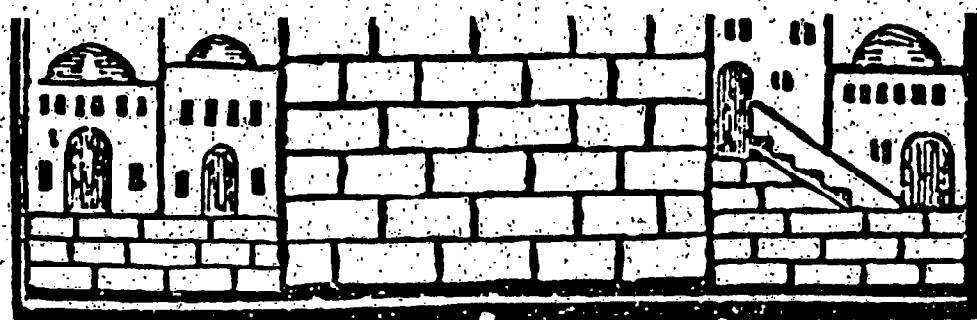


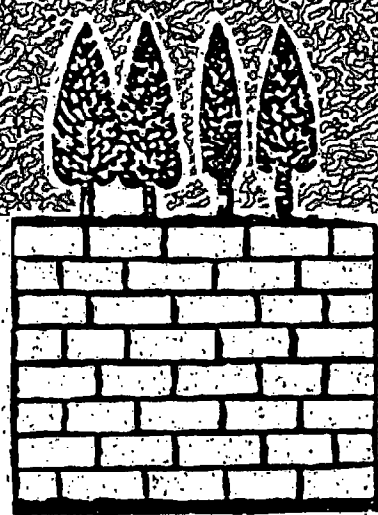


THE CHALLENGE OF JERUSALEM

BETWIXT THICKET AND ALTAR



Israel Eldad ■ Arie Eldad





**THE CHALLENGE
OF JERUSALEM**
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THE CHALLENGE OF JERUSALEM
Betwixt thicket and altar

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BETWIXT THICKET AND ALTAR

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Jerusalem is the battleground of geological and geographical forces, a battleground stretching from the desert to the Mediterranean Sea. This has left an indelible mark upon the history of the city and even on the souls of its inhabitants.

(I.A. Picard, "Jerusalem")

WHAT IS IN A NAME?

The Hebrew of ancient days attached great value to names. One of the first favours bestowed upon Adam was the power to give names to creatures. This was Adam's initial act. First he gave genetic names to the animals. Then he called his first offspring by personal names, Cain and Abel. Thus, at first, he calls his wife Woman; later she acquires her own name, Eve, the Biblical explanation being "because she was the mother of all living", while the implied meaning supplied by the Sages is that Eve is derived from Hivia — snake. God Himself is praised in that "He giveth them all their names" (Psalms 147.4). The name carries something of the essence of the named, irrespective of which came first, the name or the essence. Therefore t h e Holy Name, the name of God, Elohim, is of such great import.

Some persons were called names indicative of their ultimate fate, like Abel, whose name — Hevel in Hebrew — means naught, and who really came to naught. Sometimes names are changed, following upon events or upon meaning added to their lives, as occurred with Jacob turned Israel. A name can also acquire a new meaning and shed its former significance. This is what happened to Jerusalem.

Its ancient and profound history, stormy and colourful, actual and prophetic, echoes through the history of its name, but Jerusalem has always remained faithful, with the stubbornness of its solid rock, to its primary source: Jerusalem: interpret me, explain me, call me by other names and titles, but forever I shall remain Jerusalem. As if she were saying: Behold, even those who have made me what I am today, who built and glorified me and ruled me longer than any others, the People of Israel, never succeeded in altering my name, even though they had ample reason for so doing; ample reason because its original meaning related to one of the ancient Canaanite Semitic gods, Yeru-Shalem, or Uru-Salim in Cuneiform. Shalem appears in the Ugaritic Texts as the brother of Shahr. They were the sons of El, a Canaanite god, who is cited as El the Most High, Maker of heaven and earth, and whose priest was Melchizedek, King of Salem.

The antiquity of the city goes back at least to the third millenium B.C.E. Mention of Jerusalem occurs more often in the 20th and 19th centuries B.C.E. as Ruslmem. Later on, in the Amarna Epistles, it is called Urusalim. In the Sennacherib Inscriptions the name is

Ursilimmo.

The meaning of the word Salem is therefore quite clear. Occasionally this god appears under the name Shalman, at times he is accompanied by a mate, Shalmanato. For us, Salem creates no problem, particularly since in its abridged form, without "Jeru", the name Salem appears in the Bible twice — with reference to Melchizedek, and in the 76th Psalm: "In Salem is His tabernacle and His dwelling-place in Zion". The successive mention of Salem and Zion is conclusive proof of the identity of Salem and Jerusalem.

What, however, does Jeru mean? The majority of scholars agree that it is derived from Yara — to establish or firmly base, as in "Who laid ("Mi yara") the corner-stone thereof" (Job 38.6). In Hebrew, the root Yara forms the word hora'ah (meaning), and connotes shooting an arrow, laying a foundation, and dispensing knowledge. This is noteworthy. Its importance to us is in the understanding of Jerusalem's other name, Moriah, the mountain to which Abraham brought his son Isaac to be sacrificed. Tradition identifies this site with the Temple Mount. The name Moriah is interpreted in a number of ways — as a derivative of "yir'ah" (awe), of "re'iyah" (vision), or of "hora'ah" (meaning or teaching). Moriah was the source wherefrom teaching went forth to Israel, as stated in the Midrash. Was the object, perhaps, to Judaize the god Salem? Just as the Hebrew name Hanan-Yah parallels the Canaanite Hani-Baal, and Bin-Anat (one of the daughters of Ramses II) is parallel to Bat-Yah, Pharaoh's daughter, it is quite plausible that Moriah is the Hebraization of Yeru — shalem. However, Jerusalem won out over Moriah, or — more appropriately — absorbed Moriah, as occurred with Zion and the City of David. These were originally names of quarters which in time came to designate the entire city, but lost in the competition with the name Jerusalem and were content to complement it and became reconciled with it. Jerusalem she was to remain forever. At the time of its conquest, it is mentioned once or twice by the name of its ancient inhabitants, Jebus, but this name passed and vanished; Jebus was subjugated too.

The ancient spelling almost always omits the letter Yod in the suffix: Yerusalem. Subsequently the use of the dual suffix was adopted, Yerushalayim, whilst the spelling throughout the Bible, except for five places, remained without the Yod. Wherefor? Can it be that in those days the Upper City expanded and, in a way, two cities were established, on two hills, with a deep ravine separating them? We shall later on discuss the two Jerusalems, Celestial Jerusalem and Terrestrial Jerusalem, but this duality arose long after the twin usage was adopted.

Could it be that the change was intended to weaken the link with the ancient god "Shalem", whilst at the same time maintaining the old accepted and sanctified name. In translation to Greek, Latin and Aramaic, the ancient form — Jerusalem — was retained. Yerushalayim it was only to the Jewish People.

There is no doubt that the Peace connotation, City of Peace, dates far back in history. This is the theme of Psalm 122. The City's praise is sung for three of its attributes: Unity — A city that is compact together (perhaps the Psalmist is hinting at its perfection, derived also from the word "shalem"), all the tribes of Israel are united therein. Secondly: Justice. Thirdly, in the concluding verses of the Psalm, there are three emphases: "Pray for the peace of Jerusalem... Peace be within thy walls... Peace be within thee". This is clearly the ideic meaning which the Psalmist ascribes to the name.

Some commentators believe that the name Solomon, Shlomo, son of David, is derived from the name Jerusalem; it was Solomon who made Jerusalem the City of the Temple. Solomon — king of Shalem. One of the greatest scholars of our time, Albright, even goes further and maintains: Melchi-Zedek was king of peace with Abraham, not king of Shalem.

The message of peace went forth from Jerusalem, but peace itself was never its lot and many wars swept through Jerusalem. It was destroyed and was rebuilt, was destroyed a second time and its rebuilding was commenced in the days of Bar-Kochba, again it fell and again it was rebuilt. This time, however, a total effort was made to eradicate its ancient and holy name. Emperor Hadrian was obliged to deploy his best legions to suppress the revolt. It seems that he realised the power in the name Jerusalem and the spell which it cast upon the Jews both in Judea and in the Diaspora. He therefore resolved to subdue the Jews by altering the two names, the names of the country and the city. No more "Judah" or "Judea" but Syria Palestina. In order to obliterate the Jewish character of the land, it was worth recalling from oblivion the Philistines who were already dead and forgotten. It was David who drove them to the coastal strip and established the country's Jewish and Israelite identity. Hadrian apparently hoped to turn the wheel back; if the Philistines were no more — then at least their name would be revived, therefore — "Syria Palestina", and its subjugation to its perennial foe — Damascus.

The same King David who prevented the country from becoming the land of the Philistines, also conquered Jerusalem and made it capital of land and people for the first time. His son Solomon completed the

process and made it God's Sanctuary. This too Hadrian sought to reverse. He erects a pagan city upon the ruins of Jerusalem: Aelia Capitolina. Aelia — Hadrian's own name, Capitol — in honour of Jupiter Capitolini, the Roman god. The ancient Canaanite Shalem was no use any longer, he had become thoroughly Judaized. A Roman Emperor and a Roman god extirpate from the City the names of God and Jews. It is not only the name which he replaces, he builds a whole Roman-Hellenistic city on the site of Jerusalem, and it is called by this alien name for hundreds of years, by Christians too. One of the fathers of the Church, Philostronius, explains the renaming of Jerusalem thus: —

"Hadrian, the Roman Emperor, who was called Aelius, gave Jerusalem his name, Aelia, so that the Jewish nation should be driven out of it completely and even its name would no longer be able to serve them as an excuse to claim the city as theirs".

Still more extreme, Father Hieronymus gloats: —

"Like pottery which once broken cannot revert to its initial form, so the Jewish nation and Jerusalem — destroyed, will not revert to their ancient station. Its name has now been obliterated and it is called Aelia, after Aelius Hadrianus. With the loss of its former population it also lost ancient name, and the pride of the former citizens was broken."

What interest can a Christian writer have in a pagan name? Better a pagan name than a Jewish one... The pagan temple was removed and churches were built in the city in its stead, but Byzantine Christianity continues to preserve the name Aelia Capitolina. In Roman coins there appears also the abbreviation Col. Ael. Cap. (Colonia Aelia Capitolina).

Still the city fared better than the land. The name Palestina clung to the country up to our time, but the name Aelia Capitolina was erased. One finds it still in the Medba Map, and again it is mentioned after the Islamic conquest. Thereafter it vanishes. The Arabs do not, of course, simply restore its holy name. The name Aelia — interpreted as the House of El (God) — endures for about fifty years after the conquest of the city. Thereafter, the Arabic name "El-Kuds A-Sharif" — the Glorious Temple, is adopted, and subsequently, it is abbreviated to El-Kuds. Another form of the name is Beit-El-Makdas or El-Balat, a corruption of Palatinum, meaning palace. The geographer Al-Makadsi, at the end of the 10th century, cites all the names, including still Aelia. Ultimately El-Kuds prevailed with them, to the present day. We say "with them", as in the Western world the previous name HIERUSALEM was restored by the Crusaders, and so it has remained.

It goes without saying that the name Jerusalem subsisted, was

exalted, and became sanctified more and more in Jewish consciousness, in the mouths of Israel, in the prayers of Israel and in all walks of Jewish life, from the cradle to the grave, on wedding-days as well as morning, noon and evening, and in grace after meals. The rebuilding of Jerusalem became the symbol of the Redemption. The whole land is the Land of Zion and Jerusalem, and never again will this name change, notwithstanding the anticipation of prophets that it will alter. It is a fact that the three greatest prophets of Israel, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, speak of a new name by which the city will be called. Isaiah does not know the name, he says "And thou shalt be called by a new name, which the mouth of the Lord shall name" (62:2). Isaiah gives very significant names to his children, and desires of course that a new and significant name be given to the city which has become sinful, but only God Himself can give the name. Jeremiah already has a suggestion: "The Lord our righteousness", (33:16) (in Hebrew: Zidkenu), perhaps referring to — or in contrast with — the last king: Zedekiah. Ezekiel, whose concluding prophecies are devoted to an architectural description of the City and of the Temple in days to come, which is not an exact replica of the past, ends his book with a new name for the city: "The Lord is there". In the description of the departure of the Divine Presence from the Temple and the City, it was as if God had abandoned the city. Therefore its future name is "The Lord is there" ("shama") there **again**. It is Ezekiel who repeats twice the reproof (in Chapter 16): Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite. Possibly the root "Shalem", being the name of the pagan god, reminds him of the idolatrous origin of the city. It is for this reason that the change is envisaged, the renewal in days to come, the complete purification, no longer Yeru-Shalem but Yeho-Shama.

PRIMEVAL STRUGGLE

*A further phase in the formation of the landscape occurred with the creation of the Jordan Divide... which was accompanied by the emergence of the central range of the hills of Jerusalem... The penetration of the Kidron stream into the mountain crest created the unique topographical situation of Jerusalem...
Carmon, Jerusalem Through the Generations, 102*

In the beginning all was sea.

Its shores are distant, unattainable, and in its depths are sunken rocks and boulders. How many years elapsed till the sea vanished?

Seas grow old too and the sea was gathered unto its waves, it retreated and dried, and there was dread. The sea died. The rocks at its bottom gradually emerged and shrank in their nakedness, turning grey from the cold and coming out in points, and they hardened in the sun.

In time the non-Jewish residents of the land would call these rocks Jewish Mizi, and iron would smash and chip and build in this hardened, sharp grey which gradually coalesced into the new Jerusalem. This, however, was yet to come. Till then — a new sea flooded and swept and subdued the rocks. The new young sea is all-encompassing, it is alone in the world. It is mighty, and its rocks are white, red and black. Chalk is in its rocks, and the boulders are black, and with these majestic young rocks temples will be built one day, but whilst they are as yet submerged in the depths of the sea, awaiting their destiny — the sea above them has expired.

And again, beneath the sun, the rocks are arranged, cluster by cluster. Till the sea covers them up, and like white shrouds of soft chalk, the hard chalk shall be enfolded, to preserve it till the day of revival of the rocks, the day of the War of All the Strata, which will decide who shall be the sole ruler of this landscape.

It arrived. Who knows how long it lasted?

Then there was an earthquake and a mighty chasm rent asunder all the layers and cleaved the depths unto the very foundations, through all

the crusts to the utter abyss.

And rock crushed rock, and mountain battered mountain, and all the strata of the earth crumbled and there was a great outcry in the world.

Thereafter quiet prevailed.

There was one cleavage in the earth, from north to south, and silence.

Only the echoes of ancient days coursing through the depths of the new chasm, to seize their place in it, only they reverberated in space.

In years to come geologists would call the rift The Syrian-African Divide, and their brows would furrow like the wrinkles of a mountain-side in speculating who triumphed in that ancient struggle, or perhaps no one of them was the victor, and the struggle continues, and the day of battle, which is neither day nor night, is still to come.

Into that mighty chasm to the very depths, there was enfolded also a deep curl to the heavens. From the deep of the lowest sea on the face of the earth to the peak of the mountain above it, an age-old rift was excavated, a last spurt, as it were, of expended effort by the Great Divide, as an ambassador to the upper region, sundering the living strata of rock, exposing them and reaching to the summit. Nahal Kidron.

This stream has three ends, three valleys, to relate all that has been, that is, and that shall be, and to build Jerusalem upon them:

The Valley of Hinnom, from the abyss and the depths, the Valley of Tirofion for everyday necessities, for stone to build houses, and the Valley of Beit Zeita to the north. These are the factors which dictated the location of the Temple Mount and the Valley of Jehosaphat, in anticipation of the last war, still to come.

And the Syrian-African Divide, not necessarily the geological phenomenon, still constitutes a threat.

THE BATTLE OF THE WATERS

It was the struggle of the rock strata on which Jerusalem is built which moulded the character of the landscape and determined the course of an age-long war. The war for water.

Jerusalem is built astride the watershed. Nature has prescribed that the waters shall flow from her to the Dead Sea and to the Mediterranean, they do not flow to Jerusalem.

Every builder of Jerusalem was therefore compelled to fight for its waters: from the springs, from the sky, and from afar. The more the city grew and spread — the harder was the struggle for water, for the mouths which thirsted for it multiplied.

Jerusalem of pre-Davidic days, the City of the Jebusite and its predecessors, dwelt on the spur of a mountain at the foot of the south-eastern end of which a spring emerges, the Spring of Gihon, Jerusalem's first source of water, in ancient times — its spring of life. Its waters pour into Nahal Kidron, and therefrom they issue forth, not in a constant current, but in sudden spurts, on rainy winter days — several times a day, in the parched summer — only once a day. The primitives sanctified it and believed in the power of its waters.

The Gihon was situated, however, at the end of the valley; the city was on the upper slope. And the waters do not ascend of their own. In normal days all that this involves is the burden of descending and carrying, drawing and bringing, for drinking, for libation, and for irrigation of the gardens on the Kidron slope. In times of war, the enemy would occupy the spring, drink its waters and deny them to the city. The city would thirst, and be vanquished. For the spring was outside its walls. The ancients simply had to bring the water into the city. They hewed a system consisting of two piers and vertical holes, to reach down to the artery of water flowing under the City and to trap it there, in the deep, before it bursts forth into the valley bed. They failed. The remnants of the piers are visible to this day, but the water was not tapped.

Generations passed and the House of David reigns in Jerusalem. The City reaches the zenith of grandeur and development in the days of Solomon. It contains Palace and Temple and has expanded in size and population. Scores of thousands of pilgrims come in Passover time, Succot (Tabernacles) and Shavuot (Pentecost) to the Temple. All this

requires greater and more abundant water works.

It appears that in the days of Solomon, the water-supply from the Gihon spring was improved, the level of the water was raised and the canals were lengthened, up to the Kidron Valley, to irrigate the King's gardens. From there, they extended to the southern point of the City of David, and thence — into the City, to a reservoir in the Central Valley of Jerusalem. This may also have been the period of the first engineering feat which stored rain-water, for use in summer.

And even if Kohelet (Ecclesiastes) was not Solomon, he was wise and knowledgeable in ascribing these deeds to Solomon: I made me pools of water, to irrigate therefrom the wood springing up with trees (Ecclesiastes 2:6).

These works were not enough. The water conduits which were adequate at the time, were insufficient for the increasing needs of the City. They were obviously inadequate in days of war.

Hezekiah King of Judah, and his Court, recognised Sennacherib's objective — conquest of the land. It was clear that preparations had to be made for a difficult war. The forces of Judea were not capable of course of opposing the armies of the northern empire in open combat on the battlefield. The only alternative was to fortify Jerusalem and prepare it for a prolonged siege. It was evident that the aqueduct which carried water from the Spring of Gihon, and which was probably constructed by Solomon, would not ensure the water-supply of the besieged city, as it passes in an open area which is dominated by besiegers. The very gradual slope and the numerous bends in the conduit slowed the flow of the water, as is implied in Isaiah's simile, This people hath refused the waters of Shiloah that go softly (8:6). And then, approximately in 700 BCE, by order of the King, the breakthrough occurred, And how he made the pool and the conduit and brought water into the City (Second Kings, 20:20). And when Hezekiah saw that Sennacherib was come, and that he was purposed to fight against Jerusalem, he took counsel with his princes and his mighty men to stop the waters of the fountains which were without the city; and they helped him. So there was gathered much people together, and they stopped all the fountains, and the brook that flowed through the midst of the land, saying: Why should the kings of Assyria come, and find much water? (Second Chronicles 32:2-4).

And in the wall of the conduit which the men of Hezekiah excavated, the unknown mason has inscribed, The conduit (is completed). And thus the conduit was made. Whilst (the masons swung the) axes from one to the other, and whilst still three hundred cubits remained, the

voice of one man calling his fellow-man was heard, in the flint from the right and from the left, and on the day the conduit was completed, the excavators hewed each in the direction of the other, ax to ax. And the waters flowed from the source to the pool one hundred and one thousand cubits, and one hundred cubits was the height of the rock above the head of the excavators.

Winding is the course of the conduit, for the rock was stubborn and was difficult to bore. And two gangs of labourers excavated, converging from the spring and from the city. Time was of the essence, for Sennacherib's battalions were approaching, and from time to time the hewers encountered solid rock and they were obliged to circumvent it. The cracks and nooks in the rock — they were an obstacle too. The excavators would have had to bore through three hundred and twenty metres had they proceeded in a direct line. Because of the obstructions in the rock, however, the length of the conduit is almost double. Yet its point of exit is only 2.20 metres above the height of its starting-point. How did the engineers and excavators succeed in ensuring such a graded slope, with the very simple tools at their disposal? How could it ever have entered our minds that there were not highly-skilled artisans in Jerusalem?

King Hezekiah blocks the mouth of the Gihon and builds a pool at the end-point of the conduit within the city. It is called The Shiloah Pool. Sennacherib's siege disintegrates against the walls of Jerusalem, and in the course of time the Gihon will be forgotten and the people of Jerusalem will know it only as the Spring of Shiloah.

However, the Shiloah waters did not suffice. Both prior and subsequent to the excavation of the Shiloah conduit, every effort was made to utilise rain-water and to store it for the sultry summer days. Most of the public water works which were established in those days made use of the external and internal city walls as dams to block the water at the lowest section of the valley. There large reservoirs were built, and many are the relics of those pools to this day, and the references to them in ancient books.

The Lower Pool and the Upper Pool date back to the First Temple. In the days of the Second Temple, the Upper Pool was rebuilt. It is not known today where they were located. Pools were built also in the northern part of the city, including the one built in the new suburb of Beit Zeita which developed north of the Temple Mount.

The Pool of Israïne which was built in the days of Herod, was the largest reservoir of Jerusalem: One hundred and twenty metres long, thirty-eight metres wide, with pipe-lines leading the water to it from

considerable distances, draining large quantities of rain-water. North of the pool there was the Sheep Pool which is mentioned in one of the stories of the miracles of Jesus. In Christian lore it is known as the Pool of Beit Hisda. Pilgrims and the afflicted would come there to bathe and be cured. Further on — the Setrothion Pool which was apparently part of the defence moat which Herod dug opposite the Bira Fortress, otherwise known as the Antonia. It was at this point, opposite the Antonia, that the Fifth Roman Legion built a rampart. The waters of this pool come from the north, from above, and flow to the Temple Mount, to the Temple itself.

Herod built still more pools in Jerusalem, The Snakes Pool in the Valley of Hinnom, its southern end banked by a dam traversed by the road to Bethlehem; The Mamilla Pool to the west of the city, its waters flowing into the Amigdalon Pool, otherwise known as the Migdalim (Towers) Pool, because the towers of Herod's palace were reflected in its placid waters. It is also called Hezekiah's Pool. To this day it lies hidden between the houses near Jaffa Gate. Herod further built pools for the use of his palace which abounded in gardens and fountains. Herod gathered all this water into Jerusalem, but the maintenance of the pools was difficult. Large quantities of silt accumulated in the pools, and the superintendents were obliged to sweep them constantly. When water stagnates for long summer days, it becomes polluted and malodorous, and is no longer fit to drink. Moreover, if the pool is not properly constructed, the water seeps through. If it is well-built and the water is stagnant, it invites mosquitoes and malaria. Those who are in need of the water do not have them on tap; they must go for it, draw it and bring it home.

Possibly, the large pools supplied the important institutions, the Temple and Jerusalem's palaces, or perhaps they served the scores of thousands of pilgrims who came to Jerusalem, and perhaps again they constituted reserves for times of war. Be that as it may, the residents of Jerusalem relied in the main on themselves; it is fair to assume that most houses had private cisterns in their yards which drained the rain water from the roofs and yards. There were also General Pools for the use of a number of houses in a city quarter. Some of the cisterns were covered and plastered, some were excavated deep into the rock. Many of them exist to this day and are still leak-proof. On the Temple Mount and in the Temple grounds there are numerous cisterns, some of them ancient, others more recent. We do not know the specific use of the water of each cistern.

The cisterns were the principal source of water of the inhabitants of

Jerusalem from the days of the Second Temple till modern times. Thousands of cisterns existed during the final period of Ottoman rule and during the British Mandate. Their importance was demonstrated once again during the Siege of Jerusalem in 1948, when the pipelines to the city were cut, and it was the cisterns which saved the Jewish quarters in western Jerusalem from dire thirst.

We have described the subterranean and heavenly gifts of water supply to Jerusalem. These two sources, however, did not suffice; Jerusalem was obliged to bring water also from afar. It is unknown who were the first to build aqueducts at a distance from Jerusalem, but it appears that it was the wisdom of the engineers of Greece and Rome which was expressed in sculpted columns and hollowed stone pipes. Aqueducts spanned the mountainsides in Judea, and they descended very gradually towards Jerusalem.

A mighty water enterprise bearing the Herod stamp, transported water from the springs of the Tahanot Valley (Wadi Irtas) and from the springs of Nahal Arub to gigantic reservoirs (including the famous Solomon's Pools), whence meticulous aqueducts conveyed their waters to Jerusalem.

Aqueducts tens of kilometres long move the water along the hills, pierce mountains through tunnels, and re-appear on the other side of the mountains, descend to the bottom of valleys and soar again upwards to the other side of the valleys, in siphon-type constructions similar to those employed in water carriers to this very day.

The distance from the Arub Pools to Solomon's Pools is about forty-five kilometres, and it is approximately twenty-four kilometers from Solomon's Pools to the Temple Mount. The difference in altitude between the highest spring and the Temple Mount is only eighty metres.

This water project of the Second Temple period was built in a number of stages, in accordance with growing needs of the City; a constantly increasing number of pilgrims kept flocking to Herod's Temple. Josephus Flavius relates how riots broke out in Judea when the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, attempted to finance the construction of a conduit seventy-five kilometres long out of the treasure in the Temple vaults.

Thirst was not the cause of the fall of Jerusalem nor of the destruction of the Temple, but there was insufficient water in the city to extinguish the numerous conflagrations ignited from outside by the besiegers. Worse still — once the fratricidal war within the city flares up and the City walls are breached and the Temple is destroyed — no longer can all the waters in the world extinguish the conflagration.

In subsequent generations, water was again obtained from ancient sources, new cisterns were dug, old ones were restored to prevent seepage, the pools were repaired to prevent collapse, and the aqueducts — to avoid leakage. New works were not undertaken, however, and Jerusalem continued to struggle for its waters for many generations.

And today — again water is carried to Jerusalem from great distances, from the west and the north. Through steel pipes the water is forced upward to the hills, pumped by mighty steel lungs to steel taps in the homes, and water is abundant and good. Yet there still are many small stone houses in Jerusalem, their courtyards paved with flagstones, their taps flowing water in step with progress, but in the courtyard there is a deep cistern and its waters are cool and quiet. The inhabitants of the house know: The steel taps are good and the water they bring is abundant, but the experience of thousands of years has taught them: Maintain the water cisterns; Jerusalem fights for its water.

The Divine inspiration which bestirred the Prophet of the Dry Bones evoked a wondrous vision: Not only would Jerusalem be freed in days to come from dependence on water from the outside, from a lower region, but it will indeed supply water to its surroundings. Not only figurative water, The Torah, will go forth from Jerusalem, but also real water, for the body which thirsts no less than for the soul. And he brought me back unto the door of the house; and, behold, waters issued out from under the threshold of the house eastward, for the forefront of the house looked toward the east; and the waters came down from under, from the right side of the house, on the south of the altar... and led me round by the way without unto the outer gate, by the way of the gate that looketh toward the east, and behold there ran out waters on the right side... Afterward he measured a thousand; and it was a river that I could not pass through; for the waters were risen, waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed through... Then said he unto me: These waters issue forth toward the eastern region... and when they shall enter into the sea, into the sea of the putrid waters, the waters shall be healed... (Ezekiel 47).

IN A CANAANITE CITY

"Thine origin and thy nativity is of the land of the Canaanite. The Amorite was thy father, and thy mother was a Hittite".

Ezekiel 16:3

3800 to 3400 B.C.E.

A Canaanite city it was at least three thousand and eight hundred years ago, during the period which archaeologists call the "Middle Bronze MBIIb" Age. Its fortifications were excavated in modern times and they reveal that already at that time it was a city of substance with solid protecting walls. The floodlights of ancient records illuminate Jerusalem from long ago and from afar, from Egypt and Nubia and el-Amarna. Ceramic pottery and clay images — The Egyptian records refer to Jerusalem and its rulers, and to the names of many other towns in Phoenicia, southern Syria, Trans-Jordan and Galilee. Jerusalem is the sole representative of the hills in the centre of the country. The clay images bear curses and maledictions which will befall the city and its rulers should they dare to revolt against Pharaoh. From these antiquities we learn that there were two ancient rulers of the city: Yekor'an and Sath'an (Shas'an?). The names are Amorite, i.e. Semitic, and Jerusalem's name at that time was Yerushalmem. This is all we know.

Four hundred years later, that is to say three thousand four hundred years ago, a messenger was urgently despatched from Jerusalem bearing a missive to Pharaoh Amnahatep the Fourth, from the Governor of Jerusalem Eved-Hafa (Peti-Hafa) to his supreme lord, the Pharaoh of Egypt. In due course, the epistle reached "the Great House", which is what the word Pharaoh means. It may have been referred to a minor secretary. Be that as it may, it was read by someone or other, who gave certain orders, and the letter was filed in the bureaucratic office system of the day — and stored in Pharaoh's archives. It came to light in Tel-el-Amarna, a century ago, in the Electricity Age, somewhat removed from the Bronze Age. It seems that since then the letter has received more attention than at the time it was written — even though in our time it has lost the sense of urgency which it contained when despatched, for the damage could no longer be undone. But let us not render Kafkaesque judgments.

To the King my Master

I shall say: So sayeth
 Eved-Hafa your servant. Before your two feet
 My Master the King seven times seven I fall.
 Behold the deeds which Shemilchialu
 And Shavardata have done
 Against the land of my Master the King.
 They have hired soldiers from Gezer
 Soldiers of Gat
 And soldiers of Ke'ilah
 And have conquered the land of the city Robotha.
 The King's land has fallen
 In the hand of the Habiru.
 And in addition
 A city in the land of Jerusalem
 Its name is Beit Niniv.
 The city of the King
 Moved to the place where the people of Ke'ilah are
 And may the King consent to listen to Eved-Hafa his servant
 And send archers
 To restore the King's domain to my Master
 But if archers will not come
 The King's land will desert to the Habiru
 This will be the fate of the land
 I beseech you to kill the son of Milichialu
 And the son of Shavardata
 — — — — — Gat

And may the King be pleased to care for his land.

The message is written in Accadian, which was the language of most diplomatic communications at that time in this part of the world. Six letters were sent from Jerusalem to Amnahatep III and his son Amnahatep IV, otherwise known as Pharaoh Ahnaaton, the great religious reformer in Egypt. Eved-Hafa, king of Jerusalem, feared for himself and for the House over which Pharaoh had appointed him to rule. Canaan was riven by wars and disputes, and Egypt's rule was unsteady. The "Great House" shut his eyes to the little follies and rebellions of the rulers of the cities of Canaan. City warred on city, and Eved-Hafa found himself alone on the battle-field, arrayed against changing coalitions of enemies, headed always by the sons of Labaya, rulers of Shechem, hated foes of Eved-Hafa and therefore — so the King stresses in his letters — foes of Pharaoh. Pharaoh would be well-advised to assert his power and to inculcate in them discipline and

obedience. The kings of Gezer and Hebron join at times with the kings of Shechem and of many smaller towns. All of them scheme to make war upon Jerusalem and to conquer it. Eved-Hafa strives to establish ties and to enter into alliances with kings in the distant north of the country. He and the king of Acco had fifty chariots, and Eved-Hafa was in need of them to smite his treacherous enemies. How frustrated we are today because never shall we know whether the chariots arrived on time.

And in the country-side, in between the cities — there too neither peace nor quiet reigned. The Habiru, those nomads whom no one knows whence they came and when they shall leave, wander about; many say that even the Hebrews are of them. At times their swords are for hire and they serve as mercenaries. Sometimes they maraud, in and out of town, and even the King's highway along which tribute to the King of Egypt is transported is not secure. At the crossroads in the Valley of Ayalon, a caravan carrying tribute from Jerusalem to Pharaoh is plundered. This is the cause of the serious delay in the despatch of the tribute, not — perish the thought — an attempt by Eved-Hafa to evade payment, or ingratitude on the part of the "junior officer" towards his supreme commander, Pharaoh.

Eved-Hafa is in need of a garrison, of Egyptian reinforcements to be sent to him from Egypt's chief stronghold in Canaan, Gaza. "Yet still this year, send me a garrison and the King's Agent." He quotes the gigantic number of soldiers which he requires: Fifty. If they will not be despatched — "and if this year there will be no archers force — then all the King's lands are lost, oh Master!"

However, Eved-Hafa is also dissatisfied with the Egyptian garrison, and he complains bitterly to Pharaoh of an attempt on his life made by soldiers of Ethiopia — Nubia:

"The house is sturdy; to this Pharaoh's agents can testify. Notwithstanding this, a vile crime was plotted, they took their tools and broke through the roof... a hair's breadth separated me from assassination by the men of Ethiopia in my own home. Bring them, oh King, to justice!"

Poor Eved-Hafa, between the Habiru hammer and anvil of his enemies within the land, he puts his trust in the staff of the broken reed — the Egyptian garrison at its base in Gaza. In his despair, Eved-Hafa writes, "May the King send an Agent to bring me to him, with my brothers, and die we shall near the King, our Master."

Only a few generations after these lines were written — apparently after the inevitable death of the King of Jerusalem — the forces of the Children of Israel penetrated Canaan, headed by Joshua the son of

Nun.

The view of Canaan which presented itself before their eyes had not changed. The countryside studded with cities and states, the cities fortified and warring with each other, suspicious of each other, suspicious still more of the power arising in the east, whilst in the west, Egypt's sun is setting temporarily. The Children of Israel set up their headquarters in Gilgal, and in the "seam" between the sworn enemies, the Kingdom of Jerusalem and the Kingdom of Shechem, they penetrate to the crest of the mountain range, and enter into alliances with four vassal cities of the Hivites, foremost of which is Gibeon.

Adoni-Zedek, King of Jerusalem, succeeds this time in enlisting the aid of other kings, and at the head of the armies of Hebron, Jarmuth, Lahish, Eglon and his own contingents — he makes war on the cities of the Hivite who made peace with Joshua. At Gibeon he is thoroughly defeated by Joshua and the tribes of Israel.

There is war with the King of Jerusalem, not yet war for Jerusalem. A long night's march from Gilgal, a grievous blow at Gibeon, a long pursuit up the Beit Horon Ascent, (Maaleh Beit Horon), the great stones which were cast from the sky and which slew more of the Amorite soldiers than the sword of the Children of Israel, and the sun which stood still even whilst the moon shone in the Valley of Ayalon, until the nation had avenged themselves of their enemies — is it not written in the book of Yashar? Joshua and his men return to their base at Gilgal and the five defeated kings hide in a cave at Makkedah and are captured there as the remnants of their forces re-group in their fortified towns. And it came to pass, when they brought them forth out of the cave before all the men of Israel, the chiefs of the men of war put their feet upon the necks of the kings, as witness that thus shall be done to all the enemies of Israel. They are thereafter slain by Joshua.

Jerusalem's day has not yet arrived. Only after the death of Joshua do the sons of Judah and Simeon fight against Jerusalem, "and took it, and smote it with the edge of the sword, and set the city on fire". (Judges 1:8). We are not told, however, that the sons of Judah settled in Jerusalem, and as history and geopolitics abhor vacuum — the indigenous population returned, rebuilt the ruins and settled the city. The composition of the population of Jerusalem may have altered at this stage. Perhaps it was then that the Hittites overcame the beaten Amorites, and became the rulers for the time being of the city, when the Judges judge in the land.

In the beginning of the settlement of Canaan by the Children of Israel, they did not yet conquer Jerusalem. It is still the city of Jebus

when David mounts his attack upon it from Hebron, in order to take it for the People of Israel and make it "The City of David", and yet more and exalted than that.

BETWEEN THE THICKET AND THE ALTAR

Though it is not stated so expressly in Scripture, it is suggested in the Midrash, that the Foundation Rock (Even Hashetiya) in the centre of the Temple Mount, which is in the centre of the city, the centre of the land, the centre of the Universe, its very cornerstone, is the self-same rock upon which our Father Abraham bound his son, his one son, whom he loved, Isaac, for the purpose of offering him up as a sacrifice as he was commanded. This stone was the testing-ground, there the faith of the Father of the Nation was put to the test, his readiness to sacrifice that which he treasured most on earth — at the behest of Him who was dearest and holiest to him in Heaven, his Heavenly Father — there he was tested, there he stood the test and prevailed, and became the father of the sanctifiers of the Holy Name. After having himself been tested by fire — according to the legend — when Nimrod, father of all hunters, king of idol-worshippers, cast him into the furnace because of his belief in one invisible God, thereafter he was tested by a severer and more painful trial: He was not called upon to sacrifice himself but his son. In Haran, before coming to Canaan, he was required to sacrifice himself; in Canaan he was bid to sacrifice his son.

