



Daniel Jeremy Silver Collection Digitization Project

Featuring collections from the Western Reserve Historical Society and
The Jacob Rader Marcus Center of the American Jewish Archives

MS-4850: Daniel Jeremy Silver Papers, 1972-1993.

Series III: The Temple Tifereth-Israel, 1946-1993, undated.

Sub-series B: Sermons, 1950-1989, undated.

Reel
64

Box
21

Folder
1329

The Holy City of Hebron, 1987.

THE HOLY CITY OF HEBRON

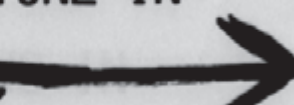
THIS TALK IS A DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE FROM THE TYRANNY OF THE TEMPLE BULLETIN. THE BULLETIN COMES OUT BIWEEKLY, AS YOU KNOW. MATERIAL FOR THE BULLETIN NEEDS TO BE IN 4 TO 5 WEEKS AHEAD OF TIME. I, THEREFORE, HAVE TO PICK TOPICS CONSIDERABLY IN ADVANCE. IN THE PAST, WHEN THE SUBJECT I'VE CHOSEN HAS BECOME PASSE OR NO LONGER INTERESTING, I PERSEVERED, BUT NO LONGER. THE TOPIC FOR THIS MORNING WAS TO HAVE BEEN "FOR ALL THESE THINGS LET US GIVE THANKS." AMONG THE THINGS I AM GRATEFUL FOR IS I AM NOT GOING TO TALK TO YOU ON ~~THAT~~ SUBJECT.

RATHER, I AM INSTEAD GOING TO BEGIN AN INTERMITTENT SERIES WITH YOU ON THE 4 HOLY CITIES OF ISRAEL. WHY THE CHANGE? BECAUSE IT INTERESTS ME, AND BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT CAN TELL US A GREAT DEAL ABOUT OUR HISTORY AND OUR TIMES.

FIRST, WHAT IS A HOLY CITY? THE TERM IS EARLY MEDIEVAL. IT DESCRIBES A CITY FAMOUS FOR ITS WONDER-WORKING GRAVES, THE GRAVES OF WELL-KNOWN AND REVERED ANCESTORS. THERE ARE 4 SUCH TOWNS IN PALESTINE: HEBRON, JERUSALEM, TSEVAT, AND TIBERIAS. IN HEBRON ABRAHAM AND SARAH, ISAAC AND REBECCA, JACOB AND LEAH, ARE BURIED, OR PRESUMED TO BE. IN JERUSALEM, KING DAVID, IN TSEVAT, RABBIS MEIR, AKIBA AND MAIMONIDES AS WELL AS MANY OTHERS. IN TIBERIAS, HILLEL AND SHAMMAI AND SIMEON BEN YOHAI.

INSIDE NOW THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT THESE MEN AND WOMEN WERE ACTUALLY BURIED IN THE PLACES INDICATED. MAIMONIDES, WE KNOW, WAS BURIED IN EGYPT. BUT TRADITION ASSOCIATED THESE PLACES WITH THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD, AND PIETY ASSOCIATED THESE GRAVES WITH FAITH HEALING AND INTERCESSORY PRAYER. SO THESE PLACES BECAME PLACES OF PILGRIMAGE, OF HEALING, OF PRAYER FOR THE EARLY COMING OF THE MESSIAH AND FOR THE RESTORATION OF ISRAEL'S INDEPENDENCE.

LET ME BEGIN BY REMINDING YOU OF THOSE WONDERFUL BEJEWELLED CASKETS, CALLED RELIQUARIES, WHICH ^{YOU} CAN SEE AND ADMIRE IN OUR BETTER MUSEUMS. THEY WERE DESIGNED TO ^{HOLD} THE BONES OF SOME MARTYR OR A LOCK OF HAIR FROM SOME SAINT. TO READ THE CHRISTIAN CHRONICLES IN THE MIDDLE AGES IS TO REALIZE HOW IMPORTANT THESE RELIQUARIES WERE. NO SELF-RESPECTING CHURCH OR CATHEDRAL COULD BE WITHOUT ONE. ALL KINDS OF MIRACLE STORIES WERE ASSOCIATED WITH THEM---HOW A THIEF BROKE INTO A CATHEDRAL TREASURY AND STOLE A RELIQUARY ONLY TO HAVE GOD STRIKE HIM DOWN WITH A THUNDERBOLT. THE FAITHFUL LOOKED UPON THESE RELICS AS TANGIBLE PROOF THAT THERE WAS SOMETHING DIVINE IN THE PRECINCTS OF THE BUILDING AND IN THE DESIGN OF THEIR FAITH.


THIS KIND OF BELIEF WAS NOT LIMITED TO CHRISTIANITY. IF YOU TRAVEL IN BUDDHIST ASIA YOU WILL FIND AT EVERY GREAT SHRINE A STONE PILE CALLED THE STUPA. ~~IT IS A MONUMENT OF STONE IN ROUNDED PYRAMID FORM.~~ ~~INSIDE THE HEART OF EACH STUPA,~~ 

INSIDE THE HEART OF EACH STUPA, THERE IS A LITTLE BOX IN WHICH ARE PRESERVED ^FSOME THINGS ASSOCIATED WITH THE BUDDHA --A LOCK OF HAIR OR A TOOTH--OR SOMETHING ASSOCIATED WITH ONE OF THE BUDDHIST SAINTS. THE SAME REASONS ARE PUT FORWARD: THAT THE PRESENCE OF A RELIC OF THE SAINT ENHANCES THE POWER OF PRAYER.

