragement and again proof that with God all things are possible - and that there are wonderful people in this country!



The main purpose of our trip was prayer for divine intervention in Harald's cancer illness. So we went daily to the "Kotel" (Hebrew), the Western Wall (called the Wailing Wall before 1967) at the former Temple, because we think this is a special place.

Solomon had prayed at the dedication of the Holy Temple: 1 Kings 8:41-43 *"As for the stranger who does not belong to your people Israel, but has come from a far country for your name's sake ... when they come and pray before this temple, hear from heaven...*

Do whatever the stranger asks of you, so that all the peoples of the earth may know your name and fear you like your people Israel" - and he received the following answer from God in 1 Kings 9:3: *"I have heard your prayer and your supplication before me; I have consecrated this temple ... placing my name there forever. My eyes and my heart will always be there".*

And while we felt, that each time our inner peace and confidence grew, that this situation too was for our blessing, we experienced heartwarming encounters with old and new Jewish friends. Some visited us, others came to pray with us at the Kotel. And still others we visited as we passed by, such



as Moshe Kempinski's "Shorashim" book store (which we recommend to everyone!) on the square in front of the large Hurva Synagogue. It is his great desire to make the Jewish way of thinking and seeking God understandable. With his books he creates a great basis for mutual understanding and respect. Once again we were richly blessed.

One evening we tried the restaurant "Margo" at 21 King George Street. Opened 6 months ago, this little gem is hidden behind the entrance to the Stay Inn hotel. Chef Ezekiel is a young Israeli, a creative self-taught chef who creates original and absolutely delicious meals. He told us his story and even gave us an extra dish when he realized how much we liked his delicacies.



This is something that fascinates us again and again in various encounters: people are so open and share their life stories when they realize that you are interested in them. And many of these stories are absolutely extraordinary and impressive, whether it is the young lady who made Aliyah from England 6 years ago, the Antiquarian who came to Israel from Syria as a child over 40 years ago, the "lone" soldier from the USA, who volunteered for military service in Israel and is missing his family during this time; our young cook or our friends Ari Abramowitz and Jeremy Gimpel, who are building a farm in the Judean mountains. What we found in all of them is the love for Israel, the determination to make a valuable contribution to the construction here, the energy, the innovative ideas and a lot of warmth and cordiality towards us.



The culmination of our time in Israel was 2 days with Aviel and Anat Schneider (who run the news agency Israel Today), who hosted us at their home and whose friendship we value very much.

A sunny morning on their terrace, beyond noise and the hectic life, surrounded by flowers and birdsong reminds us of paradise. What we will always be grateful for, is that they gave us insights we would never have had otherwise. They took us to the unspoiled nature near the moshav (Israeli Jewish village) where they live. We would not have thought that there was such beautiful, pristine land here. And in the middle of it, a small winery, with a garden - and people enjoying Shabbat here. The atmosphere was incredible: the peace, the quiet, the joy of life. Like a dream!



These days we had received an email from the German Foreign Office, in which we were explicitly warned of demonstrations, violent riots and attacks. What we experienced was something completely different.

Undoubtedly, the situation in Israel is tense, the losses due to terrorist attacks are extremely tragic, the disunity of the people can become a real danger for the future of the country and the threat of rocket fire is frightening.



But when you walk through the streets of this country, see the young soldiers, who protect it and really meet the people, you feel how beautiful and energetic Israel is - in the midst of all, despite all the unsolved problems! It is a special land full of promises and fulfilling prophecies! The people here have a unique potential. God's blessing is still felt - he is committed to the covenant with his people.

And it is the same God who saved Israel many times from seemingly hopeless situations: Whether it was the Exodus from Egypt, which we commemorate now at Passover - or, for example, the War of Independence in 1948, when the approximately 600,000 Israelis of the newly founded state (militarily correspondingly unequipped) successfully defended themselves against the attack of 5 armies from Arab countries (who did not accept the UN decision). On April 26, 2023, the 75th anniversary of Israel's Independence Day, Yom haAtzma'ut, was celebrated.

Isaiah 41:10: *“But you, Israel, do not be afraid, for I am your God! I strengthen you, yes, I help you, yes, I hold you with the right hand of my righteousness.”*

Am Israel chai - la chaim! The people of Israel live - to life!

In this sense: see you next year in Jerusalem!

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