The place — Jerusalem. The altar — Even Hashetiya. Anyone not content with the straightforward meaning, that is was just a test, may add: It was a divine injunction — “In the mount of the Lord it shall be seen” (Genesis 22:14), to prohibit the sacrifice of children which was then prevalent. The two came together: The birthplace of supreme idealism, the readiness to bring the supreme sacrifice, as well as the site of the new humanism: Man shall not be sacrificed to God. The ram shall be sacrificed, man shall not. In honour of the only God who is above nature, a creature of nature shall be offered, nature itself shall be sacrificed, even Man’s nature shall be submerged, but not Man himself.

The event itself, including the awesome procession to the site, “And they went both of them **together**” and again “So they went both of them **together**”, is one of the most sublime in Scripture, it attains the loftiest heights of Biblical recounting, simple in language and so emotionally restrained. Yet beneath the rock of ordinary and prosaic words, emotion, struggle and suffering are enveloped, charged with poetry and fate.

The fate of a nation is bound and tied between a father’s heart and

divine injunction, between a father's hand ready to obey, and divine love which stays the hand. Bound to the altar, ready for the sacrifice, and descending from the altar, again and again.

This too repeatedly occurred here, at Even Hashetiya in the heart of Jerusalem: The ram which was caught in the thicket was sacrificed on the altar instead of Isaac. That is expressly stated. That which has not been expressly stated, but which nonetheless definitely did occur, is this:

Isaac — and we, the Jewish People of all generations, with him — replaced the ram in the thicket.

In moments of trial we display supreme readiness and straightforwardness. But once we stand the test, after descending from this lofty Foundation-Rock, we divest ourselves of the constraints of sacrifice, sanctity and altar, we descend from Celestial Jerusalem to Terrestrial Jerusalem, enter the thicket and become involved in its complexities. Was Jerusalem given only for **dying** therein in holiness and purity, not for **living** there in sanctity and purity? After every David comes a Solomon, after every Solomon — a Rehoboam, after all unifiers — dividers, after every ascent — descent, after every Hezekiah — Manasseh, and after every Maccabee — an Edomite? Isaac descended from the high altar and he and we entered the thickest thicket. The source of all our complexes is here, in Jerusalem. It all started with Isaac's submission to the sacrifice. We are great in readiness, and are ready only for greatness and to pay the price and take the risk of this readiness. The dread: Will the delivering hand from above always appear, as a reward for the readiness below?

"The Almighty revealed to Abraham that the Temple which will be built on this site will be destroyed and rebuilt and destroyed and rebuilt and destroyed again, and shall be sturdy and perfect in days to come, and He showed him: Just as this ram leaps from this wood and becomes caught and involved in another wood, so are his sons destined to be trapped by sins and subjected to foreign rule, from Babylon to Media, from Media to Greece and from Greece to Edom, and ultimately they will be delivered by the horn of this ram" (Breshit-Rabba 56:13).

This memory too, the memory of the experience or — if you wish — the experience of this memory, and the thicket, they too are woven in the fabric of this Jerusalem, in the realm of meta-history, or: in the story of the past and of the present.

DAVID'S CONQUEST

David reigns seven years and six months in Hebron. He then moves his army northward and prepares for the attack on Jerusalem.

What was Jerusalem at that time?

The Israelites called it the City of Jebus, after its inhabitants. The Jebusites, possibly one of the ancient Canaanite tribes, with whose king — Melchizedek — Abraham made a covenant. They allied themselves in the generation of the Conquest of Canaan with the Amorites, to wage war on the sons of Abraham, in the war of the Amorite king against Joshua. Perhaps, however, the Jebusites are new arrivals who came by sea to Eretz-Israel from the west. And maybe they are the sons of Heth who seized an historical opportunity to capture Jerusalem after it was destroyed in the days of the conquest of the land by the sons of Judah. Be that as it may: The city of Jebus lies between the land of Benjamin to the north and the land of Judah to the south. Jebus dominates its surroundings and stands astride vital crossroads. On a mighty mountain saddle, slightly lower than the mountains of Ramah in Benjamin to its north and the mountains of southern Judea — there sits Jerusalem, in the centre.

And this is the saddle of the kingdom of David. All the elders of Israel went south, to Hebron, to the City of the Patriarchs, to anoint David with oil and to establish him as king of all Israel. There he makes a covenant with them. But to fulfil their covenant with him, so that in fact he will reign over all Israel, he is in need of the mighty royal saddle in the centre, Jerusalem.

What road did David's armies take from Hebron? How many were his warriors, how so did the burnished copper of their weapons glisten in the setting sun? In David's camp there was no Homer, and present-day scholars are obliged to scrutinise records, pottery and stone-heaps that have survived, and then once again shut their eyes and visualise in their mind's eye that march which was destined to bind Jerusalem for evermore to the People of Israel.

For Jerusalem was not given to Israel on a silver platter. At that time Jerusalem was still Jebus, the Jebusite inhabited the city, manned its walls and felt secure that his citadel would not fail him.

Jebus rested on a hill surrounded on three sides by deep and steep ravines — to the east the Valley of Kidron lies between the city and the

Mount of Olives, to the south and west — the Valley of Hinnom. In the centre of the hill — “The Valley (Hagai)”, which was the Valley of Tirofion, the valley of the cheesemakers in the days of the Second Temple, dividing the area in two. The Upper City of Second Temple days would be established in the western part. The Eastern City was on a level some scores of metres lower. On the high plateau to the north, the Temple would arise. And from the Temple Site a steep spur descends. There the city of Jebus was located. Upon it the armies of David converged from Hebron.

Where did the city’s walls stand? This we do not know for sure. It can however be assumed that as a Canaanite town of that period, its area was over ten acres, and that it obtained its waters from the Gihon stream, which flowed northward, in the conduit, to the City. “And the king and his men went to Jerusalem unto the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke unto David saying: ‘Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come in hither’; thinking: ‘David cannot come in hither.’ Nevertheless David took the citadel of Zion; the same is the City of David. And David said on that day: ‘Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites, and getteth up to the gutter and taketh away the lame and the blind, that are hated of David’s soul —.’ Wherefore they say: ‘The blind and the lame shall not come into the house’. And David built round about from Millo and inward.” (Second Samuel, 5:6-9).

In the Book of Chronicles the event is otherwise related: “And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem, which is Jebus; where the Jebusites were, the inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Jebus said to David, Thou shalt not come hither. Nevertheless David took the citadel of Zion, which is the city of David. And David said, ‘Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first shall be chief and captain.’ So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief. And David dwelt in the citadel; therefore they called it the City of David. And he built the City round about, even from Millo round about: and Joab repaired the rest of the city.” (First Chronicles, 11:4-8).

The story of the battle is not clear. In modern military parlance one would say: The fog of battle has not yet lifted. Through the fog, we see a Jebusite standing on the wall and shouting to David and his men: “Thou shalt not come in hither”. Weapons, food and water, and a network of fortifications instil a feeling of security in the population of Jebus, who face the relatively light forces of David, troops who are courageous, but who lack the heavy siege equipment which is as yet unknown. It is time for the wisdom of David and the valour of Joab.

David’s conquest is of decisive importance in the annals of

Jerusalem. Let us consider two views of scholars on the method of conquest. One was an historian, the other is an archaeologist and soldier:

Ben-Zion Dinur, the historian says:

David is in his tent. It is night, and guards are patrolling. The walls of the near-yet-far city outline the horizon. "David shall not come hither" proclaim the Jebusites atop the walls, and they display cripples, the blind and the lame upon the walls and above the gates. Do they mean to say that even these cripples suffice to prevent David from investing the city? Or perchance the Jebusites are posing a terrifying riddle, terrifying to him who shall not solve it, and terrifying to its author — should David solve it. An amusing riddle, none the less terrifying, after the fashion of the sea-faring Philistines whose habits David knows so well. "Except thou take away the blind and the lame..." — who are the blind and the lame? Cripples up there atop the walls? Or perhaps it is David who is blind, as he does not discern the weak point in the city walls, and his soldiers are lame for they cannot scale the walls? Could it be that the blind and the lame are in his own camp and he will have to remove them to enable him to penetrate the city? A riddle-language echoing back to the days of Samson and his riddles.

It is night, the patrols make the rounds. Morning has dawned and David has discovered the key to the riddle. The walls still rise against the paling skyline, but their destruction is now assured. Only the lame must be withdrawn from the camp, now that its commander clearly sees the course to be followed.

So Joab the son of Zeruiah went first up, and was chief.

Joab son of Zeruiah, is foremost amongst David's mighty men, yet from the days of the play of the young men by the pool of Gibeon, when he faced Abner son of Ner, captain of Saul's host. Joab, David's close comrade from the days when he was hunted and was wanted — till the chain of tragic breaches between them along the road to David's throne and glorious kingdom, fraught with obstacles, triumphs and rebellions. David, who could not reign without his general Joab, and whose heart yearned to Joab even as he said, "What have I to do with you, ye sons of Zeruiah?". Joab, whose loyalty to David's kingdom was stronger at times than his submission to David's will.

Be that as it may, in the Battle for Jerusalem, Joab's position as David's general is established, "and he repairs the rest of the city." Thereby he strengthens his standing, and that of his family, also in Jerusalem.

Yigael Yadin visualises a different battle picture. As an archaeologist

and a general, he endeavours to read the battle plan through the understanding of the weapons of the period, and "intelligence reports" which have fallen into his hands from other sources.

The city of Jebus is besieged. Most of the towns in the vicinity of Jerusalem have already been conquered by David or have submitted to him. David has been crowned king of Israel and Judah, and the city of Jebus is completely encircled. The situation of the Jebusites is desperate. David's men, encamped opposite the City, are ready for the battle to breach the walls. It may not be easy — but the outcome is a forgone conclusion.

And then: Upon the walls, facing the marshalling forces, mount the priests of Jebus. In their priestly garments they are recognised from afar. The soldiers see them, stop and watch. From within the city a number of men and women are dragged up. They move and stumble, they limp and grope their way down, till they are opposite the camp at the foot of the wall: the blind and the lame. Dinur the historian sees the cripples in the Israelite camp. Yadin, the Chief-of-Staff, visualises them in the enemy camp.

The priests light a fire, melt wax, and place the cripples opposite the army. From atop the wall a voice is heard:

He who will break this spell and will harm the city or its inhabitants — shall perish and shall melt like this wax. Thereupon they pour water on the flames and again the voice is heard:

"Behold the blind and the lame. He who schemes evil against the city and its inhabitants — may their curse come upon him. The gods shall blind him and chop off his feet, he shall become a cripple. The gods shall destroy him, his wife, his offspring and his family."

Anxiety reigns in David's camp.

The ceremony is familiar. It is the work of the priests of Heth. Thus they adjure their battalions. One theory is that the Jebusites are of the sons of Heth. It is therefore that Ezekiel says, "Your mother was a Hittite." In the army camps of Heth, in the distant north, loyalty is thus instilled in the hearts of the warriors. The first foreign mercenaries in David's forces, the core of the battalions of the Cherethites and Pelethites — pass on by word of mouth that terrible is this curse and woe unto all who break the oath. David must act swiftly before fear will seize his men:

"Whosoever smiteth the Jebusites first and getteth up to the gutter, and the lame and the blind — shall be chief and captain."

And Joab son of Zeruiah, foremost amongst David's mighty men, is the first to break in. He is armed with the "gutter", a sort of three-

pronged pitchfork. Holding it in his hand, he scales the wall. His weapon finds its quarry, the priests, the Jebusite soldiers and the blind and lame. David's troops pour through after him, and the city falls before David.

"And David dwelt in the citadel, and called it the City of David. And David built round about from Millo and inward. And David went on, and grew great, and the Lord God of Hosts was with him."

What happened to the Jebusites who were in the city?

There is no clear evidence as to their fate. Perhaps they were all smitten by the sword, as was done to the blind and the lame, who were hated of David's soul. Perhaps a few of them survived, including Aravnah the Jebusite, one of their leaders. Perhaps even Uriah the Hittite, husband of Bathsheba, one day to become a warrior of David.

Aravnah the Jebusite has a threshing-floor, on the high plateau in the north of the city, at the summit of the hill. There the threshing of the wheat harvested in the valleys surrounding the mountains, took place. Aravnah, one of the Jebusite noblemen, perhaps their former king, owns the threshing-floor.

The prophet Gad brings the Lord's message to David — Go forth, buy the threshing-floor and build me there an altar.

It were as though the promise to Abraham — "Unto thy seed will I give this land" — did not suffice, the seed which was bound on the altar at the Mountain of Moriah, and as if the blood of David's warriors which was shed on the conquest of the city did not suffice — fifty shekels of silver had to be weighed by David into Aravnah's hands, so that the altar of God could be built on Mount Moriah.

How remarkable it is that in the three largest cities along the backbone of the land: Hebron, Jerusalem, Shechem, purchases were made for money: The Cave of Machpelah in Hebron, the threshing-floor of Aravnah in Jerusalem, and Joseph's burial plot in Shechem. All three were bought with our money; all three were purchased with our blood. To this day we are still struggling for all three. To this very day.

WHY JERUSALEM?

Ask anyone, out of the blue, why Jerusalem of all places was chosen as the land's capital and its heart of hearts. He will open wondering eyes, as if you had asked the reason for the sun shining by day. Why was Jerusalem chosen? Because she is Jerusalem...

The tremendous **load** which Jerusalem bears, or still better — the vast **power** with which it is charged, history and faith, fact and legend, poetry and prose, tears and blood, sanctity and desecration — has become so real, that men of vision have anchored the world upon it, from it the world was created, from Even Hashetiya on the Temple Mount. And when it appeared that she was being utterly destroyed, she was saved and immortalised by sublimating her into "Celestial Jerusalem". Whether the "load" with which she was burdened came from the heavens, or the power with which she was imbued rose from the earth, be that as it may — whether from a non-rational source, so to speak, from God, or from rational roots, so to speak, from History: She is the Chosen City.

All the same it is right and proper to ask why **she** was chosen. How did Jerusalem, of all the cities of the earth, reach this station? After all, she was not unique, not even the largest town in the land. True, she is located in the centre of the country, between north and south, and between the Jordan River and the Sea. Hebron, however, is higher, Shechem is more abundant in water. The country's watershed is located somewhat to the west of Jerusalem. Why therefore did David choose to make Jerusalem his capital, rather than Geva in the tribe of Benjamin, of his predecessor, Saul, or Bethlehem in Judah, his own birthplace? Or Shiloh, so saturated with ancient grandeur?

The sages of Israel grasped the political element in the decision of Israel's greatest king who was the greatest of Israel's poets, (for indeed divine inspiration is also a prerequisite of the decision): **Jerusalem was not allocated to any of the Tribes**. Her northern section is in the land of Benjamin, to the south she borders on Judah, but she herself, only she, was not given to any tribe. She was also one of the last towns to be conquered, (except for the Philistine strip). After the death of Saul, the representatives of all the northern tribes come to Hebron and submit to David's rule. Would it not have been natural that Hebron should be proclaimed the royal seat, all the more since it is endowed with the

ancient crown of the Patriarchs? Not so thought David. He goes forth toward the tribes. He will not force a city in Judah upon them. This is statesmanlike wisdom. David, however, was not merely a statesman, nor even merely a statesman-cum-general-cum-strategist. He was a poet too. It was he who discovered in Jerusalem the inspiration for his song, which was to last for evermore. He was the first to **create** song in Jerusalem. Undoubtedly he knew the ancient story of the Father of the Nation on Mount Moriah, and possibly also of the ancient tradition regarding the reason for not dividing Jerusalem among the Tribes, as if she were preserved for this destiny, to be the centre of the body and soul of the Tribes of Israel. Not all the records have survived. The traditions passed on by word of mouth are more numerous than the sources in writing. We learn of the hidden facts from the open record. Only he in whom there were united three powers: The physical prowess of the warrior, the mental ability of the statesman, and the spiritual-imaginative power of the poet, only he grasped what would be the most eminently appropriate site for the unification of all the Nation's powers. Until David's generation, the country did not have a capital at all, a central town, both political and religious, for indeed the nation was not one. Shiloh was never what Jerusalem subsequently became for the Tribes of Israel. Samuel and Saul both came near, but did not "grasp" it, grasp in its dual meaning. They constitute intermediate stages, the one as a prophet, the other as king. They approach but do not grasp. Samuel at Ramah, Saul at Giv'ah. So near, yet not the same. As if she were waiting for him whom she deserved, who would discover her secret, her destiny.

This blend: David and Jerusalem was divinely ordained. Valour, majesty and song.

SOLOMON COMPLETES

In the days of David, the city is still in its stormy youth, driven by the fervour of faith, by love, by war. The king dances before Ark of the Covenant which is being brought into the city; he himself, not professional dancers. He fears not for the prestige of his crown, he is not concerned with the rules of protocol, he is exhilarated and he exhilarates: Natural faith, masses, free of the privileged hierarchy of noble and lowly stations. "Before the Lord... and will be base in my own sight". There are not yet rules of ritual to be applied by an established priestly order. David himself brings sacrifices, not for the honour, but for the joy which fills him. He distributes free food to the celebrating masses. This city probably never again experienced such spontaneous joy till the morrow of its liberation in our times.

The king falls deeply in love in this youthful and stormy city. There are love and sin, but not yet palace and harem. Prophecy too is fearless. It is cognisant of the destiny of David and his seed for evermore. Not only the king, but also the city is highly spontaneous. There is also the blood of love and jealousy within her, and she is pregnant with prospect. David's days are the days of Jerusalem's young love.

She becomes a city of peace only in Solomon's time. David and his generation paid the price for the peace which she attained. Were it not for all the blood which was spilled because of and in Jerusalem, her glorious and glorifying king would not have had peace. Were it not for the love of his father David, Solomon's wisdom would not have flourished; had David not seized Batsheba in a storm of love, Solomon would not have received the Queen of Sheba. Without the heart of David, the wisdom of Solomon cannot be. Happy is the wisdom which is rooted in the heart. And without the fiery faith of David who brings the Ark of God's Covenant to Jerusalem, Solomon cannot build the Temple. Happy is the structure founded upon faith.

Solomon, who completed the unification and centralisation of the nation, was able to do so because he brought peace to the land. He completed, because he built and glorified the complete city, his palaces and its palaces and the Temple of God in its centre. From the heart of the Greatest of Israel's Poets, David, prayer overflows. With Solomon, the wisest of men, the author of the Proverbs, it arises on the ascending steps, sung by Levites accompanied by instruments of song. David

himself yearned to build the House of God in the city, but this was not to be, for he had shed much blood. He had had to spill it. The splendour which Solomon built in the city would one day be devastated. The love which David had implanted in her would remain. The steps of the Levites would be destroyed, the prayers in the Book of Psalms — live on. Everything has its price. Spontaneity like prophecy, its price is: no home. The price of the house, like that of ceremony, is: no spontaneity. Perhaps that is why the Prophet of the Redemption, Ezekiel, sees the vision of the future thus: Living waters issuing forth from a built Temple. A synthesis of a prophet and an engineer: Planning and spontaneity combined.

Solomon completed the Temple, but he also compromised with the idol-worship of the foreign wives whom he took, not iniquitously, as David took Batsheba, yet also not out of love, but for political reasons, after the fashion of the mighty monarchs of other lands in those days. This too was a sin, perhaps more grievous than the sin of his father, as it involved compromise with the altars to the abominations which the Gentile wives required. "And his heart was not whole with the Lord his God". He who compromised with altars and with temples to idolatry, his heart cannot be whole with his God.

True, this was an aged Solomon. What was it that David sought even in his old age? Love. Solomon in his old age — even his wisdom availed him not. The silver, gold and wives turned away his heart. Jerusalem becomes a city of splendour; the price thereof — idolatry.

Therefore he is not like David, who distributes food to all the people, perhaps without reckoning, purely from an overflowing heart, not from abundant wealth. Solomon is the king of abundance. He brought prosperity to the land, he built harbours and developed trade, import and export, and a city that becomes famous throughout the world, and will become yet more famous world-wide due also to him. For this, however, the whole nation is compelled to pay heavy taxes. Were the taxes expended only for the erection of God's Temple, the people would not have rebelled. They would even have accepted the palace and all that is related to the maintenance of a royal court and thrones of ivory and gold, but palaces and temples for the foreign wives at the people's expense?

All this wealth redounded to Jerusalem's disadvantage. Would the price of dissipation be paid here too, as amongst all nations? Is Jerusalem like all capitals? How is the city become a harlot — thunders Isaiah. How has it turned into a den of robbers — Jeremiah shall lament. How did stone outweigh prayer? How did the priests overcome

the Levites? The city of David is not perfect, but it is the City of God. Solomon's City is complete, and peaceful, but with God she is not at peace.

Nevertheless, Solomon's Temple was built in purity. The prayer which he prayed there still rose from the heart and is one of the most beautiful prayers ever. Should a misfortune befall an individual or the people, even the foreigner, whether at the hand of God or of Man, war, drought, pestilence, or disease, one may come to this House, upon which the eyes of the Lord are always open. Therefore they will come to it, "and shall pray unto the Lord toward the City which Thou hast chosen, and toward the House that I have built for Thy Name". Under David, the lover and conqueror, and under Solomon the builder and stabiliser, Jerusalem became that which it has remained throughout the generations. It is the City of David yet also the City of Solomon. She has been contending since those days, over her character, struggling as to her essence, a struggle both human and divine, Israel striving with man and with God, over the image of God in man, the image of God in the City, and for the City. To be great and built-up yet not petrified, to be godly yet not abstract and weak-bodied, to be beautiful without cosmetics, to be a city of wisdom and majesty yet also a city of prophecy and holiness.

Thus Solomon begins his prayer: The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness. I have surely built Thee a House to dwell in, a place for Thee to abide in for ever. In the version in Chronicles there is a slight variation which is most illuminating: "But I have built Thee". This "but" reveals the meaning of the opening verse: "The Lord hath said that He would dwell in the thick darkness", in unknown spheres, unseen, undefined, too vague for human conception. But I, Solomon the King, the Builder, I who have put an end to the era of anarchy and wars, I have built Thee a House to dwell in. I am the king of wisdom. Wisdom, unlike poetry, abhors haziness. It desires clarity, definition, structure. Wisdom strives to perceive God Himself, so to speak, within an edifice, clear and defined. No more shall He elude us in mists of holiness, in mystical sensations, in experiences and in imaginings. Individuals can cope with this, it suits prophets wandering in the wilderness. It is inappropriate to a people dwelling on its land, who need order, including orderliness in prayer and ritual. Therefore there is the Temple, therefore there are priests in their sanctuary. Therefore procedures are set for sacrifice and prayer. That is the routine. A place for Thee to abide in forever — so hopes the wisest of men, but not wiser than a prophet. A prophet like Isaiah desires a Temple too, and

understands the need for the Temple and for royal ceremony, but he also realises the peril in a House, in routine, in mechanisation, in institutionalisation, in a permanent establishment, as one would say today.

The Midrash says that in years to come, when the Temple will be rebuilt, the Tabernacle built in Sinai will be reconstructed therein. Wherefore a Tabernacle if there is a Temple? asks the Midrash, and it answers: The Tabernacle was erected through the voluntary effort of the people, and God will not relinquish the quality of voluntary offering. Again we encounter the same duality of God dwelling in the thick darkness as against a place to abide, in the Temple. In the human-subjective sphere, it is the contrast between emotional action, and activity arising out of a feeling of national duty. For the Temple was built not out of voluntary contributions but from taxes levied upon the people. Which comes first? Which is necessary? Can one rely only on the voluntary spirit?

This eternal problem too is part of that Jerusalemite tension between David and Solomon, between Bathsheba and the Queen of Sheba, between the haze and a place to abide in. This is the Jerusalemite vision: To achieve holiness — in the Temple, the House of Holiness (Beit Hamikdash, in Hebrew). Eternal love.

The struggle is over the Israelite character of the City, Israel in the fullest meaning, in the original meaning of the word — to strive.

AGAINST SHECHEM AND SHOMRON (SAMARIA)

*"And Eternity is Jerusalem, which is
the eternal triumph of Israel"*

(Tractate Berahot, 58)

The price of greatness was demanded all too soon: by Shechem and Shomron, upon Solomon's death. It was not that Jerusalem impoverished the other regions. The country as a whole prospered. Jerusalem, however, took the lion's share in honour, prestige and edifices. The others were filled with jealousy. Deep down an ember is still glowing in Shiloh, the ancient city of priests. Therefore Ahijah the Shilonite fosters the revolt against Jerusalem. Not in the depths, but in the open, feeling runs high amongst the tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh against the tribe of Judah. The establishment of the capital in Jerusalem, outside the land of Judea, did not avail, nor did it avail that in part the City was in Benjamin, who was the brother of Joseph also on his mother's side. The appointment of a man of Ephraim, Jeroboam son of Nebat, as Governor of Ephraim did not help either. Love is fierce, but jealousy is also cruel, and therefore more dangerous than love. "Love is as strong as death, jealousy is as cruel as the grave" said a poet and sage in this Jerusalem.

The jealousy of Ephraim merely exploited the errors of Jerusalem, but it had existed from time immemorial. It simply waited for an opportune moment. Since then, the land is constantly torn, or is on the verge of being torn between these two regions: Jerusalem and Shechem. We have seen that nature had endowed Shechem more bountifully with the prerequisites of a capital. The land, however, and the People, have been blessed, or perhaps some will say, from Mount Ebal cursed, and in any case singled out with a supernatural power. Therefore not the city of abundant waters was chosen, but rather the one dwelling on the border between civilisation and wilderness: Jerusalem.

Shechem envies and strives throughout the ages, and in many ways. She sanctifies Mount Gerizim, builds the city of Shomron, binds together ten out of the twelve tribes, that is to say the overwhelming majority of the People of Israel, enters into an alliance lasting generations with mighty Egypt to the south of Jerusalem, and then wages war upon her, jointly with the perennial enemy, Aram-Syria. Again Shechem endeavours to penetrate Jerusalem by trying to participate in the building of the Second Temple in its early days, and by establishing a kingdom of Samaritans around her. For many

years, the "Cuthite Swath" separated Jerusalem from Galilee. In the days of Ahab and Jeroboam II, Shechem reaches its zenith. It also has a period of revolt against mighty Rome. Always, however, always buried in the very depths is jealousy of Jerusalem which the tribe of Judah and eventually all Jews, crowned supreme, in lieu of ancient Shechem where Abraham built his first altar in the land. In Shechem, Simeon and Levi, the children of Israel, battled for the first time, there the choice was offered between the blessing and the curse, by Joshua of Ephraim, before David conquered Jerusalem. Therefore hers was the seniority and the birthright.

To no avail — Jerusalem triumphed. And all the prophets, even Jeremiah yearning so for the darling son Ephraim, who prophesy about the reunification of the Nation, repeatedly recognise the ascendancy of Jerusalem. Samaria was destroyed before Jerusalem. It never had a sanctified dynasty like the House of David. Neither Shechem nor Samaria attained a degree of holiness even in their most splendid periods. They succeeded in contaminating Jerusalem, but never to its foundations. That which David and Solomon planted in Jerusalem was not uprooted; even after most of her sons were torn away, they took the memory of Jerusalem with them. Not so the exiles of Shechem and Samaria. A minute and devoted community of Samaritans was preserved. Just enough to keep the candle flickering. The ten tribes who were exiled from Shechem and Samaria are lost. The Jews who were exiled from Judea were not lost. Jerusalem's power protected them.

Undoubtedly this source of ancient envy bears gall and wormwood to this day, and finds expression in the demographic and political strife: From the commencement of Zionism, of the Jewish Return to Zion, Shechem has been the centre of envy and hatred. Again an alliance of Shechem and Damascus against Judah and Jerusalem.

THE SIEGE OF SENNACHERIB — THE PSYCHOLOGICAL WAR OVER JERUSALEM

Winged lions stand guard at the Assyrian Court in distant Nineveh.

The mighty Assyrian Empire encompasses East and West and dominates north and south with its trampling hooves. To its friends: a sheltering wing, to its enemies — claws.

Many are its enemies: Babylon to the north strives for independence. Egypt to the south seeks to cast Assyria down from its greatness. And the Land of Israel, as ever, is in the centre.

The Kingdom of Israel has only recently fallen to Sargon, King of Assyria, and its sons have been exiled to the banks of distant rivers, accessible only to weavers of legends. But Sargon, King of Assyria, the conqueror of Samaria, has died. Throughout the Empire, rumours fly: Sargon has been assassinated, and the assassins came from within his Court. Another rumour reports otherwise: In battle Sargon has fallen, in Asia Minor. It is said that Sennacherib his son will succeed him, and in whispers it is said further: The son is unlike the father, he will not hold together his far-flung Empire.

It is the year 705 B.C.E. There is ferment throughout the Empire. The perennial Babylonian rebel, Merodach-Baladan, rises a third time, to set the wheels of history in motion: Independence for Babylon in his days. Again Merodach despatches his emissaries to win allies in Syria, Phoenicia and Philistia for the conspiracy against Assyria. Egypt has given her blessing and her chariots to assure that Assyria's thousands should fall far from the Nile.

To Jerusalem too Merodach-Baladan the Chaldean sends his messengers. With them he sends letters and a present, as diplomacy prescribes. Till now, Judea has not joined the revolt against Assyria. Perhaps this is why she will succeed more than the others this time in the revolt, for she has conserved her strength. Judea is independent; though she bears tribute. Judea is not one of the Assyrian provinces, like Hamath and Ashdod after their rebellion against Assyria. There are not many prying Assyrian eyes in Judea. This time Judea shall rise in revolt.

But peace does not prevail in Jerusalem on the eve of war. There is a war of ideas in Jerusalem. A king is there, and a prophet. Both of them are strong, and the war of ideas swirls around them. Hezekiah is a righteous king, and he goes in the ways of the Lord; he opened the gates

of the Temple. He dreams of a great Judea, ruling the whole of its land, and of the people of Judea strong in body and in its belief in God, dwelling securely. The prophet: One of the giants amongst the prophets of Israel, Isaiah. He seeks to make Jerusalem a "faithful city", from which the word of God shall go forth to all the world. Jerusalem is the City of God, it shall dwell alone, secure. Therefore it is inappropriate for Jerusalem to follow the lead of other peoples and other cities, whether in matters of holiness or in affairs of state.

The prophet and the king are of one mind: The yoke of Assyria must be lifted. The prophet, however, insists: Alone, not to rely on Gentiles, near or far; alone shall flow the waters of Shiloah that go softly. The mighty rivers of Assyria must not engulf them. The King, on the other hand, places his trust in the chariots of Egypt, in the spears of Babylon, in the defenders of the coastal towns. He deposes the King of Ashkelon who is faithful to Assyria; he brings the King of Ekron, whom he suspects of opposition to the revolt, in chains to Jerusalem.

The revolt breaks out. The wheels of war start moving against each other: Judea's truth as against Assyria's truth.

"Now in the fourteenth year of King Hezekiah did Sennacherib King of Assyria come up against all the fortified cities of Judah, and did take them. And Hezekiah King of Judah sent ... three-hundred talents of silver and thirty talents of gold ... And the King of Assyria sent Tartan and Rabsaris and Rab-Shakeh from Lachish to King Hezekiah with a great army unto Jerusalem ... Then Rab-Shakeh stood, and cried with a loud voice in the Jews' language, and spoke, saying: "Hear ye the word of the great king, the King of Assyria ... Let not Hezekiah beguile you; for he will not be able to deliver you out of his hand; neither let Hezekiah make you trust in the Lord, saying: The Lord will

"On my third expedition, I went to the Lord of Heth... They (the allies) appealed to the kings of Egypt. The army of archers of the king of Ethiopia, a host too numerous to be counted, came to their aid. In the vicinity of Elthaka their battalions paraded before me. And they gave battle. With the help of my Master, the God Ashur, I fought them and I brought about the downfall of the charioteers and the princes of Egypt, and together the horse-men of the Ethiopian King. I captured them alive in the middle of the war... And as for Hezekiah the Jew, who did not submit to my yoke, I encircled his 46 fortified cities, his fortresses and innumerable small towns, with ramparts and battering-rams,

surely deliver us... for thus saith the King of Assyria: Make your peace with me, and come out to me; and eat ye every one of his vine; and every one of his fig-tree, and drink ye every one the waters of his own cistern; until I come and take you away to a land like your own land, a land of corn and wine, a land of bread and vineyards, a land of olive-trees and of honey, that ye may live, and not die ... Hath any of the gods of the nations ever delivered his land out of hand of the King of Assyria? ... Who are they among all the gods of the countries, that have delivered their country out of my hand, that the Lord should deliver Jerusalem out of my hand?" But the people held their peace, and answered him not a word for the King's commandment was, saying: 'Answer him not.' ... So Rab-Shakeh returned, and found the King of Assyria warring against Libnah; for he had heard that he was departed from Lachish. And when he heard say of Tirhakah king of Ethiopia: 'Behold, he is come out to fight against thee', he sent messengers again unto Hezekiah, saying: 'Thus shall ye speak to Hezekiah King of Judah, saying: Let not thy God in whom thou trustest beguile thee, saying: Jerusalem shall not be given into the hand of the King of Assyria...' Then Isaiah son of Amotz sent to

with machines of war, and with assaults of infantry, and I dug trenches. And in the battering-ram attack I captured 200,150 men, young and old, male and female, horses and mules, donkeys, camels, cattle, and sheep beyond count. From their midst I took out and counted the booty.

As for him, like a bird in a cage I had him trapped in Jerusalem, his capital. I laid siege to him. The sole exit from the gate of the city I turned about, and I brought down upon those leaving the city gate the consequences of his iniquity ... The cities which I captured I tore from this land ... and so his country contracted ... To the initial tax I added a tribute payable to my Court, which I imposed upon them as a condition for the return to them of their land.

This Hezekiah was terrified by the fear of the splendour of my might. The Orvi (the Arabs?) and their mercenary battalions, whom he brought to reinforce Jerusalem, his home, abandoned him. In addition to the 30 talents of gold and 800 talents of silver, there was there a vast quantity of metals, precious stones and beds of ivory ... All kinds of precious treasure, silk and purple, vessels of copper and iron, instruments of war too numerous to count, with his daughters and his harem of wives, men-singers and women-singers, into Nineveh my

Hezekiah, saying... Therefore thus saith the Lord concerning the King of Assyria: 'He shall not come unto this city, nor shoot an arrow there, nor come before it with shield, nor cast a rampart against it'... And it came to pass that night, that the angel of the Lord went out and smote in the camp of the Assyrians a hundred and eighty-five thousand, and when they arose in the morning, behold, they were all dead corpses. So Sennacherib king of Assyria departed, and went and returned and dwelt at Ninveh." (Second Kings, 18:13 — 19:36)

capital I transported, and to submit to the yoke of servitude he dispatched his messengers." - The six-column clay prism of Sennacherib

Two versions: The King of Judea against the King of Assyria. History is written this way and that. How shall we know the whole truth?

From the available material the following picture emerges:

Not one arrow was shot at the walls of Jerusalem, no battering-ram assaulted the stone walls, no ramparts were erected, none of the besieged died of hunger or thirst. This was a war of nerves, in modern terms — psychological warfare. The war is waged far from here, on the coastal plain. The Assyrian army captures many fortified cities, and even reaches Lachish. The chariots of the king of Egypt are smitten at Elthaka and Sennacherib despatches an expeditionary force to Jerusalem: Perhaps its gates will open without a struggle. Jerusalem trembles. Isaiah describes the scene. "He is come to Ayat, he is passed to Migron, at Michmas he layeth up his baggage ... This very day shall he halt at Nov, shaking his hands against the mountain of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem" (10:28, 32). In the fuller's field, which may perhaps be the channel of the upper pool, whose waters dried since they flowed into Hezekiah's conduit and since the Gihon was blocked, stand Tartan, Rab-saris and Rab-shakeh, who have come from Lachish. To the south of the city they stand, and a powerful army is to their rear. It is silent. Only its sabres glisten in the sun. It is immobile. The delegates

speak. Behind them, stand the thousands of Assyria's troops, to make the import of the spokesmen's words crystal clear.

They come towards the city from the south, possibly for the purpose of demonstrating their contempt for its wall fortifications. Not from the north — the weak point in the defences, the traditional point of breakthrough favoured by all the enemies of Jerusalem since time immemorial — but from the south, from the deep ravine. Their feet are planted in the channel of the upper pool, and from there they shout their message to the princes of Hezekiah who have been summoned to negotiate from atop the wall.

