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Israel's Four Holy Cities III: Safed, 1983.



Israel's Four Holy Cities:

III Safed

Daniel Jeremy Silver

January 23, 1983

Besides memory, our brains seem to have two basic capacities: intelligence and imagination. Intelligence operates in the linear fashion. It helps us move logically from fact to fact, from number to number, step by step. It's neat. When we use our intelligence effectively it's tidy and it allows us to live with a great deal of prudential competence. Imagination is another kind of place. It's untidy. We leap to conclusions. We claim to be able to see beyond the surface of things, within things, what they represent as opposed to what they physically are. We make connections which have no essential clear relationship between them. It's a place of insight, the capacity which gives us art, poetry and religion.

I don't know where the idea developed in the last century or so, but I hear it expressed in a number of ways and it's the idea that the supposed superiority of Judaism over the other religions of the world is that we have no myth. We don't make absurd leaps of faith. We don't believe in magic and miracle workers and holy men and faith healing and all the other consequences of the imagination. Now, it's true, of course, that learning plays an important role in our Jewish tradition, that we are taught to cultivate the mind. In point of fact, the imagination and intelligence are never wholly separate, one from the other. And it's equally true that we've recognized that the imagination, untrammelled, when it is not reined in, can be madness. But, on the other hand, Judaism does not rest on empirical observation. When Moses set out to develop the Commandments he didn't send out some social scientist to see what ways of life were functional and which dysfunctional and simply proclaim those which had worth, had practical merit, as those which were necessarily Jewish. And when Isaiah preached against the evils, sins, and injustices of Jerusalem he didn't first compile a Ralph Nader-kind of report on the problems of the community and then simply use this as a basis for an effective sermon against those who were of privilege. Rather, he saw a vision, , something within him. There was a fire within him



which could not be contained. God had placed that fire there. This was his imagination playing on his experience, playing on what he knew of the problems of the time.

Judaism, quite as much as all the other religions, but in its own special way begins in the imagination for what is religion, after all, but our desperate attempt to make sense out of that which does not make sense - life. All religion requires that we assume that the incoherent experiences, the conflicting, contradictory experiences which we go through in life somehow can be shaped into meaning, that the questions which we have about what is right and what is wrong, what is valuable and what is dysfunctional, these questions can be answered affirmatively and substantially and that, in fact, our lives can be graced with significant purpose and not simply end a few years after birth in the grave. Religion begins in the imagination, and I suspect that one of the great problems of Jews in the last century or so is that we have not sufficiently used, trained, developed the powers of our imagination, allowed them free enough rein in matters of the spirit. We've been so determined to be rational. We've been so determined to be 20th century men and women that we have damped down the fires of the imagination and, as a result, the strength of our tradition, its ability to make sense out of life, has been lessened for us and we are troubled and conflicted. But that's another sermon for another day.

Today I want to talk, as you know, about Safed, the city in which Judaism allowed its imagination to run rampant, in which the most luxuriant, mysterious, mystical flowers of our imagination were developed in the 15th and 16th and 17th centuries. I'm going to take you into a world which makes no sense, a world which your scientific, rational, linear minds will rebel against and instinctively declare to be unJewish, a world of ghosts and dybbuks and possession and mystical experiences of vigils and flagellation<sup>a</sup>, strange, bizarre world which most Jews, I think, believe only belongs in Salem with the goyim, but it's our world, and this mystical tradition which I'm going to describe in a very strange way provided precisely the sanity, the sense of worth, which allowed Judaism to survive the sufferings and the confusions and the oppression of the Middle Ages.



Now, many of you have been to Safed. You know it as a lovely, mountain top town in northern Israel, an artist colony, every tour stops there. The streets are quaint and they tell you that they're very old. In point of fact, there isn't a building standing in Safed which is older than the third decade of the 19th century. Safed suffers from periodic earthquakes, terrible earthquakes, and in 1831 the whole town was leveled. Safed comes from a Hebrew root which means to look out - tsa fa. It was originally the lookout mountain of Israel. We don't know when Safed was first populated, but we do know that in Persian times or Greek times it was a lookout point. There was a small garrison there. If you are on Mt. Zion in Jerusalem and you take some faggots, some sticks, and you bind them together and you light them and you wave them up like this, that fire, those signals, could be picked up on Mt. Tabor which is the northern most major hill in the Judean range, and then you can light another faggot there and wig-wag whatever way with the fire you want, and that will carry across the Valley of Jezreal northward and the lookout point which can see this fire is at Safed. And so this was the northern outpost through which all satellite communications were passed from Jerusalem to the north in ancient times. And the small garrison there we know increased a bit by Josephus when he was in command of the northern armies during the rebellion against Rome and there was a small town there through the most of the first thousand years of this era, a town of no consequence. And then in the year 1140 the Crusaders, a man named Falkof Enjou, built a great massive Crusader fortress on top of the mountain of Safed and it was like the fortress at Bulfour which the Israelis conquered the first or second day of their invasion of Lebanon, one of these great, high command centers by which the Crusaders hoped ultimately to be able to pacify the Holy Land. And for the next 120 years the knights templars who provided the garrison of Safed and the Sarsans exchanged conquering the city until finally, in the year 1260, it was conquered for the last time by the Mamaluks who made it a district command center, and a small market town developed there.

