

Traveling the world can be a great way to get an education unlike anything you will learn in school. Seeing places first hand will bring their history alive, and meeting the people and experiencing the cultures is something you just can't do without being there. So take a trip and expand your horizons!

## The Gift of Finding Yourself

You went looking for yourself. Anyone could find a place, a job, a conversation, but you wanted to find out who you were and just as importantly, you needed to find out who you weren't.



You had met when you were both very young; young enough for it all to seem only mysterious and to have no brutality to it.

You were thirteen, and then, when he turned sixteen, he left to go back home.

Come and visit me, he said. You said you would.

The time finally came and it was, as such things always are, an adventure. The airports were, massive, full of every language, every idea of every place in the world.

The Orthodox man at DE Gaulle asked you to pray, but you declined. You were getting closer and the faces began to change and the atmosphere changed with it. The security guards did not smile and they held automatic rifles and small machine guns in their hands and their eyes never seemed to stop scanning the airport terminal, or your face.

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As the plane banked over the electric blue of the Mediterranean, the sun was starting to decline, and you looked out the small window and saw the lights of Tel Aviv coming on in sharp glittering rows. The plane leveled out and the pilot came on the intercom to say you were making your final approach. The plane came down and you felt the impact of arrival and people on the plane applauded. They were home.



If you are looking for kosher corporate gifts, we've got you covered. We have a whole line of products that can be customized with company ribbon or stamped with your logo, and any of them can be sent as certified kosher.

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This gorgeous gift basket is filled with kosher gourmet foods including Alaska smoked salmon, rye bread loaf, stone wheat crackers, mixed dried fruit, almond toffee, shortbread cookies, chocolate truffles, cocoa, vanilla coffee and cappuccino. We've finished off the dark stained basket with grapevines and a bow for a breathtaking presentation!

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You had both grown older, if not, up; completely, and there, with the street signs and the voices on the radio, the weight of the heat of a late summer, everything made you feel that you had stepped across a threshold and that a door had closed behind you.

That, he said, pointing towards a small long valley with buildings high up on either side; that's The Valley of the Cross. You looked at the squat brown monastery in the middle of the valley and beyond it to the rows of apartments and houses. It was like that everywhere you turned; the impossibly old, and the impossibly new.

You went up the tallest mountain in the city. Carved into the side were, first, the Roman ruins, then the Crusaders, then the trenches the British had dug all of them like a kind of clock recording centuries instead of hours. At the top, was a mosque and a Coke a Cola stand.

First the grub, he said, laughing, then the

good books.

Downstairs, in the crypt below the mosque, there were Orthodox men standing around the tomb, they said, of the Prophet Samuel. They spoke to us with thick New York accents, like characters in a gangster movie from the always receding past.

You climbed to the top of the minaret. The valleys and the Old City and the far mountains rolled out under the haze and waving heat lines rose from the ground like strips of seaweed in a vast ocean.

What do you think? He asked.

You looked around, and history looked back, then it yawned at you and you had to laugh.

You could either find yourself, you said, or get lost in a hurry.

Well, he said, you've got a good guide, so you'll be fine.

He was right.