

# Weekly Teaching

## February 9, 2018

This Shabbat, I am in Jerusalem with our Sholom Center's Interfaith mission delegation.

If you haven't had a chance to travel to Israel, or haven't been recently, it's the greatest most important Jewish experience you can ever participate in.

Israel is the Jewish "melting pot."

There you have Jews who want to study Torah and live a traditional Jewish life living along their fellow Jews who barely practice Judaism at all, yet speak Hebrew, know the Bible, Jewish History and culturally celebrate all of the Jewish holidays.

Israelis come from all streams of normative human life.

There are the doctors, nurses, social workers, farmers, bankers, jewelers, poets, techies, academics, scientists, firemen, police, soldiers, tour guides, etc...

Jewish history is preserved, and archeological sites could be found aside a Kosher McDonalds or falafel stand.

The land is preserved, but so are its citizens.

Israelis can be "prickly" on the outside, but they are "sweet" in the inside, like the cactus (sabra).

In Israel, we live the mitzvah of taking care of the widow, orphan and strangers in our midst.

Israel is of "this world" and yet allows us to touch the "next world."

After 2000 years of Jewish exile, we have been returned to our land and can control our own Jewish sovereign State.

In Jerusalem, we can hear the cacophony of all the sacred sounds of different religions coming from the synagogues, churches and mosques, and know that Israel guarantees the freedom of religious sites to all.

Ancient, timeless, eternal, Israel is our living miracle.

Our Interfaith mission delegation has the privilege of walking upon the dust of Abraham and Sarah, sharing in the sweetness of an ice cream and modern Jewish life.

We can't take our modern miracle of Israel for granted, or deny ourselves every opportunity to visit our holy land.

For much of Jewish history we experienced the agony of persecution.

However, our People always "HOPED"—HATIKVAH—that we could again live in a world which would see the restoration of our Jewish sovereignty in our own Holy Land.

It's why we conclude each Passover Seder and every Yom Kippur with the words and sacred pledge: *L'shana habaa b'Yerushalayim* — Next Year in Jerusalem.

Theodore Herzl, the founder of modern day political Zionism, put this idea of a self-fulfilling prophecy in modern language, when he declared: *"Im Tirzu ein zu aggadah"* — "if you will it, it is no dream."

Our Jewish generation has been privileged to see the dream come true.

*Am Yisrael Chai; Odaveinu Chai; The People of Israel Live; And, we will Live forever!*

*"Sisu et Yerushalayim giluh bah. Giluh bah kol ohaveha.* — Let us rejoice for Jerusalem, all of us who love it."

Shabbat Shalom,

Rabbi Mitch

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