

Article from Magazine Maariv– Ba'ah me'ahava (comes with love)

She's in love with Sderot and the settlement of Itamar. She never takes off her Magen David (Jewish star) and helps countless communities with pro-Israel Hasbara. Tani Zarelli, the wife of Senator Joseph Zarelli, is the best friend of Israel in Washington. "I can't explain it", she says, "I'm simply in love with your country!"

Ha'Yidida Me Washington (the friend from Washington)

If you tell Tani Zarelli one bad word about Israel– be prepared for a harsh response. The wife of Republican State Senator of Washington State fell in love with the Jewish State and especially Itamar and Sderot. Despite her being a Christian, she wears a Jewish star, gathers contributions for Jewish causes in Israel, and enjoys traveling the length and breadth of Israel. "Even when I go home, I can't stop thinking about you!", she says.

2006. Two months after the end of the second war in Lebanon, a special conference for support was held in Savannah, South Carolina. Knesset members and Republican representatives were invited to take part in a moral boost for Israel's damaged image. Amongst the honored guests that were invited was Joseph Zarelli and his wife, Tani. They had no inkling when they arrived at this function how their lives would go through a huge change and how Mrs. Zarelli would become one of the leading powerful and influential ambassadors of the Jewish State to the United States. At this event, Tani met Leah Magen who was then the personal advisor of Likud Knesset member Limor Livnat. "It was love at first sight between Tani and Bibi", says Magen, "and between her and the State of Israel." Tani cleared her work schedule and came to Israel where she discovered everything different than the information she had read about previously. I discovered it to be a magical Land."

On her first visit she decided not to give up on any part of Israel so the days started early and ended late. She traveled from the south to the north, combing through the places of conflict like the northern communities affected by the Lebanon war and Okef Gaza, Judea and Samaria. Zarelli tells of the places that entered her heart. "The city of Sderot and Yishuv Itamar..." she says with a smile. She brings friends and supporters there who can see from up close the reality these people live with day to day.

A Portion of Zionism

Immediately upon returning to the United States, full of insights and new information pertaining to Israel, she decided to hold her own Hasbara conference. In Vancouver, Washington she gathered over **400** people—students, businesspeople, media, etc...— they all came to honor Mrs. Zarelli and her husband, Joseph. Here was a **large** gathering of Christians in support of Israel. At the height of the conference was the attendance of Knesset members Limor Livnat, Areyeh Eldad, and Yuval Steinitz. The couples that attended this forum dished out **\$175 per person** to attend this lavish affair. Knesset member Eldad recalls "We were thinking that this is just another of many Israel Support events... It wasn't! Tani organized a very sophisticated panel of discussions on strategic problems like the Iran crisis, Chamas control, etc... It was all done in great taste and an obvious zealous love for Israel!"

It is important to note that United States does have thousands of Evangelical supporters of Israel. Zarelli does not include herself in this category but professes a simple blind love for Israel she can't explain! As mentioned before, Joseph Zarelli is Washington State Republican Senator. Two years ago the Zarelli's discovered that Joseph's counterpart (the Democrat representative), Adam Klein and his wife, a Supreme Court Judge had never been to Israel! "We told him, Adam— this can't be! says Zarelli. The couple took the Kleins on a two week eye opening tour that had forever changed their lives. "These are very important people that have influence in society! They have a lot of know how!" The Kleins were blown away by what they saw here. Since then their perspective has turned 180 degrees.

Good News

On her first visit to Israel, Zarelli came to Itamar, a settlement located in the Shomron (Samaria). On this visit she met a couple that made aliyah in the 70's (*really the 80's!) from the United States and immediately a strong bond formed between them. Since that first visit she doesn't skip Itamar on any of her visits to Israel. In contrast to many Israelis who have a fear about entering the "West Bank", Zarelli just smiles and says she has absolutely no fear going to those areas. Last year, on a visit to the community she noticed exposed **water** pipes lying on top of the ground and was explained the intricate difficulties of piping water through so big a territory. There are many water problems on Itamar, especially pumping

it up to the higher neighborhoods– it's size and topography make water a challenge. She immediately turned to a friend in the U.S. who understands this type of problem and runs his own engineering company. They plan together to raise the funding for this project which can run into the hundreds of thousands.

When meeting Zarelli you can't help notice the Magen David dangling from her neck. "I never take it off, including lucrative business deals in the U.S. On the flotilla incident she has a lot to say about her own government. "If such a thing even came close to our shores America would have sunk that ship!" She has set up her own internet site with the "Real News" including pictures of the fresh produce in Gaza markets, etc... She has a blog explaining the real facts not heard on regular news. "The objective here is to show Americans the real truth about Israel." "To teach them Israel's rich history, it's security challenges and to counteract the bias anti-Israel media."

These days Tani is back in Israel. When you ask her how many times has she been to Israel it is hard for her to come up with an answer. And like all of her visits, she brings plenty of friends whose eyes are soon wide open! She also invests in business strategies and the pairing of success for both Israelis and Americans alike. One such example is Garret Hergert, who she is infusing with the "Israel bug". Being an outdoor living specialist and a professional in outdoor equipment whether it be for beautifying the grounds or adding exercise equipment, Zarelli saw a wonderful and unique example of just what Garret needs for his business on the beach between Yaffo and Tel-Aviv. The connecting between Garret and the Israelis who put out this equipment was made and now they can smell success in the air.

When we asked Zarelli when she is going back to the U.S. she said she really doesn't want to speak about it. But her responsibilities calls to her. She adds– "I promise two things: I will not stop thinking about you in Israel and I will be back soon!"

*Items in **Bold** are corrections made to the article and also show the different column section headings.