



# QUOTH THE MAVEN

BY BEVERLY KING POLLOCK

## It's Good to be a Jew

It's good to be a Jew touring in Israel. You find people care. Like if you sneeze, 27 people say, "Gezunt!" And anytime anybody makes a purchase, you take time off to say, "ooh" and "Aah" and "Use it in good health."

You find you learn so much. (And not just about the bladder capacity of the people you're touring with.)

Back home if you see a bunch of Hebrew letters atop a building, you know you're approaching a Shul. But in Israel the letters can mean a gas station, a restaurant, a gift shop or even a church!

No matter how ardent a worker you are for Jewish causes or how many travelogues you've seen, unless you've been to Israel you simply can't grasp all that is true.

And even being there you sometimes feel it's a dream concocted for us tourists.

I expected to see hills and hills of sand. And there are some. But there is so much green. And you know that every tree was planted by a Jew probably within our own lifetime. You see miles and miles of green. And when it abruptly stops you know you're near Arab territory.

What surprised me were all the mountains covered with stone from 2,000 years of erosion and neglect. Now the Israelis are taking the same stone from the mountains and using it to build a modern Israel. There is construction everywhere. With so many needs and limited

financial resources, you wonder how priorities can ever be determined.

You are struck by the contrast of the old with the new. You're moved by the Western Wall where our forefathers cried for generations. And as you look up to the top, you see patches of green brush somehow clinging to the Wall and growing from out of nowhere.

The green brush has to be tough to survive. And it reminds you of the Israeli of today. Tough, independent, a little cocky, and proud of his country and his people.

You find yourself starting every sentence with, "It's difficult to believe...." (for most everything is). And how can a country which gives you such a feeling of peace be a country prepared for war.

But you are reminded by the constant security checks. Even at the Wall. And at the Hadassah Hospital where a tour member received expert treatment.

(Did you know that the blue in the Chagall window portraying Dan the Judge represents water? Because water is as unstable as human justice.)

On the highway there are security checkpoints for vehicles. I wondered why our bus with all of us wearing the red tour hats (which could double as yarmulkes) was never stopped.

But the tour hat meant nothing when we went to the street dancing and celebrations in Jerusalem on Simha Tora. A girl soldier searched every pocketbook. You get used to it and don't even mind. (But I wondered for a moment how I'd feel if that were done here in the States.)

You get a special lift (on Simha Tora) when you see a child going through a dancing chain atop her grandfather's back. You hear accordion players blaring over the loudspeakers and boy buglers. And you see hand-lettered placards (a couple in English) saying, "Jews of Russia we are with you."

Jews around you when Hatikvah is played. Even when it isn't sweater weather you get chills. I don't know if my mother enjoyed because she cried the whole time.

In other sections of Jerusalem on the same night you saw babies in strollers with "pais" and yarmulkes held down with an elastic band. And men in frock coats and hats with fur and women with "sheitels." And there was the haunting melody of the violins.

And all of a sudden you realize what it is to be a Jew in a Jewish State. To participate in any or all or none of the celebrations the way you like.

For this is the country where the children's textbook is the Bible. (But there were no Bibles in the hotel bedrooms.)

A trip to Israel can't be measured in one sitting of words and thoughts. But from time to time I hope we can review and share more of our hopes and dreams and impressions and observations with you.

And if you want to compare notes, please do!

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## INSPECT JDC OPERATIONS IN EUROPE

Rabbi Dudley Weinberg, Chairman of the United Jewish Appeal's Rabbinical Advisory Council, has departed for a two-week fact finding tour of the operations of the Joint Distribution Committee. Rabbi Weinberg is spiritual leader of Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun in Milwaukee.

Rabbi Weinberg, who is accompanied by his wife, departed on August 2nd and will return to the country August 19th. He will tour JDC installations in Casablanca, Paris, Vienna and Bucharest. In each city,

he will visit and see first hand the diverse programs sponsored by the JDC from funds raised by the UJA. Among these are the extensive programs of elementary education in Casablanca; programs for transmigrants in Paris and Vienna; and the extensive health and welfare programs for the aged in Bucharest.

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