And then during the 13th, 14th, 15th centuries Safed remained a Mamaluk district headquarters. There was a small market, a few Jews lived there. Nothing



Safed's early history suggests the kind of later history which it would enjoy. As a matter of fact, the history came to Safed in a rush. We know of a traveler who went to Safed in the year 1520. He describes the market town. He describes a few hundred Jews who are engaged in farming and in small commerce and the crafts, a sleepy little town of no particular intellectual cultural consequence. And then in the 1520's Safed suddenly became a boom town. It grew from a few hundred Jews to ten thousand Jews by 1530, to twenty thousand Jews by the 1550's. And what was at boom town, it's business? Not a gold rush, but a holiness rush, a rush of piety. Safed became the mecca, it became the focus of a pilgrimage of pious, largely Sephardic, Jews who came there to the Holy Land to do holy acts in order to bring about the coming of the Messiah.

Now, why did they come to Safed, to this garrison town, this town which had beneath it the ruins of the Crusader castles and the Mamaluk castles. It had nothing particularly Jewish about it except for one thing. Sometime during the early Middle Ages local custom declared that a certain grave three miles away, near Meron, was the grave of a man by the name of Simeon bar Yohai. I talked a little bit about Simeon last week, a second century sage who was very much caught up in the Bar Kochba rebellion, a man who preached that Rome must be overthrown, who became such a pain in the side of the Romans that the Romans put a price on his head, and who had to go to flee to the wilderness where he lived in a cave, some say for 12 years, some say for 14 years, and during that period in which he was an escapee in the wilderness by himself, the legend developed that he engaged in vigils, in long private study of the holy writ, and that in the course of these vigils he had visions. In the course of these vigils and the imposed fast, really, his soul had at night gone up to heaven where he'd studied with Elijah in the academy that is on high, and that when he emerged from his twelve years in the cave, he emerged not only with the arthritis I told you about last week, but he emerged with esoteric wisdom, knowledge of the mystery, knowledge of when the Messiah would come, knowledge of what man must do in order to hasten the coming of the Messiah, knowledge of the secret deep inner meanings of the Torah.

kind, came suddenly to be fore? In the year 1260 by a strange coincidence, the very



And over the first thousand or so years of this era, Simeon Bar Yohai's biography turned into hagiography, that is it turned into legend, and he became the patron saint of all Jewish mystics and they believed, because there were great stories told about it, that if they visited the grave of Simeon bar Yohai and performed there the vigils and the fasts and whatever other acts they had to perform, Elijah might speak to them, Simeon bar Yohai himself might speak to them, they would gain the kind of knowledge of the mysteries which was so essential for the imagination, for the development of those theories which would explain to them what Jewish life was all about.

And to understand Safed probably the most graphic way I know is to tell you something about a feature of the architecture of the synagogues of Safed which is unique as far as I know in the world. Visitors to Safed in the 17th and 18th centuries tell us that in these very little synagogues, they're hardly 30 x 30, there must have been 20 or 30 or 40 of them in the little town. In each of them there hung from the ceiling a long rope with a little basket at the end and in that basket there was an ostrich egg. Now, what have ostrich eggs to do with the synagogue? Well, if you know your Bible and, of course, you all do, and you know all the references in the Bible to ostriches and ostrich eggs, you know that in the Book of Micah from which I read to you this morning there's not only this great prophecy of the messianic times, but Micah is made by God to prophecy about the destruction which will precede the coming of the Messiah. Israel is to be punished for her sins and he says, I shall lament and I shall wail as mournfully as the ostrich. These synagogues were the place where Jews came to mourn, to wail, to lament what had happened, the judgment, and out of that mourning and that wailing and lamenting and the sacred acts which they would perform then would come ultimately the redemption. These were not synagogues like ours where you simply come for study, for prayer, for the education. These were places which were part of the whole apparatus of redemptive power which Judaism, which religion, assumes to be at the basis of life.

