

Jerusalem Museums (including the Knesset)

We finally made it to Jerusalem after all this time in Israel (4 months+).



(you must have heard about the Holyland fiasco - we just drove by it)

We set out to tour The Israeli Museum (מוזיאון ישראל)



and the Temple of the Book (היכל הספר) the home of the Dead Sea Scrolls.



As both are practically adjacent to the Israeli Knesset (parliament) we thought we'll watch the daily parliament session from the visitor's gallery. Interesting that in all the years we lived in

Israel we never seen the chamber from within (other than on TV) and seeing that we are watching the Knesset channel on TV (mostly for lack of channel availability) , we thought it would be a good idea.



In typical Zohar improvisational flare, we (I) did not notice that that on Tuesdays the Israeli Museum is open only from 4PM - 11PM (all other days 10-6) - who knew?!. So here we are at 10:30 at the gate and no Museum. Good things happen to good people - so we found out that the Museum of the “The lands of the Bible” next door, was open and we figure we’ll kill some time there.





Little did we know how it was going to turn out. We joined a guided tour with 2 other ladies just as our tour guide arrived. Mrs. Ada Klein is by our estimation 92-95 years old (you judge by the photo - we were too shy to ask). On a Friday afternoon, in 1997 Ada was doing some shopping at the Machne Yehuda Market just when a 17-year old Palestinian female suicide bomber detonated a powerful bomb at a bus stop next to the crowded market. 6 people were killed and 90 were injured. Ada was among the injured.



Ada Klein was a biologist, but after her retirement she decided to study Archaeology and while as she apologizes that because of her injury (she seems to drag a lame leg that still hurts her a lot on a good day) she could not go on digging expeditions, she decided to become a volunteer guide. Ada took us on a fascinating tour of the Museum and with her combination of knowledge, passion and charm captivated us for over two hours. She apologized for being a bit slow that day as her leg was really hurting but she did not stop to rest for a moment during the tour - What a woman!





After lunch the Jewish quarters we were back at the Knesset to watch the daily session. I promised before to observe but not criticize, but I have to break my promise. Of the 120 member Knesset 4(!) were in attendance - FOUR!!! (sorry, not including the chair, a transcriber

and a security officer). The rules of the house require the attendance of at least one cabinet minister to represent the government of the day. He/She were not present! After 30 minutes the chair, who was pissed off royally and made a few scolding remarks, threatened to close the session unless a cabinet minister showed up within 5. A few scrambling moments later the Transportation Minister, without any apology, sat down at the Cabinet desk.

You all know that the balance of power in the Israeli Government Coalition rests with the religious parties and they know better: You need to have a “Minyan” (10 people) for any prayer, why don’t they bring forward a law requiring a Minyan in the Knesset? I was embarrassed for the youths who were in the gallery representing a religious girls’ school from Jerusalem and a secular High School from Haifa. Must have been a be field trip as part of their Citizenship curriculum. What a shame!





(in the Lands of the Bible museum there was also an exhibition of “Shofars”. The class of young student is listening to the teacher describing the shofar in the middle. The one belonging to the Rabi Goren, then the head Rabi of the IDF. This is the very shofar he blew when (in the picture on the wall) the Israeli paratrooper unit liberated the Western Wall during the six-Day War. There is a wonderful story to go with it - ask me sometime)

The tour of the Israeli Museum and the Temple of the Book, where we learned all about the Dead Sea Scrolls, was wonderful. We must go back sometime as you really need a full day to see it and we were museum'ed out.





(A model of ancient Jerusalem)



and the Second Temple

What have we learned? If at the Museum - look for Ada Klein, we hope she'll be there for many years to come. Actually we wish that we would be around to reach her age but more so her vigor;



Do not go to the Knesset to see the Israeli parliamentary system at work or you may get depressed and do not take the train to Jerusalem it is slow and cranky;



But go to Jerusalem whenever you can. Even when you think you have seen all there is to see - there is always more and than - the feeling in the air (and the air itself) - it's inspirational.