What strange negotiations. The clearest message is transmitted by the Assyrian troops who are massed in silence in the rear. No smooth talk of diplomats, but only the smoothness of the polished shield, helmet and spear. The audience is not confined solely to the princes of Judea upon the battlements, who would have understood Assyrian, had Sennacherib's emissaries spoken it. However, they speak the **Jews' language**, so that the people sheltering behind the walls should hear, (Loudspeakers did not yet exist in those days, but a bird in the air carries the voice, apparently), to breach Jerusalem's human wall: Then there will also be found men to deliver the gates.

A psychological softening-up process. And in the Assyrian camp: Speakers of **Jews' language**. This phenomenon will occur and recur in our history. Speakers of the Jewish tongue, Hebrew, the Israelite language, in the midst of the enemies' forces besieging Jerusalem.

Many are the nations which have been subjugated by Assyria. Who can count them? Samaria has just fallen, the armies of Egypt and its chariots have been vanquished at Elthaka. Upon whom will you now rely? Upon your God? Why did he fail to rescue Samaria? How is it that the gods of the nations were unable to save them? How can you dare to rebel?

And in another tone and approach: King Sennacherib will transport you to a good land, fully as good as your land, just open the gates and surrender. Why should you perish? The King's princes do not reply. The walls are silent, the gates are bolted, and the princes' mouths are sealed. But in their hearts?

Fear stalks Jerusalem. The words of the emissaries of Assyria who have blasphemed God and country appear to be true. It is evident: "For out of the snake's root shall come forth a serpent." Sennacherib is as mighty and cruel a king as his father. Samaria fell, Egypt's army collapsed, the fortified cities in the coastal plain were conquered. Whom can Jerusalem rely upon now?

A delegation from Jerusalem offers Sennacherib ransom of gold and silver to persuade him to turn away from Jerusalem. But the city refuses to open its gates and surrender. And the mouths of its princes remain sealed.

Still Sennacherib refrains from moving against Jerusalem. He accepts the silver and gold, but he has campaigns to complete on the coast, and in the meantime he continues to despatch letters to Jerusalem.

Again a softening-up salvo, without shooting one arrow.

And then the fortunes of war suddenly turn.

The prophet had foretold: "By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and shall not come into this city." How many had dared to hope that this would indeed happen, to believe that it would so be?

Rumours reach the Assyrian camp: Tirhaka king of Ethiopia has set forth at the head of his armies and he is moving northward with the object of engaging the Assyrian troops. Trouble brews also in the north of the kingdom. And from the heavens — whose messengers on earth are so many and varied — there comes further aid: A terrible plague spreads in the Assyrian camp.

Out of the blue, the wheel turns full circle. The Assyrian army withdraws before reaching its objective in Judea. This was the war for Jerusalem which was not fought in Jerusalem.

In later inscriptions, after his eighth expedition, before his assassination by Adrammelech and Sharezer in the house of Nisroch his god in Nineveh, Sennacherib writes of this expedition to Judea, but the boasting and length of the first description, which the proximity in time with that partial debacle required, are gone. "I have **swiftly traversed** the broad province of Judea. I cast my yoke upon Hezekiah the king". The ultimate result is reflected in history.

Judea stood fast, and Jerusalem was not violated. For the sons came to the brink and prevailed.

THE FIRST DESTRUCTION

The downfall of Sennacherib's army in Judea and the scores of thousands of dead left in the field became the arch-type for the defeat of enemy armies at the walls of Jerusalem in the war of the end of days.

However, many a day is yet to pass till that war is fought; in the meantime the land is riven by wars, and not always are the corpses of the enemy smitten by God's plague. It may very well be that the great deliverance of the days of Sennacherib lulled hearts into tranquillity: No one can harm Jerusalem, where the Temple of the Lord is situated — the Temple of the Lord, the Temple of the Lord ... (Jeremiah 7:4).

After a righteous king came a wicked king. Manasseh rebuilt all the pagan altars which Hezekiah had destroyed. Not only is the yoke of Assyria heavy upon Manasseh's neck — his knees too are bent before Assyria's idols and his senses are attuned to the fragrance, sights and sounds of its rites. And his feet are swift to persecute those loyal to God. No enemy can vanquish the City from the outside, unless the enemy within has weakened it, this is the keystone of the prophetic concept. "Her adversaries are the chief ... for the Lord hath afflicted her for the multitude of her transgressions," (Lamentations 1:5). Legend has added transgression upon Manasseh's transgressions: He ordered that the prophet Isaiah be put inside the hollow of the trunk of a cedar, and to saw it while yet he lived. When they reached his mouth, his soul departed. That is the legend, but Isaiah's voice continues to ring in Jerusalem and throughout the world.

In the days of the great empires, Judea contracts more and more. She experiences difficulty in manoeuvring between the giants of the earth. Always she is faced with the same dilemma: To revolt against her masters of the day, or to go to war against the enemies of that empire. That is the law of the subdued. Either way, it means war. The danger of destruction is ever-present.

After Manasseh came Amon, and after him — Josiah. A righteous king begat a wicked king, the wicked king was followed by another wicked one, then came the turn of the righteous one. The walls of Jerusalem heave again a sigh of some relief. Mighty Assyria in the north falls, her idols are cast out of Jerusalem, the borders of Judea expand once again, and there is a spiritual rebirth in Jerusalem. Momentary relief. The fifth Book of Moses, Deuteronomy, has been found in the

Temple. It speaks of things long forgotten, or unknown, and they call for a mighty religious and moral upheaval, as though a covenant has been made anew to cleanse the city and the land. Externally: Assyria has fallen. There is, however, no vacuum; Babylon arises to dominate, upon the ruins of Assyria, Josiah becomes entangled in a battle which is no concern of his, he goes forth to block the passage of the chariots of Pharaoh-Nechoh to Babylon. In the Valley of Megiddo, far from Jerusalem, the king is sorely wounded. Jeremiah composes lamentations which last through the ages, for this king, the last of the great kings of the House of David. Jerusalem is subjugated once again, first to Egypt, then to Babylon.

In Jerusalem, within the walls, there is strife again. A war of words, a war of beliefs, and possibly more than that — the supporters of Babylon struggle against the Egyptophiles. The priesthood, the prophets, the royal house — all are embroiled in the conflict.

Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim — the kings of the House of David in these trying times, pay tribute and are deposed, one after another, and after them — Jehoiachin.

Jehoiachin was eighteen years when he began to reign, and he reigned in Jerusalem three months. Can you visualise the picture of Jehoiachin's rule?

A stripling of eighteen on David's throne. The throne is too big for the lad's youthful measurements. The land is in turmoil. The armies of Babylon are at the gates of Jerusalem, because his father, Jehoiakim, had revolted against the king of Babylon, who proceeds, himself, to set the teeth of the rebellious son on edge. Nebuchadnezzar lays siege to the City. What can the boy do? Jerusalem is besieged. The battle is lost before it has begun.

After one hundred days of reign in Jerusalem, the King and his household leave through the City gate and surrender to the Babylonians.

The Book of Chronicles is very concise: At the turn of the year, king Nebuchadnezzar sent, and brought Jehoiachin and the precious vessels of the House of the Lord, to Babylon. Clearly — not a war. Surrender.

The Babylonian army removes not only the Temple treasures and the royal house, but also the key to the loyalty of the country — its leadership. With Jehoiachin, most of the princes of the land go into exile, as well as the rich, the military and the artisans of weaponry.

Nebuchadnezzar makes Zedekiah king in Jerusalem, and makes him swear loyalty by the God of Israel, and so that the surrender of Jerusalem in the days of Jehoiachin should not be forgotten, he records

it in the annals of Babylon: "And in the seventh year, in the month of Kislev, the king of Accad gathered his troops and went to the Land of Heth, and encamped against the city of Judea, and in the month of Adar on the second day, he conquered the city. He captured the king. He appointed therein a king after his own heart. He imposed a heavy tribute upon it, and transported it to Babylon."

Jerusalem, however, is not at peace even after the exile of her king and princes.

The Prophet Jeremiah goes about Jerusalem; the prophet of wrath. He says aloud why and wherefore Jerusalem will be destroyed and in what manner the corpses of the people will be cast all around in the fields. Zedekiah, king in Jerusalem, chooses the course of revolt and conspires with Egypt. The prophet sees clearly Babylon's punitive expedition against Judea, the destruction of the Temple as the Tabernacle at Shiloh was destroyed, and the breach of the walls.

On the tenth of Tevet, in the ninth year of Zedekiah's reign, the Babylonian army does indeed arrive, and encamp round Jerusalem. The walls have already seen such as this: War, and war again, and siege. Battle-stations round about, ramparts thrown up, double-horned siege battering-rams in their wagons and protecting-wraps; the blows of the rams against the walls are felt from one end of the city to the other. The multitudes crowd into the city for fear that the unwallled cities will perish. The fortresses in the land of Judea fall one by one. Lachish is no more, Azekah is no more. Only Jerusalem still stands.

As for the scores of thousands in the City, bread is rationed and measured. Water is apportioned strictly. Shouting echoes at the northern walls, the City is encircled and the blows of the rams against the walls continue day and night, incessantly.

Judea is exhausted, the House of David is worn out, the walls' stones are tired. How true that material becomes fatigued, like human beings.

One still hopes for a miracle, that the king of Egypt will come and smite Babylon, that a pestilence will come, as in the days of Sennacherib, and that God will deliver his City. Worship of God intensifies in the City. The Hebrew slaves are set free. But Jeremiah, the Lord's prophet, is in the City. He goes about the Temple, the markets, the streets, the house entrances: The City shall be destroyed, shall burn, and the remnants will go into exile. Is it any wonder that they seek to kill him?

And then, as if the miracle of Sennacherib recurs: About a year after the commencement of the siege, the blows of the rams cease. The Egyptian army moves northward. Nebuchadnezzar lifts the siege of

Jerusalem, and transports his legions southward to confront Pharaoh Hophra, to wage war upon the Egyptian Expeditionary Force. However, is Hophra's power so frail? Or perhaps he is not really interested in saving Jerusalem? Why is the Egyptian expeditionary force so small?

In the beginning of the spring of the year 587 B.C.E., Nebuchadnezzar meets the Egyptian Expeditionary Force and gains a swift victory. He turns back to conquer Jerusalem.

The City alternates between despair and hope.

Many escape from the City when the siege is lifted. Where to? The whole of the land is under the heel of the Chaldeans. Jeremiah too tries to get out of the City. He is caught and is charged with attempted treason. He is thrown into prison. He is threatened with death. His chief adversaries are princes — the leaders of the rebellion against Babylon. His supporters are few. The king secretly believes in him, but the princes are stronger than he. In the midst of the last few days of hope, from his prison dungeon, the prophet continues to foretell the terrible destruction, and all hearts are fearful.

The King of Babylon returns to lay siege to the City. A ring of forts, ramparts and battering-rams. Arrows are shot from afar at the guards on the walls. Burning torches are catapulted, no one leaves or enters the City. The rams batter the wall to the north, whence evil always breaks forth; they batter day and night. Summer comes and goes, autumn arrives, and the blows of the rams against the walls are ceaseless. A second winter of siege comes upon the City. Again the water cisterns, which had run dry, fill up. But bread in the City is scarce, whilst the sound of the rams butting against the walls increases. Oh, the battering-rams! How much longer will the weary stones be able to withstand them?

Spring. Not the spring of hope, as last spring. The end is in sight.

But Jerusalem is not yet ready to surrender. Jerusalem waits: for the wall to be breached, or for a miracle. There is no falling away to Chaldeans, and the royal house does not leave through the city gate, as happened with Jehoiachin. Nor is heavy tribute offered again, ransom. None is left.

The rams batter the northern walls. The city swelters in the summer. There is famine. And despair. In the eleventh year of King Zedekiah, in the fourth month, on the ninth day, a breach is made in the City. The royal family flee to the southern gates, by way of the gate between the twin walls, which was by the king's gardens, in the valley of Kidron, eastward, to the valley of Jericho, and thence — perhaps to Trans-

Jordan, to sanctuary.

Legend does not leave Jerusalem in peace. It seeks to see everything physically occurring, in actual reality. It identifies the route of flight of the last of the kings of Judea, it finds the cave, Zedekiah's Cave, and there it sees and also hears, it hears to this very day, the tears flowing from the eyes of the king, the last king of the House of David.

One does not know whom Zedekiah feared more, Nebuchadnezzar who would inflict upon him the punishment meted out to rebels, or the Jews who surrendered yet prior to the destruction, to Nebuchadnezzar's host, and who blame Zedekiah for the devastation of their Land, City and home.

Zedekiah is caught on the plains of Jericho. His bodyguards desert him, and he is led chained to Riblah, to Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters. His punishment: His sons are slain before his eyes, his eyes are gouged out, and most painful of all: He is kept alive and exiled from his country.

The city was breached. It was not destroyed, however, in the heat of battle.

Its destruction is planned to the last detail at Nebuchadnezzar's headquarters. First of all, every article of value is to be dismantled, everything must be seized. And then: smash and burn.

Not accidental burning in battle, not soldier's looting, not uncontrollable outbursts in war. Planned annihilation.

About a month after the conquest of the City a special expeditionary force arrives to destroy the city. Nebuzaradan, Captain of the Guard, servant of the King of Babylon, is in command. On the seventh day of the fifth month. They take everything: All the vessels of gold and the vessels of silver in the Palace and in the Temple which remained after the exile of Jehoiachin. All the priceless brass pieces in the Temple are dismantled, tons of brass are carried away by them, or upon the backs of their new Jewish slaves, to Babylon. And after them: the people.

The People are classified. Nebuzadaran separates the Jews of Judea into three categories: to death, to exile, and — those not important enough to be put to death and who need not be exiled — watchmen of the vineyards and ploughmen in the fields, so that the land shall not cease to yield produce for tribute to Babylon.

Jerusalem is consigned to flames. The Temple is set on fire. The King's palace is burnt. All the houses of Jerusalem go up in flames, all its large buildings. And the walls: flatten them, all round the city. Breaches will not suffice, the walls must be demolished, so that never again shall they encircle the mounds of smoldering ashes which were

once Jerusalem.

The kings of the House of David sat on the royal throne in Jerusalem for four hundred and fifteen years. And now — the Palace is destroyed, the Temple is burnt. Not in the heat of battle, no, but deliberately, as part of a master plan, and most thoroughly. **Nebuchadnezzar** was the first.

How doth the city sit solitary, that was full of people. How is she become as a widow. She that was great among the nations, and princess among the provinces, how is she become tributary. The first Temple is destroyed. The prophet shall lament — she is become as a widow. As a widow, but not actually a widow, so shall the comforters console. Like unto a lady whose husband has gone to distant lands, but return He shall.

FROM LAMENT TO DREAM

Not much has been said of the suffering of the prophets who foretold the doom of the city they so loved, **because** they so loved it. Only such fierce love can entail exaggeration. Were the crimes of Jerusalem so terrible indeed in the days of Isaiah and Jeremiah, as they had described, as they had lashed with their tongues? Was there not really within the city a single good and righteous man? Only the great love which they felt for her made the prophets so demanding, since they so wanted her to be better than all the cities of the world. Therefore the weight of her sins was graver than Samaria's. Well nigh we should have been as Sodom, we should have been like unto Gomorrah; since the days of Abraham the Patriarch, Jerusalem is the opposite of Sodom. The good and kind Melchizedek King of Shalem on the one hand, and sinful Sodom on the other. Ten righteous men could have saved Sodom from destruction. Were there not in Jerusalem tens, even thousands, of righteous men, capable of saving it from destruction? Such however is the power of love, such is the price of being destined to holiness. More is expected of the beloved and the sanctified.

"How has she become a harlot", thunders Isaiah. "How doth she sit solitary", laments Jeremiah. It is the **City**, which weeps, not the prophet, and not for her shrines which have been destroyed, but for her sons who have gone into exile, for the mournful ways of Zion as none come to her assemblies, as there are no pilgrims. Such personification of a city is rare in intensity and persistence, in descriptions of the love of nations for their cities. She is the queen, the beloved, the widow, the bride, a mother, a bereaved and solitary mother, or a mother gathering her offspring, embracing them, bewildered and wondrous over the multitude of her sons who have returned and come unto her. One can no longer ascertain who is struggling harder: The people for their City, or the City for its people. Who exists for whom? Who is more loyal to whom?

In the entire history of nations and cities, no one has ever lamented for a city as Jeremiah wept, as the nation throughout the generations has mourned for Jerusalem. Unparalleled, unprecedented, unimitated. All attempted imitations, all substitutes, pale in comparison with this power, this devotion. The destruction of the First Temple expressed this gradual and basic transition, from reality to dream. A demanding

dream, however, a dream requiring return. Not only when the Lord brought back those that returned to Zion was the Nation like unto one that dreams. The Nation would not have returned had not the City first dominated its dreams. How singular is the emphasis in "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yes, we wept, when we remembered Zion", specifically by the rivers of Babylon! Jerusalem is poor in waters, Jerusalem whose inhabitants sometime thirst for water. Cannot rivers erase the arid memory of Jerusalem? No! Even by mighty and broad rivers, are rivers of tears shed over Zion. Not only whilst going into exile, whilst wandering, is she remembered, but also whilst sitting, whilst dwelling firmly in lands of riches and peace. Indeed wealth and peace did prevail in the Babylonian Exile. But even then is she remembered, wept over, and dreamt about, the city that sits solitary. And even when she shall no longer sit solitary, when many shall inhabit her, but strangers, she is grasped in the mind of her people as in ruins, with only foxes walking upon her, or — in the words of a modern poet, Tchernichovsky — she is like a person whose flesh is pierced by the spikes of minarets and alien shrines.

Since the First Destruction she has become part of the Nation's dream and song. She floats on rivers of tears, on rafts of poetry, on the wings of fantasy bridging ancient splendour and future glory. Many were the foreign conquerors of the land, but the concentrated hate in the soul of the nation was directed at the devastators and desecrators of the City and the House. As her walls and Temple fell, she became embedded in the heart of the People, in its consciousness and memory, the term memory connoting not only the past, as in the usual meaning of the word, but also the future, the anticipated. In addition therefore to being a bridge between above and below, she became the link between yesterday and tomorrow, a bridge of tears, of prayer, of hope.

BETWEEN JERUSALEM AND ATHENS

Whoever seeks to express or even dramatise the contrast between the cultures of Judea and Greece, of Jerusalem and Athens, should look back to the year 445 B.C.E. (or a year or two before or after), to the days of Ezra in Jerusalem, of Pericles in Athens. In Jerusalem, the rule of the Torah is established, the Law of Moses, a Covenant is made with the People. Some go so far as to say: Judaism becomes firmly established. In Athens, a democratic government is created, as a model for generations to come. The most magnificent edifices and temples are erected in honour of the gods, particularly Athene, by the greatest architects and sculptors of Greece, whilst the gods themselves and their influence diminish, due in part to the philosophers. In Jerusalem there is no splendid Temple, there is a modest altar on the Temple Mount, but simultaneously zeal increases for the God of Israel, Creator of the World, the one and only and invisible, who gave Torah and mitzvot (commandments) through Moses, the Great Assembly and the scribes being only interpreters of the Law. The democracy founded in Athens is a far cry, of course, from the present-day concept. All citizens are, it is true, equal as regards the right to participate in decisions and to fill public posts, but not every one is entitled to be a citizen. Not only are about half the population of the city slaves, but there is a racial condition-precedent — both parents must be Greek Athenians — to appointment to public position. Therefore critics should tread softly ere they condemn the action of Ezra in Jerusalem during these very days, in expelling the foreign wives and in rejecting the Samaritans. True, Ezra does not take measures to establish a political structure, as does Pericles, but neither does he engage in as many wars as Pericles. Ezra seeks to establish a nation, whose constitution is the Law of Moses, whose spirit is belief in God and whose way of life is the observance of the mitzvot, both major and minor. True, it is not the citizens of Jerusalem who elect the nation's leadership; it consists of the priests — by right of their origin, and the scribes by right of their wisdom and learning, both also by right of their virtues. They do not always live up to this last criterion. True. But also the elected in Pericles' regime are not necessarily the select. In Jerusalem they live on faith, Torah and mitzvot — these are absolute criteria, and this spiritual foundation proves deep and sound. In Athens of those days, the first mighty offensive was launched to

undermine confidence in logic, in the human mind; Zeno, the philosopher creates the dialectic reasoning which is anti-logical. Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem to strengthen its walls, to instil concrete assurance in the phenomena taking place within the city, in the spiritual-religious reinforcement of Judaism. In Athens, most of the regions of Greece are being united, to constitute the foundation of the Empire of a century later. There is **art** in Athens; in Jerusalem there is **faith**. As yet there is no rivalry between the two. Therefore also no attempt to reconcile them. They are distant, the one from the other. There is no contact. Jerusalem is just a poor province of the Persian Empire. Athens is already a power warring with this Persian Empire. It is most probable that even among the wise men of Athens, nothing is yet known about the strange and wondrous God of Jerusalem, and that Jerusalem is not yet obliged to contend with the spirit of Greece, and surely not with its army. The ground however has already been laid — or perhaps it would be more appropriate to say that the roots are already bringing forth trunk and sprouting branches, for one is not speaking merely of buildings, but of culture — of **two** cultures which will struggle for hegemony over hearts and minds.

So did History bring events about, that at one and the same time, in the middle of the fifth century B.C.E., democracy was established in Athens, theocracy — in Jerusalem. The Parthenon in Athens, the Scribe's House adjoining the miniature Temple in Jerusalem. In Athens there is much to be **seen**, in Jerusalem — to be **heard**. To this day, millions of tourists throng to Athens to **see** relics of grandeur of those days. To this day millions of Jews **live** by the rules which Ezra enacted. There are also millions who **hear and recite** Psalms and prayers to the God to whom Ezra prayed. Is there today anyone who still worships the goddess Athene to whom Pericles prayed?

Two hundred years after Ezra in Jerusalem and Pericles in Athens, Athens as a city was already in decline, but her forces had spread throughout the Empire, and she had imposed Hellenism in most of the world. In Jerusalem, the struggle had commenced between Judaism at its best and Hellenism at its worst. The Hellenists sought to impose upon Jerusalem the negative aspects of Hellenism-in-decline: its external appearance, not the best of Greek culture, nor its philosophy, from which Maimonides and others endeavoured to pluck the finer points. In Jerusalem itself not one Hellenistic thinker arose, only High Priests and the wealthy who sought to resemble the Greeks externally. Philo flourished in Alexandria in Egypt, not in Jerusalem. Only a thin crust in the governing class succeeded in giving the City's buildings a

Hellenistic appearance. The people of Jerusalem remained Jewish in content and form. Jerusalem did not become like Alexandria, nor like Antioch, cities which were mixed ethnically, and which therefore were also culturally pluralistic.

The upheaval which Ezra wrought in purging the city and the family, contributed undoubtedly to this end. The firmness with which he carried this out, determined for ever after the Jewish character of the City, save for the short Hellenistic period. However, it too was Jewish, from the ethnic aspect, as opposed to the other towns in the Hellenistic world, where Greeks actually constituted a large segment of the inhabitants. It was only as a result of the Jewish revolts, or of the quarrels between Hellenists and extremists — Jason and Menelaus — that Greeks and Hellenist Syrians began to live in the city, mainly as garrisons. Jerusalem is not therefore one of the Decapolis, the ten Hellenist towns such as Beit-She'an, Susita, Geresh or the most typical mixed city, Jerusalem's chief rival: Caesarea.

Jerusalem did not become a mixed city. Beneath the Hellenist crust, even under the might of Herod's Court, there was a population consisting of the middle-class, artisans and the poor, who were imbued with the spirit of the Pharisees also in times of persecution, and were sustained by it in the Hasmonean period and during the Great Revolt. This was a blending of Terrestrial Jerusalem with Jerusalem-on-High. Between the two, the ruling segment, the Hellenists of the House of Herod, and — to a limited extent — the Sadducees, endeavoured to Hellenize Jerusalem, to make it a Polis, not from the democratic aspect, as there was not a majority in Jerusalem in favour of this system, even when there was a "Sadducee" majority in the Sanhedrin, but from the political standpoint. Some Hellenists even sought to turn the Temple into a pagan shrine, and placed therein a "revolting abomination", but Herod himself was cautious and refrained from doing in Jerusalem what he did in Ashkelon. He erected palatial buildings in the Hellenist style, some seek to find Hellenist influence also in his Temple, but he did not put up places of worship to pagan gods in the City, nor were idols placed there. The Sanhedrin itself, whose name is Greek and which sat in a semi-circle, in Greek style, did not promulgate Greek laws, even when it had a Sadducee majority. A pig was brought to the Temple Mount only to provoke, and Roman ensigns and eagles were raised upon it only to cause ferment, whilst in all the towns of the Greek and Roman-Hellenist Empires these were permanent adornments and ceremonies.

The Jerusalem which Ezra, and — after him — the men of the

Great Assembly and the first Hasmoneans, established and cleansed, did not become a Polis. She remained holy, and torrents of blood were spilled in the struggle to defend her sanctity, her uniqueness. Two hundred years did the struggle last, from the cleansing of the Temple Mount and the Altar by Judah Maccabee, till the last of the priests and fighters died amidst the flaming ruins of the Temple set on fire by Titus.

Kalos! Kalos! Kalos! (Beautiful! Beautiful! Beautiful!) cried the crowds in Athens at the sight of the creations of Phidias, the greatest of sculptors.

Kadosh! Kadosh! Kadosh! (Holy! Holy! Holy!) sang the Levites on the steps of the Temple, as in the Book of Isaiah, to God in Heaven. And the people fall on their faces and answer Amen, amen, and amen, Hallelujah.

HASMONEAN WARS FOR JERUSALEM

The Hasmonean Wars for Jerusalem did not commence in Jerusalem.

The citadel of the Hellenophiles is in Jerusalem. It is the seat of the Hellenist High Priesthood and of the Greek-orientated intelligentsia, who scorn the Torah of Israel. Inside the city there is a Syrian garrison, which supervises the desecration.

The "cultural revolution" to which the Hellenists aspired, was not instilled by gentle persuasion. Pagan Greek culture was brought to the nation's heart — Jerusalem, by means of harsh edicts and the short daggers of the Greek soldiers. As we have seen, it was not Greek culture at its best, but at its grossest, its ostentation, and its exhibitionism, to the extent that some even extended foreskins so that they might appear in the gymnasium as uncircumcised.

The desecration of the altar, the sacrifice of a swine upon it and the prohibition of the holy rites, were the apex of the enlightened Greek culture bestowed upon Jerusalem.

In Jerusalem there are the priests, the rich and the merchants; Greece is their model. They yearn to be citizens of Antioch, to make Jerusalem a Greek Polis. The revolt therefore will arise from the common folk, who remain loyal, in their natural and "unenlightened" way, to their fathers' physical and spiritual heritage.

The revolt will break out in Modi'im.

On the plain of Judea, the spark of revolt will be ignited, and the flame will spread, through many battles in the foothills and in the mountain plateaux: to Jerusalem. The Hasmoneans move in two channels which are in fact one: War upon the Hellenistic culture, and war against a Hellenist-Syrian army.

Two are the wars, yet one is the direction: Hebrew independence in Judea. Not merely a struggle to revoke harsh decrees, not merely to secure freedom of worship or religious autonomy: Only complete independence will assure the people of Israel freedom of faith.

Jerusalem, the city of the Lord's Sanctuary, is the war's objective.

What was this Greek army which faced Judah and his Maccabean commanders? It numbered few Greeks. In the main, its soldiers were mercenaries: Syrians, Samaritans, Arabs and many many others. The uniforms, the weapons, the art of war — all came from Greece.

However, it was neither the spirit of Sparta nor the wisdom of Athens which imbued these battalions. Their pay and the prizes awarded to the victors, were the factors which banded together the warriors of the House of Seleucus.

The Judean Army is a people's volunteer force, which trains and acquires its weapons in the midst of the war. At first, a handful of troops, without proper arms; a sword from here, a shield or spear from there, even pitchforks and hammers were no doubt used in the initial battles, till the army was forged, its numbers increased, it equipped itself with weapons captured from the enemy, and it appointed battalion, regimental and brigade officers. There were not many brigade commanders in Judah's army, because the brigades were few. In the first stages of the war, Judah's army numbered ten thousand men at most. At times this army opposed a force of sixty thousand soldiers, including large cavalry contingents (the Battle of Beit Zur). This was the usual ratio of forces, though at times the Hasmoneans succeeded in splitting the enemy force and in attacking each segment separately.

How was the Greek army organised?

The phalanx was the principal military unit which served as the keystone of the Greek war code. The flanks of the phalanx are protected by cavalry, light archers head it, and its main body consists of thousands of soldiers placed in long lines, bearing long spears, all pointing forward. The phalanx was a shock contingent. It was designed to be thrown into the fray when the enemy was being subjected to a frontal assault and could no longer manoeuvre or alter direction.

The phalanx is a heavy-going unit. Its striking power is vast. It would be wrong to assume that it would be more vulnerable to an attack on its flank in the mountains. Phalanx soldiers repeatedly practised swift movement to the sides, protecting flanks and changing direction, because this weakness of the phalanx was self-evident. In the battles of Persia and Asia Minor, the phalanx displayed its immense ability to defeat the enemy, even in rough and impassable territory.

The Hasmonean victories are therefore not the result of their being light-footed warriors in mountainous terrain. The phalanxes were already familiar with such as these. The fighters of Judea fought for their homeland, and victory over the Greek mercenaries was achieved due to the fighting spirit within their hearts and the wisdom of their leaders.

Step by step the fighters of Judea ascended to Jerusalem.

Beginning with the first encounter at the altar to the gods of Greece in Modi'im, through the defeat of Apollonius, the Samaritan, and his mercenaries by the small army of Judah Maccabee, to the defeat of

Seron the Syrian general, at Beit Horon, the same Beit Horon which repeatedly was the site of Israelite victories, from the days of Joshua who defeated the King of Jerusalem, when the sun stood still, till the fall of Lysias and Gorgias his general, in the battle of Emmaus, otherwise known as Hamath. This was not the last battle prior to the liberation of Jerusalem and the cleansing of the Temple, but it was one of the most decisive, and it demonstrated the brilliant leadership of Judah Maccabee. The battles of Beit Horon and Hamath were battles for Jerusalem, as was the Battle of the Castel in our times.

Gorgias and Nicanor deployed forty thousand infantrymen and seven thousand horsemen at Emmaus. The Maccabean army was small. Nonetheless, Judah purges away the dross: Whoever has built a house or planted a vineyard, and all that are fearful and faint-hearted — shall return unto their houses, as prescribed by the Torah, as well as by the logic of a war of idealists, strong in faith. Six thousand men remain with Judah. Then he addresses on the eve of battle. He speaks of the heroism of ancestors, of the history of a people who has already in the past fought with strong adversaries and has prevailed, of the present shame which they have vowed to erase. The battle cry is: God's salvation! Gorgias sets forth at night to make a surprise attack, accompanied by five thousand men. Judah steals out of camp, leaving there a crack battalion to divert the enemy to the ascent of the mountain pass. He takes the main force with him, skirts the mountains and descends upon Emmaus. There the main army of the Greeks is encamped.

Scores of thousands of Greeks, but they are not deployed for action. They camp and await the victory of Gorgias.

The Maccabean fighters storm the camp which is swarming with men. The camp is only superficially protected. Its soldiers are in shock. The Greeks are decimated. The mercenaries flee west. In their rear, the camp is in flames.

Gorgias tires of the futile pursuit after the phantom Maccabean fighters. He returns to the camp at Emmaus. As he enters the valley, the scene of a camp ablaze unfolds before his eyes. Thousands of Judean soldiers are ready for him in the valley, to annihilate his forces.

A hasty withdrawal towards Philistia. Sanctuary in Gaza.

One year later — another battle: The Battle of Beit-Zur, south of Jerusalem.

In this battle ten thousand soldiers of Judea meet sixty thousand Greeks and Syrians. The Maccabean fighters smash the organised phalanxes under the command of Lysias, the Seleucid regent. The Syrian army loses five thousand men, and Lysias returns to Antioch to

hire a new army of mercenaries.

Now the way is open and the time is ripe to storm Jerusalem.

The Greeks and the Hellenists in the City know that they cannot stop the Hasmoneans who have numerous supporters within the walls — and they assemble inside the Hakra Citadel.

And the Maccabee enters the gates of Jerusalem.

There are no celebrations, there is no parade. He hastens to the Temple Mount, to lament over the destruction and the desecration. And to act: to purify the Temple of the pagan abominations. The swine's altar is smashed. The stones of the desecrated altar are gathered together into one place, till a prophet will instruct them what is to be done therewith. A new altar is built. The ruined galleries are rebuilt. On the anniversary of the Greek desecration of the Temple, the holy rites resume, the Temple Menorah burns eight days with pure oil, and for eight days the restoration of the altar is celebrated. In another ancient version it is told that "The Hasmoneans entered the Temple, bearing eight iron skewers, they encased them in wood, and lit the Menorah therewith." The Greeks and the Hellenists are in the Hakra. A fly in the ointment.

The Maccabee does not propose to take them by assault. Perhaps his forces are insufficient to bombard the citadel, or perhaps the majority of the inhabitants will not allow him to mount the attack and to smite a High Priest and the nobility. It might also be that at this stage he does not wish further to antagonise the Kingdom of Syria and he requires more time to mobilise and arm a large army and to fortify his temporary borders.

The dwellers of the Hakra are not, however, under actual siege. They go and come, and make their purchases and send emissaries to Antioch. They are a city within a city, a state within a state, an enclave. Such co-existence between Jews and Greeks is untenable, certainly in Jerusalem.

After the Maccabee has fought his country's wars, to the south — in Edom, to the north — in Samaria, to the east — against the Amonites in Trans-Jordan and in Gilead, and to the west — in the plains of Judea and on the sea-coast, and has moulded Judea into a proper state, and after he fortifies his City and the bastions on its approaches, he turns to wipe out this last hornet's nest of Hellenists and Hellenism in Jerusalem. No doubt there were first repeated skirmishes between the occupants of the citadel and the worshippers at the Temple. Possibly the Hellenists were not content with the continual despatch of missives to Antioch, and sought actually to hamper worship in the Temple.

Two years after the Maccabee entered into Jerusalem, he lays siege to

the Hakra, intent upon destroying it. The Greeks have, however, supporters also outside the Hakra. With their assistance, messengers urgently go forth to Antioch, taking with them an appeal:

"How long will you refrain from doing justice and from avenging our brethren? We sought to serve your father, to follow in his footsteps and to obey his commandments. Because of this, our compatriots have besieged us and we have become estranged. Those of us whom they have captured, they have put to death. They have looted our belongings. They are now encamped against the Citadel, bent on seizing it. They have fortified the Temple and Beit Zur. If you fail to forestall them, they will perpetrate still worse crimes, and you will not be able to stem their assault."

The king is not any more Antiochus Epiphanes, the promulgator of draconic decrees, who died of disease and insanity in the wilderness of Persia, but his son, educated by Lysias whose army was beaten only two years earlier in Judea, Antiochus Eupator. He sets forth to avenge his defeated army and his besieged adherents in the Hakra.

He assembles a force of one hundred thousand men, as well as twenty-thousand cavalry and thirty-two elephants. This is the first time that such heavy instruments of war are brought to Judea. Each elephant is protected by one thousand foot-soldiers in armour and helmets and five hundred horsemen who constitute the mobile unit of the elephant division. On the elephants there are wooden towers. Catapults and snipers are installed in the towers. The elephants are aroused to battle by the sight of the blood of the grape and berry. Like the tanks of our times, except that these do not operate on grape and berry juice, but on fuel of another type. Each such armoured elephant is ringed by infantry — this too is a familiar phenomenon, particularly since the Yom Kippur War.

Judea has never seen such a vast army descend upon it. Regiments of infantry and cavalry patrol the mountain heights on both sides of the camp, to prevent attacks from the flank. The massive phalanxes, with silver and gold shields, march through the valley, in mighty step.

The army of Antiochus and its general, Lysias, besiege Beit-Zur. The town withstands the siege and destroys the Greek's machines of war. In Jerusalem, the Maccabee lifts the siege of the Hakra and speeds to confront the Greeks.

His army camps near Beit Zecharia. Thousands against scores of thousands. The sight of the Greek army is awesome, but Judah does not avoid the contest. There is a short hand-to-hand battle. Six hundred of the Greek vanguard fall. The number of casualties in the Judean army is unknown. In the midst of the battle, Elazar, Judah's brother,

endeavours to decide the outcome by a heroic act of self-sacrifice: He breaks through the rows of infantry, to stab to death the elephant which appears to him to bear the escutcheon of the Royal House. The elephant falls dead upon Elazar. Antiochus, however, was not upon it.

Elazar was the first Hasmonean to fall in the effort to halt the Greek assault upon Jerusalem.

Judah Maccabee disengages. He will not be able to overcome the Greeks by tactical steps alone.