Now, why in the 1520's, the 1530's, does piety of this kind, mystery of this kind, come suddenly to the fore? In the year 1260 by a strange coincidence, the very



same year in which the Mamluks destroyed the Crusader castle at Safed, a Jew at the other side of the Mediterranean, a Jew in Spain by the name of Moses de Leon brought together the mystic traditions of the first thousand years of this era and published a commentary on the Torah, a mystical commentary on the Torah, which he called the Zohar, the book of splendor. And that book, the Zohar, he ascribed to Simeon bar Yohai, and in that book, which became known as the book of Simeon bar Yohai and which became the Bible of all those who play with the mysteries, of all the Kabbalists of the Jewish tradition, he put together the theological, philosophic, theosophic basis of mystical speculation. Mystical speculation has a noble, intellectual tradition. It was an interest not of only ordinary superstitious folk, but of almost of all the best trained, most learned Talmudists and sages of the day, particularly in the Sephardic world, particularly in Spain. What interested them? They knew what philosophy was all about and they felt that philosophy, by which they meant the logic which Aristotle had taught that philosophy drained religion of all that was religious. It explained everything. God was not simply a miracle worker, one who listened to prayers, a creator, but He was simply a first cause. He was simply a logical postulate instead of a source of energy, a source of redemptive power. One could explain almost all of the mitzvot of the Torah, all of God's Instructions to Israel functionally. You should not steal, you should not murder, you should not commit adultery, you should not bear false witness, all of these rules have a very pragmatic social basis to them. Society really cannot exist without them, and so by explaining everything they drained religion of its juice. They drained religion of that which is its source of energy, which makes it something more than philosophy, which allows religion to do what it must do, that is to give people hope, to give people a sense that the universe cares, the universe makes sense, life has some meaning. Philosophy had in these intellectual circles its followers, Maimonides among the Jews, Thomas Aquinas among the Christians, Eban Rusht among the Arabs, and it also had its opponents, those who sensed that philosophy as it was practiced was bleeding out of faith all that was important to it.



They say there's another kind of thinking which is possible and that's the acceptance of the mystery, the acceptance of the imagination. The world as we know it is only the outer garment of the real world. Behind the world as we know it is the world of energies, the world of the divine, the world of God is the world of purpose, and if we can understand the makings of that world we'll come to understand our own. And so the Torah ceases to be text, language. It becomes the shell behind which lies the real meaning, the mystery, the time of the coming of the Messiah, the real understanding of the purposes of the various mitzvot which are given within it. It was an attempt by the imagination to get behind what the intellect told us religion was all about in order to maintain the sense of power and energy that religion provides.

And during the 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th centuries this tradition flourished among learned circles in Spain. A similar tradition was flourishing in learned circles in Christianity and in Islam, and they fed on one another. And then in the 14th and 15th centuries Jewish life underwent the worst tragedies it would undergo until our own generation. The Christians began the reconquest of Spain in the 11th century. By the 14th century they had managed to reconquer most of Spain. There had been a crusade. The Crusades were not all against the Holy Land. The largest and most continuous crusade was a crusade to reconquer Spain and Portugal from the Arabs. It lasted for 500 years, and this military religious act spurred the kind of fanatic fervor among Christians which turned against any and all other religions with a terrible anger. The Arabs were pushed out. Their armies were overwhelmed. Those who survived were imprisoned or sold as slaves. The Jewish communities were left behind. The Jewish communities of Spain represented, like the Jewish community of America today, the richest, most intellectual, most cultured, most powerful Jewish community in the world. And for awhile they were left unmolested because as with the Muslims, so with the Christians, the Jews provided almost all of the intellectual, cultural, medical services the society required. But then, little by little, the Christians began to be very jealous of the status of the Jew, the infidel, the pariah, the Christ-killer, and



in 1391 there were terrible destructive raids at Easter time against the Jewish communities in Barcelona and Seville and Madrid, Toledo; and then during the 14th century Jewish life tried to rebuild itself, but as Christian authority develops its stronger and stronger hold and more and more Christians became educated and were able to take over the jobs in the bureaucracy the Jews had had, more and more Jewish life became precarious. And in 1492, the year in which Ferdinand and Isabella were married, the year in which and, therefore, brought together Aragon and Castile into a single union, the year in which the last Arab stronghold in Spain near Gibraltar fell to the Christians, that very year when Columbus sailed the ocean blue, a decree of expulsion was written in Madrid and signed in Toledo. All Jews were to be exiled from Spain within six months. The rich, the powerful and many of the learned chose another way - conversion. They were afraid to leave their possessions behind. Some of the rich and powerful, and most of the ordinary Jews, took to exile and went to Portugal across the mountains. Portugal was still a place which seemed to welcome them. But six years later the King of Portugal published an even more draconian order of expulsion, and that is there was to be none. The Jew must either convert or be burned at the stake. And out of these two drastic acts six hundred thousand Jews found themselves on the roads of Europe and North Africa, and where were they to go? The low countries were not yet Protestant. Italy, largely controlled at this time by the papacy, had up till then been<sup>a</sup> fairly quiet place for Jews, but the counter reformation was in full cry. They were afraid of what Luther and Zwingli and Calvin were doing in northern Europe and so the Pope began to impose new restrictions on these Jewish communities and to expel many of them. The eras of the Renaissance Pope with a relative toleration was giving way to the fierce Popes of the counter Reformation. Really, the only place Jews could hope to settle with any chance of starting new life was in the East where the Turks had recently conquered Constantinople in 1453 and where they were eager for the skills and the culture and the literacy and the commercial talent and the capital which some of these Sephardim were able to bring with them.

