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Beersheva Vignette

Canadian French-speaking Jews from North Africa and the Middle East who have settled mainly in Montreal and Toronto for the first time participated as a body in the deliberations of the recent Canadian Jewish Congress plenary assembly in Toronto.

Reading this item reminded us of our visit to Beersheva, where we arrived one Thursday evening following tours to Arad, Sdom, and the Dead Sea. When we set off to see the city Friday morning, cameras clicked everywhere. In front of the hotel was an obliging Bedouin who posed with anyone who wanted him to do so as he stood beside his black tent (possibly made of camel hide) or beside the ungainly camel tied to a post of the tent.

In town our group stopped at Abraham's Well which, our guide Paul said was probably on the original site although actually only several hundred years old. From the well, everyone took off hither and thither on the narrow cobbled streets full of stalls containing a vast variety of merchandise, from antique urns and odd materials to live chickens.

Just to stand and look was a fascination. Here one saw a bowed old man go by with an unwrapped "kollich" (sabbath loaf) under his arm; there on a wall was a cinema poster depicting Melina Mercouri with the inscription "Lo rak beshabat" (not only on Sabbath). Elsewhere on the street was a youngster on a scrawny horse; take my picture, he grimed; and all of a sudden from nowhere it seemed, many youngsters all laughingly wanted their pictures taken while each in turn straddled the horse. We paused to chat with a husky lad from England, knapsack on back, hiking — destination Massada.

We glanced across the street — where obviously there was action. We walked over, Gerald, one of the tourists, had stopped at one of the stalls to buy a "tarboosh" (white headpiece worn by the Bedouins). When he asked the price, he was told two pounds. Another member of the group came up and admired the tarboosh, and the price went up. By the time I got there, Paul and many members of the group were there and, stimulated by audience interest, the merchant had brought the price up to five pounds. Paul succeeded in persuading him to reduce the amount to three pounds, but against any further dickering the stallkeeper was adamant.

The trouble with a tour is that, no matter what, finally one has to tear oneself away to fulfill the pre-planned itinerary. As the group headed back to the bus, I straggled along, sorry to leave. Filling my eyes and ears and nostrils with the sights and sounds and smells, I trailed along until I reached the top of the street where the bus was parked. Here stood Dr. Sam, another member of the group, chatting earnestly with an elderly gentleman and peering into the back of a truck. It was draped over with some sort of cloth so that it had the appearance of a covered wagon; at the back the hangings were drawn to one side to form an entrance. From within there emerged a singing whine, or whining song. The elderly gentleman was explaining that these women were on their way to a wedding, and they were singing, and he walked away.

Intrigued, I also glanced within, and saw seated on both sides of the truck about ten

attractive Bedouin women in native costume. Some of them were nursing babies. Some of them held their veils across the lower half of their faces; some did not. It was dim within the truck, but it seemed as if some of them had light blue paint on their faces. Each one of them wore a ring through her left nostril. Like necklaces across their foreheads, they wore multi-colored circles of objects resembling coins. Although shy, the women were evidently not disturbed by our presence. The prolonged soprano whine continued intermittently.

Within a matter of minutes, a Bedouin came up to the truck — possibly the husband of the ladies — and hurriedly lowered the covering across the opening. Dr. Sam asked him if they are indeed singing because they are in fact going to a wedding, to which the man replied, "Don't speak English." We had apparently encroached on their privacy. As we turned, there were Paul and Gerald hurrying toward us — but we weren't lost — just lagging behind, loath to leave. We later learned that blue paint is believed to ward off evil spirits.

What stuck in my mind when I was back in

Pilgrims and Pilgrimages

By RABBI DR. HARRY RABINOWICZ

The purpose of a religious pilgrimage is to visit and worship at a shrine where a unique manifestation of Divine activity occurred. At a time when the worship of the nation was centered around the Temple, "every male Israelite was required to visit the Temple three times a year" with appropriate offerings.

The three festivals, Passover, Shavuot and Succot, are known as the Three Pilgrim Festivals, and were of agricultural, religious as well as of political significance. The pilgrimage served to unite the people in a common cultural and religious entity, while at the same time benefiting commerce and industry.

