

# 10 Days in Israel in 2022/5782

*By Steve Feldman*

*One could not fully document all that I saw during my uplifting and inspiring trip to Israel, nor could I share all of what I did document photographically. Here then are some visual highlights:*



**A hilltop in "Area C," Judea, Israel**



**Beautiful, burgeoning and charming Efrat, Israel. Unfortunately there is a tremendous amount of illegal Arab building in Efrat's environs which is apparently tolerated by elected officials.**

*While the landscapes are breathtaking and the air is charged with a spirituality and energy unlike anyplace else on Earth, living in Israel includes living with challenges and adversity found no place else. Reminders of this are often apparent and at times not so apparent. Some make "lemonade" from the "lemons." Others meet the challenges head-on, with the same spirit that Jews have lived with on this land for many millennia. In the next two pages are glimpses of some of both:*



**Atop the Hesder Yeshiva in Sderot, people with a creative bent have taken the remnants of Kassam rockets and other missiles and turned them into sculptures, or in the example at left, a chanukiah. Palestinian-Arabs have fired more than 15,000 rockets and missiles at Jewish communities in Israel for 20-plus years — with many raining down on Sderot. Everyone age 21 and under and many adults here suffer from PTSD — but it is not "post." Below is a view of part of the fence that separates the Gaza Strip from Israel (since it is hard to see due to the haze, I have added a red line to the photo), and a view of Sderot from the same spot — with the train tracks in**

**the immediate foreground. While news media and social media are filled with tales of suffering in Gaza (though not noted, at the hands of Arab leaders), there is little about the suffering of Jews — nor the courage of every Jewish person in this area of Israel.**



*Israel is blessed to have many of its citizens plus Jews from throughout the Diaspora don the uniform and serve in its military branches — and there are also those who defend the land and the people in other ways — choosing to live in dangerous and unpleasant circumstances to maintain and preserve a Jewish presence whether in congested Jerusalem or on an otherwise barren hilltop. These unsung heroes whose names likely will not be recorded for posterity are true heroes living the Zionist dream today.*

For more than a year, one Jerusalem neighborhood has gotten an inordinate amount of attention — all fallacious. The Jewish People know it as Shimon HaTzadik (named for “Simon the Righteous,” a Kohen Gadol, head of the Sanhedrin as well as a Tanna, whose tomb is nearby) while the Arabs and nearly all of the media refer to it as Sheik Jarrah. Many of the houses in the neighborhood are Jewish owned (with proof verified by Israel’s liberal Supreme Court) but Arabs have illegally squatted in them for decades — refusing to pay minimal rent or to vacate despite court orders. The situation became newsworthy and volatile as officials sought to carry out evictions. Some Jewish families have been able to reclaim and live in these homes like the one pictured below. The competition between Arabs and Jews for land in Judea and Samaria in what is known as “Area C” is even fiercer. Illegal Arab buildings primarily funded by Europeans are more and more prevalent. If someone Jewish does not settle Israeli land, then Arabs will. These

red signs prove that it is Israelis — not Palestinian-Arabs — who face travel restrictions in Israel.



From Har Habayit (the Temple Mount) and the Kotel (Western Wall) in Jerusalem, to the Machpela (Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs) in Hebron, to the most secular sites in Israel, and from Avraham Avinu (Abraham our Patriarch), to Theodor Herzl (the father of modern political Zionism), to Jews today living the Zionist dream — Israel: the nation-state of the Jewish People, the Jewish homeland and the largest Jewish community in the world today, is both an ancient and a modern miracle. It thrives despite modern-day slings and arrows and their dangerous rhetorical equivalents. We who care about Israel, and who care about Jewry and who understand the importance of Zionism — whether Jewish or Gentile — must continue the struggle to safeguard the Land, the People and the rights of Jewish people in this place. We must be at least as smart, relentless and hard-working as our enemies and adversaries. It takes effort and supporting those who make the effort — whether that effort is exerted in Israel, or in the Diaspora such as by ZOA. It took the efforts of millions to get to this point, and it will take the efforts and resources of millions more for it to continue.

**A view of Har Habayit and the Kotel as dusk approaches from atop Aish HaTorah World Center in the heart of Jerusalem, followed by a view of Ma'arat HaMachpelah (the Cave of the Patriarchs and Matriarchs) in the ancient Jewish city (and first capital of the First Jewish Commonwealth) Hebron. A plaque marks the burial chamber of Abraham there. Meanwhile, one of many posters of Herzl at the Herzl Museum in Jerusalem.**