BECAUSE ISLAM, LIKE JUDAISM, BELIEVES IN THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY, PARTS OF THEIR HOLY MEN'S BODIES WERE NOT AVAILABLE FOR RELIQUARIES. STILL, THE SAME PSYCHOLOGICAL MECHANISMS OPERATED IN THE MUSLIM AND JEWISH WORLDS AS WELL.

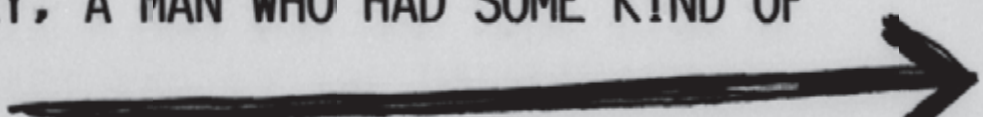
THROUGHOUT NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST, THERE ARE HUNDRED OF LITTLE GRAVE-SHRINES, USUALLY A SIMPLE MOUND OR BRICK BUILDING. THE GRAVE IS RAISED ABOVE GROUND, AND BESIDE IT YOU WILL FIND THAT THE FAITHFUL HAVE PLACED SMALL STONES, EACH STONE REPRESENTING A PARTICULAR PRAYER FOR HEALING, FOR SAFETY IN CHILDBIRTH, FOR THE DYING OR THE DEAD. ONE OF THE INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THESE GRAVES IS THAT LOCAL MUSLIMS AND JEWS WOULD PARTICIPATE IN THE WORSHIP OF THE SAINT OR HOLY MAN, NO MATTER WHICH FAITH WAS HIS. IN HEBRON YOU FIND MUSLIMS, CHRISTIANS, AND JEWS WORSHIPPING AT A SINGLE SHRINE--THE MAHPELAH--DEVOTED TO ABRAHAM AND SARAH, *and the other ancestors.*

OF COURSE, THERE HAVE ALWAYS BEEN RATIONALISTS AND SKEPTICS WHO MOCK ALL THIS TALK OF HOLY GRAVES, RELIQUARIES, AND FAITH. THERE IS A STORY YOU CAN FIND IN INNUMERABLE VERSIONS IN ARAB FOLKLORE.



CANDLES AN ARAB MAN, DOWN ON HIS LUCK, HAD NOTHING LEFT BUT HIS DONKEY. HE AND HIS DONKEY LEFT FOR DAMASCUS TO TRY ONE LAST TIME TO MAKE THEIR FORTUNE IN THE WORLD. THINGS WENT FROM BAD TO WORSE. FINALLY, THE ARAB COULD NOT EVEN PROVIDE FODDER FOR HIS DONKEY, AND THE ANIMAL DIED. HE BURIED THE DONKEY AND LAY ABOVE HIS GRAVE IN A PROSTRATION OF GRIEF. A CARAVAN HAPPENED TO BE PASSING ALONG THE SAME ROUTE. THEY SAW THE ARAB PROSTRATE ON THE GROUND, PRAYING, AND THOUGHT, AHA, HERE IS A HOLY GRAVE...LET'S ~~NOT~~ PASS WITHOUT DOING OUR DUTY. THEY CAME AND THEY PRAYED. OF COURSE, WHEN YOU PRAY, YOU LEAVE A FEW DOLLARS FOR THE MAN WHO MANAGES THE SHRINE, AND SOON THE ARAB HAD A FLOURISHING BUSINESS AT THE GRAVE OF HIS DONKEY.

LEST YOU FEEL SUCH CREDULITY IS FOR THEM AND NOT FOR US, LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT VISITING THE GRAVES OF HOLY MEN HAS BEEN ONE OF THE MOST COMMON RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF OUR PEOPLE FOR THE PAST 2 THOUSAND YEARS. SOME YEARS AGO OUR FAMILY WAS IN MOROCCO. WE DROVE UP TO THE ATLANS MOUNTAINS FROM MARRAKESH. ALONG THE ROAD, WE CAME ACROSS A SMALL, DOMED BUILDING WITH A MAGEN DAVID ABOVE THE DOOR. WE GOT OUT AND CAME CLOSER SO I COULD READ THE SIGN ON THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING. IT SAID, IN HEBREW AND ARABIC: "THIS IS THE GRAVE OF THE HOLY MAN, REBBE SO-&-SO." WE WENT INSIDE AND I READ THE INSCRIPTION ON THE TOMBSTONE. THIS WAS THE GRAVE OF A MAN WHO HAD LIVED IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND HAD DIED RELATIVELY RECENTLY, A MAN WHO HAD SOME KIND OF REPUTATION FOR FAITH HEALING.