After the building of the Second Temple, Jerusalem, the Holy City, was without rival the objective of Jewish pilgrimage. Visiting Jerusalem became a fond dream and sacred obligation of faithful Jews in the Dispersion. Jews journeyed thither from Mesopotamia, and daily prayers for rain were postponed until 15 days after festivals "in order to grant time for the last of the Israelites to return to the Euphrates without being inconvenienced by the rain."

The Talmud relates that King Agrippa once desired to take a census of the pilgrims. He ordered the priests to take one hind leg of every paschal lamb and they counted 1,200,000 legs. Josephus, too, tells us in his "Jewish War" that Gesius Florus (44-46) counted 256,000 paschal lambs at one festival. The fact that sufficient accommodation was found in Jerusalem is listed by the Mishna as one of the minor miracles associated with the Temple.

After the destruction of the Second Temple, conditions changed. Pilgrimage ceased to be an obligatory act. It assumed a personal and emotional character. Pilgrims to the Temple site now came principally to mourn and to pray for the restoration of Zion, and they were not always welcomed by the non-Jewish population of the land.

By the fourth century Jews were allowed only once a year to enter the Temple site. "All Jews come once a year to this place," writes the Pilgrim from Bordeaux in the year 333, "weeping and lamenting near a stone which remains of the Holy Temple." The Christian theologian, Jerome (342-420), in his commentary to Zephaniah writes: "Up to this very day the faithless inhabitants are forbidden to enter Jerusalem, and it is that they may weep over the ruins of their State that they pay a price."

At around this time Jewish literature begins to refer to the sanctity of the Western Wall. "The Divine presence has never departed from the Western Wall," says Rabbi Aha, who lived in the first-half of the fourth century. "The Western Wall of the Temple," state our rabbis, "will never be destroyed because the Divine Presence (Shechina) is in the West."

During the first Moslem occupation of the Holy Land (637-1099) the Jews were allowed to

my seat on the bus was the conversation I had had with the waiter in the dining room at breakfast. He was a slight, tanned, dark-haired young man from Morocco. Although he had lived in Israel for 15 years, he and his wife still spoke French as fluently as the Hebrew they had learned. He was planning to emigrate to Montreal, where he had sent his wife and two children. She was already working as a waitress and he had been promised a job as a waiter. He would not have to work from half past six in the morning until eleven at night, as he did here. He now was waiting only until he had his passage money saved as he wanted to do it completely on his own, without a loan. He wanted to know about Canada generally and Montreal in particular. He felt that if they did not like Canada, they could try the United States, and if they did not like it there, they could return to Israel.

I wonder today if they stayed in Canada, and if they attended the Plenary Assembly in Toronto a couple of weeks ago and if they are happy. In any event, it is just before Shavuot, "The Season of the Giving of the Torah." Chag Sameach to all!

enter the sacred area, "to make rounds of the Temple gate and to pray there with a loud voice." They were even permitted to build a house of prayer near the site. From the tenth century onwards, regular services were held not only on fast-days and festivals but also every Friday afternoon. Here generations of pilgrims would chant the sorrowful verses of the Book of Lamentations.

Many medieval travellers corroborate this ancient Jewish custom. Maimonides who visited Jerusalem in 1165 writes: "I entered the great and holy house and prayed there." Benjamin of Tudela, writing in 1177, says: "They call it the Gate of Mercy; thither all the Jews go to pray before it."

Five hundred years later, in 1683, the Karaites, Rabbi Benjamin Yerushalmi ben Elijah, noted: "Afterwards we went to the Western Wall to pray. . . . If anyone desires to go every day to the Western Wall the Ishmaelites permit him to go and pray."

A prescribed ritual was already in use at the time. The first printed "ritual" is dated 1601. It indicates that the Jew would take off his shoes as he approached the Wall, kiss the stones and recite a special prayer. The Bodleian Library, Oxford, has a copy of such a prayer book, printed in Venice in 1702.

In the nineteenth century, there is a plethora of evidence regarding pilgrimages to Holy Sites. Sultan Abdul Majid issued in 1841 a decree according to the Jews the right to pray there without interference. Sir Moses Montefiore in his report to the Board of Deputies writes in 1866: "The Governor of Jerusalem, Izzet Pasha, kindly gave me permission to erect an awning for the 'Wailing Place' so as to afford shelter and to protect from rain and heat pious persons visiting this sacred spot."

