

Jew Speaks Out Under Shadow of Gaza Rocket Fire

Another rocket hit ... and another ... and another ... here in Ashkelon, sitting on the porch of my apartment on the beach, five miles north of Gaza. I'm looking at the most magnificent, serene, pastoral view of God's given gift, the coastline of Israel, and I think to myself how nature, in its glory, is immune to man's acts of terror and force. It is not affected—unbothered. It remains serene and calm and beautiful.

I received another phone call from loved ones asking if we are OK here. Physically, we are—thank God—OK. At least, this time around.

I had a choice the other day. Leaving Tel Aviv after a great meeting with the board of directors about the Holy Land Dream project, a project designed to offer physical connection to the land of Israel while generating much charity as well. I could have gone to my home in Jerusalem, or stayed in my beachfront apartment in Ashkelon.

Thoughts of my father bombarded my mind. He was a Holocaust survivor, a fearless partisan who came to Israel in 1948—from the ashes of the concentration camp Mauthausen—on one of the Exodus ships, along with my mother and at the time, baby brother. He was not given a choice. He got off the boat, was given arms to use that he never held or even saw before, and he was off to the Negev, to fight the battle of Kis Faluja against Gen. Nasser. He was suddenly an Israeli soldier, fighting for the survival of the Jewish homeland. He was proud to do his duty.

My father was my guiding light at that moment. Ashkelon is in the district where that battle was. He called me home. Home to Ashkelon, to stand in solidarity with our people in the

South—to continue to uphold the biblical idiom that “God gave this land to me,” as stated in the song of Exodus, written by Pat Boone.

No one is chasing me away. No one is going to undermine my belief in God or instill me with a fear that will override my faith—even as the rockets burst at the very moment I am writing this. There have been hundreds of rockets just since this morning.

The rockets know no better. They are non-discriminant. They don’t know if they are hitting Muslims, Jews or Christians. They need to stop being launched. Being a second-generation Holocaust survivor, I know firsthand the importance of finding peaceful solutions, of the necessity of laying down of arms, of finding a way to live together in peace.

I end my words in prayer that is universal to all mankind. In our morning prayers, we ask that God’s light shine upon Zion, and that we *all* merit to see His light. All of us. Not the light of rockets glaring in the night as they explode, but the light of peacefulness and goodness—the goodness of God.

And the prayer from the book of Micah, Chapter 4: “and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more. But they shall sit every man under his vine and under his fig tree; and none shall make them afraid: for the mouth of the Lord of hosts hath spoken it. For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.”