CANDLES LIT BY THE FAITHFUL WERE GUTTERING IN FRONT OF THE TOMB. I WAS TOLD BY THE KEEPER, A MUSLIM, THAT MUSLIMS AND JEWS FROM THE COUNTRYSIDE OFTEN CAME TO THIS PLACE TO OFFER THEIR PRAYERS. IT MATTERED NOT THAT THE SAINT WAS A JEW. WHAT WAS IMPORTANT WAS THAT HE WAS A HOLY MAN. THOSE WHO CAME SOMETIMES BROUGHT A WRITTEN PETITION. IT WAS THEIR HOPE THAT THE INTERCESSION OF THE HOLY MAN WOULD PERMIT THEIR PRAYERS TO BE SPED INTO HEAVEN AND TO BE HEARD BY GOD.


I PROPOSE TO SPEAK FIRST IN THIS NEW SERIES OF HEBRON, BECAUSE IT CONTAINS THE GRAVES THAT CLAIM TO BE THE OLDEST. THE OLD TITLE OF HEBRON WAS KIRYAT ARBA, THE PLACE OF THE FOUR, A TITLE WHICH LATE BIBLICAL PIETY INTERPRETED TO REFER TO THOSE FOUR COUPLES WHOSE GRAVES PRESUMABLY EXIST IN HEBRON: ABRAHAM & SARAH, ISAAC & REBECCA, JACOB & LEAH, AND, BELIEVE IT OR NOT, ADAM & EVE.

WHEN THE ASSOCIATION OF THESE PARTICULAR GRAVE SITES WITH THE PATRIARCHS WAS ^{FIRST} MADE, CAN NO LONGER BE RECALLED. THE ASSOCIATION WITH ADAM & EVE SHOWS HOW IMPLAUSIBLE THE IDENTIFICATIONS ARE. BUT LACK OF PLAUSIBILITY HAS NEVER BEEN A DRAWBACK TO PERSONAL FAITH. THE BELIEF OF JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS HAS BEEN FOR ^{MORE THAN} NEARLY 2 THOUSAND YEARS THAT THESE WERE THE ACTUAL GRAVES OF THE PATRIARCHS ---AND THAT WAS ENOUGH.

HEBRON REMAINED EDMITE FOR ABOUT 4 CENTURIES, UNTIL THE 2ND CENTURY BCE WHEN THE CITY WAS CAPTURED BY THE HASMONEANS, DESCENDANTS OF JUDAH THE MACABEE.

THE BIBLE MAKES QUITE A POINT OF THE FACT THAT ABRAHAM SPENT A GREAT DEAL OF TIME IN AND AROUND HEBRON. ABRAHAM PITCHED HIS TENTS UNDER THE TEREBINTH OF MAMRE, A GREAT OAK TREE UNDER WHICH HE SAT WHEN VISITORS CAME BY. IF YOU ARE PARTICULARLY GULLIBLE, THE GUIDE WILL STILL POINT OUT TO YOU ABRAHAM'S TREE. THE BIBLE IS QUITE SPECIFIC THAT THE MACHPELAH, THE CAVE THAT ABRAHAM SECURED FOR THE BURIAL OF HIS WIFE SARAH, WAS IN HEBRON, BUT THAT IS ONLY AN ANCIENT CLAIM AND THERE IS NO REASON TO ACCEPT IT AS CERTAIN EVIDENCE.

WHAT IS TRUE IS THAT THERE ARE A NUMBER OF GRAVES IN THE PRESENT MACHPELAH COMPOUND---INSIDE A LARGE HERODIAN WALL WHICH ENCLOSSES A CRUSADER CHURCH---WHICH SUPPOSEDLY HOUSES THE GRAVES OF THE PATRIARCHS AND MATRIARCHS. GREAT MEDIEVAL ~~ARCHED~~ CANOPIES COVER THE GRAVES, WHICH ARE OBJECTS OF VENERATION BY THE ORTHODOX PIOUS OF ALL THE WESTERN TRADITIONS.

WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT HEBRON IS THAT IT WAS CAPTURED FROM THE CANAANITES BY KING DAVID ABOUT 8 YEARS BEFORE HE CAPTURED JERUSALEM. ~~IT~~ ^{HE} SERVED AS THE CAPITOL OF HIS KINGDOM UNTIL HE CENTERED HIS AUTHORITY IN JERUSALEM. HEBRON THEN REMAINED IN JUDAEN HANDS FOR SEVERAL HUNDRED YEARS UNTIL THE BABYLONIAN EXILE, WHEN IT WAS DEPOPULATED OF ITS JEWISH ELITE AND TAKEN OVER BY THE EDMITES, A GROUP OF PEOPLE FROM THE AREA OF MODERN JORDAN. HEBRON REMAINED EDMITE FOR ABOUT 4 CENTURIES, UNTIL THE 2ND CENTURY BCE WHEN THE CITY WAS CAPTURED BY THE HASMONEANS, DESCENDANTS OF JUDAH THE MACABEE. 

Then THE FLOOR OF THE MACHPELAH WAS COVERED OVER AND A GREAT WALL WAS BUILT, WHICH IS KNOWN AS THE WALL OF HEROD ALTHOUGH IT MAY HAVE BEEN BUILT SLIGHTLY BEFORE HIS TIME. THE HISTORIAN JOSEPHUS IN THE FIRST CENTURY INDICATES THAT THESE VENERATED GRAVES HAD GREAT MARBLE FORMS TOWERING OVER THEM.

