

# *Yerushalayim Yearnings:*

## **Of Exalted Summer Reunions, Lost Hats, and Wealthy Poor People**

**Shalom Uvracha from Eretz Yisrael and from the Old City of Yerushalayim!**

**We boarded on Sunday, *Shiva Asar B'Tamuz*: the first halachic conundrum that many fasting Jews had was: *when does the fast end?* Many offered their desired input, but a Westwood turned Yerushalayim holy yid by the name of Rabbi Dr. Chaim Keller (son of Ray and Lucy Keller ob"m) revolutionized the zmanim world and saved the day by developing the chai tables (<https://chaitables.com> ) and incorporating it into ELAL's entertainment system. It turns out that the times (and the route) are constantly a-changing so that ELAL LY06 flies more north then east, flying according to the great circle route (<https://gisgeography.com/great-circle-geodesic-line-shortest-flight-path>) – ideal for fuel and quicker flight times, but less so for famished fasters; so while my initial assumption was that we would cut about three hours from the fast, the net reduction was actually about an hour and ten minutes. Another point of fascination, from *tzeis* to *neitz* (night to sunrise) was about three hours**

**I walk into the famed and gorgeous Churva Shul on Tuesday morning. I am greeted by many smiling faces - we have a few things in common: mutual love, great simcha and we don't quite remember each other's names. To be fair, there are more of them than me and the Zilberman mishpacha weights heavily to the *yuds* – so there is Rav Yosef, Rav Yehoshua, Rav Yechiel and Rav Yirmiyahu Zilberman. We worked that through Baruch Hashem and we are excited to be learning in their holy and super vibrant beis midrash.**

**But this is more than the standard reunion; there is more simcha in the air – after all, we are post one of the great *hearas panim* (acts of Divine grace) of our lifetimes – the 12 day war. We can't properly fathom the tension and subsequent simcha felt here. I later find out that the Rov of the community, Rav Eliyahu paskened to say *Hatov V'Hameitiv* with *sheim umalchus* and to say a full Hallel (without a bracha). By the way, neither the yeshiva nor the shul closed for a moment during the war. Incredible!**



Avraham from Elad, my *peyos* clad (they were not dread locks) cab driver from the airport was helping me unload as I arrived into the Old City; After thoroughly enjoying my fascinating conversation with him [who at the age of 20, a month after finishing the Israeli navy, married his childhood sweetheart. Feeling pangs of Teshuva in the navy, he committed together with his kallah to start marriage with the Shabbos Kallah (along with a fully observant lifestyle). Today some 32 years and six children later and after slowly impacting his extended family, his fifth child was about to be engaged Tuesday night; he was wondering how he was going to afford it (thank you to the shliach mitzvah donors – we were able to give him something), it was time to part. I asked him to take out my hat, but alas the hat, it was not to be found.

Avraham was fairly sure I didn't bring it into the cab. I knew that I brought a hat on the plane and was fairly confident that I had even brought it out of the airport. You know the mind games we can play (mental note, when traveling bear down on transitions into cabs , out of cabs, leaving trains and planes) – but luckily, Batyah had this year, put a label in the hat with my name and phone number and indeed I got the call about an hour later.

The cute call of a ten-year-old girl excitedly leaving a *hashavas aveida* message was precious and pure. I had taken the hat with me into the cab, but apparently as we let the other passenger off in Ramat Eshkol, I had put my hat on a Jerusalem stone garden wall and in the rush, had forgotten to take it back.

I called back, and as HP (*Hashgacha Pratis*) would have it, her father works in the Old City – at the storied Diaspora yeshiva - he would be happy to bring the hat the next day. As I made my way to the yeshiva, which I had never visited before, the incredible sight of the motley crew of vibrant yidden, in one corner there were two older men in their mid 70's, in another a chavrusa between a pierced young man and a bearded bekeshed avreich. Another group with non-standard yeshiva garb was learning seriously a piece in Kiddushin with the Rov who had a microphone and was also on zoom. The furniture was old, the sefarim needed a good binder and the walls were crying for paint – but it was sooo alive!

And then the girl's father, the Rov walked in. I thought here's a wonderful opportunity to thank the young lady. I handed him a 50 shekel bill (~15 dollars) for



her. He was not having it, he said *mitzvos lav leihanos nitnu* – mitzvos are not meant for personal benefit. I countered it's proper chinuch to feel good about the mitzvah. He said, "*Don't worry, they feel good already - that's not the way we are mechanech our children.*" I suggested he ask his wife to weigh in – he was unimpressed by the suggestion. He told me give it to tzedakah - I said maybe your daughter can give it to tzedakah. *B'kitzur*, I lost big time.

I don't know this family nor their financial situation; it is hard to imagine this is a wealthy family. However the reinkeit, the purity of not mixing mitzvahs and money - just letting the mitzvah stand on a pure pedestal of *lishma* was something so beautiful to behold. Is there really a price for a pure mitzvah? In a city of exalted Torah values, who needs money?

We bumped into Rabbi Jeff Wohlegelernter in Zilberman Kollel, and met with Rochel Simon and with Chattan/Kallah Asher Smith and Rachel Kaufman – due to get married around Sukkos time.

Shabbos in the Old City beckons!

Thank you to Rabbi Stern and the other Rabbonim who are filling in the gap.

A gutten Shabbos to All  
The Branders