It is the sabbatical year of Release, Shemita, the seventh in the seven-year cycle. It is observed, as prescribed by the Torah and the Great Assembly (Knesset Hagdola), whom the majority of the people obey. In Jerusalem there is a shortage of bread, as it is full of refugees from all parts of the country, including Galilee and Trans-Jordan, where they had been persecuted by Syrians and the Hellenists.

Antiochus' powerful army besieges Jerusalem.

His siege is around the Temple Mount. It seems that Antiochus has also penetrated Jerusalem, without a battle, and has established contact with the men in the Hakra Citadel. The mighty walls of the Temple are not breached, however.

A rampart surrounds the Temple. The siege machines batter the wall, and torches are catapulted into the compound, as well as rocks, arrows and stone missiles. The bombardment is heavy.

The besieged also make siege weapons, and shoot rock missiles and torches from the platform of the Temple Mount upon the camps encircling it.

Gradually, most of the besieged extricate themselves from the Temple Mount. In the Temple, only a handful remain, the high command of the Hasmonean House and the most resolute fighters. They suffice to defend the walls. Till when?

Again — as in the days of Sennacherib, and of untold conquerors who sought to subdue the city — events in the distant lands of the aggressors oblige them to withdraw their forces from the city. Antiochus Epiphanes forgot, in his madness, that he had already appointed Lysias as regent over his son; perhaps there was method in his madness. Be that as it may, he appointed another regent before his death — Philippos. Philippos seizes the throne for himself while Lysias and Antiochus Eupator, his king, are camped outside Jerusalem.

Lysias keeps the news secret, to avoid consternation among his troops. A suggestion is made at army headquarters: As the end of the siege is not in sight, and supply problems increase and multiply, and state matters require the King's presence in his capital, let us therefore

grant the besieged the religious liberties to which they aspire, and local autonomy, and they should again submit to our rule.

The proposal was accepted by the besiegers and by the besieged.

We do not know, we have not an inkling as to the motives of the Hasmoneans. Did they accept this temporary compromise in order to secure the lifting of the siege and to gain time? Did they realise that Antiochus Eupator was hard-pressed and that whether or not the besieged accepted his proposals — he would be obliged to withdraw? We do not know. Or did they think that the compromise, the concession, would afford a breathing-spell. They believed...

Antiochus and his army hurry north, but not before they commit a breach of the fresh treaty and destroy the Temple's defence, which they could not overcome by frontal assault and prolonged siege. As compensation, so to speak, they take with them, from the Hakra citadel, Menelaus the Hellenist High Priest, who had been the cause of this Greek invasion of the Land. They take him with them to Syria, where he is executed.

Not for long does Antiochus Eupator enjoy the renewed political subjugation of Judea, obtained by the compromise reached at the walls of Jerusalem. Another aspirant to the throne of the House of Seleucus prevails, and kills Eupator. The name of the new king of Syria: Demetrius son of Seleucus. He had been living in Rome as a hostage.

In Judea, the people are divided.

The moderates, whose fondest wish was the revocation of the harsh decrees of Antiochus Epiphanes, are pleased. Freedom of worship has been assured; they are content. Every man to your tents, O Judah!

The Hasmonean faction believes that without complete national independence for Judea, there will be no peace for Jerusalem, nor will there be freedom to worship the Lord fully, and the spirit of Greece will again seek to dominate. They declare: The war shall continue till total victory is attained. There is a new Antiochus. Envoys scutter from the Hakra to Antioch.

Alcimus, of the family of the high priests, comes to Antioch to claim the High Priesthood, and the removal of the rule of the Hasmoneans. It appears that at that time Judah Maccabee was acting High Priest: "Deputy Cohen". The family of the high priests in Jerusalem and the members of peace-in-our-time make a curious compact, as if "Neturei Karta" so to speak joined forces with the supporters of the Greek kingdom, against the Maccabees, the "warmongers". If not for the revolt, it would have been possible to live in Jerusalem in peace, under the wing of Syria and the wonderful culture of Greece, a Temple on the

one hand, a gymnasium on the other; in modern terminology — pluralism. In any case, very enlightened.

A new Antiochus. And each Antiochus has his Hellenist, who welcomes the support of Greek battalions in seating him on the throne of the High Priest.

The new Antiochus equips the Hellenist with the instrument conferring power over Judea — Bacchides and his divisions. High Priest and Syrian general offer “peace proposals” to Judah Maccabee. Behind them — phalanxes bearing thousand of pointed spears.

The walls of Jerusalem had already heard such words of peace. Had not Rabshakeh and Rab-saris faced them and spoken in Hebrew to the people behind the walls: Open the gates, what have you in common with the rebels? We bring you peace. Just surrender and open the gates. Why rebel against the king?

Once again: No war in Jerusalem. The city opens its gates before Alcimus and the Greek army. The Maccabee withdraws to the hills of Judea, the rock from which he was hewn, his stronghold from the very beginning. There he assembles his loyal troops and there he shall wait until all the people — including those who had tired of wars and were content with “freedom of worship” — realise who is this fine High Priest who rests on the bayonets of Greece.

Indeed — he did not have to wait long.

Alcimus, Yakim and Bacchides hasten to arrest those loyal to the Hasmonean House, or those who are suspect of such loyalty, “The Congregation of Scribes”. They are brutally murdered and their bodies are left hanging in Jerusalem.

So that the people should see, and fear, and distance themselves from the Hasmoneans.

Bacchides finishes the slaughter in Judea and returns to Antioch. And Alcimus continues the fight to hold on to the High Priesthood by blood and fire.

Every victim of Alcimus brings ten men to replace him in the Maccabean army, men who had gone home, thinking that the time had come to plough and sow, who had imagined that an era of peace had arrived, and that the country would now rest. The end had come upon the “spiritual centre”.

Again the simple truth becomes crystal-clear: Peace is unattainable without total independence. Isaiah warned, “There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked”. Alcimus again cries for help: Nicanor and his army arrive, bearing new orders: Annihilate the people. No longer a punitive action to quell a rebellion, but a decision that there is no

solution to the Jewish problem save the extermination of the people of Judea, genocide, or at least the extermination of whoever shall refuse to accept conversion to Hellenism. For the first time in the history of Israel: Apostasy or extermination.

Nicanor sets up his command in Jerusalem, to bolster the Hakra.

The priests go forth to him with protestations of peace, but Nicanor does not differentiate between Jews who are enemies of Greece, and her friends. To him they are all the same. They cannot be trusted. If the priests will not deliver into his hands the Maccabee and his army — the Temple will be set on fire.

On the thirteenth of Adar 161 B.C.E., the Eve of Purim, the slopes of Beit Horon again witness the utter defeat of the Syrian phalanxes. Nicanor falls in battle. A momentous Hasmonean triumph. The right arm and head of the blasphemer of the Temple are displayed opposite the Temple Mount. Again the Eve of Purim, but not in Shushan in the Diaspora, and not by the grace of Ahasuerus, but in Jerusalem and thanks to the Hasmonians.

But the Hakra is still there, in Jerusalem. A hornet's nest. Antioch will continue to dispatch mercenaries, again and again. It were as if Antioch had no other problem except the subjugation of Judea and wiping it off the map. The Maccabee, who foresees this endless process, realises that without a powerful ally who will deter the House of Antiochus from attacking Judea — the land shall not rest nor have quiet.

The Hasmonian emissaries leave for Rome, to propose an alliance. Upon bronze plaques the record of the first relationship between Judea and Rome is inscribed:

"It will forever be for the good of the Romans and the Jewish People, at sea and on land. And the enemy's sword will not touch them. Should war come first upon Rome, or upon any of its allies in any of the lands of its dominion, the Jewish People shall help, as circumstances shall require, unreservedly. And they shall withhold, and shall not supply the enemies grain, weapons, money or vessels, if Rome should so request, and shall fulfil their undertakings, without recompense. Similarly, should war first come upon Jewish People, the Romans shall eagerly hasten to their aid, as circumstances shall require, and shall withhold from the enemy's allies food, weapons, money or vessels, in such manner as Rome shall deem proper. And they shall observe the commitments, and shall not prevaricate. In accordance with these terms, the Romans have entered into a covenant with the Jewish People. Should hereafter the parties agree to add thereto or detract

therefrom, they may do as they see fit. And whatever they add or delete shall stand. And as for the evils which King Demetrius has perpetrated, we have written him saying, Why have you made heavy the yoke upon our friends and allies, the Jews? And should they complain once more against you, we shall do justice with them and shall make war upon you, by sea and by land".

Judah assumed a third crown. In addition to the crown of the believer and the crown of the valiant strategist, there was added the crown of the statesman. Far away, a new power is arising to rival the Greek Empire. The war of the Jews against Greek Syria is of great assistance to ascending Rome. This is the basis of the treaty. Judah Maccabee makes the land of Judea a factor in international relations.

However, prior to Demetrius' receiving word of the treaty — or perhaps he had already heard of it and decided to act before the Romans could honour their treaty — Demetrius sends a punitive force, led by Alcimus and Bacchides, to avenge the death of Nicanor.

In Nissan 161 B.C.E., twenty thousand Syrian infantrymen and two thousand horsemen gather at Be'er Zayit. In Judah's camp there are only three thousand men who answered his call, after the army had disbanded and returned home on the day of Nicanor's downfall.

Seemingly hopeless odds!

Yet the fortunes of war are often unpredictable. The Judean army all but smashes the right wing of Bacchides' force, commanded by the General himself, but the left wing which remains intact, encircles Judah's forces, and there the Maccabee himself is slain. The Army of Judah is defeated.

Yochanan, Jonathan and Shimon still survive to the Hasmonean House and to the People of Israel.

In Jerusalem, the Hakra citadel continues to hold out, with Greeks therein, and Jews who want to be Greeks.

The Hasmoneans come upon bad days. Flight to the desert, pursuit beyond the Jordan, and the grip of Greece strengthens and tightens in Jerusalem.

Bacchides' men set up strongholds throughout Judea, for they have learned their lesson and know that Judea is the formidable redoubt of the Hasmoneans, and that power in Jerusalem alone does not in itself assure dominion over the whole land. Alcimus governs in Jerusalem and seeks to demolish the inner wall of the Temple — to prevent the Hasmoneans and their loyal troops from defending themselves ever again therein.

Death overtakes him in the middle of the demolition operations. His

scheme comes to naught.

In the midst of pursuit in the Jordan Valley and in Trans-Jordan, Jonathan, son of Mattathias the Hasmonean, skilfully manoeuvres between the Hellenists within, the Greeks without, the Nation's factions, and the various branches of the House of Seleucus which wields power in Antioch. Antiochus fights Antiochus and Jonathan reaps the benefit, till fortune smiles upon him and he returns to Jerusalem to resume its construction, to strengthen its fortifications and to prepare for still greater opportunities.

Antiochus feuds with Antiochus. The one permits Jonathan to establish a regular army and orders the release of hostages of the Hasmonean House who are imprisoned in the Hakra. Thereupon another son of Antiochus goes one better; in an effort to secure the sympathy of the Jews, he sends Jonathan from Antioch a golden coronet and crimson robe, to establish him as High Priest and Prince in Jerusalem.

The High Priesthood will no longer be purchased with Hellenist gold or flattery. **Hasmoneans are the High Priests in Jerusalem.** The end has come to the rule of the Hellenist party.

"... And Jonathan wore the holy mantle in the seventh month in the year one hundred and sixty, on the Feast of Succot, and he assembled vast wealth and arms ..."

For the high priesthood cannot vest in the defenders of Israel's heritage if complete independence is absent. Antiochus continues to war upon Antiochus, and Judea benefits. Jonathan's prestige increases. He bears the triple title: Commander-in-Chief, High Priest and Prince.

But the Hakra still holds out, and a garrison is within it.

From time to time, Jonathan endeavours to besiege it. The Greek kingdom is not in a hurry, however, to give up this last foothold in Jerusalem. Jonathan again uses his skill, to manoeuvre between the kings of the Houses of Seleucus and Ptolemy. They fight each other, they fall, and are followed in quick succession by worse kings, until he too, Jonathan, falls, in Triphon's trap. He is captured in Acre. He is brought as a captive to Judea, the object being to catch his brother Shimon — the last of the House of Mattathias — too. After a winter march to Gilead, he is put to death at Beit Shikma, and his remains are brought to Modi'im, by his brother Shimon, for burial.

The sons of Mattathias are vanishing, yet the Hakra is still there in Jerusalem. Till finally Shimon, the last of Mattathias's sons, obtains complete independence for Judea, inscribed in a Greek royal decree.

On the 27th of Iyyar, 142 B.C.E., Demetrius the Second proclaims

that Judea is released from paying tribute to Syria. Shimon mints coins of liberated Judea and Jerusalem the Holy. He fortifies the borders of Judea and extends his rule to the coastal plain and the foothills. He then turns to remove the Hakra, which for thirty years has been a thorn in Judea's side, symbol of the subjugation of Judea to foreigners. Gone are the open bridges and gates to the enemies of Jerusalem's freedom. Shimon tightens the siege, and there is hunger in the Hakra. On the 23rd of Iyyar, 141 B.C.E., a year after Judea's independence has been recognised, the city is reunited.

Timbrels and harps burst into music, and there are branches of palms as symbols of royalty, and hymns of thanks to the glory of the God of Israel: The Syrian garrison surrenders the Citadel and all of Jerusalem is now Hebrew, in an independent Judea.

A few days later Shimon persuades the People's Council to approve a grandiose project: to level the hill on which the Hakra is situated.

The excavation and quarrying take three years, and a level plain replaces the hill upon which the Hakra rose and sought to dwarf the Temple.

The Temple soars above all else. The Hasmonean House fulfils the dream of the liberation of Judea, as is said in the Book of Maccabees 13 — 14:

"The people in the Citadel in Jerusalem were prevented from coming and going, from buying and selling, and hungered greatly, and many died of famine. They sued to Shimon for peace and he acceded to their plea. He expelled them and he cleansed the citadel of the abominations. And he entered the citadel ... with timbrels, song and hymn, for a great enemy of Israel was destroyed. And he fortified the Temple Mount which is by the Citadel... And peace reigned in the land all the days of Shimon... and he extended his people's borders... and he had no opponent. And Israel dwelt secure and cultivated its land in peace, the earth yielded its crops and the trees of the field bore fruit. Old men sat in the streets, all speaking of goodness, maidens wore resplendent garments, and youths were garbed in honour and military apparel. He provided food to the cities and strengthened their defences. He brought peace to the land and Israel was greatly overjoyed. He aided the poor of his people, he fostered Torah and strengthened its guardians. He destroyed all wrongdoers and evildoers, he glorified the Temple and increased the holy vessels."

A JERUSALEM WAR AND AN ANTI-JERUSALEM WAR

The Hasmonean War was a Jerusalem war, that is to say a war for freedom and faith. Were it not for this war, and had the Hellenists prevailed, Jerusalem and all Judea would have become just another Hellenist city and principality, and would have submerged, with Hellenism, in the mass of peoples, as many others had done. The Jewish People would not have developed as in fact it did; it is plausible — as most historians believe — that Christianity would not have emerged from such a Jerusalem. In other words, the whole of Western civilisation, as the offspring of Jerusalem and Athens, would not have come to pass. It is not surprising therefore that the Hasmonean Wars — in addition to being the first wars of faith in history and symbols of Kiddush-Hashem, martyrology, received such thorough and extensive attention by Christianity. It is one of the ironies of history that the Book of Maccabees has survived only in its Greek translation, which Christianity has sanctified.

The principles of Judaism were of course set in the Torah, in the Covenant of Ezra, and by generations of scribes and the members of Knesset Hagdola (the Great Assembly), but the enormous Hellenistic pressure, which subdued powerful peoples and lands in the east and swallowed them up and obliterated them, would also have eliminated this tribe, so small in numbers, were it not for the Maccabean victory.

This was not, of course, the end of the spiritual struggle between the two worlds of Shem and Japhet. The seductive power of Japhet was strong indeed. Jerusalem, it is true, is no longer just the Tabernacle and a humble altar for the worship of God. It is a great and mighty city. The Hasmoneans made it again a royal metropolis, great in wealth and magnificent edifices. The famous kings of the latter Hasmonean dynasty open new seaways and international trade routes, expanding imports and exports, and with them — the import and export of values other than material. Since the foundation of the renewed sovereignty was laid by Judah Maccabee and Shimon the Hasmonean, and is primarily Judaic, the spiritual import cannot crush the spiritual nucleus, and even the Sadducees — who are closer to Hellenistic culture — do not question the Law of Moses. They are not Hellenists. Construction is in Hellenistic style, and as happens when there is economic prosperity, there is corruption too, and abandonment of the modesty and purity of

the men of Modi'im, but the Temple will not again be defiled by an abomination — even Herod the Edomite will not harm the Sanctuary; on the contrary, he will win the applause of the Sages for building so magnificent a Temple.

It was in this Jerusalem that, apparently for the first time in history, a law for compulsory education was enacted. Moreover, though in form the Sanhedrin may have contained certain elements similar to the institutions of Greek democracy, whether in the seating arrangement in a semicircle, or even in its very name, which is Greek, the Greek impact is absent in the content of the Sanhedrin. It is noteworthy that the literature of Israel is translated into Greek. There is no record of the Greek Classics having been translated into Hebrew. Neither the Homeric epic, nor Greek philosophy nor the magnificent dramas. Imitation of form was unavoidable, but where there is strong cultural content of one's own, the borrowing of content from the outside can be forgone, particularly when it is fraught with danger. Apparently, the Sages of Israel — who knew Greek — felt at the time that it was dangerous to introduce "the secular into the holy". Therefore even a scholar like Philo, who was an Alexandrian, not a Jerusalemite, endeavours to bring the Torah of Israel to the Hellenists, and does not try to bestow the wisdom of Greece upon the Jews.

Jerusalem withstood this cultural struggle in spite of the political turmoil which convulsed her from without and within.

The idyllic peace which Shimon the Hasmonean attained, so beautifully described in the hymn which ended the previous chapter, did not last. Perhaps it is a historic and sociological law, as binding as the laws of nature, which only the Messianic era of the future will overcome: after every David and Solomon — a Rehoboam and Jeroboam, after every Shimon the Hasmonean — Hyrcanus and Aristobulus.

Between these periods was the Golden Age of Alexander Yannai, which bore within it the seed of destruction. He was a great king, still imbued with the spirit of the Hasmoneans. The proof: He "repents" at the end of his days, even to the satisfaction of the Pharisees, whom he had so tormented. His wife, Queen Shlomzion, could not have gone down in history as a great Jewish personality and could not have restored the Pharisees to their original station, were Yannai really a "wicked" king, as some sources sought to brand him. It has indeed been said that much of the calumny poured up on him was not intended for him but for Herod the Edomite. It may also be that Pharisees, some of them as great as Shimon ben-Shetah, were not free of error in this battle

of ideas which deteriorated into a bloody struggle, and even into the most grievous act of the Pharisees calling a Syrian ruler to their aid. Queen Shlomzion created the solution to this internal bloody division: A Pharisee Sanhedrin in charge of all matters of spirit: Religion, education and law strictly in accordance with the tenets of Judaism. Matters of the realm, however — today they would be called foreign affairs and defence — were not subject to their control. Perhaps the Pharisees preserved the thread, at times evident and at times hidden, stretching even as far back as the days of the Prophet Samuel and his argument with the people over the kingship. It certainly relates back to the days of the first pious men who were prepared to accept religious autonomy in Jerusalem and who isolated Judah Maccabee because he insisted on complete political independence. Judah, of course, was no "Sadducee".

Be that as it may — this struggle too, between Yannai the Sadducee and Shimon ben-Shetah the Pharisee, was, after all was said and done, a Jerusalem struggle, legitimate from the Jewish standpoint, originating perhaps yet in the days of Samuel.

After the death of the great Queen Shlomzion, the war between the brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus was no longer a Jerusalem war, though it was fought in Jerusalem. It was a battle for hegemony, not for ideals, nor for the fulfilment the Torah's commandments, nor for a way of life.

The beginning of the Jerusalem War of the Hasmoneans was: **What** would reign in Jerusalem. Thereafter the question arose: **Who** would establish that idea? The last stage was: **Who** would reign? That was the beginning of the end: **Who?** Why not an Edomite?

The war between the brothers began ostensibly over the spiritual struggle between Sadducees and Pharisees. The Army commanders — whose power and successes fuel their aspirations — lean towards the Sadducees because of their position, and gain the support of the younger brother, Aristobulus, whilst due to his birthright, the heir-apparent is Hyrcanus, who is High Priest during the lifetime of Shlomzion. The Pharisees were never wholly reconciled with the notion of kings of the Hasmonean House. Priesthood — indeed, but kingship? Is not the crown reserved solely to the House of David? and as for the Queen, does the law of the Torah countenance a Queen? However, the Queen is a staunch Pharisee, a pious woman, and she supports them. What is to be done if the masses love the Hasmoneans, and rightly so?

But the sons of Shlomzion go to seed, and become involved in an ugly war, unrelated to Jerusalem, to freedom or to faith, a war for the

throne, just like amongst the nations.

No wonder therefore that longing increases (and there is no longing but to the past) to a kingdom of the House of **David**, or, as a substitute, yearning, (there is no yearning but to the future) for the Kingdom of **Heaven**.

CONQUEST BY POMPEY

When the Pharisee leaders attempt to exercise powers conferred upon them by Shlomzion, and to wreak vengeance upon the hated Sadducees, the army commanders — who are amongst the leaders of the Sadducees — turn to the Queen. In concert with her second son, Aristobulus, they appeal for a change in the Queen's policy towards them: Either liberty to serve in the Army of Hartat, King of Arabia, enemy of Israel, or at least, to appoint them as fortress commanders in the country, to relieve them of the danger of constant persecution in the Pharisee capital. The fortresses in the provincial towns are given to the Sadducee officers. As Shlomzion's days near their end, Aristobulus knows that his elder brother Hyrcanus, the High Priest, will also ascend the Throne. He tours the towns which are under Sadducee rule, and before long large portions of the land are in his hands. When Hyrcanus is crowned, his brother Aristobulus wages war upon him.

Thus commences the fratricidal war in Judea.

Hyrcanus is defeated and escapes to the Citadel in the north of the Temple Mount. He is obliged to abdicate the throne and to give up the high priesthood in favour of his brother. Aristobulus reigns in his stead.

The Hasmonean sons benefitted when the sons of Antioch warred against each other. Now that the Hasmoneans fought each other, the sons of Edom benefitted, as Rome would do subsequently.

Antipater dwelt in Jerusalem, a rich Edomite, whose caravans, coming from Arabia, carried spices and perfumes to the ports of Judea. Antipater had friends in the courts of Edom and Arabia, and he himself was appointed governor of Edom in the days of Yannai. In the days of Aristobulus, however, he was recalled to Jerusalem, as his friendship with Hartat, King of Arabia, caused concern.

He was determined to benefit from the brothers' war.

He persuaded Hyrcanus to flee Jerusalem, telling him that his brother Aristobulus seeks to kill him. At the same time, he induced Hartat to make a pact with Hyrcanus to restore him to the throne of Judea, against an undertaking to return the towns which Yannai had conquered in Arabia. Antipater knew that if Hyrcanus will be king, Antipater will rule Judea. Hyrcanus was too weak to steer the ship of state, and the helm was in Antipater's hands. He would be the power behind the throne.

Hartat sets forth with fifty thousand cavalry and infantry, from Petra, in Edom. They are accompanied by Jews who support the restoration of the Kingdom of Judea to Hyrcanus, for he is the firstborn.

The battle with the forces of Aristobulus ends in his defeat. Many of his soldiers desert to Hartat and Hyrcanus. Aristobulus retreats with the remnants of his supporters to the fastness of the Temple.

Hartat, King of Arabia, fights the fratricidal war of the Hasmonean House for the Temple, and an Edomite pulls the strings behind the scenes.

Civil war.

And in the surrounding lands, the news spreads: Hasmonean makes war upon Hasmonean.

Many towns which were conquered by the Hasmoneans rise in revolt and seek to break away from the Jewish kingdom. And in the distant north, in Armenia, the Roman Pompey and his legions, listen carefully to news from Judea. He prepares his armies to intervene.

Most of the nation goes over to Hyrcanus, and two armies besiege the Temple, the Jewish army and the army of Hartat, whilst behind the defences of the Temple Mount Aristobulus, his mercenaries and the remnants loyal to him, including the priests, are entrenched. The siege takes place on Passover; Jew against Jew on their holiday of liberty.

There was an old man in Jerusalem. His name was Honi. God once answered his prayers and sent rain, to end a ruinous drought. He was brought from his village to the besieging camp and was told to pray against Aristobulus and the priests who supported him.

What could a saintly Jew pray to his God when Jew fights Jew?

"Our Lord, King of the Universe, since those who are with me are Thy people, and the besieged are Thy priests, I entreat Thee not hearken to the prayers of the one against the other, and not to fulfil the prayers of the one against the other".

So they stoned him.

The besiegers refused to supply even sheep and cattle for sacrifices, (as related by Joseph ben-Mattityahu — or perhaps it is Josephus Flavius who is telling us this?), even though the besieged offered to pay a king's ransom for the sheep.

Two generations earlier, in the days of Johanan Hyrcanus the First, Antiochus Eusibius laid siege to Jerusalem. On the holiday, he acceded to the request of the besieged and supplied them with animals for sacrifice. Now that Jew is warring upon Jew — hate is as cruel as the grave.

Pompey, in Armenia, realises: Now is the hour. He despatches an

army, headed by Scabrus, and messengers scurry from Jerusalem to welcome the Roman general, who comes by authority of Pompey. Messengers set out from each camp. Who will arrive first?

The messengers of besieged Aristobulus and of besieger Hyrcanus, both seek aid. Each claims that right is on his side. But justice is a minor consideration as against four hundred talents which each brother promises Pompey in exchange for his support.

Whose gold will be preferred?

The gold of Aristobulus is surer, he is rich and generous, and at the moment he is in control of the treasures of the Temple in Jerusalem. He can be trusted to pay. Hyrcanus is poor, and miserly.

Access to Aristobulus' gold is also easier. It is less difficult to drive off a poorly-armed force of besiegers consisting in the main of mercenaries and Nabateans, whose king, Hartat, trembles in fear of the threat of the Roman Army, than to reduce a mighty citadel and breach the walls of the Temple in Jerusalem. Scabrus orders Hartat to withdraw, on pain of being branded an enemy of Rome. The king of Petra folds his tents, lifts the siege and returns petrified to Petra. Aristobulus, upon whom the fortunes of war have smiled, pays Scabrus the agreed amount and sets forth to fight his brother and Hartat, his brother's ally. In the Battle of Papiron, he is victorious. The forces of Hyrcanus—Hartat leave six thousand dead on the battlefield.

Pompey turns south. He is in Damascus when emissaries from Judea again attend upon him. The messengers who come to ask justice of the Roman, do not arrive empty-handed. Antipater is there to plead for Hyrcanus, and Nicodemus brings with him the golden vine, the gift of one of the Hasmoneans to the Lord's Sanctuary. It is a unique work of art, worth five hundred talents of gold. Again and again ambassadors are despatched, to buy justice of Pompey.

Pompey commands — the warring brothers are to come to Damascus in springtime.

Will the fate of Jerusalem be sealed in Damascus?

The brothers arrive to argue their cases before the just Roman. They revile each other, and the people's voice too is heard on that occasion. So, at least, claims Josephus: The people are sick of the wars for the Throne, the people wish to be subject only to their High Priest, they do not wish to be ruled any longer by kings.

Pompey listens attentively and deliberates how Rome can benefit; whom should he support? Is Rome in need of a Judea with a stable government? Who will pay more? Who will be better at collecting taxes for Rome?

The arguments have been concluded and Pompey does not yet know the answer to his questions.

If he should show preference to Hyrcanus, the weaker of the two, he must first smite the army of Hartat, who is the mainstay of Hyrcanus, for as long as the Nabateans are unbeaten, Hyrcanus is not weak enough.

He therefore rebukes Aristobulus for his acts of violence, but nevertheless shows him favour, so that he should refrain from rebelling in the rear and establishing himself in his towers, whilst Pompey is campaigning in Nabatea. He tells the brothers that they must wait for his decision until his return from Petra-in-Edom.

Aristobulus, however, guesses Pompey's intention: Rome has obtained a foothold in Judea, and will not willingly withdraw its soldiers therefrom. There is no alternative to war.

He returns to Judea to strengthen his defences and fortifications. Pompey marshals his forces in Jericho, to march on Jerusalem at dawn. That night Aristobulus counts his troops once again and re-assesses his chances, and realises that he cannot prevail against the army of Rome. He sets forth in the night to the camp of Pompey, to appease him, and offers the Roman a heavy tribute, and entry into Jerusalem without battle. And whilst he is offering to surrender, his men shut themselves up in Jerusalem, lock its gates, leaving their king captive in the hands of Pompey.

Whereupon, the armies of Rome lay siege to the City.

Because of two Hasmonean brothers, Rome besieges Jerusalem. Now both brothers are in the Roman camp, and Pompey is waging the **Roman** war, not the war of which-one-of-the-Hasmonean-sons. Within the city — as ever — there are two camps: For capitulation, and for carrying on the fight. Those favouring war shut themselves behind the fortifications of the Temple Mount, and demolish the bridge leading to the City.

The peace group opens the gates of the City and of the royal palace before Pompey. Feison the Legate, Pompey's trusted lieutenant, assumes command of the besieging forces. They take up positions in the City, and in the palace. They turn the houses in the vicinity of the Temple into strongpoints for the catapults and when the besieged reject all talk of compromise, they open an offensive from the north.

Hyrcanus assists the armies of Rome to occupy the Temple. So overwhelming is the power of hatred. The main thrust is from the north. The deep moat is filled, a ramp is built for the assault upon the walls, and to enable their bombardment. The work is done mainly on the

Sabbath, on the day that the Jews do not disturb the siege effort. The Jews do not fight on the Sabbath, save when directly attacked.

Therefore the Roman general had decreed: not to shoot nor to provoke war on Sabbath days, but only to engage in siege preparations, to build ramparts and towers, and to bring up the tools of destruction to the wall, so as to pound it on the morrow of the Sabbath.

Throughout the period of the siege, the ritual in the Temple does not cease, and sacrifices continue to be offered.

The wall is bombarded, the largest of the towers falls and the wall is breached. Three centurions burst through, with their regiments.

Joseph Ben Matityahu writes:

"In the third month, on the fast day, in the one-hundred and seventy-ninth Olympiad, in the days of the Consuls Caius Antonius and Marcus Tullius Cicero, the attacking enemy slaughtered the people in the Temple, yet those engaged in bringing sacrifices continued the Holy Service. Neither fear for their lives nor the death of so many, induced them to flee. They felt that it was better to undergo all the suffering which was ordained to them, alongside the altars, rather than break any commandment".

Many of the Jews were killed by the Romans, and others — at the hands of Jews. Some threw themselves into the abyss, or set the buildings on fire and were burnt to death, rather than survive the disaster. Twelve thousand Jews fell in the fighting. Pompey and his entourage entered the Holy of Holies, into which only the High Priest was entitled to enter. Even he, Joseph Ben-Mattityahu, stresses, "But in all this terrible anguish, no catastrophe so wounded the very soul of the people as the desecration of the Holy of Holies by aliens, for Pompey went in — with his companions — to the place where entry is permitted only to the High Priest".

Aristobulus was bound in chains, a prisoner. Hyrcanus became High Priest. A tax was levied upon Jerusalem as a symbol of servitude. All the towns which the Hasmonean House had conquered in Trans-Jordan, the Golan, and the coast, were torn from Judea.

Thus writes Joseph Ben-Matityahu:

"This disaster befell Jerusalem through the warring of Hyrcanus and Aristobulus, the one upon the other".

THE GREAT REVOLT — THE DESTRUCTION OF THE SECOND TEMPLE

From the day the Romans set foot in Jerusalem in the aftermath of the fratricidal war, peace did not return to the City. One hundred and twenty seven years will elapse till the flame of the greatest revolt in the history of the Jewish people is ignited, but they are not destined to be years of peace. They are years of waiting, and watching. Rome and Jerusalem view one another over an unbridgeable abyss. A proud pagan culture with mighty weapons, facing an ancient culture, a God who cannot be seen, a people mighty in moral fibre, striving for liberty. There can be no bridge over the abyss.

Herod the Great sought to bridge the gap, as did Agrippa, King of Judea, a great writer — Flavius, and even a Princess of Jerusalem — Berenice. They try to become a bridge, and they fail. Bar-Giora on the one hand and Ben-Zakkai on the other — destroy these bridges, the one with his body, the other with his spirit. An abyss separates Rome and Jerusalem.

Not one of the Emperors in Rome understood the scores of protest delegations from Judea which asked to remove the golden eagles, the idols and the legion banners from the walls of Jerusalem. Rome continued to despatch legions, to break the spirit of obstinacy which kept erupting.

How many Jews fell by the sword of the Romans since they arrived in Judea?

How many fell when Aristobulus and his son Alexander tried to regain power in Judea? How many fell at the gold-thirsty sword of Croesus and for how many deaths was Cassius responsible? How many were killed by the sword of Herod the Great, who paved the way to the throne in Jerusalem with the bodies of the zealots, and who brought the armies of Rome, headed by Sussius — to conquer Jerusalem for him, and to put thousands of its defenders to death? How many thousands of dead marked the ascent of Archilaeus to the throne? In the rebellion in the days of Varus and Sabinus, and in the burning of the arches surrounding the Temple Mount, how many lives were lost? And all the zealots of Galilee and Edom, of all factions, whose boiling blood drove them to battle, and who died branded as "brigands"? And in the days of Felix and of Festus, in the days of Pilate, and of Albinus — the Roman

governors — how much Jewish blood was let?

Till the flame spread far and wide in the days of Gessius Florus.

And in rivers of blood it was extinguished.

The Greeks who brought the bird-sacrifice over a seething pot in front of the synagogue, started the conflagration in Caesarea. Gessius Florus "becomes intoxicated with fanning the flame of war", and in the very midst of the national fury, he seizes the Temple treasury. The zealots go about the City, carrying an alms bag, collecting pennies for poor, blood-thirsty Florus.

Florus wreaks vengeance and looses his troops in the lanes of the upper market, to loot, murder and brutally torture: three thousand six hundred Jews are slaughtered that day. Florus does not desire to extinguish the rebellion, rather he would inflame it, thus to justify the annihilation of the Jewish population of the land, whom he so violently hates.

Thus erupted the Great Revolt, in the year 66 C.E.

Neither the conciliatory speech of Agrippa, nor the tears of his beautiful sister Berenice, not the torrents of blood in the streets of Jerusalem — none of them could stay the mighty onrush, for the cup had run over.

Not as one man did they all go to war. Many were undecided, Was the time ripe? Was Judea strong enough to throw off the yoke of mighty Rome? The rebels too were not united. The Army of the Zealots, the Army of the Essenes, and the Army of the Sikrikin — not always did they join forces.

Hatred of Rome was common to all, as was their devotion to their faith. The Zealots' struggle was political-national, the Essenes' — Messianic-social, and that of the Sikrikin — one of force. All were ready to give their lives for the Cause, but they did not always share the same cause. At times they fought each other.

Already at the commencement of the revolt, they fought in Jerusalem: The forces of King Agrippa and his supporters, the Jewish peace camp, take up the sword in order to impose peace and the rule of Rome throughout the land. When the Priests discontinued the Emperor's Sacrifice, under pressure of the Zealots, the Peace-lovers called in the King's army and the legions of Florus, the Jew-hater, to quell the revolt "before it will get out of hand". Agrippa sends three thousand cavalry from the districts of Hauran, Bashan and Argov. Their commanders are Darius the Cavalry General and Philippus Ben-Yakim, Commander of Infantry. They are warmly welcomed by the well-to-do classes and by the Priests, the Peace Seekers and the

Sadducees. With the aid of these reinforcements, they seize control of the Upper City.

In the Lower City and on the Temple Mount — the rebels, the Zealots, are entrenched.

On the fifteenth of Av, the Sikrikin join forces with the Zealots, and wreak havoc among the Romans and the Peace-lovers. The short daggers of the Sikrikin, the spears of the Zealots, the rock cannon-balls and the flaming torches penetrate the Upper City. The Roman force and the upper classes flee to the Antonia Citadel and to the courtyard of the Royal Palace.

The Zealots set the palace of High Priest Hananiah on fire, as well as the palaces of Agrippa and Berenice. The Sikrikin — who revolted against both the rule of Rome, as well as the existing social order in Judea — also burn the Archives, where all deeds of debt are filed, in order to release the poor from their bondage to the rich, the object being to bring freedom within freedom: social liberty within national freedom within spiritual independence, in the midst of Jerusalem aflame. A passing event? or a lasting phenomenon?