HEBRON WAS NOT DESTINED TO BECOME A MAJOR TOWN. IT WAS, AND REMAINED, A SMALL MARKET CITY ON THE SOUTHERN EDGE OF THE COMMERCIAL ROUTE WHICH RUNS ACROSS THE TOP OF THE JUDAEN HILLS FROM THE NEGEV, BETHLEHEM, JERUSALEM, TO SAMARIA AND THE GALILEE. ~~IT IS ALSO A CENTER OF PILGRIMAGE AND PRAYER.~~

THERE ARE SOME ADVANTAGES IN BEING A REMOTE AND SECOND-TIER TOWN. ~~HEBRON~~ DOESN'T SEEM TO HAVE SUFFERED AS BADLY AS JERUSALEM DID DURING THE JEWISH REVOLTS AGAINST ROME. IT WAS AND REMAINED ^{LARGELY} A HOLY PLACE WHERE PEOPLE CAME TO PRAY.

WHEN THE BYZANTINES TOOK OVER THAT PART OF THE WORLD, A GREEK CHURCH WAS BUILT ABOVE THE ANCESTORS' GRAVES. IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 7TH CENTURY MUSLIMS TOOK OVER FROM THE BYZANTINES AND CONVERTED THE CHURCH INTO A MOSQUE WHICH THEY CALL HARAM AL KHALIL, THE MOSQUE OF A GOOD FRIEND, THE NAME WHICH ABRAHAM BEARS MOST OFTEN IN THE KORAN.

OVER THE NEXT HALF-MILLENNIUM, JEWS & MUSLIMS CO-EXISTED IN HEBRON. THE JEWS WERE A DEFINITE MINORITY, BUT THEY ^{MANAGED TO} REMAIN AND TO WORSHIP NEAR THE SHRINE. A TRADITION OF POST-TALMUDIC LITERATURE HAS IT THAT BURIAL IN HEBRON NEAR THE GRAVES IS EVEN MORE EFFICACIOUS THAN BURIAL ON THE MOUNT OF OLIVES IN JERUSALEM---ON THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, YOU'LL BE RESURRECTED FIRST.

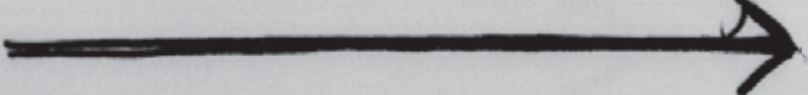
WITH THE ARRIVAL OF THE CRUSADERS IN THE EARLY 11TH CENTURY, CONDITIONS FOR JEWS CHANGED FOR THE WORSE. THE CRUSADERS KILLED MOST OF THE JEWS OF HEBRON, AND WHEN THE MUSLIMS REASSERTED THEIR AUTHORITY A CENTURY AND A HALF LATER, THEY PLACED ALL KINDS OF RESTRICTIONS ON ENTRY TO THE MACHPELAH. IN THE YEAR 1266 THE MUSLIM LEADERS PASSED A LAW THAT NO JEW COULD COME INTO THE HARAM, THE CLOSED AREA WHERE THE GRAVES WERE. THEY COULD NOT GO BEYOND THE 7TH STEP UP A NEARBY PASSAGEWAY. A WINDOW WAS CUT NEAR THE 4TH STEP, WHICH LED DOWN TO A SHAFT WHICH FELL TO THE GRAVE LEVEL. THE JEWS WOULD COME TO THAT 4TH STEP AND TAKE THEIR LITTLE PRAYER SHAWL, UTTER A PRAYER, PERHAPS WRITE IT ON A SCRAP OF PAPER AND DROP IT THROUGH THE WINDOW SO IT WOULD FALL ON THE GRAVE SITE---BUT THAT WAS IT.

FROM 1266 TO 1967, WHEN THE WEST BANK FELL TO ISRAEL, NO JEW WAS ABLE TO COME CLOSER TO THE GRAVES OF THE PATRIARCHS THAN THE ~~THE~~ STEPS ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE MACHPELAH.

IN THE 14TH & 15TH CENTURIES A GHETTO DEVELOPED IN HEBRON. JEWS BUILT THIS WALLED AREA FOR THEIR OWN PROTECTION. DURING THIS PERIOD ABOUT 50 EXTENDED FAMILIES SURVIVED WHO MANAGED TO LIVE WITHIN A DISTINGUISHABLE AREA. THEIR BUSINESS WAS LARGELY MANAGING THE JEWISH PILGRIMS WHO COME TO OFFER THEIR PRAYERS. THERE WAS A LITTLE INN WHERE JEWS COULD STAY WHILE THEY WERE IN HEBRON. THE CENTERPIECE OF HEBRON'S GHETTO WAS A SYNAGOGUE KNOWN AS THE BEIT KNESSET AVRAHAM AVENU, THE SYNAGOGUE OF ABRAHAM OUR FATHER.

