

services and does not affect our normal Shabbat link.

[Zoom Link for Agudas Achim Services](#)

FROM THE RABBI *Esther Hugenholtz*

Personal Reflections upon Poignant Moments

Twenty years ago, I spent some time in Jerusalem. It wasn't my first visit to Israel and it certainly wouldn't be my last but it came at a poignant and painful time in my life. I was young, broke, had recently ended a significant relationship and was struggling with personal setbacks, working my way through graduate school. I was trying to access Judaism in a context that didn't make it easy (or welcoming) to do so, encountering more closed gates than open doors. Given all this brokenness, this flight to Jerusalem was more desperate pilgrimage than joyous vacation.

I remember going to the Western Wall with ambivalence and a sense of 'kayved'. *Kayved* (or

Western Wall isn't a profound experience. I approached the Wall with expectation and trepidation. My desperate fingers clutched a handwritten note. Despite all my rationalist-Maimonidean inclinations, I had felt moved to pen down the deepest desires of my heart. I *davened* (prayed), pressed my hands against the cool, rugged stone and slipped the note between the cracks.

Twenty years later, I sat in my rabbinic office when a congregant reached out to me. Knowing that I needed emotional and spiritual support, this thoughtful person had charged a family member in Israel to go to the Wall and slip a note with my