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In 1493 the Turkish sultan is reported to have said of Ferdinand, he can't be a very wise king for he's impoverished his kingdom in order to enrich ours. Now, the commercial Jews, the Jews of wealth, the Jews of skill of that kind, settled in Constantinople and Salonica and Ismir, all up and down the Turkish and Aegean coast. There was another kind of refugee on the road, scholars, people trained in this mystical tradition, who now saw that Israel had not only been exiled from its own land but exiled from Spain. Tragedy was compounded upon tragedy, and they felt deep within their bones this was somehow or other the time near when the Messiah would come. Why so?

In our tradition the descriptions of the pre-Messianic era had always been one in which it said the world will get terribly difficult for everyone. There will be trouble, travail, turmoil of all kinds until the great day dawns. As a matter of fact, the Talmud uses a very homey image to describe this period, the birth pangs of the Messiah. Just as before the baby emerges the mother goes through the terrible strains, agonies and pains of childbirth, so before the Messiah comes the world would go through pains and agonies of this order: in 1492 the expulsion from Spain, in 1498 the mass conversions and mass executions in Portugal, in the early 1500's the papacy began to make it very difficult for Jews to remain in the papal states, in 1521 Venice was the first city of Europe to establish a ghetto, to lock in the Jews. And everywhere you turned you could see the birth pangs of the Messiah.

But there was another side to the coin which moved these people, and that was a sign that the power of Rome was weakening. There was first of all the great power of the Turks. They conquered Constantinople in 1453. Through the next hundred years they moved further and deeper into Europe so that by the mid-sixteenth century they stood at the very gates of Vienna, and the Jews looked upon this as the prophets had once looked upon Cyrus, as the avenging hand of God against Rome, they hated the enemy. And to the north there was Luther and Calvin and Zwingli and Huss and all kinds of people who were rallying, Christians against Christians. Christendom seemed to be splitting up. And there were interesting stories, if you read the Jewish literature of the time, which suggest that Martin Luther was in fact a Jew who wore a monk's disguise in order



to bring about at God's will the destruction from within of the Church. And so these people, as they looked about at their times, described the time as the messianic era, and so they would go to the Holy Land and to a holy place to perform holy things to hasten the coming which they so desperately needed. And their work would be as critical and significant and important to Jewish life as that of anyone who established a more traditional kind of city or community.

Now, to give you a sense of the mood of the time, let me tell you a bizarre story, a true story, a little known story to most Jews, of a man by the name of David Rubeni. Rubeni means of the tribe of Ruben, and if you remember that Ruben was one of the ten tribes that got lost in the 8th century B.C.E. When the Assyrians destroyed Israel the ten tribes were taken into exile and became the famous, or infamous, ten lost tribes. So how does a man suddenly appear in the 16th century who calls himself of the tribe of Ruben?

In 1523, three years after the ghetto had been established in Venice, there appeared in Venice a small brown-skinned, dark-skinned man who proclaimed himself to be a prince, the son of a king by the name of Joseph, who was king of a mighty Jewish country down deep in the bowels of Arabia and he would come to meet with the Pope, Clement VII, in order to enter a treaty with the Pope that the Jewish countries, this Jewish country would open a second front against the Muslims from behind if the Pope would only do certain things for the Jews - be tolerant and provide him with money and with arms which he could take back to Joseph in order to rearm and to bring the most sophisticated weapons of war to the armory of this king. It sounds like today, doesn't it? And the amazing thing is that people believed David Rubeni. Historians now believe that David Rubeni was a falasha, that is that he was of the Jews of Ethiopia. He was a commercial traveler who had been captured by pirates, who had been ransomed as Jews always ransomed fellow Jews by the community of Cairo or Alexandria, that while in Alexandria or Cairo in Egypt he had read some of the Kabbalistic materials, the Zohar. He had been caught up in this mystical messianic world. He'd gone to Safed which by the 1520's was already becoming this boom town in piety and he saw



himself really on a messianic mission in order to bring about, to hasten the long awaited age. He went to see Clement and he was granted an audience. Clement wrote for him letters of introduction to the kings of Germany and France and of Portugal. He went to Portugal. Not only did he go to Portugal, but he went to Portugal with a lovely entourage of four or five ships of war which had been given to him by the Pope, flying his own banner, the banner of a Jewish prince. And when he arrived with this entourage in Lisbon harbor in 1526, you can imagine what the Meranoes of Spain must have felt. Here was a Jewish prince coming to their prince, and here they were, cowardly Jews who were hiding behind Christian garments, and many of them circumcised themselves and fled to the ships and asked to be taken back, to rejoin the Jewish world. Well, Rubeni made the mistake that most men of his kind make. He kept his act on too long and finally, in 1532, when he was in Spain the king of Spain got a little tired of him and he threw him into prison and he died in prison, we think in Barcelona, sometime around 1536. But, can you imagine the headlines that must have appeared in the press of the day? Jewish prince arrives in Portugal, David Rubeni.