THE LONG MEDIEVAL MIDNIGHT OF THE JEWS OF HEBRON DID NOT END WITH THE COMING OF THE 19TH & 20TH CENTURIES. BY AND LARGE, HEBRON WAS OVERLOOKED BY THE MORE MODERN JEWISH PIONEERS. THERE WAS VERY LITTLE ARABLE LAND AROUND HEBRON. HEBRON HAD NEVER BEEN AN INDUSTRIAL CITY AND IS NOT ONE TODAY. IT REMAINS A SMALL MARKET TOWN WHICH DEALS WITH HEAVY VENETIAN-LOOKING GLASS AND OTHER TRINKETS FOR TOURISTS. HEBRON WAS AND IS A CENTER OF THE OLD YISHUV--THAT IS, OF THOSE WHO CAME TO PALESTINE TO HASTEN THE COMING OF THE MESSIAH---NOT OF THOSE WHO CAME TO PALESTINE TO BUILD WITH THEIR OWN HANDS A MODERN JEWISH STATE. THIS, TOO, HAS COMPLICATED HEBRON'S PROBLEM.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE 19TH CENTURY HEBRON WAS SETTLED BY DISCIPLES OF THE HABAD MOVEMENT, HASIDIC JEWS FROM EASTERN EUROPE.



AROUND 1850 THEY ESTABLISHED THEIR OWN YESHIVA & CENTER IN HEBRON. IN THE EARLY DECADES OF THE 20TH CENTURY A GREAT LITHUANIAN YESHIVA, SLOBODKA, ESTABLISHED IN HEBRON A CENTER FOR YOUNG MEN WHO WANTED TO COME AND LIVE IN PIETY, STUDY THE TALMUD, AND PRAY FOR THE MESSIAH.

HEBRON IS THE MOST RELIGIOUS OF ALL THE CITIES OF PALESTINE, FROM EITHER A MUSLIM OR JEWISH POINT OF VIEW. IT IS THE ONE MUSLIM CITY IN THE WEST BANK WHICH STILL TODAY HAS NO CINEMA. IT REMAINS THE ONE CITY IN THE WEST BANK WHERE MOST ARAB WOMEN STILL WEAR THE VEIL AND WHERE YOU'D BE HARD PUT TO GET A HARD DRINK AT A LOCAL INN. THIS CITY THEN IS ONE WHERE THE RELIGIOUS PAST REMAINS VERY MUCH ALIVE AND, THEREFORE, AS YOU MIGHT EXPECT, THE OLD MEMORIES AND INDIGNATIONS ARE FLASH POINTS BETWEEN MUSLIMS & JEWS.

HEBRON WAS DESTINED TO HAVE A MODERN MARTYROLOGY AS WELL AS AN ANCIENT ONE. IT SUFFERED SOME OF THE FIRST ARAB ATTACKS ON THE YISHUV. IN 1929 THE YESHIVA IN HEBRON WAS ATTACKED. THE BRITISH CONSTABULARY FAILED TO COME TO ITS DEFENSE, AND BEFORE THE DUST HAD SETTLED 57 YESHIVA STUDENTS AND TEACHERS WERE DEAD---60 MORE WERE SERIOUSLY INJURED---IN THE GREATEST BLOODLETTING OF THE PRE-WORLD WAR II PERIOD IN ALL OF JEWISH PALESTINE.

AFTER THIS, THE BRITISH EVACUATED MOST OF THE YESHIVA STUDENTS. THERE WAS FURTHER UNREST IN 1935 WHICH LED THE BRITISH TO EVACUATE ALL JEWS FROM HEBRON. SO HEBRON REMAINED JUDENREIN --FREE OF JEWS--UNTIL 1967 WHEN KING HUSSEIN MADE ONE OF HIS CLASSIC MISTAKES AND, AGAINST THE ADVICE OF THE ISRAELIS, ENTERED INTO A WAR AGAINST THEM. HEBRON FELL, AS DID ALL OF THE WEST BANK.

WITH THE FALL OF HEBRON THERE EMERGED A REAL PROBLEM OF PIETY & RELIGION. THE CENTRAL RELIGIOUS MEMORIAL, THE MACHPELAH, WAS A SACRED AREA WHICH JEWS HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED TO ENTER SINCE EARLY IN THE 13TH CENTURY. HERE WAS A CITY WHICH HAD BEEN ENTIRELY WITHOUT JEWS SINCE 1935, AND IT WAS NOW OCCUPIED BY ~~THE~~ THE ISRAELI DEFENSE FORCES. THE LABOR GOVERNMENT ~~WAS~~ ~~NO LONGER INTERESTED IN THE CITY OF HEBRON.~~

~~THE~~ DID NEGOTIATE EQUAL TIMES OF PRAYER AND ACCESS TO THE MACHPELAH FOR JEWS & MUSLIMS. BUT WHAT OF THE FUTURE OF HEBRON?

THERE WAS INDECISION. ~~SOMEBODY ALWAYS MOVES INTO A VACUUM. AND THAT SOMEBODY PROVED TO BE THE GUSH EMUNIM.~~

THE GOVERNMENT ~~HAD~~ ^{ADDED TO IT} BUILT A SECURITY ENCLAVE, KIRYAT ARBA, ABOVE HEBRON. THE MILITARY WAS IN RESIDENCE THERE, BUT THERE WERE & GROUPS IN ISRAEL WHICH WERE NOT SATISFIED WITH A PURELY MILITARY PRESENCE.

HEBRON REACHES BACK TO EARLIEST BIBLICAL TIMES, TO ABRAHAM. IT SEEMED TO BE THE PERFECT LOCATION FOR MAKING THE POLITICAL POINT THAT THE RETURN OF THE WEST BANK WOULD MEAN A RETURN TO MUSLIM DOMINATION OF ONE OF THE MOST VENERABLE CITIES IN JEWISH HISTORY.