Agrippa's garrison and his Jewish supporters entrench themselves. The rebels in Jerusalem are led by Menahem Ben-Judah of Galilee. His father was one of the original Zealots in Galilee, who was ferociously pursued by Herod. Menahem is one of the first of the rebels of that time. It was he who led his men in the assault upon fortified Masada and who seized the vast stores of weapons in its arsenals, after killing its Roman garrison. With these arms he equips his Zealots who assemble in Jerusalem, and there they excavate tunnels under the fortifications of the King's court. They support the tunnel ceiling with beams, which they subsequently set on fire, resulting in the collapse of the tunnel and of the towers above it. The Peace Followers surrender and are permitted to go in peace — to rejoin the legions of Agrippa and of Rome and to resume their peace-mongering in the land.

Menahem, through his bravery and single-mindedness, now one of the chief commanders of the revolt in Jerusalem, holds sway in Jerusalem. His rule does not last long, however. The government which he set up in Jerusalem, by force of arms, is unpopular also with many Zealot factions. They attack Menahem's men in the Temple Courtyard. Menahem himself escapes to the Ophel. He is caught and is put to death. The remnants of his men flee, under the command of Elazar Ben-Yair, Menahem's relation, to Masada, where they await the day, which will inexorably arrive, which will seal the saga of heroism of the Great Revolt. The torch of Jerusalem burns on at Masada.

The revolt spreads like wildfire throughout the land. The massacre of thousands of Jews in Caesarea is avenged by the Jews in towns with mixed populations; aliens are killed and entire districts are set on fire. The fighting between Jews and Greeks in Alexandria ends with an order issued by the city governor, Tiberius Alexander to the Roman legions under his command and the five thousand Libyan soldiers in town — to smite the Jews. Flavius reports the death of fifty thousand Jews. Tiberius Alexander, an apostate from Judaism, nephew of the philosopher Philo (Yedidia) of Alexandria, will one day become the chief-of-staff of Titus, the besieger of Jerusalem. That war, however, is still to come. Cestius Gallus, the Governor of Syria, sees the conflagration spreading in every direction, and he is determined to extinguish it.

In blood and fire he sweeps through Acre, Nabata, adjacent to Caesarea, and Jaffa. His legions traverse Galilee, killing thousands of Zealots at Mount Atzmon. From there he moves his troops, by way of the Beit Horon Ascent, towards Jerusalem. Fifty leagues from Jerusalem, he camps.

His force comprises the XIIth Legion, Polimineta (the Lightning Carrier), with six thousand Legionaries of the Syrian Legions, six cohorts (regiments) and four alos of cavalry from the auxiliary Syrian contingents. In addition, there are nine thousand Arabs, mainly archers, attached to his army, three thousand of them from Agrippa's army, and cavalry numbering five thousand horsemen (to which Agrippa's contribution was two thousand), all told — about thirty thousand soldiers.

Things came to a head on Succot. The city is crowded with scores of thousands of pilgrims who persist in fulfilling the commandment of celebrating the festival in Jerusalem, even at this grave moment, or perhaps because of the gravity. The Zealot Army does not wait idly for Cestius Gallus within the walls. It storms the camp at Geva. In a frontal assault, it attacks the Romans, whilst the men of Shimon Bar-Giora step up a large-scale guerilla operation against Cestius' supply convoy slowly moving up the Ascent of Beit Horon. Large quantities of food are captured and brought to Jerusalem. The mountain-tops are seized by the revolutionaries, while Cestius' soldiers are held at Beit Horon Ascent.

Agrippa renews his efforts to subdue the rebellious city. He despatches emissaries of peace to Jerusalem, to incite the inhabitants against the Zealots. The revolutionaries beat the messengers, and Cestius exploits the commotion which arises because of the affront to a

diplomatic mission, and his men march swiftly from Beit Horon and establish their camp on Mount Scopus.

Cestius bides his time three days. Why does he not attack the City? Perhaps he hopes that the Peace Seekers within the gates will open them up before him.

At the end of the month of Tishrei he moves. His thirty thousand soldiers, in battle formation, penetrate the New City to the north of the Temple Mount. He sets on fire the houses in the suburb Beit Zita, and the warehouses of the "Timber Market", and he camps opposite the Royal Palace.

Once again the Peace Camp, led by the High Priest and his faction, try to open the gates of the City to the Romans, but Cestius Gallus does not believe that there can really be such traitors in a nation in revolt which is fighting so ferociously for its liberty. Fearing a trap, he endeavours to breach the wall from the north. Again from the north, as in Jeremiah's prophecy, seven hundred years earlier, before the destruction of the First Temple, "Out of the north, the evil shall break forth". The Roman "Turtle" is set up, row upon row of shields overlapping each other and leaning against the wall. Under cover of the shields, giving the impression of a turtle's protective crust, the Roman soldiers undermine the wall's foundations, whilst all the time archers and bombardiers prevent the defenders on the walls from interfering with the tunnelling. The situation of the besieged is desperate.

At this dangerous juncture, Cestius Gallus suddenly orders the lifting of the siege and withdrawal from the City. What has happened? What had caused the Roman withdrawal?

The City's fortifications are formidable, and time is needed to pierce them. Cestius Gallus does not have supply bases in Judea. His advance was too swift, and he had hoped easily to overwhelm the insurgents. He failed to organise long-term logistical support for his army. Cestius' regiments are despatched to the villages of Judea to forage, and to seize food. In every village and valley they are attacked by the Zealots who have spread out in the hills with the object of disrupting the supply lines of Cestius. Mountains are round about Jerusalem, and in the mountains lurk her Zealots.

The withdrawal of the Roman Army from Jerusalem commences. Again the Zealots ambush the Roman armies, in the narrow mountain defiles, and Cestius' marching columns lack adequate flank cover. The march turns into a rout, the XIIth Legion sustains blows, and punishment is inflicted upon the Syrian cohorts. Retreat turns into flight and Cestius decides to gather his forces and entrench at Geva for

the purpose of regrouping his troops. This halt serves to strengthen the Zealot forces, which converge upon Geva from all the hills of Judea. The orderly withdrawal crumbles, the heavy siege machines are abandoned as are the massive weaponry and pack-animals. Arms, equipment and the banners of the XIIth Legion fall into the hands of Zealots. The Romans lose many dead, and Zealots by the thousand see with their eyes that the Roman Army is not invincible. Hope springs anew in humiliated Judea.

On the eighth day of Heshvan, in the year 66 C.E., the Zealots kill about six thousand Romans. The first military victory of the Great Revolt. Its future path becomes crystal-clear to the majority of the people — insurrection.

The Zealot chiefs, and the leaders who join the revolt, gather on the Temple Mount. The timid have now reached a decision too — revolt. The Great Sanhedrin, which had been stripped of its powers, again becomes the supreme authority. Rabban Shimon Ben-Gamliel, Joseph Ben-Gurion and Hanan Ben-Hanan — head the leadership. They are of the nobility, the moderates. They are not Zealots, but the triumph over Cestius Gallus sparks the flame also in them. Be that as it may: The die had been cast: revolt! The reasoning was that if war was inevitable, it would be preferable that the people be led by men of wisdom and judgment rather than by the hotheads and the Sikrikin. Separate groups of insurgents become a thing of the past, as do the separate regions, each fighting by its own lights. Jerusalem is in supreme command.

Military governors are appointed to the various districts, from amongst the Pharisees and the moderate Zealots. They are supervised by inspectors of the Jerusalem nobility. One of the most noteworthy appointments in this apportionment of command, perhaps the most fateful of all, was the choice of Joseph Ben-Matityahu as Governor of Galilee, the self-same son-of-Matityahu who would one day be Flavius, and thanks to whom Galilee, which was populated by hundreds of thousands of Jews and thousand of Zealots, would not become a death-trap to the Romans. Yohanan of Gush-Halav, the Galilean Zealot whose qualifications and leadership made him the perfect candidate for the post of commander of this most important region, is left without a force of any substance, and as Galilee falls, step by step, he will escape to Jerusalem at the head of the remnants of his fighters.

Why was Joseph Ben-Matityahu given preference over Yohanan the Galilean? Who can tell? There were no committees of inquiry in those days. Moreover: he himself, Joseph Ben-Matityahu, is the prime source.

Elazar Ben-Shimon, chief of the Zealots of Jerusalem after the death of Menahem, does not assume command of the City, but he retains most of the booty taken from the camps of Cestius Gallus: The weapons, the siege machines and the silver. By virtue of this power and wealth, he will also have the say in the initial stages of the Revolt in Jerusalem.

Defeated Cestius Gallus is dismissed in disgrace from the post of Governor of Syria. Vespasian is appointed Commander of Judea. The son of a tax-collector, grandson of an army private, he is brought from the battlefields of Germany. This gifted officer brings with him his son Titus, who will organise the transfer of the legions stationed in Alexandria, through Pelusium (known today as Baluza, and believed to be Tel-Parma) in Sinai, and through Gaza, Ashkelon and Jaffa. Three Roman legions march north along the coast road, paved by Rome. Vespasian places his second son, Domitianus, in charge of the support units in Syria. Vespasian mobilises his troops. His hair has turned grey on the battle-fields of the Empire. This is not his first war, and he does not make haste to do battle before he has amassed sufficient strength.

Vespasian's expeditionary force is a complete Roman army, a formidable organisation capable of supplying all its own needs. In Acre, before the army sets out for Galilee, three legions stand ready, the Vth Legion and the Xth Legion from Antioch, and the XVth Legion from Egypt, as well as eighteen cohorts of the auxiliary army from Syria, five alos of Syrian cavalry, and five cohorts of the Roman garrison in Caesarea. The armies of three kings accompany him: Antiochus of Commagene, Agrippa of Judea, and Shuhim king of Hamat. Each of them contributes one thousand archers and one thousand horsemen. In addition to this host, there are thousands of Arab archers and infantry.

Some fifty thousand soldiers stand by at Acre, under Vespasian and his son Titus. But they do not attack Jerusalem; not yet.

Who and what were the targets of this mighty human-and-steel organisation? Judea was not of importance to the great Roman Empire as a granary, as it had been for the Syrian House of Seleucus. Neither Judea's natural resources nor its agricultural abundance attracted the Emperors of Rome. Their dream was — a vanquished Judea.

In the far north, in battle with the Parthians, the Roman armies were only recently thoroughly beaten. Unrest spread across the Empire simultaneously with, and as a consequence of the revolt in Judea. Would the millions of Jews in the Dispersion rise too? They would indeed, but only fifty years later, too late. Rome was not in need of a

green or golden Judea, yielding fruit and olive oil.

A scarlet Judea, in flames, scorched, was Rome's objective. Therefore — tread carefully, Vespasian! Pillage the land, kill the Jews, avoid risking defeat even in one battle, for the eyes of the Empire are upon you. Let the Empire see and tremble: Revolt against Rome is hopeless!

Galilee falls in blood and fire. But the Roman army does not do battle with the tens of thousands of Galilee's Zealots. The Army of Rome bites off sections of Galilee, bit by bit, town after town. The heroism of the defenders of the towns is confronted by the spears of Rome, and the blood of Galilee's Zealots reddens the ruins, and the uniforms of the legionaries. The absence of a military commander capable of welding together the defence of Galilee and of throwing the full weight of the Zealots into the narrow mountain passes of the Land of Israel against the legions, is sorely felt. Gamla in the Golan is like Masada.

Vespasian kills thousands of Samaritans in Shechem, on his march south. Even in these Cuthites, sworn enemies of the Jews for ages, the spark of liberty has been set alight with the insurrection of the Jews against Rome; they too rise in revolt. But they are speedily smitten. For there is no leader who will close the ranks of Cuthites and Jews, even at this time. The road to Jerusalem is wide open.

Yet Vespasian does not despatch his troops to conquer it.

Vespasian prepares a mammoth siege of Jerusalem. He refortifies Iamnia, Ashdod and Hadida west of Jerusalem, Beth-El and Hofna to the north, Jericho in the east, and Hebron and the strongholds in the southern part of the country. He establishes supply bases throughout Judea, he will not fail like Cestius Gallus. The land is in his grip, yet Vespasian still holds back the onslaught upon Jerusalem. He is still not ready.

For the Empire is in ferment. Rome is changing emperors.

Galba is dead. There is war between Otto and Vitellius. Vespasian swears loyalty to Otto, but the bloody struggle, ugly even by Roman standards, and the mighty power concentrated in the hands of Vespasian in the East, awaken in his heart an old dream. Why not Vespasian Emperor of Rome?

The war in Judea is dormant a whole year, whilst the struggle goes on in Rome. Vitellius finally triumphs, but he does not win the support of Vespasian's armies and of the other legions stationed in the East. There are seven legions in Judea, Syria and Egypt. They proclaim Vespasian emperor, at Caesarea.

A council is convened in Beirut: Vespasian, Titus and Agrippa, who

has come from Rome to join his friends, the devastators of his people and his land. Berenice, enchantingly beautiful, exchanging glances and embraces with young Titus. After all, one day he will be Caesar. Mocianus, and the chiefs of staff are also present.

They resolve: Vespasian will go to Egypt, he will be in command of the legions garrisoned there, and there he will await the fall of Vitellius in Rome.

Titus will conduct the assault on Jerusalem, with the object of studding vanquished Judea in Emperor Vespasian's new crown. Long live Caesar!

Chief amongst the king-makers in Egypt is Tiberius Alexander, the Jewish apostate, blood-relation — but no spiritual relative — of Philo of Alexandria, who was the first to seek a symbiosis between Jerusalem and Athens, in philosophy. Tiberius Alexander, of course, is not a philosopher.

For the battle of Jerusalem in the spring of the year 70, Titus adds the units of the XIIth Legion to the Vth, the Xth and the XVth. This was the same XIIth Legion which had been decimated in Judea under the faltering command of Cestius Gallus four years earlier, and now it is given the chance to regain its honour. There are also two thousand men from Egypt, and three thousand from the border force on the Euphrates. Titus' army is greater still than the force with which his father stormed Galilee.

Chief-of-staff to Titus is Tiberius Alexander, ready and willing to give of his wealth of experience on the battle-field to assure victory over the Jews in Jerusalem.

The beautiful Berenice is also in Titus' camp, as is Agrippa, King of Judea. Soon they will be joined by a fourth, the commander of the revolt in Galilee, Josephus Flavius. After his defeat in Galilee, he arrives at the gates of Jerusalem, possibly to attempt to rescue, but perhaps only to record the events of these terrible days.

Three Jews at Titus' headquarters, and one Jewess.

In Jerusalem — a million Jews are crowded within the walls, but only — according to Flavius — about twenty-four thousand men bearing arms: the ten thousand warriors of Shimon Bar-Giora, six thousand Galilean Zealots of Yohanan of Gush-Halav, five thousand Zealots from Edom, and about two thousand five hundred Zealots of Jerusalem, under the command of Elazar Ben-Shimon.

Unfortunately, this is not a purely technical division. There is division on many matters between these forces, in this one Jerusalem, besieged by one mighty foe.

What was the sight which unfolded before the eyes of the scouts atop the walls, as Titus' legions approached the City?

The auxiliary forces, bearing light weapons, and the archers, led the force. On the flanks, in the forests and on the hilltops, additional light units patrol, to forestall possible ambush. Behind them march battalions of infantry, followed by detachments of regular Roman cavalry. Each centurion has contributed one company, to survey and mark out the camp site. After them come the labour contingents. They lay out and pave roads for the passage of the chariots and the supply convoys. After them roll the carriages of the senior commanders surrounded by a ring of horsemen. Behind them — the carriage of the Commander-in-Chief, Titus, flanked by his bodyguards. And then — crack units of cavalry, and spear-bearing infantry, the cavalry regiments of the Vth Legion, mules laden with siege machines, the cohort officers and the tribunes of the Vth Legion, the Legion Eagle, its banners and trumpets. Next comes the main column of the Legion, six men abreast, thousands of soldiers marching in perfect formation. The soldiers' packs are transported by the orderlies on mule-back. Then follows another legion. This was the famous Roman order. And another legion. And yet another. At the end, infantry and a strong cavalry force, to protect the army's rear. Never had Jerusalem faced such power.

And what was happening in the City?

A year had elapsed since the war for Galilee. Jerusalem spent the year in fratricidal strife, Galilean Zealots killing Zealots of Edom, Jerusalem Zealots stabbing Sikrikin, and the Sikrikin setting fire to the grain silos which could have sufficed to feed the City for years of siege. Only when Tiberius' vanguard is on the outskirts of Jerusalem, at Givat Shaul, does the civil strife cease. The men of Elazar Ben-Shimon, who hold the Temple Mount, recognise the authority of Yohanan of Gush-Halav, and the forces unite. The two leaders of the principal Zealot groups in Jerusalem are Yohanan of Gush-Halav and Shimon Bar-Giora, and as the first camps of the Legions are being set up around Jerusalem, Zealots and Sikrikin confront them together; Yohanan and Shimon, united in their love of liberty and their hatred of Rome, to the death.

Titus and six hundred cavalymen decide to reconnoitre around the walls. Thousands of Zealots make a sudden sortie, cut off the light unit from the main Roman force, and all but reverse the course of the battle for Jerusalem. But Titus escapes the trap, hacks his way back to his army, and arrays it east of Jerusalem.

The Xth Legion camps on Mount Scopus, and the Vth Legion brings up their rear.

Titus had learned the lesson given to Cestius Gallus at the Walls of Jerusalem. The "turtle advance" will not breach these massive walls. He despatches his men to fell the trees of the forests of Judea, never again to be replanted. With the timber he builds rams to batter the walls and he makes supports for ramparts, towers and mortars.

Jerusalem's defenders do not permit the Romans to establish their camps nor to lay the siege without opposition. Thousands of Zealots make sorties from the eastern gates. They swarm down the Kidron slope and scale the steep face of the Mount of Olives. They assault the labour battalions of the Xth Legion which are engaged in fortifying the Legion's camp. Most of the labour detachments are unarmed. They did not imagine that the Jews would venture from behind their walls, and sally out into the deep valley. The Roman cohorts scatter to the winds. The half-built walls of the camp are razed, and the entire Xth Legion is all but beaten. At that moment, Titus surges out of the flank, accompanied by hundreds of cavalry. As Flavius obsequiously observes, "From our account it is manifest that the Emperor himself saved the entire Legion from its awkward predicament".

None of the defenders' valiant efforts can, however, prevent the closing of the ring of siege around the City. Titus' camp is moved to the northwestern corner of the wall. Camps encircle the city from all sides, save the southern, wherefrom siege is most difficult, because of the steep ravines.

Whilst the heavy military equipment is being transferred from Mount Scopus to the new camps along the northern wall, Titus spreads out twenty-five thousand soldiers in seven rows, to cover and protect the siege machines. Patrols along the walls determine the points of breach: Opposite the monument of Yohanan the High Priest, for that is a weak spot in the wall. Titus' legions throw up three ramparts there. Time after time, groups of Zealots break out through the City gate and set the siege machines on fire. Titus therefore erects three siege towers, twenty-five metres high, and from their tops the Romans shoot arrows and hurl rocks at the walls, and prevent the besieged from interfering with the siege equipment battering the walls.

The battering rams pound the outer wall. The entire city shakes with every blow. The unequal contest takes its toll, and the besieged are unable to prevent the breach.

Fifteen days after the commencement of the siege, the Romans pierce the "Third Wall", which is their first. On the seventh of Iyar, they penetrate the New City, to the north of the Mishna and the Temple Mount, and they raze the northern part of the City. Within the City, the

battle rages — the men of Yohanan of Gush-Halav entrench in the Bira. Shimon Bar-Giora's warriors fight around the monument of Yohanan the High Priest, and block the entry of the Romans in the direction of the Gate of Ginat and the Pool of the Towers.

The fate of the battle for the Second Wall is sealed.

But when the wall is breached and a thousand Romans pour into the Mishna, the defenders of Jerusalem carry on a bitter battle in the alleys, and in house-to-house fighting they eject the Romans from the Mishna. Hundreds of Zealots stream also to the second breach in the wall, and for three days they block it with their bodies. After three days, the wall is pierced again. To prevent the breach from being closed again, Titus orders the gap to be widened.

Pay day has arrived in the Roman army, and Titus orders a fearful parade opposite the besieged. His soldiers, scores of thousands of them, march past, their weapons glittering in gold and silver under the brilliant sun of a Jerusalem summer. The soldiers of Rome pass by to receive their pay, tens of thousands upon tens of thousands. The walls and towers opposite them are crowded. And the defenders of Jerusalem watch in silence. An awesome sight. Scores of thousands of soldiers are receiving their pay for wreaking destruction upon the City of God, the Capital of God's People. It has become fearfully clear that all hope is lost. Titus again despatches Josephus Flavius with proposals for surrender, but there is no response to these offers from within the walls. Though the fate of the City is sealed, no one dares to deliver it into hands of the Romans. The Zealots rule the City with an iron hand, and have ordered: No surrender.

Titus raises two ramparts upon the Bira Antonia, and two more opposite the monument of Yohanan the High Priest, to enable him to break into the Upper City and the Temple Mount.

From outside the walls, Flavius calls for peace and surrender. He reminds the City of the might of Rome and the insignificance of Judea. He recounts also the siege of Nebuchadnezzar, and the burning of the First Temple. This time there is a retort from the walls: A stone hurled at the head of the traitor.

Famine gnaws at the stomachs of the besieged.

There were three very rich men in Jerusalem, and their granaries held sufficient wheat for years of siege. They all went up in flames in the fratricidal strife. The remnants were consumed by the hundreds of thousands of hungry people within the city.

Epidemics and death stalk the City. Some try to give themselves up to the Romans, to escape, to save their lives, to rescue the little gold that

they have left. Some slink out in pitch darkness to the valleys, gather whatever food they can find, and return in stealth to the City, to their families. If they are caught by the Roman patrols, they are crucified against the walls. The soldiers invent new methods of crucifixion every day, to increase the torment and terror. Arab archers tear open the stomachs of those who attempt to escape the City: Perhaps they have swallowed gold? This atrocity shocks even Titus. Famine in the City increases. Ramparts continue to be thrown up, two opposite the Antonia and two opposite the Upper City, whilst in the depths, beneath the Jerusalem rock, the men of Yohanan of Gush-Halav bore under the foundations of the Antonia and under the Roman ramparts. They stuff the tunnel with wood smeared with tar and sulphur, set it afire, and withdraw.

The result is a cloud of smoke and dust. The ramparts collapse and sink. Seventeen days of siege construction work are destroyed.

Two days later Shimon Bar-Giora's Zealots, in sheer heroism, without the benefit of tactical advantage or of military skill, but only by dint of daring and supreme surprise, storm the ramparts opposite the Upper City, set them and the siege machines on fire, and with their bare hands seize the red-hot iron of the battering-rams and the bombardment machines, to prevent the Roman soldiers from dragging them away from the conflagration.

From atop the walls, they curse Titus and his father, the Emperor Vespasian, "We defy death. It is dearer to us than slavery. We shall therefore continue to attack the Romans with all our might as long as we live. What does it matter if the Holy City will be destroyed, as you threaten? God has a Sanctuary exalted above this Temple — the whole Universe. The Temple too will be saved by Him who dwells therein, and with God's help, we shall pour scorn upon all your threats. You shall not succeed in fulfilling your plans, for all is in the hands of the Lord". What were the feelings of Flavius, alias Joseph Ben-Matityahu, when he put quill to parchment to record events for posterity? Why did he write it down? Was he pricked by doubt? Or was he jealous of the Zealots?

The famine in the City intensifies. Many are the victims of famine and pestilence whose bodies are thrown over the walls. The environs of the city are strewn with bodies which no one buries. Again the Legions set up four ramparts opposite the Antonia.

An attempt to burn the new ramparts fails, and the rams continue to pound the wall. Four large stones are removed from the base of the wall of the Citadel, and during the night a crack develops in the wall, above the tunnels which the men of Yohanan had bored to enable them to set

the ramparts on fire.

The Romans discover, upon gaining entry through the breach, that the besieged have erected a new wall whilst the siege was going on. Three days later, when this wall too is pierced, the Romans penetrate the Citadel in stealth during the night, while the guards sleep. In a bloody battle at the approaches to the Temple Mount, the Romans are repulsed and are driven back step by step. This was the seventeenth day of Tammuz.

By order of Titus, the Antonia Citadel is razed to the ground. A wide approach is opened up to the Temple Mount.

Again attempts are made to break into the Temple. Once again ramparts are built opposite the north-western corner of the courtyard of the House of God, opposite the archway along its northern wall, and opposite the western hall in the outer courtyard of the House of God. Still the besieged will not despair. A group of Zealots tries to break out in the direction of the camps on the Mount of Olives, to seize food. The attempt fails. The besieged on the Temple Mount set on fire the northern and western halls which link the Temple Mount with its surroundings and the ruined Antonia.

The Jews make a mock withdrawal from one of the western halls, many Romans pour into it, and then the Zealots set it alight, killing the Romans therein.

The Romans too are familiar with the weapon of fire, and they put to the flame some of the northern and eastern halls. The fire slowly spreads to the Temple galleries. The ring of fire tightens round the Temple. The blaze cuts a path to the Sanctuary.

The famine intensifies, whilst the battering-rams continue to pound the Temple walls, which the Romans scale with long ladders. There the besieged wait, to kill them, to burn the ladders, and to capture the legion eagles.

The Romans set the Temple gates on fire.

The fire spreads rapidly. Another day passes, and the fighting goes on in the courtyard of the House of God. A torch is thrown through the Golden Window, in the vicinity of the northern approach to the Sanctuary Chambers.

And the blaze seizes the Temple itself.

The Romans burst in, to slaughter and to plunder. The fire spreads swiftly. On the ninth of Av, the Second Temple too goes up in flames.

Blood, blood and fire. The Temple had fallen. Fighters are still holding out in the flaming Temple Courtyard, in the galleries, in the Upper City, and in the Lower City. For a further month the remnants

of the Zealots carry on the battle, to die killing as many of the enemy as possible, to vindicate their oath that never would they lay down their swords.

The entire City is laid in ruins. Only three towers remain of Herod's palace: Fazeel, Hyppikos and Miriam, to serve as a reminder of how massive was the strength of the fortifications and how terrible was the War. The Xth Legion stands guard over the ruins.

From the midst of the ruins walks forth a man, dressed in the robes of a Priest and the crimson mantle of the Messianic King: Shimon Bar-Giora.

He is taken into captivity to Rome, with Yohanan of Gush-Halav.

Flavius reports one million dead, one hundred thousand prisoners.

Thousands of prisoners are transported to Rome, to glorify the victory parade of Vespasian and Titus. The leaders of the revolt are amongst them: Yohanan and Shimon. Together they were transported to Rome, but fate continued to separate their ways. Yohanan will remain in captivity, in a dungeon, till he dies. Shimon will be put to death in the course of the victory procession of Titus and Vespasian, the victory of Rome over the People of Judea.

The People of Rome cheer. A dangerous enemy of the Empire is dead.

The destruction of Jerusalem did not, however, put an end to the Revolt.

Masada is still holding out in the desert, and Betar is yet to come, and the spirit of liberty continues to fan a tiny spark, an eternal flame. Year after year, the tears of Jews on the Eve of the Destruction, shall feed this spark of liberty. A generation later it will be related that Rabban Yohanan Ben-Zakkai escaped from the City, appeared before Vespasian and pleaded with him to spare Yavneh and her Sages, and that his appeal was granted. Rabbi Akiva's comment thereon was: **He should have asked for Jerusalem.** He was answered: He would not have been given Yavneh nor Jerusalem in that case. The outcome of this argument is not known, save for the fact that Rabbi Akiva threw his weight in support of the Revolt of Bar-Kochba, and that the scholars of Yavneh also joined in this renewed struggle: For the liberation of Jerusalem. This was the same Rabbi Akiva who made for Rachel, his beloved wife, "A city of gold", a pendant to hang round her neck, with the Sanctuary, a symbol of Jerusalem of gold, engraved thereon.

One more footnote: In 5736 — 1976, over one thousand nine hundred years after those days and those nights, an Israeli archaeologist excavating in the Upper City will discover under the ruins, an

apartment which went up in flames on the day the Temple was destroyed. Magnificent household utensils remained intact, even food remnants; the rooms were reconstructed, the walls and furnishings are publicly displayed, and upon the ruins, homes were built for those who returned to Zion, opposite that self-same Temple Mount.

**DESPATCHES FROM COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF
TO CHIEF-OF-STAFF**

132 — 135 C.E.

In the year 70 C.E., the Temple went up in flames and Jerusalem was laid in ruins. Three years more Masada withstood the siege, till the besieged took their own lives, bequeathing an immortal legacy of liberty to the fighters for the freedom of Israel.

In the days of the Emperor Trajan, the Jewish masses revolted in the lands of their dispersion, particularly in Egypt and Cyrenaica. These were the rebellions which had failed to erupt at the time of the Great Revolt. They were quelled in rivers of blood.

Not fifteen years elapse and the Bar-Kochba Revolt erupts, the biggest and last of the military insurrections in Eretz-Israel, till the revolt of our times, the Victorious Revolt.

For though the land was smitten, and scores of thousands of Jews fell, and many towns and villages were devastated, the spirit of revolt lived on. The consciousness of Kiddush Hashem, Sanctification of the Name, and of the uniqueness of this Land, of this City, which were singled out for this People, is too deep to permit despair and desertion.

Emperor Hadrian rules in Rome. He is a product of Greek education. He imposes peace throughout the Empire. He encourages removal of the old, and reconstruction throughout the length and breadth of the Empire, including Jerusalem.

It will never be known whether Hadrian originally intended also to rebuild the Temple, and only changed his mind when he saw the massive patriotic ferment which arose as a result of the hopes for its restoration, or whether he intended from the start to make Jerusalem one of the cities of the Empire, and only the vagueness of his plans aroused great hopes in Judea. Be that as it may, "In the days of Rabbi Joshua Ben-Hannaniah, Rome decreed that the Temple be built".

However, a whispering campaign of the Cuthites, or of other enemies of Israel, convinces the Emperor that he ought not rebuild the Temple ruins. He is even advised how to renege on his promise. Some of the Sages endeavour to calm the agitated mood of the nation.

"The Cuthites sent to the Emperor and told him: The King should know that if this metropolis be built, and its walls be erected, they will not pay the levies, rates and excise... The Emperor said to them: What can I now do? I have already decreed. Said they to him: Send unto

them and order them to move the Temple's location or add upon it five cubits or shorten it by five cubits, and immediately they themselves shall withdraw from the plan.

The people congregated in the Valley of Beit Rimon. When the scribes arrived, they saw the people weeping, and clamouring to revolt against the King. Said the Sages — the one to the other — let a wise man come forward and calm the public. Let Joshua Ben-Hannaniah come; he is wise in Torah. Rabbi Joshua then came and said: A lion consumed his prey, and a bone stuck in his throat. He called out: He who shall remove the bone shall be rewarded. The Egyptian heron, whose beak is long came forth, inserted its beak into the lion's throat, and brought out the bone. Said the heron to the lion: Give me my reward. Said the lion to the heron: Go forth and boast that you penetrated the lion's jaws and returned safely. Thus, let us be thankful that we entered this nation safely and left it in safety".

Many generations later, Jewish leaders would demand of the British Lion fulfilment of promises, and the establishment of a National Home. They would claim rights in Jerusalem, and would be derided. Then too would be heard the voice of earnest doves, "Let us be thankful"; to this very day.

In the year 130 Hadrian arrives in Judea, in the course of a tour throughout the Empire. He observes, considers and resolves: A religious centre is not to be permitted to this fanatical and barbaric nation, for worship to its peculiar deity, nor should it have an organised religious-national entity, differing from the customary structure in other Roman provinces. He would bring the light of Western Civilisation to the inhabitants, these bigoted zealots.

A new governor is appointed over Judea, Tinius Rufus, the governor of Thrace. He will build Jerusalem as a magnificent Roman-pagan metropolis, to the eternal glory of the exalted Hadrian, Aelia Capitolina.

For two further years the Sages of Israel manage to stifle the storm raging within people's hearts, two years during which delegations from Judea pursue the Emperor to Egypt and Syria, and as far as Greece, two years during which the blacksmiths of Judea deliver to the Romans who had ordered weapons from them; unserviceable arms, and when the faulty articles are returned to them, they forge and sharpen them, and bury them in secret hiding-places.

For the storm will soon be unleashed again.

On the Ninth of Av, in the summer of 132, the Romans ploughed a furrow around Jerusalem, with a pair of oxen harnessed to a plough-

share, to turn her into Aelia Capitolina. Simultaneously, the observance of the mitzvot, the Divine Commandments, was prohibited, and any man resting on the Sabbath or circumcising his son, was to be put to death. This was also to be the fate of anyone studying the Torah. The Ninth of Av was chosen deliberately as the date of this terrible Day of Jerusalem, in the same manner as Hitler would purposely appoint this day, 1,810 years later, as the date for the inauguration of the "Great Action".

Even the name of Shimon Bar-Kochba, the legendary leader of the insurrection, was not definitely known till his despatches, as if penned only yesterday, were found in the caves of his warriors in the Judean Desert. His followers called him Bar-Kochba (Son-of-Star); his opponents called him Bar-Koziva (Son-of-Falsehood); he was however the anointed king of flesh and blood who all but brought freedom to Israel, till his flesh was ripped and his blood was spilled at Betar, thus bringing the revolt to an end. The spiritual leader of Israel in that generation, Rabbi Akiva, would say of him, "A star has come out of Jacob — he is the Messianic King".

There was no Flavius in the Army of Israel in that generation, neither to betray, nor to record the history of the revolt. We are therefore left only with scraps of knowledge, a few midrashim, and letters, to tell the story of that revolt, as a legacy to future generations.

In Jerusalem, now encircled by the plough's furrow, camps the Xth Legion, a permanent garrison. Its emblem — a wild boar engraved in the city gate near the camp. Only a few Jews live in the ruins of Jerusalem, in hiding, and therefore it was not in Jerusalem that the revolt broke out.

The emblem of this Legion, (a broken part of the boar has been found in our times near Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem), came to be the symbol of oppression and the object of hatred. Therefore the Rabbis interpreted the verse "The boar out of woods doth ravage it", thus: Why is this kingdom like a swine? Just as the swine, whilst wallowing in filth, stretches out its paws, as if to say: Behold, I am pure, so this wicked Kingdom of Edom robs and extorts and appears as if it were clearing the platform".

The regime of Hadrian was reputed to be enlightened and constructive; it would be termed "progressive" nowadays. From the standpoint of **Jerusalem** it was repugnant. A pig in the gate of Jerusalem robs it of freedom and is a spiritual antithesis. Jerusalem was the cause of the insurrection, though it did not erupt there.

The revolt may have been sparked off in the village of Haruva, on the

fringe of the Golan precipice: "There were two brothers in the village of Haruva. Any Roman passing there, they would kill. Said they: One day we shall take the crown of Hadrian and shall place it on the brow of Shimon.

The revolt erupted. In every village and on every road, Romans are slain. Tinius Rufus calls upon the Governors of Egypt and Syria to send him help. He also appeals to Hadrian, who is then in Greece. It seems that the first to hasten to the aid of Rufus were the men of the XXIIInd Legion — the Dioteriana.

From Egypt, in the south, the legions of Rome march to Eretz-Israel. However, from then onward the name of the XXIIInd Legion is erased from the chronicles of Rome. It was obliterated, wiped out in battle. Not even remnants were left to form a nucleus for its rehabilitation. Or can it be that so overwhelming was the military victory of the Jews and so crushing was the Legion's humiliating defeat, that it was decreed that the Legion be disbanded?

This was the first major success of the Revolt. Subsequently, the revolutionaries dominated most of the area of Eretz-Israel, for there were not large Roman forces in the region, to stop them.

The road to Jerusalem was open.

In Jerusalem itself — the camp of the Xth Legion, with additional cohorts of the Egyptian garrison, sent as reinforcements, are insufficient to stem the tide of the Jewish Revolt.

On the seventeenth of Elul, about a month after the furrow was ploughed around Jerusalem, the flight of the aliens from the City commences: The Greeks, the families of the garrison force, and a hodge-podge admixture of inhabitants who came to dwell in Jerusalem after the Destruction. They flee, before the troops of Bar-Kochba close the ring of siege around the City.

The soldiers of the Wild-Boar-Legion are unable to stand up to the forces of Bar-Kochba. A short siege, a swift onslaught:

"And on the third of Kislev the symbols were removed from the City", the images of the swine over the gates were smashed, and the banners of Rome and of the legions were removed from the tops of the walls, as spoils of war.

Winter in Jerusalem — a winter of hope.

The Holy Ritual is resumed on the Temple Mount, at the site of the Sanctuary. The winter is bitter, and it is impossible to start building fortifications. It is not, however, too bitter to prevent the erection of an altar for the sacrifice of offerings as prescribed and ordained. Though there is no Temple, the altar and sacrifices are obligatory.

For Jerusalem has returned to Israel.

Coins are minted: Shimon, Prince of Israel. First Year of the Redemption of Israel. Shimon. For the Liberty of Jerusalem. A palm tree and vine leaves are impressed on the coins, a lulav (palm-branch) and an etrog (a citron) and the image of the Temple which is alive in the hearts, two trumpets, and a cluster of grapes.