Now, David Rubeni had simply passed through Safed. Most men were coming to Safed. Safed had become a kind of permanent revivalist camp. It was a place in which men regularly had visions. It was a place in which people talked a great deal about the transmigration of the soul. There was a whole doctrine popular in Safed called kibur ha kevir which means that people in the grave talk and if you knew the secret you could talk to the people in the grave and learn the mysteries which they had learned. And beyond that there was the idea throughout this whole world that when you die your soul didn't go immediately up to Heaven. It remained on earth. It entered other souls, particularly if it was a wicked soul because it didn't deserve to enter into Heaven. Or it was punished in a kind of hell endlessly, futilely, for whatever sins it had. The only difference between Dante and the kinds of sermons which were preached in the synagogues of Safed was that Dante speaks of eternal damnation, of those who are sinners as rotting forever in Hell, and those who preached in Safed said that after some period



of time the sinners would be purified and would be allowed to have their rest, to enter Heaven. It was a time when rabbis, holy men, could exorcise the dybbuk, could exorcise the evil spirit which had entered the soul of people, largely women. And if you read about the Salem witch trials, you'll read largely, you can almost transpose this kind of activity, there were no trials and no executions but there were the exorcisms and there were the feelings that an evil soul had entered the body of someone and needed to be brought out. There was a feeling that those who were charismatic and were holy men had secret knowledge and if you gained that knowledge you could gain peace of mind for yourself, you could gain the secret of entering Heaven rather easily. It was at this time, by the way, that the custom developed of reciting the Kaddish for the benefit of the dead. The Kaddish was always associated with glorification of God, gratitude to God for life, but at this point in time and in this kind of world the Kaddish became the prayer that you recited in order to guarantee that your loved one would enter Heaven. It was interceded with God or with those angels in Heaven for your dead, and because you didn't want your dead to feel that they needed a full measure of your intercession, you said the Kaddish for only eleven months and not for the full twelve months of the year when it was normally said. It was a time of public confession, <sup>gag</sup>fla~~g~~lations. They would get up in the middle of the night and have , midnight vigils in the synagogue where they would stand and study and pray all night long until the vision came. There's a whole series of regulations which have been published of what must be done by those who lived in Safed, these mystics if they had committed some kind of sin, however minor we would think it to be. For instance, if you'd spoken maliciously or gossiped about someone you had to not only beg their pardon, ask their forgiveness; you had to fast two days a week for two years. And every time you passed that person in the street during those two years you had publically to bow yourself before them, offer yourself to be beaten by them, and ask public forgiveness of them. And at the beginning of this two year-period and at the end of this two-year period you had to appear in the synagogue and to be there beaten, <sup>gag</sup>fla~~g~~lated, thirty-nine strokes, in order to admit your guilt and to make atonement.



It's a strange, bizarre, mysterious world. Now, the best way to suggest to you something of the meaning of this world as opposed to its bizarreness and the strangeness is to tell you about the most important mystic who lived in Safed, a man named Isaac Luria. Isaac Luria was born in the 1530's. He was born in Jerusalem. His father died when he was very young, six or seven. His mother took the family to Egypt where her brother was a rich merchant, one of the exiles who had been able to bring out a good bit of money with him, and there Isaac Luria studied commerce and business of his uncle. There he married, and one of the interesting things about all of these mystics, and it's important, I think, for us if we want to understand some of the evidences of mysticism in our world today, is that throughout his short life, he lived only to be 38, he remained married. He raised a family and he remained in business. As a matter of fact, the only hand-written document we have from Luria is a bill of sale for an order of pepper which he was to deliver to some merchants who were on their way to Bagdad. You wonder how it is that the madness of Khomeini's Iran and the madness of people in the cults is associated with a certain kind of practicality, how they remained able to live what we would consider otherwise normal lives. Think of these Jewish mystics. Luria remained a fine Talmudist. He had been a great scholar. His life, his inner life, was one of visions and fascinations, fanaticism, perhaps. In any case, he received a traditional Talmudic education. He was a very bright man. He had a poetic soul. He came across a copy of the Zohar when he was in his late teens or early twenties and it fascinated him. And he went to some teachers and he learned what he could from them, and then he went off, as Thoreau once went to Walden Pond, he went off to an island in the middle of the Nile near Cairo which was owned by his uncle and he lived there, some say, seven years. He lived there by himself except, like Thoreau, on Shabbas he went back to his wife and to his home and then he would come back for the six days of the vigil. He continued as a father. He continued in business. He continued with his family, but six days a week he was on this island, studying, meditating, fasting, and he felt his soul rising up ultimately to Heaven and he was able to study there in