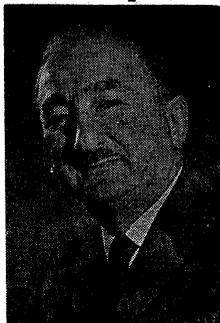
Jewish pilgrims not only visited Jerusalem but also the graves of Biblical figures, Rabbis of the Talmud and mystics. Parental merit occupies an important position in Judaism. Since the earliest days men have visited the graves of sages to pray for such intercession. It is said that Caleb, one of the twelve scouts who were sent by Moses to explore the land of Canaan, first visited the graves of Patriarchs. "My Fathers, pray on my behalf that I may be delivered from the plans of the spies," were the words of Caleb.

The pilgrimage to Meron on Lag b'Omer has been carried out for centuries. Men and women, Ashkenazim and Sephardim, Chasidim and Mitnagdim, Sabras and Yemenis, converge on the white-domed tomb of Rabbi Simeon bar Yochai and his son Eliezer. The pilgrims dance as they pray and pray as they dance, fired by religious ecstasy, not riotous revelry.

Though in Jewry pilgrimage has never become a vocation or a way of life, successive generations of Jews have never missed the opportunity of paying reverence to the many hallowed sites in the Holy Land.

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Six-Day Israel Emergency Campaign



JOSEPH SECTER
... drive coordinator

The Winnipeg Jewish community is being mobilized for a swift \$1,250,000 six-day Emergency Fund campaign for Israel as the Jewish state braces itself for any crisis and continues to shoulder its enormous burden of defence preparedness.

The blitz campaign will take place Sunday, June 2, to June 8 with major emphasis concentrated on Wednesday, June 5, which will be Mobilization Day in Winnipeg with mass rallies at seven synagogues to be addressed by General Peled, conqueror of the strategic Golan Heights in Syria, one of the toughest prizes in last year's Six-Day War. Gen. Peled is flying from Jerusalem to Winnipeg especially for the synagogue rallies.

June 5 is the first anniversary of

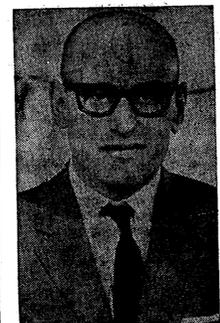


MAX NUSGART
... drive coordinator

the start of the Six-Day War, and the duration of the fund drive has been set to match the six heroic days of that war.

The June 5 rallies will take place 8 p.m. at the following synagogues: Ashkenazie, B'nay Abraham, Herzliya-Adas Yeshurun, Rosh Pina, Shaare Zedek, Talmud Torah and Temple Shalom.

The \$1.25 million objective of the drive is 40 per cent of the \$3.2 million raised by Winnipeg Jewry in last June's Emergency Fund drive; when the city's \$201 per capita giving set an example for the entire world Jewish community. The current objective is half of what Israel is forced to pay every day to maintain its standing army of 250,000



ARNOLD PORTIGAL
... drive coordinator

This will be Phase 2 of the United Israel Appeal Emergency Fund campaign. The first phase was last year's June drive.

Campaign coordinators are Joseph Secter, Max Nussgart and Arnold Portigal, who will be assisted by a task force of 105 persons re-mobilized from last year's emergency drive organization.

Following an "11th hour" full executive meeting May 31, there will be daily briefing sessions at 10:30 a.m. in the YMHA during the drive. In a statement covering the background for the current Emergency campaign, the campaign coordinators said:

"There has been no let-up in the crisis facing Israel and its state of

emergency is reaching new heights. Arab rulers, notably Nasser, are becoming more bellicose in their calls for another round against Israel, placing war preparedness at the top of priorities for Israel.

"The people of Israel are already paying one of the highest, if not the highest, income taxes in the world. They must help pay the costs of war, of constant defence alertness and postwar reconstruction.

"They can no longer be expected to shoulder the largest share of costs for immigrant absorption — a cost which was originally undertaken in full by world Jewry.

"Our job this year must be to meet the whole job of immigrant aid in Israel. This is what we were supposed to do all along. This is what we said we would do.