SEARCHLIGHT In 1967 A GROUP OF JEWS SIMPLY MOVED INTO HEBRON. MOST OF THEM WERE TRADITIONAL JEWS. SOME WERE JEWS WHO WERE DETERMINED THAT ISRAEL MUST NEVER AGAIN ALLOW ANY PART OF THE HOLY LAND TO FALL INTO NON-JEWISH HANDS. THEY WERE THE GUSH EMUNIM, UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF A MAN NAMED MOSES LOVINGER.

AND THE PARK HE BOOKED A SUITE OF TOURIST ROOMS IN THE PARK HOTEL, THE OLD BUILDING IN THE CENTER OF TOWN WHICH HAD BEEN THE HEART OF THE OLD JEWISH GHETTO. HE & HIS FAMILY SUPPOSEDLY CAME FOR A VISIT, BUT THEY STAYED AND STAYED. THE MAYOR OF HEBRON WAS INDIGNANT: FOR HIM HEBRON WAS AN ARAB TOWN. ARABS GAVE SPEECHES OF CONDEMNATION AT THE UNITED NATIONS. THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT ~~FOR THE FIRST TIME~~ COMPLAINED ABOUT THESE JEWS WHO HAD TAKEN THE LAW INTO THEIR OWN HANDS. // AT THE SAME TIME, MOST ISRAELIS WERE NOT WILLING TO SEE HEBRON REVERT TO ITS EARLIER JUDENREIN STATUS. A DEAL WAS STRUCK. THE LOVINGER GROUP AND THEIR EXTENDED FAMILIES WOULD PULL OUT OF THE PARK HOTEL & SETTLE IN KIRYAT ARBA. KIRYAT ARBA WOULD BE ENLARGED TO INCLUDE DWELLINGS FOR SOME 3 THOUSAND JEWS.

~~THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT THE LOVINGER GROUP WOULD STAY~~

THE GOVERNMENT BELIEVED THAT THE LOVINGER GROUP WOULD STAY IN KIRYAT ARBA AND IN TIME WOULD GET TIRED OF ALL THIS & LEAVE. BUT THESE WERE DETERMINED PEOPLE. THEY TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE NEW CONSTRUCTION TO TURN KIRYAT ARBA INTO A MAJOR APARTMENT CITY. IF YOU GO TO HEBRON TODAY, YOU'LL FIND THAT KIRYAT ARBA HAS A THOUSAND UNITS, SEPARATED FROM HEBRON BY A WADI--A DRY RIVERBED--SEARCHLIGHTS, AND A HIGH WIRE FENCE.

BUT IN 1980 TRAGEDY STRUCK AGAIN. A GROUP OF JEWISH ~~ST~~ ^{BUT} MOSES LOVINGER WAS NOT SATISFIED WITH KIRYAT ARBA. HE WANTED A JEWISH PRESENCE IN HEBRON. WHAT HE DEMANDED WAS THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER, PARTICULARLY THE SYNAGOGUE OF AVRAHAM AVENU, ~~AND THE RIGHT TO PRAY AT THE MACHPELAH.~~ SO, ONE DAY IN 1979, SOME WOMEN AND CHILDREN FROM RABBI LOVINGER'S GROUP DESCENDED FROM KIRYAT ARBA AND BEGAN TO SQUAT IN THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER OF HEBRON IN AN ABANDONED BUILDING, THE DEFUNCT BEIT HADASSH, A MEDICAL CLINIC HADASSAH HAD ESTABLISHED IN 1906.

NOW THERE WAS A LIKUD GOVERNMENT IN POWER. MR. BEGIN TALKED ABOUT THE POLITICAL UNDESIRABILITY OF THEIR ACTS, BUT AGAIN NO ONE MOVED AGAINST THEM. THE IDF'S POSITION WAS THAT THE ARMY EXISTED TO DEFEND JEWS AGAINST ARAB ATTACK RATHER THAN TO REMOVE JEWS FROM THIS PLACE. AND THE SQUATTERS REMAINED. THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER OF HEBRON, HAD BEEN SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL, JEWISH. IT WAS INTOLERABLE FOR JEWS TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSITION THAT ANY PART OF THE HOLY LAND--ALL OF WHICH WAS THEIRS BY DIVINE RIGHT---SHOULD OR COULD BE DENIED TO THEM.

FINALLY, IN LATE 1980, THE MEN CAME DOWN TO BEIT HADASSAH AND JOINED THEIR WOMENFOLK THERE. THEY CLAIMED THEY CAME ~~BY~~ ^{BY} RIGHT: FOR THEM THIS WAS ORIGINALLY JEWISH LAND UNDER JEWISH OWNERSHIP. THEY SAID, WE HAVE EVERY RIGHT TO BE HERE. AGAIN, GOVERNMENTAL INDECISION. AGAIN, INTERNATIONAL COMPLAINT. AGAIN, NOTHING WAS REALLY DONE ABOUT LOVINGER & HIS SQUATTERS.

^{LATE 80} BUT IN 1980 TRAGEDY STRUCK AGAIN. A GROUP OF JEWISH STUDENTS & OTHERS RETURNING FROM PRAYERS WERE ATTACKED BY ARABS & 6 WERE KILLED. ONE WHO WAS ATTACKED WAS A ROUGH, TOUGH JEW KNOWN TO HAVE BROKEN INTO ARAB HOMES AND TERRORIZED THE HOME OWNERS. THE ATTACK WAS COORDINATED BY THE PLO & HAD BEEN KNOWN AHEAD OF TIME BY THE MAYOR OF HEBRON.

