

Dear friends,

This morning, while sitting in my room, a familiar tune came in through the window together with the warm beautiful sunbeams. It was the sad sound of the trumpet playing the Izkor, which we know so well from the Israeli Memorial days. It took me few seconds to realize that this is a strange thing to hear in a sunny Southern-Californian morning. I ran out to the porch to try to locate the source of that tune, but it was already gone. Whether I was dreaming or whether it was real, it wasn't a strange thing after all, since in these days the terrible agony, grief, shock and pain that engulf the people in Israel, are shared by millions around the world.

Today, four days after it happened, I look back on Saturday with great longings. Dafna flew over from Seattle and we went out to a wonderful day, biking along the beach, laughing, having great time, enjoying the beauty of that day. We weren't aware of the tragedy that took place on the other side of the world until we returned back home and heard from Amnon the short and piercing two-word sentence. And then from the numerous confused messages on the answering machine and from the emails. Suddenly, everything shattered. Suddenly, the joyful hours of the morning looked like innocent childhood memories.

I believe that we all share similar feelings, thoughts and concern. A great concern. I am grateful to those of you who were so kind as to share with me the feeling of being there in the epicenter of the earthquake. I just want to tell you how strongly this earthquake was felt over here. The reaction of The White House, the American flags in half-staff, the shock of politicians in all levels - federal, state, municipal - both present and retired ones, the unprecedented delegation of dignitaries and reporters who flew to the funeral, the comprehensive and sensitive coverage in the electronic and printed media, the many memorial ceremonies and candle vigils held for the honor of "the fallen leader" in which not only Jews took part -- all this served as a small comfort that we are not alone in our mourning. You can't imagine how moving it was to sit in front of CNN/ABC/NBC/CBS/Fox/KTLA and see the Israeli flag blowing in the wind on Mount Herzl, hear the wail of the siren and the prayer of the chief military cantor "God, full of mercy" in front of three US Presidents, Arab leaders and so many others. But this little comfort does not soothe the immense pain and worry.

Any descriptions, thoughts and reflections from you there in Israel will be highly appreciated over here. Thanks.

Shalom,
Tamir