"When we began to help bring immigrants to Israel in 1948, we undertook to meet the full costs of this humanitarian help. But bit by bit we let the average Israeli citizen help more and more until he was paying two dollars to every dollar we were providing.

"Last June, when emergency struck, we did what we should have been doing all along: We assumed our responsibility almost completely.

"Under the ever-present threat of renewed war, Israel's people have no choice but to stand where they are and do what they are doing.

"But we do have a choice — we can decide that we will stand by Israel's people as we did last June. We can decide that the survival of Israel's people — and Jewish survival — mean as much to us in 1968 as they did in 1967. And we can choose to meet our responsibility for the whole humanitarian

burden." Messrs. Secter, Nussgart and Portigal pointed out these facts which were straining Israel's economy to the breaking point:

• While the U.S. spends 9½ per cent of its Gross National Product on defence, Israel is spending 13 to 15 per cent.

• Israel's enemies get the bulk of their weapons for nothing, whereas Israel pays in full. Russia has re-armed the Arabs with \$3 billion of material, making them better-equipped than before the June war. Israel needs 100 jet fighters costing \$1.8 million each.

• Defence expenditures have risen from \$10 million in 1950 to \$750 million this year. Part of the latest outlays will be financed by annual voluntary deductions of half a month's salary from Israeli pay-cheques.

• Israel must maintain a standing army of 250,000 at a cost of \$10 per day per man. This represents 10 per cent of the population.

• Israel has the onerous burden of administering conquered lands that are three times the size of Israel itself.

For these reasons, Israel has had to cut spending for the absorption of immigrants, placing the burden for this on the Jewish Agency, supported by emergency fund-raising.

The current campaign will contribute to the needs of 500,000 un-absorbed immigrants in Israel; transporting and receiving 25,000 new immigrants; strengthening 400 immigrant farm communities; providing care and facilities for thousands of immigrant youngsters; improving immigrant housing; and expanding vocational training and educational opportunities.

Emergency Campaign Personnel

A dedicated 105-person task force has been assigned major responsibility for conducting the June 2-8 Emergency Fund campaign for Israel in Winnipeg. Joseph Secter, Max Nussgart and Arnold Portigal, campaign coordinators, announced this week.

Most of the personnel for the force have been re-mobilized from last June's emergency campaign organization.

Forming the executive committee are: M. B. Steinkopf, Q.C., S. L. Morantz, L. Bokofsky, D. S. Kaufman, R. A. Levenstein, M. Nathanson, H. Buchwald, Q.C., S. J. Oreck, G. Schwartz, P. M. Morton, Y. Henteleff, M. J. Rosenberg, I. Asper, I. S. Portnoy, O. Grubert, M. Goldberg, G. Broder, M. Meltzer, H. Aronson, Mrs. L. Fineman, Rabbi L. Nesis, Rabbi S. Rappaport, Rabbi P. Weizman, Rabbi I. Witty, Rabbi A. Waxman, Rabbi H. Horowitz, Rabbi G. Steinberg, H. E. Saunders, A. L. Simkin, S. B. Zitzerman.

Financial control, R. A. Levenstein; public relations, H. Buchwald, Q.C., chairman; M. Fenson, L. Mainster, H. Hyman, A. Arnold, L. Escott.

Top gifts, M. B. Steinkopf, chairman; I. S. Portnoy, S. L. Morantz, S. N. Cohen, W. S. Fitch, Max Shore, Mr. Justice R. J. Matas, S. Kanes, A. L. Simkin, J. Wolinsky, M. D. Spivak.

Special gifts: D. S. Kaufman, chairman; I. Asper, M. Nathanson, Hon. S. J. Spivak, Q.C., Gordon Pollock, Q.C., R. B. Slater, G. Kroft, A. Steinberg, G. Stern, L. Bokofsky, M. J. Rosenberg, D. Levin, Q.C., H. Aron-

son, S. Bookbinder, A. O. Schwartz, P. Sheps, A. Omson, E. Vickar.