THE ISRAELI GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE WAS TO EXILE THE MAYOR & TO TRY TO PICK UP THE PIECES.

TENSIONS AGAIN ROSE TO A FEVER PITCH, AND FOR A TIME THERE WAS NOTHING BUT CONFRONTATION.

THE JEWS WHO SETTLED IN HEBRON CLAIMED THAT IT WAS IN HEBRON THAT GOD COVENANTED WITH ABRAHAM FOR THE LAND. THEY CLAIMED THAT IT WAS THE RIGHT OF JEWS TO LIVE ANYWHERE IN THAT PART OF THE WORLD. THE GUSH FURTHER CLAIMED THAT THIS AREA, THE OLD JEWISH QUARTER OF HEBRON, HAD BEEN SINCE TIME IMMEMORIAL, JEWISH. IT WAS INTOLERABLE FOR JEWS TO ACCEPT THE PROPOSITION THAT ANY PART OF THE HOLY LAND--ALL OF WHICH WAS THEIRS BY DIVINE RIGHT--- SHOULD OR COULD BE DENIED TO THEM.

HERE, IN MICROCOSM, YOU HAVE THE PROBLEM OF THE WEST BANK, AND YOU HAVE ALL THE REASONS THAT REASONABLE SOLUTIONS WILL SIMPLY NOT WORK. THERE ARE LOVINGERS ON OUR SIDE AND LOVINGERS ON THEIRS. THERE ARE REASONS--- AND THERE ARE EMOTIONS.

IT'S ONE THING FOR NEGOTIATORS TO SIT IN PARIS OR WASHINGTON & SAY, LET'S WORK OUT A SOLUTION. NEGOTIATORS MIGHT BELIEVE THAT IT IS REASONABLE TO ARGUE THAT THE WEST BANK BE RETURNED TO THE ARABS IN RETURN FOR A GUARANTEE OF THE INTEGRITY & SAFETY OF THE JEWISH STATE. BUT WHAT IS REASONABLE IS NOT ALWAYS HISTORICALLY FEASIBLE, AND THAT IS ONE OF THE TRUTHS THAT THE HISTORY OF HEBRON MAKES CLEAR.

HEBRON REMAINS TODAY LARGELY AN ARAB TOWN. IT IS A CLANNISH TOWN. IT'S HARD TO VISIT. IF YOU'RE TOURING ISRAEL, YOU'LL OFTEN FIND HEBRON SCRUBBED FROM THE DAY'S ITINERARY. THERE'S TOO MUCH UNREST TO CHANCE A VISIT. KIRYAT ARBA & HEBRON CO-EXIST ACROSS THOUSANDS OF YARDS OF BARBED WIRE & SEARCHLIGHTS ---CO-EXIST BUT DO NOT COMMINGLE. CAN YOU IMAGINE THE ARABS OF HEBRON, ACCUSTOMED TO NO JEWS FOR A GOOD PART OF THE CENTURY, BEING WILLING TO ALLOW JEWS TO COME BACK AND ESTABLISH A THRIVING COMMUNITY IN AND AROUND THE OLD GHETTO, WHICH IS NOW A THRIVING ARAB MARKET?

I REMEMBER VISITING HEBRON 20 YEARS AGO IN THE SUMMER OF 1967 JUST AFTER THE WEST BANK CAME INTO ISRAEL'S POSSESSION. TWO OF US TOOK A JEEP. MY FRIEND WAS A FACULTY MEMBER FROM THE HEBREW UNION COLLEGE. ON OUR WAY TO HEBRON WE HAD JOKED ABOUT THE CREDULITIES OF PEOPLE---EVEN JEWS. HOW COULD ANYONE BELIEVE THAT THE MACHPELAH CONTAINED THE ACTUAL GRAVES OF THE PATRIARCHS?

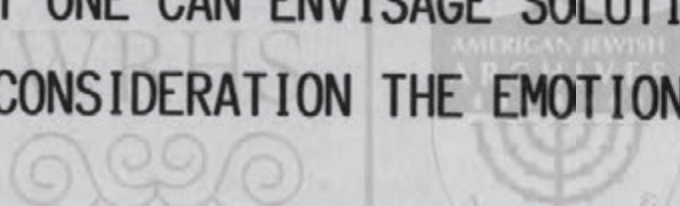
WE WERE SEPARATED WHEN WE ENTERED THE MACHPELAH, AND THE NEXT THING I NOTICED WAS THAT MY WELL-EDUCATED---EVEN, ERUDITE---FRIEND WAS STANDING IN FRONT OF THE GRAVE OF ABRAHAM AND OFFERING THERE HIS PRAYERS.

WE ARE CREATURES OF THE SENSES. ONE CAN MAKE THE ARGUMENT THAT MODERN JUDAISM, LIBERAL JUDAISM, IS TOO ANTISEPTIC AND TOO ACADEMIC AND RELIES TOO MUCH ON THE MIND. I'M NOT ARGUING THAT WE OUGHT TO BEGIN BURYING OUR GREAT RELIGIOUS HEROES BENEATH THE FLOORS OF THE SYNAGOGUE, NOR THAT WE TURN MAYFIELD CEMETERY INTO A TOURIST ATTRACTION.

