

WebMail - These Letters of yours

Delete File Create Reply Reply All Forward Previous Next Options Index

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Date Sent: Thursday, March 14, 2002 10:53 AM

From: "Yael Cycowicz, Ph.D." <yc60@columbia.edu> [Add to Address Book](#)

To: daroskies

Subject: These Letters of yours

Status: Urgent New

Shalom (Vboker Tov)

I thought to write you back after your first few letters, but my English is not as eloquent as yours and I felt somewhat uncomfortable to write. I wish I had Hebrew Word so I would be able to express myself better (or well), and you could have a chance to read written Hebrew from a typical (?) and not a literary Sabra. Well, I do not have that option, and your email force me to write, as I would like to continue reading your view and experiences in OUR country.

Your letters touched me in many ways.

As I started getting your letters, I felt, for the first time in over a year and half, that there is still life in Israel beyond terror and death. As you know, my side of the family is ALL in Israel (I have nobody in the USA) and in recent months it had become more and more difficult for me to follow my loved ones lives, to hear them, and to provide support. Every telephone call, in the late or early hours, accelerates my hear beat and sometimes I would not sleep for many hours. It will be too long to describe what is all about for me, but I can say that as a daughter of German Jewish refugees, I see my parents, who in some sense are at the sunset of their life, suffering

a great deal of pain of not being able to provide a better world for their children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. The other day when I spoke

to my father, he said: "we are back 50 years, I am living again the past, Jewish blood is 'hefker'. I heard it, and understood the life of my father better than ever before.

Then your letters start coming, and suddenly I felt that my soul has being lifted. I realized that beside "not going to the mall", and "not going downtown", and "not going to restaurants", there are places where the great

human spirit still exists. People still read and write, they visit each other (be-stam yom shel chol), and not all is dark and depressing. (My sister just told me how her family and few others start meeting for special dinners during the weekday at each other houses).

Your letters also fascinate me for a very different reason. It clearly demonstrates to me that society in Israel is so mixed. Matthew and I often argue about life in Israeli. And often I would say Matt you have not been in Israel, you were in Haifa (Matt spend 2 years there), Haifa is not Israel. But then I will add, well I am also not exactly from Israel, I really "know" Yerushalim, Israel is probably Tel-Aviv. Reading your letter suggests to me that even in Yerushalim you can have a complete different experience. As a funny exercise, I tried to envision you spending Shabbat at my sisters homes (one who has 11 children, and the other who has 8 boys),

I can see you running away as fast as you can from Yerushalim.

Your letters and description of Rehavia, also remind me of my late uncle, Yakkov Rothchild. My uncle also arrive to Israel from Germany (a somewhat

formal man who liked to be referred to as Dr. Rothchild), he married my father's oldest sister. He was one of the more learned people in my family, and for many years was the head of the School for Librarian at the Hebrew University. He was really more of an Historian, who read and spoke well in

several languages. He traveled a lot around the world, and were involved in

Jewish communities (his regular shul was 'Ohel Nechama'). Most of their life, my uncle and my aunt lived in Rehavia (on Alfasi st., but moved to Talbia to a ground floor apartment several years before my uncle death). I used to visit them, I loved to talk and to learn from my uncle, and he was the first to know I had joined an egalitarian minyan. He probably went to

the kind of events that you go to, and you could always find him with a book. He suffered a great loss when his soldier son got killed and I think as a result he hold a left wing political view. He used to tell me that our time in many ways replicates the second temple period. He viewed the religious right as parallel to the 'kanaim' and I believed he thought the R' Yochanan Ben Zacai not only saved the Jewish tradition, but opposed the extreme right of his time. Often I wonder what would my uncle tell me today.

As you see (read) your letters bring up a lot of thoughts and memories. They invoke within me many aspects of my complicated life, and as such they are very welcome.

Take care,

Yael M. Cycowicz

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