For the liberty of Jerusalem!

News of the events reaches Hadrian in Greece, in the autumn of 132. He mobilises legions from the length and breadth of the Empire. He recalls from the governorship of distant Britain, the best of the Empire's generals of that generation, Gaius Julius Severus. Hadrian himself sets forth ahead of him, eastward, to prepare the campaign.

The Romans do not fight in winter. They call their legions from afar, to establish bases for their army and thoroughly to prepare their plans to wage war in Judea.

In Judea, preparations continue for the inevitable collision with the Emperor's army, with the advent of spring. An administrative authority is set up to govern the country, an army is organised, a High Priest is appointed, Elazar, and on the coins of the Revolution his name appears alongside Shimon's. It seems that a Grand Sanhedrin too was re-established in Jerusalem to provide spiritual guidance to the people, and that leaders of Israel went abroad to the various dispersions to enlist aid, and to endeavour to stir up insurrections throughout the Empire.

And the legions march on Judea. The governors of far away provinces despatch regiments from their garrisons, to help the Emperor subdue rebellious Judea.

From the IIIrd Cyrennian Legion, from the Xth Pristine Legion, from the Xth Gaminæ Legion, from the Vth the Macedonian Legion, from the XIth Claudian Legion, from the VIth Ferrata Legion, and from the IVth Scythian Legion. The entire Roman Navy assembles in Syria, and from adjacent Egypt and Syria converge the cohorts. To lands as distant as Misia and Pannonia messengers hastened to summon the regiments based there.

The Emperor's army camps at Geresh, about thirty-five thousand men. In the beginning of May 133, General Julius Severus moves to suppress the revolt.

From Geresh in Trans-Jordan and from Acre on the coast, the forces of Rome advance in two columns upon Galilee. On the coastal plain and in Judea march the Roman forces. Fifty-two battles were fought during the Bar-Kochba Revolt, and the order issued to the Roman legions was — devastate the country, wipe out its inhabitants!

The Roman troops carry out their task methodically. Many of the regions of Israel which are barren today — were laid waste in the days of the Revolt and never again revived. The Roman soldiers pursue the population to the very last cave in the steep gullies of the Judea Desert. Rome is not endangered by a handful of fighters, women and children in a cave in the Desert of Judea. But the operational orders of the Roman divisions say — annihilate, so that never again shall they rise in rebellion.

The Roman ring tightens around Jerusalem.

Tur-Shimon, in the hills of Samaria, falls. The roads lead from there southward to the mountain plateau. With the fall of Gofna, the strategic crossroads protecting northern Jerusalem, the City is exposed to the Roman assault. The area held by Bar-Kochba's warriors steadily contracts.

What was happening in Jerusalem at that time? We do not know.

We do not even have a coin of Jerusalem mintage which might bear the legend: Third year of Jerusalem's Liberation.

In the spring of 135, the walls of Jerusalem are not yet adequately fortified, to protect the City. The destruction wreaked during the years of the Great Revolt cannot be healed in a year. The mighty walls of Second Temple days withstood the Roman siege only five months. How will the new, hastily built walls stand up against the onslaught?

Bar-Kochba is compelled to withdraw to a mountain retreat, which it will be difficult to reach and penetrate. The experience of Masada has shown that such a bastion can hold out for a great length of time. There one must stand fast, there shall the revolutionary ember continue to glow as long as possible. A change might occur. The Roman Emperor might fall. The Jews of the Diaspora might rise in revolt and set the entire Empire aflame, and the Roman armies would have to disperse in every direction, to extinguish the conflagration? Perhaps Parthian allies will descend from the north? The heavens themselves might intervene? **Just gain time!**

Bar-Kochba's forces abandon Jerusalem and entrench themselves at Betar. How thick is the historical darkness which envelops this heroic revolt, yet how bright is the light which shines forth from it for all generations?

At the end of the spring of 135, Betar comes under siege.

It is situated seven miles south-west of Jerusalem. It commands the bed of the Valley of Refa'im. It is located on a mountain spur, isolated by steep declivities. Betar is also protected by walls, and there is a spring within, its gates are fortified and a large population is concentrated

inside the walls.

Came the Roman troops and surrounded Betar with a rampart, filling the moat.

Again a long drawn-out siege. There are repeated efforts of the besieged to break out, till the Ninth of Av, a day of disaster generation upon generation, three years after the furrow was ploughed around Jerusalem and the revolt was ignited — when Betar falls.

And Bar-Kochba is slain.

This was Bar-Kochba who would catch rock cannon-balls with one of his knees and hurl them back at his enemies, killing many of them, this was Bar-Kochba who had soldiers who had amputated a finger as an act of courage, and others who uprooted cedars whilst in mid-gallop. This was Bar-Kochba of whom Rabbi Akiva said: He is the Messianic King — he too was killed at Betar. Rivers of blood flowed from Betar to the Sea, forty miles away. Many were the dead. The captives were sold in the bazaars for the price of a horse's meal. Rabbi Akiva himself is executed, and dies sanctifying the Holy Name, Kiddush Hashem, uttering "One", the last word of the Shema Israel.

It was then that the Rabbis decreed: God made Israel swear not to revolt against the rulers, nor to scale the walls. They proceeded to strengthen a new and different wall, a Jerusalem wall, yet not in Jerusalem, for the sake of Jerusalem of the future. After two terrible attempts, which were quelled in blood, the Rabbis fortified Jerusalem in the hearts of Israel. Walls of prayer, walls of Law, walls of legend, walls of vision, and above all — walls of love and faith: She shall one day again be redeemed and the Temple shall be rebuilt.

There is an almost unbelievable épilogue to this epic revolt:

Bar-Kochba wrote letters. Some of his despatches to his soldiers have been preserved, in earthen jugs, buried in the Judean Desert. There they lay buried, and there they waited. 1,800 years did they wait, till they were found. And the missives of the last Commander-in-Chief of the last revolt were destined to reach Yigael Yadin, the first Chief-of-Staff in the field, of the first Army of Israel since the Destruction.

These wondrous letters are now exhibited in the Shrine of the Book in Jerusalem Rebuilt. They are vibrant testimony that the severed chain has been reformed.

CELESTIAL JERUSALEM AND TERRESTRIAL JERUSALEM

Upon the arrival of the first Ambassadors of the State of Israel in the Christian states of Black Africa, they were received with astonishment and disbelief when they said that they were from Jerusalem. "How is it possible," they asked, "Is there actually such a city on Earth? Isn't Jerusalem only in the heavens?"

The Sages of Israel posed the opposite question: "Is there a Celestial Jerusalem?" Their reply was that indeed there is, but that it is dependant upon the existence of Terrestrial Jerusalem:

"Said Rabbi Nachman to Rabbi Yitzhak: What is the meaning of the verse, "Holy in the midst of thee and I will not enter the City," (Hosea, 11:9). Because thy midst is holy, I shall not enter the City? Said Rabbi Yohanan: I shall not enter Celestial Jerusalem till I shall enter Terrestrial Jerusalem. Is there a Celestial Jerusalem? Indeed, there is! For it is written: Jerusalem, that art builded as a city that is compact together" (Psalms 122:3).

A later Midrash adds: "Thus we find that Jerusalem-on-High is modelled upon Terrestrial Jerusalem; Because of His love of the one on Earth, He created another in the Heavens."

The scholars who attempted to explain Celestial Jerusalem as a product of the Platonic proposition of "ideas", of which the terrestrial physical reality is their reflection, would be well-advised to study this Midrash and will discover the refutation of their theory, for our Sages have said the precise opposite, that Celestial Jerusalem was modelled after Terrestrial Jerusalem. Moreover, because of His great love of Jerusalem-on-Earth, He will not enter the one on-High till Israel shall have regained the one on Earth. It is therefore evident that Terrestrial Jerusalem is the more important.

Towards the end of the Second Temple era, with the feeling of impending catastrophe, the number of visionaries in Jerusalem increased. Some of them fled to the wilderness from the city steeped in wealth, sin, and the Roman influence of Herod and his alien soldiers. They formed sects, and they awaited the arrival of the True Redeemer, and the purification of Terrestrial Jerusalem. Others made a spiritual escape, not a physical flight, and created mystical, apocalyptic literature, installing the idealistic Jerusalem therein, for the earthly world was iniquitous in their eyes, apparently hopelessly so, a divine

decree, as it were, that every man-made edifice, and particularly magnificent structures built by man, are worm-eaten, and engender corruption. After the destruction of Jerusalem, these spiritualistic tendencies undoubtedly increased. It is no wonder that Pauline Christianity seized upon them. It also had a deliberate anti-Jewish intent. When Pauline Christians sought to spread their religion amongst the nations, they decided to sever it from the Jewish origin, both in order to facilitate its acceptance by the pagans, as well as to punish the stubborn Jews. They claimed that in fact Jerusalem-on-Earth had already fulfilled its mission, and had brought forth the true faith and the Redeemer. Moreover, Jesus had cursed Jerusalem and had spoken — according to the tradition quoted by the Apostles — of its destruction. Now she is no longer necessary. Jerusalem becomes an abstract, celestial, ideal, also to the Christian preachers, at most an attitude of the heart, not a fact on terra firma.

The Sages of Israel opposed not only Christianity as such, but also its spiritualistic leanings. Thus they re-emphasised the Jewish conception of “A City that is compact together”, or — to use the description in Genesis — “A ladder set up on earth, and the top of it reaches to heaven”. It goes without saying that Solomon’s Temple was sanctified in their eyes, but even the Temple of Herod — whom they condemned as wicked, an Edomite — earned their praise and love, so much so that though Herod murdered them and was called, out of hatred, “the Edomite slave”, still they said, “He who has not seen Herod’s edifice (the Temple) has never seen a truly beautiful building in his life”. Moreover, after the Destruction, even at the School of Rabban Yohanan Ben-Zakkai, who left Jerusalem during the siege and pleaded for Yavneh and its Sages, even there prayers continued and laws were enacted expressly for Terrestrial Jerusalem, to be rebuilt and expanded beyond her original confines.

This was a new war over the City, in the days of its most grievous torment, in the days of the fratricidal war and the days of its destruction by Rome, the mightiest of the world’s empires: It was the war over the right to become a reality again, to come back to life in the near future (till the Bar-Kochba Revolt) or at least in the distant future (after the failure of his Revolt). The war was waged within and without against the Christians, whose burning hatred for the People of Israel denied the future reality of Jerusalem and its physical rebirth, and pronounced it symbolic, purely celestial; had not Rome and the Holy See succeeded the City, as the Church had replaced the Jewish People who forfeited their right to exist?

The Romans, however, with their straightforward pagan logic, did not think of this sublimation of the City from the temporal world. They sought only to wrest it from the hands of the rebellious Jews, who had cost the Romans so much effort and blood. Imperial practical common-sense could not grasp the notion of a "celestial city". Even had the Emperor ever learned from a Greek tutor about Plato's world of Ideas, it is unlikely that he comprehended it. He surely could not conceive of the doctrine of holiness, peculiar to the strangest of nations, the Jews. The Romans obviously desired to wipe Terrestrial Jerusalem off the face of the Earth. What were they to do? They went ahead and created Aelia Capitolina. These Jews refused to suffer the presence of aliens in their midst, they rejected a mixed city like Antioch or Caesarea. Fine. It would not be mixed but entirely alien. Aelia Capitolina, no longer Jerusalem. No Jew would ever again set foot therein.

ANTICHRIST TO HER AID

For two hundred years between the Bar-Kochba Revolt and the day when the Cross reigned supreme over the Roman Empire, Jerusalem is Aelia Capitolina, a pagan city, Judenrein. There are no Jews in the City, but she is in the hearts of Jews wherever they may be, and in their daily prayers, and in days of mourning and of joy, in a manner without parallel, with love unparalleled, and devotion unparalleled. There are many capital cities in the world, there are also cities which are holy to believers, but such utter loyalty and devotion, so distant in space and in time, without interruption morning and evening, in grace after meals and at wedding celebrations — such a war has never been waged by any nation over any city.

The Romans beautify Jerusalem, its mainstay being the Xth Legion. It has temples to the gods, paved streets, palaces, aqueducts and markets. It is, however, of no political or military significance to the Empire. Hadrian's edict gradually eases, and we learn of individual pilgrims approaching the City or even entering it, and seeing the ruins of the Mount. They do not, however, return to live in it. It is replete with legions and idols.

Suddenly — the Cross.

The religion that went forth from Jerusalem conquered the hearts of the masses in the mightiest of the world's empires. The Religion of Love burst through the Roman armour and through the Imperial crust, so levelheaded, egoistical and militarist. A surprising end (was it indeed the end?) to the struggle between Rome and Jerusalem. Pagan Roman thinkers put it thus — "The vanquished are imposing their faith and laws upon the victors". A Hebrew poet of our generation expressed it thus —

It was not a Zealot's hand which then avenged my People
My sister's honour was not avenged by the hand of my hero
Yet my spirit prevailed seven-fold:
My warriors did not vanquish — my God was victorious!
(Shneiur, The Melodies of Israel).

This spiritual victory of Jerusalem over pagan Rome, and over idolatry in general, was not a total victory, clearly not from the Jewish national standpoint. For this religion, which originated in Jerusalem and with her prophets, was no longer the faith of the Jewish Nation.

Neither was it a complete victory from the purely religious point of view. The new religion contained an admixture of pagan elements. Moreover, as far as Jewish Jerusalem was concerned, Christian Rome, and subsequently Byzantine Christianity, hated the Jewish People more than Pagan Rome. The spiritual hatred combined with the political hatred. If Jerusalem refused to submit to Zeus, to Jupiter Capitolinae, well and good; this was idolatry. But now? When a Jew, son of a Jewess from Nazareth (of that there is no doubt, whoever was the father; Jewish identity is determined by the mother...) becomes god of the Empire, how dare Judea continue to defy him?

When pagan Jerusalem came under the rule of Constantine, not only was the yoke not lifted; it was intensified. Just yesterday the Romans were persecuting the Christians, whom they considered Jews, or members of a separate Jewish sect. Now the Christians are in power, "A slave who reigneth". Many Romans and Greeks learn a strange lesson: This monotheistic faith, this belief in one God, though it carries a banner of love, is more fanatical than any pagan religion. There may be logic in this phenomenon. He who accepts the existence of thousands of gods, what difference does one more deity make to him, be he the God of Israel, or the god from Nazareth? But a believer in one single god must logically be intolerant; he rejects the existence and rights of other gods. When this religion attains world power, it endeavours to impose the exclusivity of God, by force, on all, it destroys all pagan temples and removes — as did the first Christian Emperors — every functionary and officer who do not submit to the Cross.

Against this background, the religion of the original Jews appears in a different light; it appears as light. True, they fought bitterly against the placing of idols in their City, which was holy unto God, and in ancient times they prohibited all idol-worship in their land, but they had not sought to impose the God of Jerusalem by force upon the world, to subject others to their faith. The Prophets of Jerusalem did fight pagan beliefs, but their weapon was scorn, and the conviction that the day would come when all nations would cast away the gods of gold and silver and rotting wood, and that would come to Jerusalem to kneel on the Temple Mount before the One and True God.

With the fall of the idolatrous Empire and the adoption of Christianity, it seemed almost inevitable that Jerusalem's sons would return to her. It has no political importance. From the religious viewpoint, Christianity recognises only Celestial Jerusalem, which is attainable — so taught the Christian teachers — anywhere and

everywhere, straight from the heart. Yet a surprising event occurred: At the Council of Nicaea, the first Ecumenical Council of Constantine, an Emperor converted to Christianity, the Emperor's mother, Helen, resolved to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem, the City where Jesus' last acts took place. To what end? Why bring down Jerusalem-on-High, which is in the heart, the metaphysical Jerusalem, to the physical geographical level?

And to what purpose should the City be built, and turned from a pagan to a Christian city? Would this not be a denial of the curse uttered by Jesus? Even the breach of a spiritual principle? The Council was attended by a delegate from the Christian community in Jerusalem. Some say that it was he who influenced the Empress. This explanation is not, however, entirely satisfactory. Could it be that the Council feared that the Jews, who still constituted a sizeable segment of the inhabitants of the land, would return to the City, and then the danger would be augmented, as the return of the Jews to Jerusalem would prove, more than anything else, the falsehood of the curse and of the punishment for their rejection of the Saviour. Indeed, at the same Imperial council of churches (325) it was also resolved finally and absolutely to sever all ties with Judaism, by total separation of the Jewish Passover from the Christian Easter, which till then was observed by many on the date of the Jewish holiday: "In the celebration of this Holy Day, we dare not follow the Jews, whose hands are sullied with the terrible sin of crucifixion of Jesus".

Thus the physical link between the Christian Church and Jerusalem was established. The Empress arrived in the City and discovered Holy Places. In one pit she was even shown the remnants of the Cross, the boards upon which Jesus was crucified. In their search for the site of the grave, she or her learned advisors assumed that the place of the interment is none other than the Temple of Venus. The foundation stone of the Holy Sepulchre was therefore laid there. The site of the crucifixion was also located, churches were erected, and Pagan Jerusalem-on-Earth became Christian in actual geographical substance, no longer symbolically and in abstract, and pilgrimage to Jerusalem spread.

It goes without saying that this simply "necessitated" tightening-up the prohibition against the entry of Jews into the City. Or was it perhaps that the fear of its being rebuilt by Jews made imperative the discovery of the Holy Places and the building of the churches?

It is not surprising that shortly after the establishment of Christian dominion over the country, a Jewish revolt, known as the Gallus

Revolt, breaks out. Its focal point, however, is Galilee. It has no echoes in Jerusalem, which is Judenrein. Christianity proved to be more fiercely anti-Jewish than idolatrous Rome. Rivers of water, and of blood — mainly Jewish blood — had flowed since the days that prophets stood in Jerusalem's streets and foretold that the doom of idol-worship would be the salvation of Jerusalem. Five hundred years had elapsed since Judah Ben-Matityahu swung the ax against the idols, in the City sanctified to the one and only God. Who could imagine or guess or prophesy that the day would come when hope for the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem would be raised by an utterly pagan Emperor who desired to wrest it from the hands of believers in one God? How convoluted and wondrous are the ways of history, and how bizarre at times are Divine emissaries. Perhaps, however, the phenomenon is not so new. Did not a prophet stand in Jerusalem and speak of "His anointed, Cyrus"? No, there is no similarity, as far as Jerusalem is concerned, between Cyrus, King of Persia, and Julian, Emperor of Rome, who sought to return Jerusalem to the Jews and to rebuild the Temple. For Cyrus, it was purely a political act, while Julian's clear motive was religious, though he did not come close at all to Judaism.

Emperor Julian, the philosopher, Julian the Apostate, the heretic in the Church's nomenclature, ascended the throne in 361, about forty years after the Empire turned Christian. He is a profound thinker and philosophical writer, and ... an idol-worshipper. He is an ardent admirer of Greece's ancient pagan culture. Moreover, he hates Christianity. His hatred stems from philosophical and ethical considerations, and from Christianity's intolerance and fanaticism. He is a true Hellenist. Strange indeed: The Hasmoneans had fought Hellenism. Now along comes a Hellenist, to help Jews resume the Holy Ritual in their Temple, to rebuild their Sanctuary in Jerusalem.

As it were, the truth of the maxim, "My enemy's enemy is my friend", was proven — not that this is always necessarily so — but the possibility of such a situation surely exists. The phenomenon of Julian is evidence of this, for all generations to come. The language of simple fact is this: Emperor Julian meets at Antioch with a Jewish delegation, and informs them of his desire to see the Jewish Temple rebuilt. Moreover, he will finance the project. Immediately he sets about implementing his plan: He despatches to Jerusalem one of his closest ministers, Alipios, and instructs him to get together the necessary building materials, and to commence construction. When he, the Emperor, will return from his campaign against Persia, he intends to come to Jerusalem, "I shall rebuild the Holy City at my expense and

shall beautify her as you have always wished to see her, and with you, there shall I offer praise to El-Shaddai”.

A sort of “Balfour Declaration”? Not exactly. In the Balfour Declaration, there is no mention of Jerusalem, certainly not of the rebuilding of the Temple. Napoleon speaks of returning Jerusalem to the Jews, in his famous proclamation, drawn up on Mount Tabor on the morrow of his victory there and prior to his defeat in Acre. In the case of Napoleon, clearly no religious objective motivated him. He did not even consider it worthwhile to visit Jerusalem on his way northward from Egypt. His aims were strictly military. Julian, on the other hand, realised the importance of the religious factor. Some scholars claim that the primary reason for his proposal was the desire to prove the falsehood of Christianity, by renewing the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. This would establish that Jesus was not the Saviour of whom the prophets prophesied. This therefore was far more than Cyrus’ Declaration. It was not merely a liberal attitude encompassing also the God of Israel, among the gods of all nations, lands and cities. Julian is a philosopher, well-versed in the Bible, as is evidenced by his letters. He is at home in all Christian theological argumentations with Judaism. This is the source of his understanding and perception: The rebuilding of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem will be a grievous blow to Christianity, so hated by his philosophical humanist soul. A rebuilt Jewish Jerusalem is not a menace to a Roman Hellenist pluralist Empire, but will be an ally against Christianity which spreads violence throughout the world. Napoleon was prepared to return Jerusalem to the Jews because he attached no value to it. Julian was ready to do precisely the same because he did value it, in his ideic struggle against Christianity.

There is no sign of “Zionism” in the modern sense, of a solution of the Jewish problem nor a desire to get rid of Jews in the Diaspora. Julian himself commences his relationship with the Jews by granting them equal rights, and even by executing Christian tax-collectors who unlawfully levied heavy taxes upon Jews.

The Emperor may have borne in mind additional considerations, as he set forth to make war upon Persia. So believe latter-day historians, basing themselves on recent scenarios (the Balfour Declaration). The object, they say, was to enlist the support of the Jewish masses in the East. Balfour too was a philosopher, and Lloyd George boasted that he, unlike Napoleon, was imbued with religious fervour. Yet they, perhaps because of their Christianity, were not moved by their Zionism to the extent of wanting to build the Temple in Jerusalem, an event which would symbolise more than all else the Jewish Messianic hope. The

conquering Emperor Julian, the statesman and philosopher, places this act in the very centre, precisely because he is not a Christian; more than that — because he is anti-Christian, actually Antichrist.

Small wonder therefore that after the power of the Church waned, it continued to fear the return of Jews to the Holy Land, particularly to Jerusalem, and the Pope asks Herzl if the Jews propose to build the Temple ...

How different would the fortunes of the Jewish People and the Land of Israel have developed had Julian succeeded, had this "Antichrist" prevailed.

Alipios, his plenipotentiary, sets to work. Information on the reaction of the Jews and of the Prince Hillel, who is mentioned in his records, is obscure and scant. Christian sources relate that there was great enthusiasm in Jewish communities in the Diaspora, an excitement which was expressed in large contributions for the building of the Temple. Women sold their jewellery for this holy purpose. In some places, the Jews demolished Christian churches in bursts of joy and triumph. In Rome, the Jews danced in the streets and blew shofars. There are also reports of Jewish labourers being hired to do the preparatory work on the Temple Mount. It appears that most of the material was stored in the halls known today as "Solomon's Stables", located under the Al-Aksa Mosque. Yet this episode has left no clear trace in the Jewish writings of that period, indicating to some historians that there were doubts and reservations. It would be incorrect to say, as does the historian Dubnov, that the Jewish community had receded into a spiritual messianic faith. We should bear in mind that Julian's project arose only ten years after an actual rebellion in Galilee (the Gallus Revolt). The Emperor's paganism could not have been a problem; he was not a greater idol-worshipper than Cyrus, who was called "His anointed". Most likely, the rapidity of the events and the tragic end did not allow time for the elaboration of the idea and its transformation into a movement of which traces would remain. In the meantime, the Jews obtained permission to expel the Christians from the City, but it seems that this was not carried out. However, temporarily — till the Temple would be built — a synagogue was erected on the Temple Mount.

After the rubble and the ruins, debris which has accumulated or had deliberately been dumped for three hundred years, had been cleared, fire broke out suddenly from the depths of the earth. Some say that it was a natural phenomenon: Gasses which had built up for generations, burst out and caused the conflagration. Others believe that it was arson

by Christian labourers, sent to commit the crime by the heads of the Church who, needless to say, subsequently interpreted the occurrence as a miraculous act, as a supernatural event, a punishment from on high for the acts of the "Antichrist", and — of course — as further evidence that the Jews are an accursed people whose Temple will never be rebuilt.

No doubt the rationalist philosopher-Emperor, whose Hellenist rationalism was one of the reasons for his opposition to Christianity and its mysticism, would not have taken fright by the fire, and would have ordered the resumption of the building project, were it not ...

Were it not that a murderous hand struck him in the back. On the Eastern Front, as he faced King Shabur II, he was stabbed in the back with a spear, not by the hand of God, but — according to most historians — by the hand of a Christian, one of his soldiers who was undoubtedly sent for this purpose. It happened in 363, two short years after Julian had mounted the imperial throne and had begun to carry out his revolution and to anticipate the Renaissance by a thousand years, before Christianity attained practically absolute domination over all, before the Middle Ages enveloped Europe.

Destructive fire prevented the renewal of the Eternal Flame, the holy fire in Jerusalem.

There is one more relic of these events; it was discovered recently, surely not by inadvertence, after the Six Days War which liberated the Temple Mount. On one of the massive stones exposed on the southern part of the Western Wall there appears this inscription: "And when ye see this, your heart shall rejoice and your bones, like grass, ..." — one of Isaiah's verses of consolation (66:14). The end of the verse, "shall flourish", has not been preserved. It has been suggested that the inscription belongs to those days, the Julian days of hope. This has not been established, and it may not be so. But perhaps it was an ardent pilgrim, who succeeded in reaching Jerusalem, who inscribed in stone his heart's prayer, his conviction, the yearning and faith of all his People, and did not manage to complete the inscription before being forced to abandon the site, leaving the writing thus — "And your bones, like grass" ...

The day of "shall flourish" was yet to come. Come it did.

WHAT DID NOT BURN?

The fire on the Temple Mount burnt all the materials stored for the building of the Temple. What else could it consume? The love of the Jews for the City, even in its desolation, could not be destroyed, nor the hope to see it rebuilt. Certainly it could not burn the tears wept over Jerusalem.

Christian tradition claims that the last words whispered by Julian "the Apostate" before his soul departed from his body (if an apostate has a soul ...) were: "You have vanquished me, Galileean". Such words the Church could never put into the mouth of a Jew, even when his City is going up in flames, even when the Temple is in ruins, even when he is condemned to the stake. A Jew made of Jerusalem fibre never confessed, never shall confess, that the Cross has vanquished him.

Is it any wonder that he was so hated? Is it any wonder that after the Julianic episode, the anti-Jewish edicts in Jerusalem grew worse? What could be severer than a prohibition to enter the City, even for a short prayer? It is hard to believe, but there is one worse alternative: **To permit the Jews to enter the City!** When? On the Ninth of Av, to wail at the stone remnant, or — as some say — at Even Hashetiya (The Foundation Rock). Could there be a sight more gladdening to the hearts of Christians than weeping Jews? Could there be a better example of the punishment inflicted upon them for the murder of the Son of God and for their stubbornness? Here is a description of the weeping and of the gloating from one of the Fathers of the Church, an eye-witness. Hieronymus (the Saint!), who lived for several years in Bethlehem, writes, (in his commentary on Zephaniah 1:15):

"To this day, the treacherous Jewish inhabitants of the City, who put to death the Servants of the Lord, and especially the Son of God, are forbidden to enter Jerusalem. Only for the purpose of mourning are they allowed to enter. They are obliged to pay for the permit to weep over the destruction of their kingdom. They, who in the past bought the blood of Jesus, must now even pay for the privilege of shedding their tears. Even their weeping is not free of charge. On the anniversary of the conquest and destruction of the City by the Romans, one can witness the gathering of this despicable people, decrepit old men and women, wearing rags. Their outward appearance and clothes, in themselves, are evidence of God's fury.

This miserable lot gathers together, and on the spot where God rose and lived again in the radiance of the Cross, on the spot where the symbol of the Cross shines from the top of the Mount of Olives, a broken race, unworthy of pity, mourns the destruction of its Temple.

Their eyes still tearful, their hands still trembling and their hair dishevelled, but the guard is already demanding a fee for the permit to shed tears.

They weep over the Temple that has been burnt to dust, over the altar which is in ruins, over the once fortified cities, over the high Temple towers wherefrom they had cast Jacob, our Lord's brother".

Thus the two pleasures of the Byzantine guard combined: The pleasure of the soul, taking revenge upon the Jew in his misery and weeping, and the material pleasure derived from the fee the Jews pay for the privilege to weep. Thus one enjoys in Jerusalem-on-Earth the celestial and terrestrial pleasures at one and the same time ...

These Jews are very strange. They do not give up, and they keep coming back, to the heaps of refuse which accumulate and submerge what was once their Temple and glory. Though there were, during the three hundred years of Byzantine rule in the land, periods of relative quiet for the Jews in other parts of the country, this did not apply to Jerusalem. In Zippori and Tiberias, Jews were tolerated, as were their supreme religious institutions. In Galilee, in the Golan, even in the south — including the Hebron range, there was extensive agricultural settlement. Jerusalem, however, is out of bounds. Byzantine Christianity continues to fear Jewish settlement of Jerusalem. This is a legacy of pagan Rome. The memory of the Great Revolt, the Bar-Kochba Revolt, and the recent Julian period is still fresh and serves as a warning. Only once again did a ray of hope flicker in the darkness of the Byzantine era, in the days of that most intriguing Empress, Eudakia. Born in Athens, she was a product of the Hellenist philosophy, under the influence of which she grew up. There she also created and wrote poetry, despite her conversion to Christianity and her marriage to Theodosius II. She lived the last eighteen years of her life, 442 to 460 in Jerusalem, in semi-exile, for she was driven from Constantinople, but her love for Jerusalem made her one of its greatest builders. In the main, she erected churches of course, but she also put up a magnificent palace for herself, extended the limits of the City southward, up to the Shiloah stream and also extended ... the hearts of the Jews, by revoking the prohibition upon them to enter the City. The daughter of Athens re-opens Jerusalem to its Jewish sons. Proof again that it was not Athens in

itself, nor the spirit Greece which troubled relations with Jerusalem. The blame was possibly that of Syrian Antioch or of Antiochean Damascus. Or perhaps the Hellenists were to blame, not the Hellenes. The exceptional attitudes of Julian, and of Eudakia who re-translated the Bible, and aided persecuted Jews, and permitted their return to Jerusalem, also granted them the right to pray on the Temple Mount. One letter, ascribed to Cohanim (Priests) in Galilee, says: —

“The period of our People’s exile is ended and the day of the ingathering of our Tribes has arrived, for the Roman kings have decreed that Jerusalem, our City, shall be returned to us. Hasten to ascend to Jerusalem for the Feast of Succot, for verily shall our Kingdom arise in Jerusalem”.

Once again, the hope was shattered. Jerusalem, it is true, did benefit at the hands of Eudakia, but even had she supported such a plan (this is far from established), it was not she who wielded power, she was merely the divorcee of the Byzantine Emperor. Indeed, during the period of her residence in Jerusalem, the City’s standing grew, for in one of the crucial Christian councils in the strife-torn Church, the Council of Chalcedon (451), the Bishop of Jerusalem was crowned Prince, Patriarch. This occurred about thirty years after the abolition the Jewish Princely House of Hillel. Jerusalem became one the five Christian capitals: Rome, Constantinople, Antioch, Alexandria, Jerusalem. These were “The Five Senses of the Church”, in its terminology. The elevation in status was an important organisational measure, not only against the Jews, whose autonomy (its centre was Tiberias) was abolished, but also in the internal struggle within the Christian camp. With the decision to make Jerusalem a Patriarchate, it was handed over to a trustee of the Orthodox Church, which outweighed the other denominations at the Council of Chalcedon.

When the first Patriarch, Juvenalis, returned from Chalcedon to Jerusalem, the Monophysite sect rebelled against him and the City was rent by war for twenty months. It was a war in which the Jews did not participate, their attitude being “A plague on both your houses”. However, in struggles between empires, the Jewish attitude was entirely different. The Sages of the Talmud always averred that when kingdoms make war upon each other, await the advent of Messiah. Thus, the land as a whole, and Jerusalem in particular, were embroiled in wars and hopes and decisive change, for twenty years, 615 to 635. Persia seizes the land from Byzantium and removes the Cross from Jerusalem. Byzantium rebounds and recaptures the land from Persia, re-establish-

ing the Cross over Jerusalem, only to lose it again, as well as the City and the country, for hundreds of years, to Islam. Jerusalem passes from the hands of Esau to the hands of Ishmael, with Jacob in the maelstrom.

BENJAMIN OF TIBERIAS: BETWEEN COSRO II AND HERACLIUS

In the beginning of the Seventh Century of the Common Era, the Persian Kingdom and the Byzantine Empire drew upon their last resources, as if in their death throes they were endeavouring to win a centuries' long war.

At first it seemed that the Kingdom of Persia had the upper hand. Cosro II led the armies of Persia against Byzantium, which was crumbling from within and without. The glorious Byzantine Kingdom of Justinian had all but contracted to the capital city itself. Then the wheel turned. Unity was established within Byzantium. Heraclius leads a mighty invasion through the mountains of Armenia into the heart of the Persian Kingdom.

At the end of the day — deadlock. The strength of the two kingdoms is sapped. Eretz-Israel is in the centre of the fighting, and amongst the warriors there are Jews, and Jerusalem is in their hearts.

In the beginning of the Seventh Century, Phocas is the Emperor of Byzantium. He suspects that the Jews of Syria and Eretz-Israel are hoping for a Persian invasion. He was entitled indeed at least to feel that they wasted no love upon his rule and his Church. Phocas decrees: Baptise them by force! Following upon the anti-Jewish decrees of Justinian, these edicts of conversion by force turned every Jew in the Eastern Empire into a sworn enemy. The yearning for the fall of Byzantium was no longer just a prayer and wish, but expressed itself in Jews arising, with weapons in their hands, coming together, uniting, and awaiting the Persian armies.

In the Midrashim of the Redemption which belong to this period, the wars between Persia and Byzantium are described as the precursors of Redemption. In the aftermath of the wars, the Messiah would appear and redeem his People. Many were the sages who related the name of Cosro to Cyrus; like Cyrus, he would return Israel to its land.

"Thereupon Michael said unto me: The Redemption will come in the days of a king, who will arise in the End of Days. His name is Harmilat. Rabbi Simai said — Hatashrat is his name. Rabbi Yehuda ben Beteira said — His name is Cyrus. Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai said — His name is Hakasra, and the law is as stated by Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai" (Please note: The law!).

Persian detachments sporadically attack the Byzantine forts in Syria and Eretz-Israel already in 606, but only in 613, when the forces of Persia capture Damascus, following a series of Byzantine defeats, is the way open for the conquest of Eretz-Israel.

Along the entire invasion route of the Persian forces, they enjoy the support of the Jews. The Jews rise in revolt in the city of Antioch, and endeavour to open its gates to the Persian Army. The Christians overcome them and the Jews suffer heavily. The Jews deliver Caesarea-in-Cappadocia to the Persians after its inhabitants take flight. By the time the Persians reach the boundaries of Eretz-Israel, a fully-organised army of twenty-thousand Jews is ready to join forces with the Persians, to free the country from the yoke of the "iniquitous kingdom".

This force, led by Benjamin of Tiberias and by Nehemia Ben-Hushiel (this is his name in the Midrashic literature), enters the fray under an express compact: The Jews will rule the liberated land, Jerusalem will be returned to them and they will be able freely to perform their religious observances.

The Persians are interested in the alliance, not only for the period of conquest, but also to help them govern the country thereafter. The Jews are natural allies, for Christian Byzantium is Persia's foe.

The campaign passes through Tiberias and Galilee to the gates of Caesarea, from there along the coast to Apollonia-Rishpon, and from there up the trail to the hills of Judea — through Lod — to Jerusalem.

In the beginning of 614, the Patriarch of Jerusalem, Zecharia, assesses the situation and offers to surrender. Persian officers are installed in the City, the remnants of the "life giving" Cross are removed from Jerusalem, the Jews are freed of restrictions, and they establish themselves in the City and await the fulfilment of Persia's promises.

They did not have to wait long.

True, the Christian Patriarch promised the Persian conqueror not to harm the Jews in Jerusalem, but why should the Christians keep their promise, if the conqueror himself, who promised the Jews independence, reneges on his word? Young Christians take up arms, and their first act is to fall upon the Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem.

Many are the dead.

Sahar-Braz (the Wild Boar), the Persian general, mobilises his forces for the march on Jerusalem. Twenty thousand Jewish warriors accompany his troops. Again they will assault the walls of Jerusalem, to demolish them in order to rebuild them again for Israel, and to batter the hated Christians. The Christians within the City, particularly the youth, members of the "blue" and "green" factions, who are fanatically

devoted to the Cross, entrench themselves inside Jerusalem. They refuse to heed Patriarch Zecharia and the peace-seekers in his flock. The men fortify the monasteries situated outside the walls. Suprunius writes: "The strangers and the inhabitants in Jerusalem, who yearned for the love of God, upon seeing the Persians and their Hebrew allies, ran swiftly to bar the City gate".

