



SUNSTONE PRESS

Contact: Michael Shepley (212) 786-9064 shepleypr@aol.com

HALF THE HOUSE: MY LIFE IN AND OUT OF JERUSALEM

A Memoir

by **Rachel Berghash**

Paperback Original with Photographs
226 Pages \$19.95 ISBN: 978-0-86534-805-9 Memoir

From an Orthodox upbringing in Jerusalem during World War II to the fulfillment of a spiritual quest in New York City at the dawn of a new century, writer and poet Rachel Berghash's life is a memorable journey rich in discovery, one that unfolds in *Half The House - My Life In And Out of Jerusalem* (Sunstone Press).

Written in an impressionistic, poetic style, Berghash's story takes as its central metaphor the divided city of Jerusalem and the author's own conflicts as a daughter, an Israeli soldier, a wife and mother in Manhattan, and a searcher for a renewed, revitalized spiritual life that has its origins in the idealism of a young Israel.

Berghash's memoir moves through seven decades of the 20th century, a turbulent time for her homeland, the lives of women in general, and her life in particular. She observes with a keen intelligence the overt and delicate contradictions in her life in Jerusalem and New York. She is at once a dutiful and rebellious daughter, with

loving yet guarded parents. An adventurous young woman, she serves in the Israeli Army in the 1950s, then studies at the Rubin Academy of Music while working as a secretary in the Israeli Parliament and at *The Jerusalem Post*. She finds intimacy in a nearly chaste relationship with a fellow soldier named Eitan, and falls in love with Mark, a New York artist who becomes her husband.

While returning again and again to Jerusalem that still offers visceral delights she once took for granted, and under the influential mentorship of psychoanalyst and philosopher Preston McLean, Berghash is able to destroy prejudices and inadequate customs of her past – the “half the house” of her book’s title (from a poem by C. P. Cavafy, excerpted prior to the narrative).

By her story’s end, Berghash has built a new house of the spirit whose foundations rest on the wisdom of forgiveness, reconciliation, intimacy, scriptures, and a loving God. Embracing the interior and instinctual life, this house stands as a monument to spiritual and intellectual growth and the peace of self-acceptance.

About Rachel Berghash

Rachel Berghash is a prolific poet and Pushcart Prize nominee. Her poetry and translations appear in numerous literary magazines. She holds a master’s degree in social work from Yeshiva University and is a longtime teacher of Interior Life seminars that use key philosophical, psychological, and religious texts. Her essays in this area, with co-author Katherine Jillson, have been published in *Tikkun*, the *Journal of Religion and Health*, and elsewhere. In the 1980s, Berghash produced a series for radio that featured interviews with prominent poets. Transcripts of these have appeared in the *Partisan Review* and the *American Poetry Review*, and in essay collections from the University of Michigan Press.

"A beautiful, deeply stirring memoir about breaking away from Jerusalem, and also about discovering Jerusalem...written with the eye of a poet, the insight of a psychologist, and a heart of wisdom." —Jonathan Rosen, author of "The Talmud and the Internet"

"Evocative and engaging...a woman's odyssey to accommodate the spiritual mysteries of her birthplace (Jerusalem) and the intellectual freedoms of her adopted city (New York). Rachel Berghash shows how, in a life long struggle to be faithful to both, she made them one." —Clinton Bailey, author of "Bedouin Poetry from Sinai and the Negev"

"A deep affirmation of the human condition expressed with sensitivity and care...a beautiful book, at once spiritual and down to earth." —Michael Eigen, author of "Contact with the Depths," "The Sensitive Self," and "Madness and Murder"

"The author's ongoing, unique ties between New York and Jerusalem reflect the story of her life, one that has come full circle. Her poetic prose dreams of a Jerusalem that was and could perhaps be revived one day, and of peace and hope for true human relations between Jews and Arabs. Required reading for anyone who wishes to understand and sense the soul of Jerusalem." —Ari Rath, former editor, The Jerusalem Post