I AM SUGGESTING THAT WHEN THE TORAH IS PARADED AROUND A TRADITIONAL SYNAGOGUE & PEOPLE REACH OUT TO TOUCH IT WITH THE CORNER OF THEIR TALLIT AND THEN TOUCH THE TALLIT TO THEIR LIPS, THAT THE SIMPLE RITUAL ACT OF TOUCHING SOMETHING DIVINE & HOLY SEEMS WORTH MORE THAN ALL THE BRILLIANT READINGS & CHANTINGS OF THE TORAH. A SIMPLE ACT OF CONFIRMATION IS OFTEN ALL THAT'S NEEDED TO SATISFY THE RELIGIOUS NEED.

WE NEED TO APPEAL TO THE SENSES, TO THE EYE, TO THE EAR, TO THE SENSE OF TOUCH---FAR MORE, I AM AFRAID, THAN MOST SEGMENTS OF LIBERAL JUDAISM HAVE DONE. THE POWER OF SIMPLE FAITH MUST NEVER BE DENIGRATED. REASONABLENESS IS NOT THE FINAL JUDGMENT THAT WE MAKE ON MATTERS OF BELIEF. BELIEFS CANNOT BE DICTATED NOR CAN THEY BE OVERRIDDEN BY SWEET REASON.

THE PROBLEM OF HEBRON TODAY, AND OF THE WEST BANK GENERALLY, IS THAT ONE CAN ENVISAGE SOLUTIONS, BUT THEY DO NOT TAKE INTO CONSIDERATION THE EMOTIONS IN PEOPLE'S MINDS & HEARTS.



Kaddish

Friday

Sunday November 22, 1987

Those who passed away this week

BEN B. LEVEY

DORA EINHORN

Yahrzeit

KIM NEWMAN

VICKI LYNN GUREN

BIRDIE A. MESHORER

DR. LOUIS H. BACHRACH

JOANNE RAPPAPORT HOLTZER

JACOB DWORKIN

PAUL E. MELDON

DR. RICHARD ARTHUR REESER

DAVID L. LAZERICK

JULIUS VIVAS

ROLINDA HAYS JOSEPH

BIRDIE STONE LEVISON

JOSEPH B. BLOOMFIELD

IRWIN H. KRAMER

MARK L. SAMPLINER

SYLVESTER MARX

SOPHIE MITNICK MIRMAN

HARRY M. MYERS

ALLEN A. ISRAEL

JOSEPH LYNN

ANNETTE C. KOBLITZ

MARK S. BERK

HENRIETTA GREENBERGER PALEY

WILLIAM MARKOWITZ

DAVID FRANKEL

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
NOVEMBER 22 COFFEE HOUR 9:30 am Branch SERVICE 10:30 am Branch Rabbi Silver "For These Things We Give Thanks" <i>ELLIS</i> <i>PM 55</i>	23	24 TWA BRANCH 10:00 am Activities 11:00 am Bible Study 11:45 am Luncheon	25	26 UNIVERSITY CIRCLE *THANKSGIVING SERVICE Calvary Presby Church 9:30 am Breakfast 10:30 am Service <i>79th & E 44th</i>	27 SERVICE 5:30 pm Main Temple	28 BAT MITZVA Karen Gimson 11:00 am Main Temple BAR MITZVA William Mann 4:30 pm Main Temple
29 COFFEE HOUR 9:30 am Branch SERVICE 10:30 am Branch Rabbi Silver "On the Economy" <i>B. K. K. K. K.</i>	30 <i>Spoken by Mr. K. K. K. K. K. to K. K. K. K. K. O. K. K.</i>	DECEMBER 1 TWA BRANCH 10:00 am Activities 11:00 am Bible Study 11:45 am Luncheon *TYA BOARD MEETING	2	3	4 SERVICE 5:30 pm Main Temple FIRST FRIDAY Alan M. Webber 8:15 pm Branch	5 PAC PARENTS PARTY
6 COFFEE HOUR 9:30 am Branch SERVICE 10:30 am Branch TEMPLE FAMILY TOUR 2:30 pm Main Temple CLEVELAND JEWISH SINGLES 6:30 pm Branch	7	8 TWA BRANCH 10:00 am Activities 11:00 am Bible Study 11:45 am Luncheon 12:45 pm Woman Indomitable Program TEMPLE BOARD MEETING 8:00 pm Branch	9 TWA COFFEE 9:30 am Branch TWA BOARD MEETING 10:00 am Branch	10 <i>EYN</i> <i>K. K. K. K. K. K.</i>	11 SERVICE 5:30 pm Main Temple SECOND SABBATH Dinner and Hanukah Celebration 6:30 pm Branch	12 BAR MITZVA Brian Friedman 11:00 am Branch
13 COFFEE HOUR 9:30 am Branch SERVICE 10:30 am Branch	14	15 TWA BRANCH 10:00 am Activities 11:00 am Bible Study 11:45 am Luncheon	16 HANUKAH	17 SENIORS' GROUP Editor Dennis Ryerson 11:00 am Branch 12:00 Noon Luncheon 1:00 pm Musical Pgm	18 SERVICE 5:30 pm Main Temple	19 NO TRS *NOT AT TEMPLE