On the fifteenth of April, 614, the siege commences.

The Persian Army commences by destroying the churches outside the wall: The Church of Gethsemane in the Valley of Kidron and the Church of Eleona on the Mount of Olives. Then it turns to storm the walls.

For twenty days it bores a tunnel in the northeastern corner of the wall, holding it up with supports made of timber, a method which these walls have witnessed before. Do the stones remember the deeds of the Zealots, and do they whisper the secret to their children's children who have returned to conquer the City? And when the supports are set on fire, the tunnel and the wall above it collapse, in a shambles of stone, iron and flesh, and the Jewish and Persian soldiers flood through the breach — to smite the Christians!

The street-fighting lasts three days. The sword-wielding monks seek refuge in the churches, the monasteries, the market and the water reservoirs. Three days of slaughter and looting. The great churches are burnt to the ground. The Jews do not deny themselves vengeance upon wicked Edom.

When it is all over, Thomas, the Christian grave-digger, makes the rounds of the markets, burning the dead. He notes in detail the number of dead he has counted in the Sheep Pool, and how many in the Valley of Hinnom, and the number in the St. Muristan Monastery. Many were the Christians who sought to hide in the Sheep Pool, or were trapped at the gates of the Temple Mount. Those who tried to escape through Zion Gate and the Valley of Kidron met their end too. The recorders of Christian events report that the captives were assembled in the Mamillah Pool: Artisans whose skills were needed were taken to Persia. The other prisoners were given the choice: To convert to Judaism — in which case the Jews would redeem them from the Persian captors — or die. The Christian source, whose aim is to record glorious martyrdom, avers: All rejected the offer and chose to die, sanctifying the Cross. Other sources say that some elected to convert to Judaism. At the end of May 614, power in the city was given to the Jews, as promised: A Jewish administration was established in Jerusalem, the holy services on the Temple Mount were resumed; it is not clear exactly at what spot and in

what manner. Jewish possession of the Mount calls for an altar and sacrifices, even though the Temple is not built. The Jewish leaders are Nehemiah ben-Hushiel ben-Ephraim ben-Joseph; that is how he is called in "The Book of Zerubabel", one of the most enthusiastic of the Midrashim of the Redemption, of that period. What was the real name of the Jewish leader? We may never know. There is also a woman in the top administration. Her name rings midrashic too: Hefzi-bah. Scholars believe that she belonged to the family of the Exilarchs of Babylon, that is to say, she was a scion of the House of David. The Midrash calls her "Eshet Lapidot", a Fiery Woman, who herself makes war "and the stars in their courses fought her wars". Who are Nehemiah and Hefzi-bah? It will probably forever be a mystery. One thing is certain, however; the Midrash is a cloak, not a figment. The Jews fulfil their part of the compact with the Persians. They continue to despatch soldiers to help the Persian forces smite the "wicked kingdom" throughout the land. They seize Acre but fail in their attempt on Tyre.

For three years the Jews rule in Jerusalem. Then comes the turning-point.

Political logic has not changed: The Persians needed the Jews to conquer the country. However, the Persians soon realise that the Christians are the majority in the land, and are ready to come to terms, even at a time when the Kingdom of Persia is at war with Byzantium. In order to rule the country in peace, the Persians seek the friendship of the majority.

The Jews, however, no longer have a choice. They cannot now turn their backs on the Persians and ally themselves with Byzantium. Perhaps also their military failure in the siege of Tyre brought about the disappointment of the Persians and a change of heart. Be that as it may — the Jewish dream of Cosro as the ancient Cyrus, was short-lived.

The Persians betrayed the Jews, and faltered. The fortunes of Byzantium, "the Wicked Kingdom", improved again. Emperor Heraclius of Byzantium moves his army through Armenia into the heart of Persia. Cosro II, the aging king of Persia is deposed — and the aspirants to the throne are ready and willing to cede back to Byzantium its former territories, in order to concentrate their efforts upon the struggle for the crown.

Heraclius transports his army to Eretz-Israel, and occupies it without a battle.

In the spring of 629 the Cross returns to Jerusalem.

For the Jews it is a bleak spring. How short-lived was the dream of independence! Heraclius receives a delegation of the Jews of Galilee,

bearing gifts. There is no love in their hearts, but they have no choice.

Where does Heraclius stay in Tiberias? Who provides for his soldiers?

Benjamin of Tiberias is the man who mobilised twenty thousand Jews to fight alongside the Persian army in the liberation of Jerusalem. The solemn covenant — so soon to be rent — assuring the Jews forgiveness for their support of the Persians in the past, against their promise of loyalty in the unstable present, may possibly have been made in his house.

This was the house of Benjamin of Tiberias, who led thousands of Jews wielding swords, after an interruption of hundred of years, to storm the walls of Jerusalem — notwithstanding that the Sages had decreed never to do so again — to smite the Christians and to re-establish a Hebrew Jerusalem, this was the self-same Benjamin of Tiberias.

He accompanies the Emperor of Byzantium on his way south, to Jerusalem. Benjamin, the Jew of Tiberias went with Heraclius as far as Shechem. From Shechem onward, he was a Christian in the Imperial entourage, he was baptised. So at all events it is recounted in the Christian source. Heraclius brings back the "life-giving Cross" to Jerusalem, which was returned to him as part of the pact with the Persians. In the name of this Cross, symbol of love and mercy, Heraclius quickly breaks his promise to the Jews: He allows the Christians in the City to kill the Jews who participated in the Persian wars and killed Christians and destroyed churches. He also issues an edict expelling all Jews from Jerusalem and forbidding them to reside therein, or within three miles of its limits.

The pious Christians of the Eastern Church in Jerusalem would, for hundreds of years thereafter, fast one day a year, to atone for the sin of the breach of the oath of the Emperor of Byzantium, "whose oath is sacred". It was easy for the Patriarch of Jerusalem to release a vow, if as a result the blood of Jews was spilled, and the Mamillah Pool avenged.

However, "Because thou drownest others, they have drowned thee, and at the last, they that drowned thee shall themselves be drowned". The Christians did not long enjoy their victory. Less than six years after the return of the Cross to Jerusalem and the renewed expulsion of the Jews, a new, vigorous, power arises, aggressive and victorious: The Arabs.

Ishmael challenges Edom.

Jerusalem again rubs its blood-shot, tearful, wondering eyes: What is this? Who are these?

THE MOSLEM CONQUEST, 632 TO 637

Till the open breach occurred between Mohammed and the Jewish clans of Arabia, when Mohammed realised that the Jews would not follow his new-fangled ideas and would cleave to the truths of their forefathers — the Moslems would turn in prayer towards Jerusalem, in the manner of the Jews. Only with the emergence of the rift between Mohammed and the Jews, and the shedding of the blood of the Jews of Arabia, did Mohammed decree to face the Caaba in Mecca, thereby borrowing — not originating — its holiness too.

Jerusalem is not expressly mentioned in the Koran. In the Sura of the Night Flight, a miraculous trip to the Uttermost Mosque is related. The wise men of Islam interpreted the Uttermost Mosque to mean the Al-Aksa Mosque, which stands in Jerusalem, or would one day stand there. Some have sought to interpret "uttermost" as meaning the Heavens, but it was deemed politically expedient to situate it on the Temple Mount. Subsequently, the foothold on the Mount would be extended from its uttermost end — Al Aksa — to its centre, the Holy Rock, and upon it the Dome would be erected, and in the Rock itself would be discovered the footprint of the Angel Gabriel who drew Mohammed up from there to see the Seraphim and Er'Elim. At a later stage a further extension took place: Mohammed had tied his magic horse to ... the Wailing Wall. Mohammed? Not quite: It was actually tied there by ... Haj Amin el-Husseini, during the great furore over the Wall in 1929... The legend cannot be found in ancient Islamic lore.

Jerusalem's holiness to the Moslems derives from a dream which Mohammed dreamt.

And therefore, though Jerusalem was of no economic or political-administrative importance to the Byzantine state of Palestine — the Mohammedans were vitally interested in conquering Jerusalem, because it was the Jewish religious centre, and subsequently also a Christian centre.

The successor must also inherit the throne.

In 632, the year of Mohammed's death, the leadership of the Islamic camp consists of the "Three Associates" — Abu Bakr, Omar and Abu-Obeida. Abu Bakr leads the campaign to seize Syria. At first, incursions and deep sorties were made. Then, in April 634, an expeditionary force of 24,000 men sets out to take Palestine. The army of Ibn-Al-Raz meets

the forces of Byzantium in the Arava and pursues them up to Gaza. Another army, under Khalid Ibn-al-Walid sweeps through Palmyra, by-passes Damascus and joins in the offensive against the Houran. Thereafter the army moves through Balka to Palestine and links up with the contingents of Omar.

Against this conquering host, the Byzantines put up a mighty army of 240,000 men, of whom 70,000 are under the command of Theodorous Verden. At the entrance to the valley of Elah, in the vicinity of the two villages Janba, the army of Theodorus, brother of the Emperor Heraclius, is defeated, in July 634. In their pursuit of Theodorous, the Mohammedan armies reach the gates of Jerusalem for the first time.

As for the country's inhabitants: Jews, and even Christians disgusted with the corrupt rule of Byzantium, joyfully welcome the Arabs.

Jerusalem is almost encircled. Yet the Arabs do not assault the City.

Abu-Bakr dies. Omar is the new Caliph. He despatches his army to Syria and captures Damascus. A decisive battle is fought on the Yarmuk River, in July 636, between the armies of Arabia and Byzantium. The Christians have an overwhelming preponderance in numbers, yet the Mohammedans are victorious.

In Jerusalem, Patriarch Suprunius generates a spirit of valour and resistance to the Arabs, but to himself he admits: "Because of our sins, we are shackled and imprisoned for fear of the Saracens; the fear of their voracious, cruel and bloody scimitars has fallen upon us".

The commander-in-chief of the Arab force, Abu Obeida, despatches a scouting detachment of 5,000 soldiers to besiege Jerusalem. A few days later he arrives himself with his main force. In the City there are twelve thousand Greeks and fifty thousand natives. The Caliph, Omar, camps at El-Jabia in Trans-Jordan.

A Jew in the camp — perhaps the same Jew who, in a few days' time will indicate to the Mohammedan general the site of the Holy of Holies upon the Temple Mount — says to Caliph Omar, "Prince of the Believers": "You shall not return to your land before Allah shall have opened the gates of Jerusalem to you". Whether the Arab forces helped to bring it about, or the God of the Jews intervened in smiting "The Wicked Kingdom", or the Jews within the country helped with body and soul, the facts are clear: The gates of Jerusalem open up before the Arabs.

Some say that there was first a short battle. Others aver that the sight of the Arab troops sufficed to terrify Suprunius and his people. In accordance with the Arab custom, they called upon the City to submit without bloodshed before storming it. Suprunius, Patriarch of

Jerusalem, stalls for time, even though he realises that he does not have a chance on the battlefield. He hopes to obtain more favourable terms of surrender. The slaughter of the Christian community after the conquest of the City by the Persians and Jews is still fresh in his memory, and the Patriarch strives for tranquillity and safety. He demands that Caliph Omar himself should come to accept the surrender of Jerusalem. Suprunius presumably thought that the promise of the Caliph of all Believers is more dependable than that of the Emperor of Byzantium.

Abu Obeida draws up the terms of surrender:

"In the name of Allah the Merciful and Forgiving. From Abu Obeida Ibn-Algirach, to the Christian inhabitants of Aelia: Good health, and to all who go in righteous ways and believe in Allah and his Prophet! To the point: For my part, I call upon you to recognise that there is no God save Allah and that Mohammed is his Prophet, and that the Day of Judgment will most assuredly come, and that Allah will bring back men from the dead. Should you accept this, your blood will be sacred, as well as everything you possess, and you shall be to us like unto brothers. Should you refuse, I shall bring to you men to whom death is as desirable as are the drinking of wine and the eating of the flesh of swine to you..."

(Note that in this first document, the Roman name, Aelia, is still used. The name El-Kuds is adopted only at a later stage).

A tribute is demanded of five dinar per rich man, four per average inhabitant and three for each poor person. Old men and children are exempted.

Suprunius rejects these conditions of surrender.

Five months elapse. Hunger stalks the City. The siege is hard on both contestants.

Finally Suprunius weakens and submits, on condition that Omar himself shall come, and guarantee to protect the churches of Jerusalem.

Omar el-Khattab pitches his tent on the Mount of Olives, and therefrom he dictates "Omar's terms".

"In the name of Allah the Merciful and Forgiving, the following are the conditions of surrender which I, Omar Abd-Allah, Commander of the Believers, offer to the inhabitants of Aelia. I guarantee the safety of their lives, their property and children, their churches and their crosses, and of everything they possess, in their entirety, and their lands. Their churches shall not be impoverished, demolished nor plundered, and the same shall hold good for their treasure, their honour and all their property. Moreover, the population of Jerusalem shall not be subjected

to violence for clinging to their religion, and none shall be hurt. Similarly, the Jews of Aelia shall not be impoverished. The inhabitants of Aelia shall undertake to pay tribute equal to that which was levied upon the population of other cities. Furthermore, the Greeks and the bandits shall leave the City. Their lives and property shall be inviolate. All inhabitants of the land who shall choose to remain shall pay the same tax as shall be imposed on the people of Aelia ... May Allah ratify all this; this is the covenant of his servant and the word of the pious Caliphs”.

As for the Greeks, they must leave the City within three days.

Omar enters the City.

Suprunius meets him, resplendent in the priestly garments of Byzantine gold, representing a decadent empire and culture. He faces an aging warrior, simply dressed but of great might.

Omar asks to be taken to the Temple site. Suprunius brings him to the Holy Sepulchre. No! Omar had not asked for the grave of Jesus. He desires to be brought to the source of Jerusalem's sanctity — to the Temple Mount. The priests explain: It is a garbage heap, and the Rock can be reached only by crawling through a sewage canal and by wading through a water conduit.

It does not matter, he will crawl, he will wade.

When Helen, mother of Constantine, erected one of the great churches of Jerusalem, she ordered rubble to be piled upon the site of the Foundation Rock on the Temple Mount. Now Omar requires the services of a Jew to show him the place of the Holy of Holies, under the heap of rubbish.

Omar clears away some of the refuse with his bare hands, as an example to his men — to purify the Temple Mount.

Only a generation later would mosques be built on the Mount, but Jews are again permitted to live in Jerusalem. Seventy families settle in Jerusalem immediately after its conquest. They build a synagogue upon the Temple Mount, a house of worship.

The “Wicked Kingdom” has fallen.

ISRAEL BETWIXT ESAU AND ISHMAEL

(The Hidden and the Revealed)

This period of political instability and hardship for Israel was an era in which Midrashic-eschatological literature flourished. Nowadays it often happens that a person appropriates the literary property of another, generations-old or from distant lands, reconstructs a bit, spoils a lot, and calls the plagiarised work his own. In olden days, at least in our literature, an author would write his own original creation, and call it by an ancient name, completely submerging his own identity. This was undoubtedly designed to confer greater authority upon the work, and to arouse respect and trust towards it, as was customarily bestowed upon the ancients, particularly where matters of vision and prophecy were concerned; but whatever the intention, the fact remains — the author concealed his own name, clearly showing that he was interested in the dissemination and acceptance of the content and not in advertising himself. He would sacrifice his name for the sake of the message which he sought to convey.

One of the personages who was the favourite of these anonymous authors of visionary writing was Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai, and such a book is "The Secrets of Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai", written — so it appears — in the days of crisis and imminent expectation prior to the conquest of Jerusalem by the Arabs, perhaps actually in the beginning of Omar's rule, 638 — 640. The book is saturated with feeling, imagination and thought:

These are the secrets disclosed to Rabbi Shimon Bar-Yohai whilst he was hiding in the cave from the Emperor, king of Edom, standing in prayer forty days and forty nights. Thus did he begin, "O Lord God, how long wilt Thou be angry against the prayer of Thy people?" The secrets of the future and hidden meanings were revealed to him ... When he saw that the kingdom of Ishmael was coming, he commenced to say, "Was not what the iniquitous kingdom of Edom wrought upon us enough? Now also Ishmael?" Forthwith did Matatron, the Angel facing the Divine Presence reply to him, "Fear not, man, the Holy One, blessed be He, is bringing the kingdom of Ishmael only to redeem you from this iniquitous one. He will give them a prophet of His choice who will conquer the land for them, and then shall they come and restore it to its grandeur, and dread shall reign between them and the sons of

Esau."

Esau had become synonymous with the most virulent hatred to Israel.

It is interesting that it was Esau who was the arch-enemy, though he was racially-biologically closer to the Jews than Ishmael. Ishmael was related to the Jews only on the paternal side, through Abraham, while Esau was Jacob's brother, through both father and mother. Nevertheless, or perhaps precisely because of this, closer relationship caused greater enmity. The hatred-jealousy of Edom-Esau to Jerusalem is of Biblical origin. The tribes of Edom participated with Babylon in the destruction of the First Temple. The Psalmist, an eye-witness, cries, "Remember, O Lord, against the children of Edom" for having said of Jerusalem, "Raze it, raze it, even to the foundation thereof". Beginning with Herod, though the builder of Jerusalem, yet still an Edomite and the slave of Rome, the appellation Edom was identified with the Roman Empire. An ancient memory combined with the experience of the Second Destruction to coin the hate-filled expression, "Esau", an expression which was retained in Jewish tradition till recent times in respect of Christianity generally, and in Eastern Europe — to the Eastern Orthodox Church which succeeded hated Byzantium. Between the Romans and Jerusalem there had been no spiritual tension. It was Christianity which revived the ancient story of Esau and Jacob, or endowed it with new content, for Christianity claimed the entire heritage, the birthright.

It is against this background that the hopes which arose in the hearts of Jews the world over, and particularly within the community in Eretz-Israel, with the advent of Islam, are to be understood (Islam was called "Keren Ze'ira", a little horn, in Midrashic literature, after a verse in Daniel). The hopes were not based upon the religion, but upon its believers, the sons of Ishmael, he too being a family relation, though not so close as to justify fierce hate. The hope at any rate was that he would not claim Jacob's heritage. From the religious aspect, the tension was not so great either. Mohammed did not consider himself the son of God, a claim which in Jewish eyes was sheer idolatry. The libel of the murder of the son of God could not occur here, Islam is mono-theistically extreme. The Arabs were not the direct successors to the kingdom of Rome, the annihilator of House, City, Land and People. The Mohammedans circumcised themselves, and pig's meat was forbidden to them. And most important of all: They were the enemies of Byzantium which had re-conquered Land and City from Persia. All harbingers of the arrival of the Messiah share this strong characteristic:

When kingdoms clash, await the footsteps of the Son of David. Hopes had risen when Persia and Byzantium made war upon each other, but the Son of David did not come. Persia had been treacherous; perhaps now the time had come?

A Midrash tells of an alliance which Esau proposed to Ishmael, its object being to kill Jacob, then to kill Isaac, and thus the two of them would inherit "the world". Such alliances between parties which are distant in essence but temporarily share an interest against a third party, are not infrequent even in modern times. However, in those days there was no necessity yet for an alliance between Christianity and Islam against Judaism, for Judaism was at its lowest ebb politically. The power was Byzantine Christianity. Therefore war between Ishmael and Esau could only bode good. The unknown author had heard already of the wars of Mohammed against the Jewish tribes of Arabia, but after all, what did Mohammed do to them? He drove them out... And whereto? To Eretz-Israel, and they now dwell in Edrei and Jericho. And they were even helping the Arabs conquer the country.

Sibius, an Armenian Christian writer of that generation, goes still further and relates that the Jews aided the Arabs in their conquests throughout the East, at Antioch, and in Persia, because Eretz-Israel had been expressly promised to them; more than that — they were promised that the Temple would be rebuilt.

The facts also indicate this possibility: Omar the conqueror searches for the Even Hashetiya (The Foundation Rock) with Jewish assistance. He is shocked by the rubbish heaped on the Temple Mount, piled there by order of Helen, mother of Constantine, the first Christian Emperor, in order to obliterate any vestige of the Temple. Jews are forbidden entry into Jerusalem. The leaders of the Christians in the City, who submit to Omar and enter into a treaty with him on the lines of the agreements concluded between Mohammed and other cities which he conquered, make their acquiescence to the new regime subject to the continuation of the proscription prohibiting the entry of Jews. Evidently, this is of paramount importance to them. There are sources which indicate grave concern amongst the Christians lest indeed the Moslems will permit the Jews to build the Temple. This would constitute a telling blow to the Christian belief in Jesus' curse that Jewish Jerusalem and the Temple will never be rebuilt. Sibius writes:

"Let me tell you of the intention of the rebellious Jews. Having received temporary support from the Hegirites, they schemed to rebuild Solomon's Temple, and after they discovered the site called the Holy of Holies, they established it on a firm foundation — as a place of prayer".

The Eastern Christian Empire is crumbling. Sacred Jerusalem falls into the hands of Araby and Islam. A new prophet has come forth to conquer the world and eradicate idolatry; Christianity in their eyes is idolatrous. Yet at such a time, the head of all the Christians in the land, the Patriarch, is concerned that the Christian law denying Jews the right to reside in Jerusalem, should subsist. The Jews are not an Empire, they are not Persia, they are not Arabia, they do not send armies to subdue the world. True, they resist conversion, but they do not try to convert Christians. And yet: A Jewish Jerusalem? The rebuilding of the Temple? No! Never! This is worse in Christian eyes than Jerusalem under Persian or Islamic rule. This is not a matter of individual stubbornness on the part of a particular Patriarch, as was bluntly proven one thousand two hundred and sixty years later: In 1903, Herzl, in audience with Pope Pius X, endeavours to gain his sympathy for Zionism. The Pope reverts to the basic tenet of the Church: The Temple has been destroyed for evermore. And in reply to Herzl's question, he admits: It is better that Turkish Moslems occupy Jerusalem the Holy, than the Jews ...

Exactly five hundred years had elapsed since the failure of the Bar-Kochba Revolt, since the pig, symbol of the Xth Roman Legion was mounted on the City Gate, to prevent Jews from entering it and the City had become pagan in name and temples. Then the Cross came to reign supreme in Rome, in Byzantium and in Jerusalem. The symbol of the pig vanished too; its place was taken by the Cross. "Since the Ishmaelites have conquered her, Israelites have dwelt within her", Judah Al-Harizi was later to describe the situation. Not all the Messianic hopes which enthusiastic Jews pinned in the beginning upon the Arab campaign and conquest of Jerusalem, were fulfilled, but they did return to dwell within her. They even resumed prayers on the Temple Mount. The first step was portentous: Omar clears the rubble from the Mount. A Jew helps him to locate the Foundation Rock. There is as yet no Moslem foothold on the Mount. Mohammed, in his attempt to attract the Jews of Arabia to him, ordained in the beginning to pray towards Jerusalem. This lasted about a year and a half. When this effort failed, he decreed the Caaba at Mecca to be the "Kibla", the direction of prayer. The Jew-turned-Moslem, Kaab, sought to create a "Synthesis" and proposed **praying north** of the Rock, as the site of the Sanctuary, so that the prayer be directed both to Mecca and to Jerusalem. His suggestion was, however, rejected. In fact there were fanatic Moslems who deliberately turned their backs upon the Rock, so as to emphasise the supremacy of Mecca.

Only at a later stage would the legend be woven regarding

Mohammed's ascent from the Mount and from the Rock which Jewish tradition had sanctified, upon which the Temple had stood not in some legend but in actual fact. Omar erected only a small wooden structure near the site, and the Jews were permitted to establish a synagogue in the vicinity. They would still have to negotiate the number of Jewish families which would be allowed to dwell in the City. A bizarre historical situation: Islam conquers Jerusalem from the Christians. The Jews anticipate an actual Messianic event, perhaps as in the days of Cyrus. And suddenly — reconciliation between the conquerors and the representatives of the Christian Church. No, says Omar. He cannot yet permit the Jews to reside in the City. He must hear what the other side, the Christians, have to say. Negotiations commence, as happened again hundreds of years later — bargaining over immigration certificates. The roles, however, were switched: In the days of the British Mandate, the Christians occupy and rule, and tie entry of Jews to agreement by the Moslems. In 639, 1,300 years before the British proclaim a White Paper which made immigration by Jews dependent upon Arab agreement — the Arabs are the conquerors, and the rulers require Christian assent as a condition precedent to Jewish residence in Jerusalem. The apex of the triangle has changed, but the Jews are all the same below. The Christians consented to fifty families, the Jews requested two hundred. Omar agreed to seventy. A sort of compromise, though far from symmetrical; it leaned in favour of the vanquished, "pagan", Christians. Jews too are "infidels", of course, tolerated, but second-class citizens. In modern terminology: All "tolerated" "infidels" are equal, but the Christians are more equal.

How did Jerusalem become holy to Islam too? Its sanctity to Christianity, though rooted in the mysticism of Jesus' resurrection, is linked originally to the concrete fact of his appearance in the Temple in Jerusalem, his trial and crucifixion. Most of the Holy Places were, it is true, "discovered" in latter days, upon the Christianisation of Empire and Empress. The renewed sanctification of the City was indeed contrary to original Christian ideology, contrary to the spiritualisation and cosmopolitisation of the new religion. Yet Christianity did possess a grain of historical and geographical reality. On the other hand, the basis of the sanctity of the City to Islam was solely mystical — the myth of Mohammed's miraculous flight to Jerusalem and his wondrous ascent from the Foundation Rock to the seven heavens, with the aid of the Angel Gabriel. The motivation and sequel were strictly politics. The new dynasty of the House of Ummaya strove to divert the centre from the Arabian Peninsula to the north, since its adversaries held sway in

Mecca and Medina. It was a development somewhat akin to the occurrences in Judea after Solomon's death — the proud Tribe of Ephraim splits the Kingdom, and in order to deflect the loyalty of the tribes from the House of David, which is reinforced by the sanctity of Jerusalem, it aggrandizes other holy places within its jurisdiction.

The analogy is incomplete, of course. The heads of the House of Ummaya are unable to eliminate altogether the sanctity of Mecca, the birthplace of the Prophet, or of Medina, the site of his first victory. They do, however, succeed in conferring sanctity upon Jerusalem, in which Muawia was crowned king. The coronation takes place in quite a curious fashion.

"And Muawia went to Golgotha; there he sat and prayed. Thence he went to Gethsemane, and descended therefrom to the graves of St. Mary and Joseph, to pray ..." but this does not mean that he converted to Christianity. He is attempting no doubt to win the affection of the large Christian populace. Still, he establishes his capital not in Jerusalem but in Damascus. Only one of his successors, the great Moslem builder of Jerusalem, Abd El'Malik, reinforces Moslem sanctification of Jerusalem. A Moslem source (El-Yakubi, 2, 311) relates:

"And Abd El'Malik prevented the population of Syria from making the pilgrimage to Mecca, the reason being that Ibn Al'Zubar always demanded of them, during the pilgrimage, to swear allegiance to him. When Abd El'Malik heard of this, he forbade them to travel to Mecca. The people complained and said: You deny us the pilgrimage to the House of Allah the Holy, though pilgrimage is a duty imposed upon us by Allah. And he said unto them: ... The Messenger of God said: One should not go on long pilgrimages, save to three mosques only: To the Holy Mosque (in Mecca), to the Mosque of Ani (Medina) and to the Mosque in Jerusalem. It will fill the place of the Holy Mosque, and this Rock upon which it is told that Allah's Messenger set foot when he ascended to Heaven, shall substitute the Caaba for you".

For many a year, Moslem mystics ("Sufis") kept trying to augment the sanctity of the City. They located the site of the resurrection of the dead there, they sought to transfer the "Caaba" to Jerusalem, and so on and so forth. But the authorities of Islamic law opposed this. A famous Arab geographer of the 13th Century, Jacuth, in describing the sanctity of the Indian town, Multhan, says: It is holy to the Indians as Jerusalem is to Jews and Christians, and Mecca — to Mohammedans.

The revealed was not as exciting as the concealed. There are scholars who opine that the Dome of the Rock was not built originally as a

Moslem mosque. Indeed it is strange: Wherefrom did the tribes of Araby, who had just emerged from the wilderness, draw such architectural ability?! The fact of the matter is that Byzantine architects were commissioned for the job. Be that as it may, the Jews were driven further and further from the Mount, and thence to the gates, outward, and down.

One more hope pinned on a foreign kingdom — shattered.

However, the tension between Mecca and Jerusalem, tension which existed between the sects in Islam and amongst the Arabs in the beginning, has over the years taken another form: For obvious political reasons, today the Moslem Arabs of Jerusalem seek to establish a twin-city relationship between Mecca and Jerusalem. This is one aspect of the effort to wrest Jerusalem, at least its eastern half, from the hands of the Jews. Leaving aside the political aspect of this intent, the essence of the matter and the essence of the City proclaim: Jerusalem has no twin, neither Mecca, nor New York so heavily populated by Jews, and surely not Paris or Moscow. Not only "A **people** that shall dwell alone", but also "How doth the City sit solitary", solitary — bereft of her sons. Therefore Jerusalem's twin can only be Celestial Jerusalem, or — the People of Israel. "She is become as a widow", they lamented. As a **widow** — said our sages, not a widow. For her mate, whether the Divine Presence, or the People of Israel, liveth. From time to time, her hopes for their return falter. Yet in the end they do return.

In the course of the years, however, Islam succeeded in establishing a foothold of sanctity in the City. Seemingly it is to the City's glory that all yearn for her, but not everything which sheds glory also bestows blessing.

DAYS OF EMPTINESS, VOID AND WASTE

No one who set forth on a trip could foretell who would be the Moslem master of Jerusalem when he would return.

(Kalkashandi, in the 15th century)

Four hundred and sixty-five years had elapsed from the expulsion of the Byzantines, until the rule of the Cross returned and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem was established. Four hundred and sixty-five years in which scores of Arab rulers of various dynasties and nations reigned in Jerusalem.

After Omar's death, the House of Ummaya dominated Palestine. Muawia, founder of the dynasty, a Syrian, was chosen Caliph of Jerusalem. One of the following rulers, Abd El'Malik, the most brilliant member of the House of Ummaya, develops Jerusalem and builds therein the magnificent Dome of the Rock, to increase the importance of the City as a centre vis à vis the Caaba in Mecca, where a rival wing of Islam is in power. Fanatical Moslems ascend the Temple Mount, face Mecca with their bodies and transfix the Rock in Jerusalem with their eyes, whilst glass-blowing Jews make the chandeliers, the plates and the glass ornaments of the Dome. They are also the lamp lighters and are responsible for cleaning them.

Suleiman, son of Abd El'Malik, removes his capital to the new city which he builds on the Ramla dunes, and which he declares as the capital of Falastin. Jerusalem is deprived of the birthright.

The rulers of the House of Ummaya keep changing. Omar the Second, Yazid, Hisham, Yazid the Second; during the short reign of the latter, who devoted himself to the pursuit of pleasure in the desert city which he builds in Trans-Jordan, an insurrection breaks out. Ibrahim leaves Gaza for Jerusalem. In 744 he occupies the City and demolishes its Wall.

Ibrahim rules four months, and is defeated by Maruan the Second, who seizes power. On the horizon, however, the black banner of the House of Abbas has already been unfurled. The Abbasid general, Abdullah Ibn-Ali speedily conquers the whole country and establishes Abbasid rule in the land for a century.

Already at the beginning of their rule, rebellions flare up in the land, for the centre is moved from Palestine and Jerusalem to the centres in the north, and subsequently to Baghdad. However, even apart from

these revolts, very few of the thirty-seven monarchs of the House of Abbas really managed to exercise proper authority. Most of them were puppets of the Turks, of Egypt or of other external forces. A blood-drenched scene unfolds in the kingdom of Araby, and Jerusalem does not avoid paying its share in the events of these years. Hundreds of thousands fall in the internecine wars between the kings of the House of Abbas.

In 758 Jaafar (el-Mansur) sweeps through Palestine. Son of a Berber family, he passes through Jerusalem and decrees that a mark of shame be branded on the arms of the Christians.

In 761 there is an earthquake. The southern wing of the Haram esh-Sharif is destroyed; the Dome of the Rock is also seriously damaged.

Amongst the Jews there is bitter strife between Karaites and Jews.

In the days of Haroun Al-Rashid, war flares up between the Ishmaelites and the Yaktans. Fire and sword spread in the land, and Jerusalem braces itself for siege. Trenches are dug, gate fortifications are strengthened, there are regular wall inspections; and the Yaktans fail to pierce the defences.

In the days of Haroun Al-Rashid, a mission arrives from Charlemagne to the Caliph. The Emperor is interested in Palestine and in the guardianship of the Latin Church of Jerusalem. A member of the mission is Isaac, a Jew of Narbonne. The mission receives from Haroun Al-Rashid silk fabrics, spices, a chess set, and an elephant. The Elephant and the Jewish Problem. The Patriarch of Jerusalem sends with the mission, to Charlemagne, also "the keys to the Holy Sepulchre, to Golgotha, to the city of Mount Zion and the Banner of the Cross". The two Christian members of the delegation die on the way home. The Cross from Jerusalem to the Christian King of Europe is brought back by the Jew; there is no greater dramatist than History ...

The three sons of Haroun Al-Rashid struggle for the succession to the throne. The churches are destroyed, some are looted, and monasteries are abandoned. Jews too are hurt in the wars.

His son, Al Ma'amun, prevails. He will enter history, thanks to the locust invasion which occurred in his days. The Moslems escape from the City. Patriarch Thomas takes advantage of their absence, and with the Caliph's permission he repairs the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and elevates its dome contrary to the agreement and the rules, higher than the Dome of the Rock.

Al Ma'amun is succeeded by his brother, Al Mutasim, and in his days there are insurrections, murder and looting throughout the land. The Turks and the Seljuks gradually seize key positions in the kingdom. In

842 there is another revolt by a leader who wears a mask. Jerusalem is looted. There are many dead.

In the days of Aliatich, 842 to 847, there is again a heavy earthquake in Jerusalem. The earth shudders, and with it the Christians and the Jews are levelled to the very dust to which their houses were reduced by the quake. All the non-Moslems wear yellow hoods, yellow badges and multi-coloured clothes. Above the doors of the Christian homes there are little devils. Jews and Christians are obliged to wear the "Zunarian" — the sash.

From 861 to 866 there are frequent palace revolts. The Seljuks gain control of the Royal Court. There is endless turmoil in the land.

Ahmad Ibn Tulun rules in Egypt. He wrests power over Palestine and Egypt from the House of Abbas. Two hundred years of total anarchy commence. The holy Caaba is stolen by the Karamats for a period of 20 years. As a result, the standing of Jerusalem as a centre rises again. Thereafter the Ihashides fight the Caliphs, and the Fatimids make war upon the Ihashides. Then John Tsimiskes, Emperor of Byzantium seizes the opportunity, and in 975 he marches on Palestine, and Jerusalem falls before him without a fight. He dies, however, in 976 and his armies retreat. The land reverts to the Fatimids.

In the days of Aziz Belah Abu Mansour Nizar (975 to 996), the Caliph had a Jewish vizier, Jacob Ben-Chilis, and in 995 — a pure Christian by the name of Ibn Nestorius, whose deputy was a Jew called Menashe Ben-Abraham Al-Kazaz, who was also Governor of Palestine. He appointed Jewish and Samaritan commissioners in the land. An Arab poet of the period composes a satirical poem against the Jews, who dominate the kingdom:

"The Jews realised their ambition in his days and dominated the land
To them the glory and the riches
Viziers and princes are chosen from amongst them
Hearken unto me, Egyptians!
Become Jews, all of you! For God has also turned a Jew!"

The year 1000 arrives and the world does not come to an end. Al Hakim Abu Mansour, a mad Caliph, is the third of the Fatimid Dynasty. The Jews are ordered, among other decrees against non-Moslems, to wear bells round their necks.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is demolished. Synagogues are seized in Jerusalem and converted into mosques. Al Hakim believes in his divinity. He is one of the founders of the Druze religion.

1016 — another earthquake. 500 chandeliers are smashed when the Dome of the Rock collapses.

December 5, 1033 — yet a further earthquake. Sections of the City wall and the Tower of David collapse. The quake lasts 40 days.

1071 — Invasion of the Seljuks from Khorsan to Palestine. They are a Turkmen people, fanatic Sunnites, who tyrannize the land.

In 1071 It-tiz diverts his hordes from their onslaught upon Egypt. They lay siege for several months to Jerusalem. Famine stalks the City. Nine thousand of its inhabitants are killed. His rule in the City lasts seven years. Then a Fatimid, Tautus, arises and over-runs Palestine in 1078. He appoints a Turkish governor. After Tautus' assassination, the sons of the Governor, Al-Gazi and Succaman rule the City. Their rule is fraught with brutality.

