



# How Was Your Chag?

Here's an attempt to summarize the Jerusalem Shavuot experience, 5782.

To see tens of thousands learning Torah in the middle of the night. In lectures, learning in a group or with a partner, in saying the traditional Shavuot Tikkun. Not to mention more than a few parents and children who simply are sitting and learning together until one of them falls asleep (which was generally not the child...).

To see tens of thousands of people flowing to the Western Wall at five o'clock in the morning. They poured out of all the neighborhoods and alleyways and overflowed the Kotel plaza with emotional early morning prayers. As I was going down the steps leading to the Kotel and the throng below was revealed, a woman next to me asked in astonishment: "Is it like this every year? I am already 30 years old, so how is it that I never knew about this?".

To see the night disappear and the sun

come up. I do not remember the last time I was so privileged. To disconnect from my cell phone for two consecutive days. I do not remember the last time I was so privileged.

To be silent for a moment and to hear the different prayer services, the varying styles, the piyutim (liturgical poems), the Hallel songs, Megillat Ruth, the Ten Commandments. And to read the words in the prayer book that define this unique festival: "the time of the giving of our Torah."

To meet tourists from Israel but mostly from

abroad who are returning to Jerusalem. To hear from them that there is no room available in any of the city's hotels, baruch HaShem. Welcome. We missed hearing English and French and Spanish at the Kotel.

To meet the many reservists that returned from that huge IDF exercise in Cyprus. I saw at least three of them who returned Shavuot Eve and recited the HaGomel blessing on Shabbat morning after a week away from their families, during which time there was no possibility of calling home.





To see the many security forces on guard and also the refreshments that kind souls were distributing to them. And to see the distribution stations where water and food were available to all. Thanks to whoever bought so many colorful frozen treats and was passing them out at Jaffa Gate. It was amusing to see little children next to adults and bearded Chasidim, all of them walking around with an ice pop in their hand. Perhaps this represents the sweetness of the Torah for everyone.

And how do we come down from all these emotional experiences? It is said that on Shavuot each of us must accept a new obligation, however small, that is connected with the Torah. Some positive action to which we can surely commit ourselves. Everyone is invited to try.

Shavua tov. ■

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