the great academy on high the secrets of the mysteries. And when he had completed these years of vigil he went back to the community, and now he felt compelled to go to Safed and there he came. And when he came to Safed the charisma, the sense of the holiness of this man, and the mystery which surrounded him attracted immediately a large number of followers, and he and his followers became the circle of pious in this city of the pious. They would go out to visit the graves, and apparently Luria claimed and people beclaimed for him, that he could speak with the graves and people in them; he could speak with the animals; he could speak with the birds. They would go to this grave of Simeon bar Yohai and there great mysteries took place and much was revealed that had not been known. He would spend all night in the synagogue and people would come to him and he would be able to see what their problem was. He would see what soul possessed them, whose soul, and he was able to exorcise that soul. They said that he, himself, was a reincarnation of Simeon bar Yohai and of Elijah. He certainly looked upon himself as the forerunner of the Messiah.

He lived for only a year and a half in Safed before he was taken off by one of those plagues which periodically came through the ancient world. Dying young is very important to the life of a saint, and he fulfilled that mission ably. It was said that one day when he was out in the fields with his friends and his disciples, it was Friday afternoon, and he said to them, let's go up to Jerusalem, the shahinah, the divine presence is there. And some said to him, we'll go, and others said to him, we have to go home and pack and tell our wives, we can't simply leave. And he is reported to have said to his disciples, woe to you, this generation has so little merit; if you'd gone up with me immediately the Messiah would have come. That kind of story gives a sense of the urgency and the immediacy which was part of this world.

Now, what did these people think they could do to hasten the coming of the Messiah? How do you get from here to here? Very simply. According to Luria, when the world had been created and the big bang had taken place, it had been of such intensity



that part of the playroma, part of the divine energy had spilled out of the circles of Heaven which were designed as its containers, and it got lost into space. And in space part of this overflow of God had been surrounded by hard material shells, and the reason that redemption did not come to the world is that God Himself was not powerful enough to bring about redemption. Only if God was put back together again could God bring redemption. Now, how could God be put back together again? What could break open the shells and bring this light back to the light of God? The prayers of the Jews, the prayers specifically of the holy men of the Jews. The Bible, the Torah, was not simply what it seemed, language, history, a series of practical instructions. It was a revelation of mystery. It was a revelation of the mystery of the nature of the universe and it told man how he could , put the world back in shape again, and by concentrating on tikuno lam, on bringing back God to God, the lost light, the light of the Divine, the mystics will be able to strengthen God and ultimately God would bring about redemption. So essentially these holy men and the Jewish people now become the center of the universe.

Imagine what's happened, a dispersed people, wanted nowhere, who had just suffered the worst tragedy in their history since the destruction of the Temple, a people who, compared to the great powers of the world, are of no account, a people who'll exist, if they do exist, at the edge of tolerance, the toleration of some other power, this people develops a theosophy which imagines itself at the very center of the universe. Nothing can happen of significance unless Jews make it happen. Nothing can happen redemptively unless the holy men of the Jewish people make it happen. What do we have here? We have here an attempt to find dignity in a world where one is beaten constantly around the neck, when one has nothing one affirms something. When one is frightened, one affirms power. When one feels deprived of God, one declares oneself essential to God. And in this, what might we call it, this mishegas, in this crazy theology Jews for the next 200, 300 years, found that which is the ultimate sanity, dignity and the sense of purpose. No rational system, no philosophy, could have provided this to those Jews. They had only to look out themselves, wearing a Jew badge,



cursed openly on the street, treated as social outcasts, incapable of managing their lives, prohibited from engaging in most occupations, to know that they were of no account. We can't live if we're of no account, if our lives have no purpose, no sense, no meaning, and if there's no meaning given to us in the outside world, where can we find meaning but in the world within? The imagination provides us the context of meaning, and Safed was the place where this imagination worked out the mystical scheme, the mysterious theosophy, which allowed Jews to survive with some dignity until the Emancipation and more recent times.

Now, I will not defend this thesis of Safed teachers as reasonable, it certainly would not be reasonable for us, but what strikes me as strange is when I first learned about the Zohar and about Safed, when I first tried to understand this strange, bizarre teaching which lay at its roots, I could not imagine

*Tape turned over*

Zohar and all of the mishegas, all of the nonsense, which made so much sense to these people long ago. And I wonder, therefore, if there's not something to be learned from Safed, that strange, medieval community which is not immediately relevant to our own lives. Why this interest in mysticism, not only Jewish mysticism but the mysticism of the East? Obviously, again, the times are tragic. Obviously, people no longer feel themselves in control of their lives. Obviously, they're turning more and more to the imagination and less and less to intelligence. The think tanks are in ill repute. The soul is again being talked about as the basis of all sense, and it's not so long ago that we had a whole spate of books here in America which claimed that it was our intelligence that was misleading us, we had to listen to the imagination, to feeling, we had to be genuine, we had to be in tune with our senses. Remember the Greening of America and all the books of that kind?

