



# The Nizhoni Times

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## NIZHONI TEACHERS AND STUDENTS JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM

by

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Journey to Jerusalem was not a trip of the guidebooks nor was it a vacation. It was a call to witness, a call to love, and a call to act. It was a journey into the private territory of human lives, into ancient wounds yet to be healed. It was a journey across the lines of segregation dividing East and West, Arab and Israeli. We witnessed the hearts and souls of people living on both sides of the line.

The journey required our love, our willingness to listen, our openness to learn and our courage to look into the eyes of people and see the higher self beyond their pain. It was a journey of holding out ones hand to both great people and call them brother and sister while holding the picture of peace as we walked upon a torn land.

One of the participants said: "You provided a vision and an opportunity to live our spiritual principles at a higher level than we had ever dared dream possible. We found that being asked to live the role of peacemaker rather than teach the role of peacemaker has taken us into deep and meaningful spiritual growth."

We first traveled to Amman, Jordan where we met with members of King Hussiens cabinet and the Jordanian parliament. We then crossed the Allenby Bridge into the City of Jericho and the occupied territories. In Jericho we met with Sa'eb Erakat, Vice-Chairman of the Palestinian Delegation to the Peace Negotiations.

Over the next few days we made our home on the Mount of Olives overlooking the old city of Jerusalem where we visited the Jewish, Islamic and Christian Holy sights. We were met in the Knesset by a member of the conservative party, Rabbi Menachem Porush. We visited the Holocaust museum and the Shrine of the Book, home of the Dead Sea Scrolls and later met with Bishop Nassar of the Lutheran Church of the Redeemer.

We traveled to Ramallah, a traditional Arab city and visited with a Quaker Friends school that has been in operation since this region was occupied by Israeli soldiers in 1968. We then visited an Israeli Settlers town on the outskirts of Ramallah and then on to the Refugee Camp called Jalazon. One evening we had dinner with a young American Jewish woman, Eve Rubenstein, who is working with an organization called, Intermers for Peace. Eve lives in an all Arab village and has integrated into the village life to bring understanding and gain trust as a participant in the peace process.



Nizhoni Teachers and Students at the Israeli/Lebanon border

### Journey to a Holy Land Some Call Palestine and Some Call Israel

by Brooks Jordan

I sit hunched over in my chair where a religion was birthed—a way of being created. I sit in the Church of the Nativity, Bethlehem where they say Jesus the Christ first sucked in life. A magnificent church the Nativity. Marble candle holders as tall as grown men, guard the steps. Carved wooden chairs with high backs topped with delicate crosses line the walls. Silver coated gates lead to red velvet chambers of worship. It is a place I feel is frozen in time.

A week now I've been here in this land some call Israel and some call Palestine; all call it Holy. What have I learned? I feel a weight, an aging, that I did not know before I came here. I stay back from the group today, even from my classmates for I feel that one more straw upon the back of my emotional body will be too much. I even avoid their query, "how are you feeling today?" No matter how well intentioned, the gesture feels more a taunt than a caring. We have seen so much, heard so much, felt so much, this magical group of 22. Rochelle, a member of this matrix, a being who describes herself as a global citizen, said quietly to me one day at lunch, "it feels as if forceps were forcing my body open, so that I will learn what I came here to learn." Yes, it is true, compressed evolution for all of us.

The weight of this Holy Land, and its Holy Places is what I feel. But I have been taught nothing by my teachers if I let it sit on me, if I do not turn it back upon itself and let the inertia of this Holy Land plow the fields of a new and dynamic future. It is my choice and

I choose to use the weight of Holy Conflict as a stone with which to ground myself, and not let it bury me in the ground. I am not these things; these are not my guns, fears, sewage, checkpoints, intifada, Semitic languages, Keneset, Yamikah wearing politicians, PLO, occupied territories, settlements, beautiful fluffy haired wide-eyed Arab, Israeli, and Christian children, and holocaust museums.

Yes they are. This is the lesson of the Holy Land. These things belong to me, they are part of me. If I embrace it all I will stand grounded. If I resist—pick sides, take a position, then I will end up in the ground. An easy lesson to teach a hard lesson to learn. So, I consciously choose this land, these places, these people as my people: the Jews, the Muslims, the Christians, the Koran, the Torah, the Bible, Abraham, Isaac and Ishmael, the Wailing Wall, the Dome of the Rock, the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, Hamas and Yahweh. Yes, these are all my people and places; M-16's and holy books. I embrace them all: I am the microcosm of the macrocosm.

These Holy Places whisper to me, they say, "go on, do not come back to us, repeat the same patterns. Cut through! Live the example of something new, something fresh and alive. BE A CHILD OF THE UNIVERSE. Yes, Nietzsche is quite right, God is dead. . . in buildings, and temples, dogma and idols, rituals and texts. Yes, honor us but no longer use us for worship or for separation. We are all the truth, all the way of life and beauty. You have not come here

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### Tips for an Ageless Body

by Chris Griscom

In today's world, the quantity of information we receive about the kind of food we should eat seems like an insurmountable barrage. Most people simply cannot attempt to decipher between the hype of advertisement and the elementary truth of the body's needs. We have an attitude that children must eat to grow and that once grown, somehow the food we eat is merely for pleasure. We consequently eat too much and we do not eat well.

Tragically, we eat too much because of an emotional need that perhaps began in childhood, through our body's direct association between being fed and feeling loved. As we move on into adulthood, we are expected to nourish ourselves, although we continue the habits and motives of eating that we learned in childhood. Thus, we eat in defiance, for comfort, and even for protection.

Our eating is often disconnected from actual messages coming from our bodies as to what foods are necessary to maintain it in health and in an ageless state. Far too much emphases has been placed on foods that damage our bodies, rather than what foods should be taken in accordance with each body's particular balance and necessities. Though the human body is to some degree a predictable system of specific parts and general necessities, each body is absolutely

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