



THE GENERAL JEWISH HOSPITAL JERUSALEM

SHAARE ZEDEK

161, JAFFA ST. P.O.B. 293
JERUSALEM • ISRAEL

May 7, 1970

Rabbi Maurice Lamm
1889 Sedgwick Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10453

Dear Rabbi Lamm:

I am sending you enclosed a photocopy of an article written by Arnold Fine in the April 17 to April 23 issue of the Jewish Press which shocked us very much. Although we can understand that Mr. Fine was upset about his son's illness and, being far from home, had to go through unfamiliar procedures, his report about Shaare Zedek is incredible and not factual.

We feel that the whole tone of this article is so undignified that it would not be right for the hospital to send an official reply to the Jewish Press. On the other hand, this should not go unanswered, and the best possible reaction to such an article would be the spontaneous reply from a person like yourself who knows Shaare Zedek well from his personal experiences there and has a high standing in his community. You could state that this description of Shaare Zedek is completely out of line with your own experience of the hospital, both with regard to cleanliness and courteous treatment by our staff.

We would very much appreciate it, were you to write a suitable letter to the Jewish Press.

Nachum Pessin asked me to convey to you his warmest regards.

Thanking you for any help you could give us in this matter, I am, with best wishes and personal regards,

Sincerely yours,

Elchanan E. Pels

Director of Public Relations

EEP:mg

cc: Rev. A. Asher Hirsch
American Committee



I Remember When...

By ARNOLD FINE



Shoen! I'm back from Israel! And all I have to say is, like Mama always says, "Gay gezuntch heit—and convince yourself!" Israel is truly the land of miracles.

First, let me tell you something about Israeli drivers. If the Arabs ever want to destroy Israel, they don't have to use bullets—all they have to do is put a car in the hands of every Israeli. They'll destroy themselves in a week. GEVALD! Are they drivers! After we got off the plane and took a cab ride to Jerusalem—I tore up my driver's license. A New York driver wouldn't last ten minutes on the road with the Israeli drivers! They drive like every car is a tank and your car is an Egyptian installation.

On one trip we rode with a cab driver who smacked into the back of another small car. The damage was slight and I told him he was a terrible driver! "Didn't you see him?" I asked. He shrugged, "Listen, I hit him, didn't I?"

But let me start from the beginning. The flight to Israel on El Al was a riot. First of all, you know how you can tell an El Al flight from any other? On El Al, nobody sits—everybody walks up and down the aisles, like it was a boardwalk in Coney Island.

From the minute you get on the plane they start feeding you. We were at Kennedy airport waiting to get off the ground and they began serving supper! Once we were in the air—they came around with 'ah glesseleh tea' for you to wash down the supper. Then about an hour later they came around with 'ah small snack.' Let me tell you something, if you don't put on ten pounds on the way over—you don't put on an ounce.

The stewardesses on the plane aren't just hostesses—they're simply 'balabustehs' in mini skirts! Honest! A flight to Israel on El Al is like going to a Bar Mitzvah reception. At first I thought the plane was taken

over by a caterer and we were heading for Moscovitz & Lepowitz.

A lady sitting next to me was a little nervous. It was her first flight. When the stewardess came over with food the woman refused. The hostess stood there almost with tears in her eyes. "Eat something—you need the energy! Eat! You'll worry later." And she wouldn't move until the woman at least took something!

Now, let me ask you something—is there ever a Jew who doesn't look for a bargain? 'Takeh,' even on El Al halfway over the Atlantic the plane stewards come down the aisle with duty-free bargains for sale! They have cigarette lighters, shavers, perfumes, cigarettes, shoppes—everything "strictly wholesale"! My wife went on a shopping spree! We got off the plane with twelve pounds more luggage than when we got on!

We landed at Lod Airport in Israel and took a 'Sharoot' which is like a taxi, to Jerusalem. The driver, a former Israeli pilot drove that car like it 'takeh' was a Phantom Jet! Gevald—what a trip! When I asked why he had to take the turns on 2 wheels, he explained this was a way of saving rubber. Nu?

Once in Jerusalem, we left our bags at the hotel and right away we went to the Western Wall.

My son, who attends Tel Aviv University and my niece who attends Haifa University led us down the intricate pathways to the Wall. Then the Wall appeared in all its glory. What an awe inspiring sight. We prayed at the Wall and said prayers for our loved ones and friends. You honestly come away feeling ten feet tall. The place is filled with magic.

We then walked through part of the Old City and the Arab quarter. It was one of the most picturesque spots I have ever seen. Like something out of a James Bond movie—but here, the smells were real. Let me tell you, 'Kon't brochen' from

city. It is filled with all kinds of intrigue and souvenir shops. Gevald, do they have souvenir shops!

The following day, my little one got up with a fever and a severe pain at the back of his neck. Nu? Go find a doctor! We found one and he said, "I want him to have a blood test immediately! Show this to a taxi driver and he will take you to Shaare Zedek Hospital immediately."

He called a cab for us and we ran down the stairs. We showed the driver the doctor's note and the driver nodded that he knew where we wanted to go. He drove for about ten minutes and then let us off in some desolated spot inside Jerusalem. He pointed—and grunted, "There... There..."

We got out of the cab and walked toward the building he had pointed to. We walked up the stairs and came upon a room with maybe fifty or sixty coughing and sneezing men, women and children. If you weren't sick when you entered this room you surely would have been by the time you got out. It had all the character of a subway rest room. We stood around until I could speak to a nurse who ran by.

"I'm an American, could you help me, I must get a blood test for my son," I said in English. I showed her the note the doctor had given us. She grumbled something in Hebrew and pointed to the door. "You don't belong here! This is no where you go" and raced off quite indifferent to our anguish.

We later learned this place was the clinic for the Socialist medicine patients.

We went outside and looked around but could not find any other building that even remotely looked like a hospital. Suddenly we saw two Chassidim walking down the street, my niece ran over to them to show them the paper and to ask if they knew where the hospital was. They turned their faces away from her and kept walking. I ran after them and spoke in English, but they waved me off with a nasty shout of, "Americans!"—and kept walking, leaving us in the middle of nowhere!

We finally found a woman who was passing by. She read the note the doctor had written

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and took us to the right place. Here, too, there were about twenty women in a room a little bigger than a filthy telephone booth. I tried speaking to a nurse to check to see if we were in the right place and I was ignored with a nasty, "You have to wait your turn!"

I pleaded, "All I want to know, is this the right place for the child to take a blood test"—she simply ignored me. She too, was not impressed by an American tourist.

Finally, one of the women who was waiting saw the pain the child was in, gave us her place and allowed us to reach the inquiry window. We gave the nurse the note and we went into a filthy room, where three or four other people were sitting taking all kind of tests. It was a horror, to say the least. Finally a student nurse came over and did the test on the youngster.

"Will you give the results of the test to the doctor—he's waiting for the results," I said to the woman who seemed to be in charge. She simply ignored my inquiry and practically threw us out of the room, making certain our bill for the test was paid!

The doctor we had visited eventually called the hospital and got the results. Everything was as it should be, and we all breathed a sigh of relief. We even forgave the rudeness of the Shaare Zedek staff!