The imagination and the intelligence, the two capacities of the mind, must somehow work together for real progress to take place, but in times when intelligence



does not provide answers, in times like ours when there is no rational way which any of us can imagine to avoid the nuclear war which we all fear, it's not surprising that people are turning to the cults. What was Safed? It was a Jewish, mystical cult. They're turning to the bizarre; they're turning to the imagination, into its fantasies, to provide them a sense of meaning, a sense of worth that the external world does not provide to them.

Now, perhaps the history of Safed is the most encouraging thing that we have because after the two centuries of fervor God sent earthquakes. In the 18th century and the 19th century Safed was ruined, leveled, as if God was saying, enough yet, let's get on with the world as we have to get on with it. And today Safed is, as you know, a lovely artists' colony, and art is a wonderful way to use the imagination and to combine it with intelligence, but, at the same time, that the synagogues of Safed are empty I worry that the synagogues of Jews throughout the world are not using the capacities of the imagination in the most effective way that we might. I'm not advocating that we plunge into the bizarre. I do believe that our 20th century has turned to the imagination but done it in <sup>an</sup> undisciplined kind of way. We want to break all the rules, to take all kinds of strange leaps into the unknown. What about using the imagination on the rules themselves, to accept them, and to see how much more they could mean if we consecrated family, if we truly allow the imagination to play with the moral life and all of its value and all of its meaning? Perhaps in that way we might begin to see a way out of the dead end in which our world seems to feel itself and we would not find ourselves plunging more and more toward the world-wide Safed, with one country after another picking up some kind of mystical frenzy, plunging ahead in the name of imagination into world suicide.



From the desk of—

RABBI DANIEL JEREMY SILVER

על שם ה' אלהינו  
אשר לא יחדל לעולם  
לעולם אמן

I shall <sup>cannot</sup> ~~be~~ and will

is mounted as the article -





Basic memory, we know passes 2 minutes up to  
intelligence and imagination - Intelligence is NOT, orderly,  
LINEAR - it seems to operate like a non-linear computer -  
putting facts and numbers together as a legend and material used.

Intuition is untidy, always illogical, solvent of  
previously set goals - it jumps to conclusions - it sees  
what must be - what is within and behind - what is  
what appears to be same - where source of power  
are the products of intelligence - but - Feeling - Intuition -  
Religion are the products of IMAGINATION -

One of the most surprising aspects of the thinking of  
Jews about judgment in recent times has been the  
assumption that many of these judgments are  
given to myth and visions - visions believed  
in visions and miraculous events and miracles in  
upheld, judgments represent a reasonable - logical  
ethical standards - that it is more probably  
intelligence on IMAGINATION - judgment is  
never based on intelligence and IMAGINATION  
unbridled can become a madness - but  
judgment the beginning is the first act of the  
IMAGINATION - for what is any religion  
but an attempt to make SENSE of what does  
NOT MAKE SENSE - LIFE, every religion - and



even saved in a religion - began as an imagination  
LONG OF PATH - instead jump to the conclusion  
That LIFE IS NOT CRAZY - purposeless, but makes sense  
and that a way of life can be described which  
allows us to live more intelligently

More and more aware that every act of human  
rules that would be shown experimentally to be  
life enhancing - He heard and would be found - the  
way. - - - So and feel not necessarily the  
superior of the society and perhaps a <sup>Ralph Waldo</sup> ~~confused~~  
report; he ~~felt~~ <sup>was</sup> called by God as a vision  
which would be judgment on the society would be -  
Name of us as people that it makes sense to  
accept the truth - to accept in life & energy

body action - all my life SELF INTEREST is  
The way - but we feel attracted - - we ~~are~~ <sup>are</sup>  
prove in commitment - we are involved - love  
we are up to

I would go on and make us aware  
that we are integrated people we  
invention, integrity has made ourselves a  
we are human people for our good  
attention to the cultivation of the spirit



[illegible]

Trefut is a very interesting game in which I  
 at first - The player must 203 mean to look  
 out at - Trefut means definitely - look out MT.  
 sometimes but - called any night night  
 would call to us a SATURDAY 2027  
 STATION was discussed on the 2700  
 just kept under it - a minute  
 piece every 100 miles of the Upper Calder







build - the result of the ant. in unilateral as well as  
 a major function of the endocrine system. The system  
 recommended that before the endocrine system is  
 not common with endocrine P/H 333 P2 P2 -

(Letter) - Enclosed are a copy of Vol. 1, pages  
one all that seem to be repeated, left - a  
copy that in the places Vol. 1 repetition and  
pages are new -

But can ~~much~~ <sup>reached</sup> last time the top of the

Defect was not the history of early years - but  
 was the memory of the future of the future  
 of the present memory to future - memory  
 of these memory memory memory - memory  
memory memory memory

At about the same time that Leo von Meck  
was full of his ideas Leo von Meck for First  
Sept - a ms began to circulate in Spain -  
which purported to be a mystical currency in the  
Tenth of the 2nd century ~~ago~~ - -- We really  
don't know how much of a mystical world with  
S. M. Yulian in his case - but we do know  
that Leo von Meck was a most important of B.K.