Synagogues: S. L. Morantz, co-ordinator; Shaare Zedek — Dr. N. I. Corne, M. Goldberg, Rabbi L. Nesis, Dr. N. Book, A. O. Schwartz, G. Pullan, D. Sokolov, Q.C., A. Stern, Dr. H. Fleishman, L. Shearer; Rosh Pina — Rabbi S. Rappaport, J. Erlichman, M. Reich, H. Reiss, F. Marantz, H. E. Saunders, L. Cham; Talmud Torah — O. Grubert, Rabbi A. Waxman, D. Thomson, I. Kirschner; Ashkenazie — Rabbi I. Witty, M. Soudack, J. Hurlig; B'nay Abraham — N. Goltzman, Rabbi P. Weizman, I. Spector; Herzliya-Adas Yeshurun — Rabbi M. Horowitz, A. Freeman, J. Walker, S. Pesochin; Temple Shalom — G. Broder, Rabbi G. Steinberg.

Women's campaign: A. Feld, Rabbi L. Nesis, M. Manishev, Mrs. L. Fineman, Mrs. A. Snukal, Mrs. H. Gale.

Zionist clubs: H. Aronson, Harry Warren, H. Silverman, H. E. Saunders; professionals: C. N. Blankstein, Dr. M. Pierce; B'nai B'rith: M. M. Meltzer, S. J. Oreck, Abe Schwartz, D. Stitz; young people: Gerald Schwartz and Paul Morton (co-chairmen); Ivan Berkowitz, M. Goldberg, Leo Shearer, Jack Chapman, Q.C., Gordon Pollock.

Speakers committee: Mr. Justice R. J. Matas, Rabbi L. Nesis; regional communities, Y. Henteleff; Hebrew Fraternal Lodge, S. B. Zitzerman.

Review committee: S. Galpern, R. Cristall, M. J. Rosenberg, G. Gershman, D. S. Kaufman, M. Eriker, J. Cohen, L. Shearer, S. Bookbinder, E. Silver, M. Bernay, S. G. Sheps.

B'nay Abraham Men's Dinner June 4



LEONARD PAUL
... dinner chairman

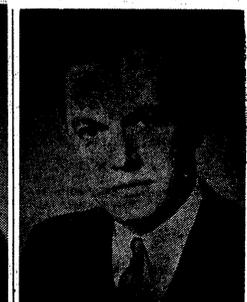
Leonard Paul, dinner chairman, and Norman Goltzman, president, announce that the sponsors response to the annual B'nay Abraham Men's Dinner has been most gratifying. The dinner is slated for Tuesday, June 4, at 6:30 p.m. in the B'nay Abraham Synagogue Auditorium, 235 Enniskillen Ave., at which time the guest speaker will be Mr. Justice Roy J. Matas.

Joe Standil, ticket chairman, states that tickets are still available from himself or from any members of his committee, who are as follows: S. Malmud, Joe Yager, Norman Goltzman, S. Ostrove, Joe Nezon, Leonard Paul, Herman Kraut, Ike Permut, I. Wolson, J. Standil, Larry Nezon, R. Flood, M. Chapnick, M. Hirsch, W. Itzkow,



MR. JUSTICE ROY J. MATAS
... guest speaker

M. Raber, M. Shane, E. Potash, S. Glow, E. Tessler, M. Langsam, J. Winston, Y. Freedman, S. Green, E. Kraut, G. Shell, Lou Nezon, A. Silver, S. Greenberg, G. Turner, D.



NORMAN GOLTZMAN
... president

Boroditsky, S. Sorokin, H. Grushko, P. Hirt, J. Liber, T. Kessler, M. Raizman, C. Levin, I. Gotfried, J. Yamron and P. M. Wilder.

Emergency Drive Women's Rally

A special rally of Jewish women of Winnipeg has been called for Thursday, June 6, 8:30 p.m., in Shaare Zedek Synagogue in support of the Israel Emergency Fund campaign.

This was announced by Mrs. I. C. Schacter, Mrs. M. Duboff and Mrs. L. Fineman, co-chairmen of the presidents council of Jewish Women's Organizations of Winnipeg,

under whose auspices the rally will be held.

The women will be addressed by Brigadier General Elad Peled, conqueror of Syria's Golan Heights in last June's Six-Day War, who will be in Winnipeg to attend emergency campaign events.

The women's rally is a major event of Winnipeg's swift six-day emergency drive to be conducted June 2 to 8.