66  
which would regard them - , that as I told you  
last week - the Bureau put a price on the head - &  
as a consequence he spent 12 hours of 181 years -  
hiding in a cave as the revolutionaries - Quite and  
sighed long to undertake that Sumner but spent the  
time in fighting - secretary pulling - & press study of  
the Tulard - & that he had gained some knowledge of  
the secret means of both test which the  
interests of Elgar.

The Tulard reports were Elgar - , the first  
the first entire view of the young day of  
Thompson speculation - Kellogg - with one to  
be called now cracked to John Zuker - - so  
that the elaborate method was to be used to register  
both , the Zuker , primary circulation the with  
not to be seen negotiated but to a registered  
but reaches to Sumner Elgar

and to you all - S. F. R. , S. F. R.  
register speculation secret method - business  
S. F. R. S. F. R. - business a subject of interest  
to you of the best method of the case - &  
under secret method under a subject of interest







2 1892 year of unpleasant surroundings - and and  
from the middle of concern on down - in 1795  
to you like to go of interest - in which my eyes  
not you see cost down - concern in the

may left - 6000 - if when can be 1000  
much it is to see also account - may  
concern - 3-4000 - as man - long time  
with left, then make reparation - like strong  
strong

knowledge from a middle of proceed, now

unpleasant surroundings - -

some with needed

long as needed

added to eyes - at the time of

desire - there - day well - strong

desire some

There also needed to be  
strong - with of some benefits - last year  
along the way - came up with some

of reference - my well known there

troubled eyes - needed for the last

with the needed some

admission of 1000 to my can help





travel there - direct & one of course - one  
I will be Marine - but see also to have all  
some needed -

Travel before of time is supposed to be  
said of French church of 1791

How can you conceive him a  
with king, the imperialist has  
own used and unlimited power

The Secretary of course went to London last / Summer

signed - The name of scholarship & other papers  
went to London - at S. B. & T. Jones house - There  
new card was to be needed perhaps to with  
about to help which needed course and  
to send to Marine -

Visited de London - the 17-18th century  
after reminded in original file at the same  
as well as signed - ~~for~~ the century in  
other days ~~the~~ the century in  
some papers now - is the actual age?  
The old and new Rules, the papers that will







But I was also a time under the power of the Lord.  
Latter I have ~~received~~ to be about to travel.

Turtles abundant in Europe - as well 16<sup>th</sup> <sup>cent</sup>  
but at ~~year~~ of Venice

On North Camp made L<sup>100</sup> - 2 days -

Return your envelope to David - Condit

search to a policy expert

typical of low

Eye Diameter  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch - one of largest eyes in

all your hats - 2 6523 4 small unmarked

for approval in U.S. Army idea - pure - idea

for approval in District Court  
I have found this is correct and have  
the same with

...the present day ...  
...the very same ...

has been reported in various parts of the world - especially in the tropics

been captured in battle. The  
Egyptian for. with the whole the army to defeat the  
the army

Egyptian for - ~~see (1) below~~  
~~which is the same as the~~

honey maple & forest tree

landings of wood - replaced 7 May 1 Year 10

~~these~~ - None of manure to add on

of Time DRUGS Reviews

Page 100 and interior - None

Page 100

~~first~~ Tumble - 20 Dec also found







notion even after death -

They believed in hibbet ha-kain - the concept of the  
future - "There is no rest for the wicked" - with the word  
used like attitude - These principles in the Torah of the  
law in DANIEL & the world, to it - justice - deserved to  
justice - "A question in war from its side" - The  
war and the different concepts vision of the Torah  
of justice of DANIEL & the king made - Now  
OBVIOUS AND NOT damned - was was punished  
has been entered - By the conflict - recovered

It was a world of justice & recovery - the  
peace of justice recovered recovered recovered  
action could only be recovered - Recovery  
in the recovery of the world was recovered - the  
of these world recovery but fact recovery recovery - particular  
recovery - of justice - recovery recovery recovery  
of these recovery recovery recovery -

Transcript of recovery recovery recovery -  
1 recovery of recovery recovery recovery -  
Recovery - of recovery recovery recovery -  
S. van Yuhai - recovery recovery recovery -  
recovery recovery recovery recovery recovery  
recovery recovery recovery recovery recovery







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to my, Day of Good

I have been at the age of 25 - 40 people asked  
 about my life - but I am never able to see what  
 a permanently nervous meeting around the world  
 of the people with the minds about you in the  
 - with children changed - & by special  
 encouragement see in the people reached

[illegible]