The Fatimids conquer Jerusalem again, so as to —

So as to put an end to this fruitless inter-Moslem strife, to face the Cross which once again looms over her.

You might wonder, reader, why we have recounted all these vicissitudes. Who remembers them? What do they matter? Our object was to show that though Jerusalem suffered heavily since the Ishmaelites conquered her, these wars were not for Jerusalem. Baghdad, Damascus and Cairo vied for supremacy intermittently. Jerusalem never entered their minds.

ZION'S SCHOOLS AND SCHISMS

During five hundred years of Roman and Byzantine rule, Jerusalem was out of bounds to her sons, her builders, the Jews. When Jewish residence in the City was once again permitted, with the Arab conquest, what part did the Jews play in Jerusalem, what did they do therein? Five hundred and sixty years elapsed from the Islamic conquest till she fell again to the Cross, borne by the First Crusaders.

After the initial spurt of construction, particularly of the two mosques on the Temple Mount, the new conquerors did not produce anything of value in Jerusalem. The House of Ummaya was deposed by the House of Abbas, the House of Abbas — by the Egyptian Fatimides, and there were wars and rulers and dynasties by the score, but in this long chain of conquerors and rulers, some "good", some "bad", some tolerant, some fanatical-killers, Jerusalem has no specific weight of its own. There are no struggles over her per se, for her, in her name. She does not constitute a religious idea, nor a political reality. She is occupied and given up within the general framework of the wars, which have no ideological background. Jerusalem becomes just a victim, she is not the object of yearning, except of course for the uninterrupted longing of the Jews.

The fire of messianic hope which was kindled in the beginning of the Moslem conquest — was soon extinguished. On the Temple Mount, THE Temple was not erected. There is ample evidence that for a time there was a synagogue on the Mount itself, but gradually the Jews were driven beyond the walls of the Mount, either to the foot of the Mount, to the Western Wall, or in the opposite direction, to the Mount of Olives. They make their way back whenever the opportunity arises, in periods of grace during the reign of a Moslem ruler who is not a fanatic, and they cling to the gates in order to be as close as can be to the very Holy of Holies. At times they are nearer, at times they are further removed, but heart and eye are always focussed on it, on the Temple Mount.

With the resumption of Jewish habitation of the City, it was planned to make it the spiritual centre. In those days, spiritual centre meant the centre of legal authority, which continued to bear the title of Sanhedrin or the Grand Yeshiva, and it was situated in Tiberias. The Princely House of Hillel had ceased officially to exist by order of Byzantium two

hundred years before the Moslem conquest. In Tiberias the **Jerusalem** Talmud evolved, as against, or concurrently with the Babylonian. It was not created in Jerusalem. Its major part was written in Tiberias; nonetheless it bears the name Jerusalem. For many years after the Moslem conquest, Tiberias continued to be the centre. There are only a few Jews in Jerusalem. The details are not known, but the "Ge'on Yaacov" Yeshiva moves to Jerusalem, which becomes the Torah centre of the land, and its heads bear the title "Gaon". It dares to compete with the yeshivot of mighty Babylon. In Babylon, the heads of the academies are called "Gaon", not only as a title but because they genuinely are giants of learning and philosophy, while the spiritual prowess of the heads of the Jerusalem community, whether in the Law or in philosophy, is inferior to that of Babylon. "Only" in the midrashim, in poetry and song, are there greater achievements here than in Babylon. It is a fact that in the Diaspora of Babylon, the lyrical intensity of Eretz-Israel and Jerusalem is deficient. The struggle between Babylon and Jerusalem is unequal. Babylonian Jewry is wealthy, while Jerusalem is dependant on donations — in the main from the rich community of Egypt. The Jerusalem community is not self-sufficient. The "Old Yishuv" of modern times, which lived on Haluka (remittances), originated in those days, with the renewal of the Jewish population of the City after the Moslem conquest. There are Jewish artisans, but the centre of learning cannot survive without constant support from the communities in the Diaspora. It flows in. Prayers in Jerusalem for the welfare of a community in one of the Dispersions or in honour of individuals in the Diaspora, are worth a lot of money. Contributors from all over the world ask for prayers on their behalf, at least from the Mount of Olives, facing the Temple Mount. The practice of emissaries setting forth from Jerusalem to solicit contributions originates in this period too. The never-ending stream of pilgrims is a further source of income. Let us not forget that pilgrimage in those days was not only a question of cost, nor only of time and discomfort, it was an expedition fraught with acute danger on sea and on land, piracy and robbery, political anarchy, and epidemics. In spite of all this, they are not deterred. These pilgrims, who come to pray opposite the Temple Mount often share voluntarily or unwillingly, the tax-load imposed on the community. The taxes are levied on the Jewish (or Christian) community as such, not on individuals. The Gaon of Yeshivat Ge'on Yaacov, who is the official head of the community, is responsible for the collection of the tax. "A maw like a cavernous pit" is the description which the Jews bestow upon the tax machine. The pilgrims share this

tax burden. This perhaps is an additional cause of the slackening of Jewish tourism. One of the letters from Jerusalem to Cairo says: "We shall not conceal, dear friend, that this year the number of celebrants diminished, and what we collected did not suffice to cover the annual penalty, and we were obliged to borrow the remainder". Only for a short period, during the Fatimid era, was there a slight alleviation of the plight of the community in Jerusalem, and in particular of the "Ge'on Yaacov" Yeshiva. This was in the days of Paltiel, one of the chief ministers of the Caliph Al-Moaz. The Yeshiva becomes semi-"official", that is to say — its budget is financed by the Caliphate in Cairo. Except for this period, Jewish Jerusalem struggles valiantly to make ends meet.

And yet she presumes to demand seniority over the mighty centre in Babylon, even vis à vis a Gaon of the stature of Saadia. The struggle for hegemony comes to a head in the famous dispute over the determination of the festivals. It becomes so bitter that for a number of years there is no coordination in the fixing of the calendar. Jerusalem, and the community in Eretz-Israel, and perhaps also in Egypt, observe the Yom Kippur fast according to Ben-Meir, head of the Ge'on Yaacov Yeshiva in Jerusalem, contrary to the decision of the Babylonian centre. The Ge'on Yaacov Yeshiva considers itself a Sanhedrin, and even holds its sessions in the ancient form, row upon row in a semi-circle. Its venue was the Mount of Olives, above Yad Avshalom and Zechariah's Tomb, just below the crest of the Mount of Olives (on its summit stands the "Church of the Ascension") across the valley from the Gate of Mercy ("Shaar Harahamim"), known also as the Priest's Gate or the Eastern Gate, and from the Dome of the Rock, in other words — facing the site of the Holy of Holies, "opposite God's Sanctuary", as it was called in the writings of the time. The Mount of Olives is invested with holiness from antiquity; Zechariah 14:4 prophesies: "And His feet shall stand in that day upon the Mount of Olives which is before Jerusalem on the east". At the top, there is a large plateau, (occupied today by the Intercontinental Hotel and by the higher rows of the cemetery) called "The Shelf". It is most probable that the important spiritual centre, the Yeshiva, was situated there. For centuries, the big celebrations, the Hakafot (processions) took place there, particularly on the Feast of Succot (Tabernacles), and Simhat Torah, always facing the "Sanctuary of God".

It was its location in Jerusalem which conferred upon the heads of the Yeshiva the power to claim supreme authority in Jewry. Not much is known nor has survived of their spiritual legacy, especially not in the realm of the Halacha, the Law. There are mystical midrashim,

apocalypses, Pirkei de-Rabbi Eliezer, the Prayers of the Mourners of Zion. In the sphere of the Law, Babylon surpasses Jerusalem. It was no doubt also a result of the material poverty and the upheavals which were the order of the day in the City and the land, that the centre in Jerusalem did not thrive and expand. It struggled for sheer existence. Jerusalem overcame Tiberias, but did not overcome Babylon.

And then she was subjected to two massive blows. The first was Al-Hakim, the most savage of the Egyptian Caliphs, whose decrees were absolutely maniacal. The Yeshiva moved for a period to Ramla, which was the Moslem capital of the land. After his death, the Yeshiva returned to Jerusalem, only to be exiled again, permanently, to Tyre, when the City was occupied by the Seljuks in 1070.

To top all this, an internal front came into existence — the Schism with the Karaites. Another chapter in "The Wars of the Jews".

The zeal of the Karaites for Jerusalem exceeded that of Rabbinical Jewry. The reason may perhaps be that Rabbinical Jewry, fortified as it was by the heavy defences of authoritative Halacha, found some sort of substitute for Eretz-Israel in its way of life and its detailed Code of Laws. Karaism, on the other hand, did not develop — deliberately — such a detailed Code, and it was psychologically in greater need of a firm base upon which to stand. Whatever the reason, the Karaites throng to Jerusalem more than the Rabbinical Jews; (their second-largest community is in the country's capital — Ramla). Jerusalem as its centre, is one of the distinguishing characteristics of Karaism in the first centuries of its existence. From Jerusalem Karaism conducts its war upon Rabbinical Jewry and its Babylonian centres. In Jerusalem, Karaism is able to maintain a life of strict separation from the Gentile world and to mourn over Jerusalem and its destruction. Its influence is considerable therefore among the Jews of Eretz-Israel, which is the sole place in the world where the Karaites are numerically equal to the Rabbinical community. One of the leading preachers of the Karaites adds thunder to his proclamations, opening them thus: "From the Temple I have come to warn my People" (Sahal Ben-Matzliach). He means Jerusalem, of course. Perhaps this language is derived from the Arabic name of Jerusalem, "Beit el-Makdas", the Temple.

The Karaite community also prays on the Mount of Olives. Sahal Ben-Matzliach, one of the leading ideologues and propagandists of the Karaites writes: "Brothers! Jerusalem is in ruins, deserted and lonely, while you rest in your beds and sleep ... Jerusalem and Zion are subjected to two nations: Zion — to Esau, Jerusalem to the sons of Hagar. Therefore He hath been compassionate to His People, to give

them hope and to enable them to worship Him, for the only place wherefrom to pray is this place ... Those who pray to the Temple are the dwellers of Jerusalem ... Take note that at the present time, Jerusalem is a refuge to all who flee, a resting-place to every mourner, and a comfort to every beggar and pauper. In the months of Tammuz and Av their numbers in Jerusalem will increase, and men and women pray in ashes, and fast in sackcloth; suffering people ascend the Mount of Olives with throbbing hearts". In one of his letters, he appeals for Aliya: "And you must come to live in the Land of God, to stand at His gates, to climb the Mount of Olives opposite the Ancient Gate, to cast your eyes upon its defilement, and to weep over its desolation".

We also have an example of ancient "Zionist" propaganda, which castigates those who defer their Aliya till the arrival of the Messiah: "Rascals in Israel say to each other, we should not go to Jerusalem until God who dispersed us shall gather us together". Similarly, other excuses are rejected: "One should not say, how can I go to Jerusalem for fear of robbers, and there are no means of livelihood in Jerusalem" (Daniel Hakomsi, 9th Century). Reasons of safety, economic reasons and even religious reasons — awaiting the Messiah — are the excuses of those who evade Aliya. It is the Karaites of Jerusalem who are the most insistent in calling for Aliya. They warn: "If you do not come, because you are so allured and tempted by your material possessions, send from every town five people, accompanied by their means of subsistence, so that we may increase our congregation, to pray constantly upon the hills of Jerusalem".

However, this Karaite "Zionism" is not free of blemish. The two communities, the Karaite and the Rabbinical, squeezed as they are between Christians and Moslems, are locked in a bitter struggle. The success of the Karaites in Jerusalem arouses grave fears in the hearts of the heads of the Yeshiva, because the impact of Jerusalem upon the Diaspora is strong. For this reason, the Festival of Succot, which brings many pilgrims to Jerusalem, is chosen for proclaiming the excommunication of the Karaites. This takes place, naturally, upon the Mount of Olives. One of the clashes between the communities results in actual bloodshed. Ben-Meir, head of Yeshivat Ge'on Yaacov reports to Babylon that a Rabbinical Jew "was killed in the gallery" by one of the seed of Anan, and it is not clear whether he was referring to the Western Wall or to the Mount of Olives. Every year the excommunication of the Karaites was pronounced anew. In the beginning of the 11th Century the influence of the Karaites veered to Cairo. At that time, the Jews were forbidden by law to perform the excommunication ceremony.

Some of the Rabbis exercised moderation. The extremists, however, decided to repeat the excommunication rite on Hoshaana Rabba, but in a cave, probably in Zedekiah's Cave, though some historians say that it was in the Cave of the Patriarchs in Hebron.

The Moslem authorities generally favoured the Karaites, and would send police forces from Ramla, with "punitive instruments", in order to prevent the rabbis from imposing the ban. In one instance two of the heads of the Yeshiva were seized and sent to jail in Damascus. Only in the days of Gaon Shlomo Ben-Yehuda of the Yeshiva was peace established between the communities. His successor, Daniel (middle of 11th Century), who was brought from Babylon, was accepted even by the Karaites, and he reports to Babylon on the festival which was jointly celebrated. Till the next clash ...

This therefore was another of Jerusalem's wars ... till a third party came along and put an end to it. So it always has been. The men of Aristobulos made war upon the men of Hyrcanus over the high priesthood till Pompey arrived. Groups of Zealots fought against each other till Titus came and completed the job.

The Sages of Jerusalem struggled against the Sages of Babylon and Rabbinical scholars fought Karaite scholars, till the Crusaders arrived.

ROME MARCHES ON JERUSALEM ONCE MORE

Jerusalem was not the objective of the Arab conquerors. They set out to "impose the law of Mohammed by the sword" throughout the world. They seized all the territory they could, they stopped wherever they were halted, and they took Eretz-Israel and Jerusalem en passant, not in a campaign mounted specifically for the purpose, even though the occupiers knew full well what City they were capturing. The conquest of Jerusalem by the Byzantine Heraclius was in itself not the prime objective of the war, notwithstanding the fact that the Cross which was removed from Jerusalem by Cosro the Second, was ceremoniously restored. The war was part of the struggle between East and West, a repetition in another form of the war between Persia and Greece of a thousand years earlier, in the days of Darius, Ahasuerus, and their predecessors and successors. The Crusade, on the other hand, was designed ab initio to conquer Jerusalem. The objective was not to capture all the Holy Land, not even — to be exact — all of Jerusalem, but only the Holy Sepulchre. The Sepulchre could not, of course, be freed without the conquest of the whole City, nor could the City be taken without conquering all or almost all of Syria and Eretz-Israel, but the original call to arms was: Free the Sepulchre. This may have been the only war between powers which was fought over such a cause. There were no doubt many other motives for the Crusades, political, social, dynastic, but the declared objective in any case was: to free the Holy Sepulchre.

The Holy Sepulchre and the City had been, however, in Moslem "heathen" hands, for 450 years. Why did the Christians take no action all that time? This is a question which we the Jews are hardly entitled to pose, for why did we just hope for 1,800 years, before we started a mass exodus to our Land and City? The answer is clear: Since the Bar-Kochba Revolt, we no longer believed in the possibility of a Return by natural means. We believed in a miracle-performing Messiah who would bring us back to our Land and would build our Temple in Jerusalem.

In the Christian attitude a similar process took place, not from the means standpoint but from the aspect of the essence. Within the Jewish People there was a spiritualisation of the **methods** of redemption, but in Christianity, the redemption **itself** became a spiritual event. They knew

naught of a national Exodus from Egypt, nor of conquest and liberation of a homeland. The Christian nations were not in a diaspora, they lived in their own countries, and the "Holy Land" and "Holy City" of which they read in their Holy Scriptures, became allegorical and abstract. Indeed, the urge to sever the cord to the womb of the Jewish mother, necessitated the reinforcement of the spiritual, symbolic element, and required abstraction from geography. The real founder of Christianity, Paul, and following him many of the fathers of the Church, emphasised this point: The physical existence of Land and City are of no importance. Rome became the Holy See, the Eternal City, the place of residence of the Pope, since the conversion of the Emperor. Rome: the centre of the world. The destruction of Jerusalem proved the truth of Christianity. Christian theory endeavoured, at least in the beginning, to minimise the physical significance of the City. There is no advantage to prayer by a Christian in Jerusalem; his prayer soars to Heaven also from Britain. Ancient Christianity stressed, "The Saviour abides within thee". "Jerusalem is spirit" was the definition of these theoreticians. The daughters of Jerusalem are simply souls devoted to Jerusalem — such were their allegorical interpretations of "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's".

In reality, however, this separation, this total spiritualisation, this transformation of the City into "Celestial Jerusalem" only, could not last; first and foremost because of the Christians within the country; they and the Christians in Syria were always a source of ferment. These ideological sects diverged from the official Christianity of Rome and of Byzantium. One simply had to compete with them, and to strive against them, when ordinary folk and even holy monks were attracted to this land, where the miraculous events which were the corner-stone of Christianity, took place. Scholars deal with theories and ideas; simple believers cling to the epic, narrative aspects of faith, to its tangible side.

We have seen that Jerusalem came under Christian rule for the first time following the conversion of the Emperor in Rome. A woman, Helen, Constantine's mother, yearned to visit the Holy Places where the events had occurred. Though the Father is said to have been the Holy Ghost, the Mother was without doubt flesh and blood. This mother discovered the Holy Sepulchre, according to Christian tradition, and a Jew led her to the remnants of the Cross. She helped in the construction of the great churches, and they became the destination of pilgrims. The fathers of the Church, who endeavoured to minimise the significance of this tangible linkage, failed. The theory of Celestial Jerusalem was obliged to compromise with popular reality.

The sharp difference between the developments in Jewish and in Christian thought become apparent. To Jews, the basic Jerusalem is Terrestrial Jerusalem, and only in the wake of the Destruction, was she elevated temporarily on high, in order to descend, with the advent of the Messiah, and again serve as the Capital, pure and simple, of a King of the House of David, with the Temple rebuilt on the Mount. Christianity, on the other hand, was fundamentally opposed to Terrestrial Jerusalem, and in its stead it fostered the abstract idea which required no material concretisation. Only the reality of the pilgrims and the devotion of the pious masses to the sites of the events, compelled the Church to accept the importance of Terrestrial Jerusalem.

To this was added the fear that the Jews would return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple. This would have demolished the Christian claim that the Church had inherited Israel and that the Nation had lost its right to exist. It could never be restored to sovereignty and its Temple could never be rebuilt. Moslem rule in Jerusalem did not pose problems which threatened Christian dogma. One of the most interesting and significant facts in this connection is that even when Jerusalem was in Christian hands, whether during the three hundred years of Byzantine rule in the Land and in the City, till the Moslem conquest, or in the hundred years of Crusader rule, and in spite of the fact that their kingdom was called "The Kingdom of Jerusalem", the centre of Christianity was not transferred from Byzantium or from Rome to Jerusalem. Holy Places — yes, and this too, as we have seen, under pressure of popular demand, but a capital and centre — certainly not. Such an idea was never even broached. Even pilgrimage to the Holy Places, to the Holy Sepulchre and Golgotha in Jerusalem, was never proclaimed a religious duty, as was the pilgrimage of Jews to Jerusalem since ancient days, the commandment to "appear" there on the three Festivals, or as the Haj, the Moslem pilgrimage to Mecca, the holy place of Islam, became.

Therefore historians are puzzled all the more by the Crusades. They were not wars which sought to impose Christianity, but specifically to free the Holy Sepulchre and the Holy City. Historians seek economic and social explanations for this phenomenon. They ascribe to Pope Urban, who conceived the First Crusade, an act of genius, which solved complicated European problems, by calling for the liberation of Christ's burial place.

"Wrest this land from an evil race and take it unto yourselves. For this is the land of which it is written in Holy Scripture, "A land flowing with

milk and honey", which was given to the Children of Israel for a possession. Jerusalem is the core of the world. This majestic city, situated in the centre of the world, has been seized by the enemies of God and is subjugated to men who know Him not and who have turned it into a temple of idol-worshippers."

So spake Urban the Second, father of the First Crusade. The Church Council at Clermont added that anyone reaching Jerusalem will be absolved of sin. Although this was qualified by the condition that it would apply only to those who were not seeking fame and fortune, the promise induced scores of thousands to join the long and arduous march. It did not improve the quality of the Crusaders, as quite understandably, many criminals joined up, hoping that on this adventurous campaign, they would not only be rid of their sins, which multiplied along the way, but that they would also obtain expiation for sins of the future, on account ...

The decisive point, as far as we are concerned, as regards the war for Jerusalem, is the reliance upon the Children of Israel. This was also the argument of the Crusaders in a debate held at Caesarea, when they were asked by Moslem dignitaries, what they were seeking in this land. They replied: Since the land had been given to the Children of Israel, and as the Church was the true Israel, it followed that the country was theirs.

This constituted a radical change: The Church had of course always considered itself as the true Israel, but in the beginning the meaning of this claim was purely spiritual, a religious mission, free of territorial implications. Changing needs impelled the Church to claim also territorial succession, with Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre serving as more concrete objectives than the whole land. The attempt to link up with ancient Israelite history is apparent also in expressions used by the first crusading conquerors: They called the Dome of the Rock (The Mosque of Omar) — *Templum Domini*, the Temple of the Lord, the El-Aksa Mosque they named Solomon's Temple; Therefrom is derived the name Solomon's Stables for the halls beneath the Mosque. The throne upon which the king was crowned was given the name "The Throne of David". Still they dare not bestow a secular title upon a king in the Holy City; his official title is "Defender of the Holy Sepulchre". Already when they invested the city, they first surrounded it in the hope that its walls would fall as did the walls of Jericho. These phenomena were meant to signify the historical identity with the People of Israel and with the actual history of the City, a complete departure from the allegorisation and spiritualisation which guided the fathers of the Church after Jesus. The power of Jerusalem was, to Christianity of the

day, a sufficiently strong attraction to constitute one of the causes of the Crusades, and an adequate excuse for the annihilation of the Jewish community within it, for obviously, if the testator still lives, he cannot be inherited ...

This, however, did not suffice to keep Jerusalem and the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem in existence for any length of time. The spiritual meaning of a holy grave, be it even the burial site of the Son of God, can serve as motivation for making a pilgrimage, but not for settling in the country and making it one's homeland.

Ultimately, Jerusalem under the Crusaders also remained faithful to her real sons — and not to her “sons-in-spirit”. The Christians did indeed build extensively in Jerusalem during their occupation, for religious as well as for temporal reasons, but as we have shown and seen, even then they did not dream of looking upon Jerusalem as their capital. This is clearly demonstrated by the fact that neither Pope Urban II nor any of his successors ever saw fit to make the pilgrimage to the Holy City and the Holy Sepulchre. Was the reason that they had not sinned sufficiently to need expiation through pilgrimage? ... Needless to say, the slaughter of Jewish communities in Europe and in Jerusalem itself by the Pope's soldiers, the Crusaders, was not considered a sin. We have said that neither Urban nor his successors made the trip, ... until the rebirth of the State of Israel, when for the first time a Pope arrived in Jerusalem, the first Pope to make the pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Why were we so privileged?

This may explain a further struggle which Jerusalem had to go through in the days of the Crusaders, the struggle to populate the City. It is instructive to note today the nature of this struggle.

The City was conquered in a dreadful bloodbath. Over 40,000 of its Moslem and Jewish inhabitants were slaughtered, as will be related in the next chapter, and the City was impoverished. Of the 20,000 Crusaders who captured her, only 2,000 stayed. The economic interests which prompted the Crusade, the opening up of the Eastern markets, were not concerned with Jerusalem. Their objective was the Italian “communes” along the coast. Jerusalem was declared the capital by virtue of its being the seat of government, (unlike the situation under the Arabs — who made Ramla their capital), and because of the location there of the Holy Sepulchre, which was the objective of the whole campaign. It was therefore necessary to populate the City. The stream of pilgrims did increase, but they did not differ from the tourists of today. They come, they go. The authorities developed incentives, starting with exemption from taxes — a bait not unknown to us too. In

the first stage they even granted ownership of houses to whoever would seize them. The building momentum — of palaces for the rulers, and of churches — employed many labourers and artisans. Some of the local Christians, who had been persecuted by the Moslems, were invited to settle in Jerusalem, and they seized the area which had been the Jewish Quarter before the Crusades, in the northeastern part of the City, (not the Jewish Quarter of modern times). Notwithstanding all these concessions, Jerusalem did not become a city of commerce and industry. It was an administrative centre, a centre for religious tourism, for the sale of religious souvenirs and the dwelling-place of a few artisans. The bustling towns were then as now: the coastal towns — from Jaffa to Acre and Tyre.

As for Jerusalem? Perhaps a Holy City in which it is good to die, but to live — there were bigger and livelier places. Because of the many monasteries and holy orders in Jerusalem, there is a steady flow of money to the City from Europe, a system not dissimilar to the "Haluka" of the "Old Yishuv" of later generations.

Is Jerusalem content? Perish the thought! She remembers in the days of her affliction the days of her greatness as a true capital, both holy and temporal. For that however she would have to be patient yet for hundreds of years more.

THE FIRST CRUSADE

1099

The end of the world was fast approaching. Of this there was no doubt in the Christian West. One thousand years had elapsed since the Revelation of Jesus Christ, and he was due again to appear, presumably again in the Holy Land.

It is occupied, however, by the Moslem unbelievers.

The Christians of the West set out, therefore, to free the Holy Land and Holy Jerusalem by force of arms, as a first step towards preparing the ground and stirring hearts in anticipation of the complete redemption. There were of course other factors which stimulated this mass movement of people in Europe. The stories of molestation by Moslems of Christian pilgrims to the Holy Land, the heavy taxes which were levied upon pilgrims, the destruction and looting which befell many holy churches, the interminable wars amongst the Arabs which reached their peak in the clashes between Fatimids and Seljuks — all these, plus the urgent need for a cause which would put a stop, if only for a time, to the wars of the kings of Europe and would reinforce the power of the Church, brought about the impassioned call of Pope Urban II at the Synod of Clermont: Jerusalem is crying for Christian armed aid, and whomsoever will go to Jerusalem to redeem the Church of God — he shall be absolved of all sin.

And the Synod unanimously echoed: "It is the will of God".

This became the slogan of all Crusaders.

Who were the Crusaders?

Knights from all over Europe, and troops mainly from Germany, France, Normandy and Italy. Waves of religious fervour and a fanatical spirit of adventure combined behind their steel coats of mail. Thousands of knights pawned all they had, to pay the cost of the expedition to Jerusalem the Holy, a city which many of them believed to be in Heaven. They were accompanied by scores of thousands of paupers, simple folk, and farmers, who swarmed eastward. At every city-gate their question was: Is this Jerusalem? On the way, of course, they murdered Jews, the reasoning simply being: Till we reach the Holy Sepulchre, is it not a holy duty to take revenge upon the enemies of the Messiah in our midst? Just as the motives for the Crusade were religious, economic and psychological, so the justification for the

dreadful slaughter was not merely religious holiness. Scores of thousands of Jews, on whose lips and in whose hearts and hopes the memory of Jerusalem was always present, were killed on Kiddush Hashem (Sanctification of the Name) and for their belief in the redemption of Zion, by men who set out to capture it for the sake of the true or imagined Holy Sepulchre.

The main army was led by Gottfried of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, 10,000 cavalry and 8,000 infantry. His brother Baldwin, and Raymond of Toulon were the commanders of his force. Robert of Normandy, whose heart was set on glory in battle, Boémond, Tancred (later to become Prince of Galilee), Hugo of Vermondois, Robert of Flanders, Stephen of Blois — each man leading his knights. The army was accompanied by scores of thousands on foot — poorly-armed villagers, women, children, priests, bishops, tight-rope dancers, camp-followers, scoundrels, monks, ascetics, traders, and lunatics — many of them fell by the wayside before reaching Constantinople.

Alexis, Emperor of Byzantium accords them a very cool welcome, though they were proposing to retrieve his lost domains in Syria. On the way to the Holy Land, things almost deteriorated into a war of Christian against Christian.

The Crusaders slowly edge southward. The Fatimids attempt to exploit the presence of this great force, to seize the country from the Seljuks. The Fatimids despatch a delegation bearing precious gifts to the Crusaders and invite them to join forces against the Seljuks, in consideration for the cession of part of the Holy Land. The Crusaders refuse to co-operate, and the Fatimids mount an offensive on their own, and capture Tyre and Jerusalem, which falls into their hands after a siege of 40 days.

The Moslems retreat from the coast in the spring of 1099, leaving in their wake destroyed churches, monasteries, fortified towns and harbours. The mighty Crusader host encamps near Ramla, poised to assault Jerusalem from there.

Ramla, as we have seen, is the regional capital, but who will fight for her? Ramla is the only town ever built in the country by Arabs, but it was never holy or dear to them, not a drop of blood was ever shed in its defence.

Upon arrival of the vanguard at Rama (Nebi Samuel), when they set eyes for the first time upon the real Jerusalem, all were seized by great emotion. "Behold, Jerusalem! Thy liberators have come!" they called, kneeling, and weeping tears of joy. All their tribulations were forgotten. For this single moment, all the suffering was worth while: This was the

City ...

The giant Crusader force, which had slowly advanced over thousands of miles of obstacles and obstructions, man-made and natural, is on the verge of realising its dream.

The Crusaders assaulted Jerusalem in three heads: St. Giles led thousands of troops from the direction of Shechem, Gottfried of Bouillon with the main force came up the way from Jaffa, and Tancred with three hundred horsemen — captured Bethlehem, and from there marched on the City.

The Egyptian commander of the City, Ifthar Adwalla, organises the defences. He expels the Christians from the City, to prevent their becoming a Fifth Column, and he "scorches" its surroundings. He fills the wells with earth and blocks the springs, or poisons their waters. He brings large flocks of sheep and cattle into the City and gathers in all the crops.

Forty thousand people are besieged in Jerusalem.

Ifthar stations his Sudanese garrison in the Citadel (in the area of "David's Tower"), and he places the defence of the various sections of the Wall in the hands of the population living behind each section.

Fate — or the Crusaders — decreed that the main Crusader thrust was made opposite the northeastern quarter, the Jewish Quarter. Jews stand guard upon the walls in the area of the Crusader breakthrough.

Of the mighty armies which left Europe, only twenty-thousand, including 1,200 mounted knights, reached Jerusalem. On June seventh 1099, they arrived at the walls of Jerusalem. They were faced with grave logistical problems. They were separated from their principal bases in Ramla and Jaffa — which in turn were supplied by vessels from overseas — by hostile country, not under Crusaders control. The besieged hoped against hope that the Fatimid expeditionary force which had set out from Egypt would rush to their aid. For this very reason, the Crusaders could not bide their time in a long siege of the City, and they had to pierce its defences quickly. In reckless courage, Tancred tries to breach the walls all alone, with the aid of tall ladders. When this effort fails, and he himself miraculously escapes death, the Crusaders mass their troops for a conventional assault.

They divide up the battle-front amongs them: Gottfried of Bouillon spreads out his forces in the section between the Valley of Jehosaphat and St. Stephen's Gate (Damascus Gate), opposite the Jewish Quarter within the Wall. Tancred, wreathed in glory, deploys his men opposite the Tower of Goliath in the northeast. Raymond of Toulon takes up position along the western part of the Wall — up to Jaffa Gate.

At first they try to break in at Jaffa Gate. The moat is deep and the siege machines cannot be brought up close to the Wall. The western flank is therefore abandoned; only an observation unit is left opposite the area of the Mamillah cemetery.

The army of Raymond of Toulon comes up from the south, to the area of Mount Zion, sets up headquarters in the Greek-held Church of St. Mary and attacks Zion Gate therefrom.

The fiercest assault is upon the northern flank, where convenient topographical conditions attracted all armies which sought to penetrate the walls, from time immemorial. There, only a deep trench separates the siege machines from the City walls.

The Battle of Jerusalem of the days of the Great Revolt is repeated: The Crusaders faithfully copy the military moves of Titus, with the besieged defending themselves with weapons hardly more sophisticated than those used a thousand years earlier.

The Crusaders are impeded by a shortage of timber to build the siege machines, till they discover the "ancient forest" not far from Jerusalem. A bizarre co-incidence brings to Jaffa Genoese ships bearing carpenters and tools. After prolonged haggling over their wages, the funds for payment to the artisans are made available, and the wooden siege towers are built with great effort — only to be set on fire by "the Greek fire" missiles of the besieged.

The assault upon the City lasts five weeks. The walls as well as towers and buildings deep inside the City are heavily bombarded. The Crusaders endeavour to fill the moat, and bring up the siege machines and towers, whilst the besieged catapult Greek fire-bombs in order to ignite the Crusader siege installations.

At times the Crusaders are overwhelmed by despair. They call to their aid witches and young sorceresses to lay a curse upon the walls. Jew and Moslem join forces courageously to defend the northern wall, (opposite the hill upon which the Rockefeller Museum is today situated), against the attack of the regiments of Gottfried of Bouillon. The Jews fight with outstanding bravery, clearly visualising the scenes of the slaughter wrought by the Crusaders in all Jewish communities along their holy route to the Holy Land, news of which sped eastward ahead of the slowly advancing Crusade. The annihilation of communities in Germany and Bohemia was very much alive in the hearts of the Jewish defenders, many of whom believed that they heard the footsteps of the Messiah: All the peoples of the world had congregated at the gates of Jerusalem, and their downfall would be complete and swift.

One fine day the Crusaders remove their steel helmets, and their

shoes, and like the Children of Israel who compassed the city of Jericho, they march round the walls of Jerusalem, in prayer and humility, humility before Heaven and prayer for success in breaching the walls. On the night prior to the decisive battle, in which they intended to exert the supreme effort in a final attempt to be or not to be, one of the soldiers writes: "A peaceful night for the Jews, a night which envelops the shining stars in a cloak of darkness", for the Crusaders knew that the Jews were the defenders of the sector of the Wall which was due to be pierced on the morning of the morrow. The battle raged from early morning, and in the third hour after noon the Crusader troops managed to bring forward to the wall a wooden tower, to lower a bridge therefrom, and across the bridge surge into the City the first Crusaders, with Gottfried of Bouillon in the lead.

They open the gates of City and the whole army sweeps in. At the same time, Tancred breaches the northwestern corner of the Wall, and Raymond St. Giles bursts in from the direction of Mount Zion.

July 15, 1099. A terrible massacre.

"... And if you should want to know what befell the enemy within, you shall know that in Solomon's corridor and in his Temple, our men rode in the blood of the Saracens up to their horses' knees."

So writes Gottfried of Bouillon to Pope Paschal II.

The Jews fought to the death, and the Crusaders, the protagonists of the Religion of Love, invented weird kinds of death. The remnants of the Jews locked themselves in synagogues, publicly to Sanctify the Name. The Crusaders set the synagogues on fire and burn alive the Jews inside. A Jewish unit fights its way to the Temple Mount. There they encounter Tancred's regiment, and almost all the Jews are killed. Only a few remain alive. They hide in the mosques, and are taken prisoner. Jews are employed in the burial of the dead till Tancred's keen eye notices that they are Jews, and he sells them into slavery — thirty for one gold coin. They are sent by boat to Apulia in southern Italy. Some drown on the way, some are decapitated, some reach Italy. There they give their Jewish brethren the opportunity to fulfil the mitzva of redemption of captives, at thirty gold pieces per head. Why? Against the thirty talents which "as is well-known", Pilate handed over to Judah Iscariot.

The massacre continues for thirty days. The Council of Crusaders resolves, and not in the heat of battle:

"This counsel was accepted, and on the **third** day of the victory, the military command issued the order, and everyone seized their weapons and set forth to slaughter the masses of people still surviving in the City.

Some removed the chains of the captives and then beheaded them, others — who were at first spared, for their money or out of humane feelings, were now killed, girls and pregnant mothers were killed, as were babes-in-arms. No one was pitied. The Christians gave vent to their lust for murder. Not a child escaped the murderers. The streets of Jerusalem were strewn with the bodies of men and women and the dismembered limbs of infants, to the extent that they became impassable ...”

So writes Albert of Aachen.

The Crusaders had a rule: Anyone who seizes a house and hangs his coat-of-arms upon it, acquires it. The Crusaders therefore went through the City and killed everyone on their way. They affixed escutcheons testifying to their heroism, on the gate. These were the soldiers of the religion of love, compassion and mercy.

Forty thousand persons were massacred. When the murder came to an end, the Crusaders entered the Holy Sepulchre, their hands dripping with the blood of their victims, to offer thanks to their God, whose son suffered upon the Cross in order to redeem all humanity from suffering, and so that love only should prevail upon Earth. Tancred himself, the knight clothed in romantic glory, robs the Dome of the Rock mosque of gold and silver articles, ruthlessly killing all who chanced his way.

The governor, Ifthihar Adwalla, capitulates in the Tower of David to Raymond of Toulon. The Crusaders allow him and the remnants of his men to flee to Ashkelon, without food or weapons.

Again Jews were forbidden to enter Jerusalem, and the Moslems were designated second-class citizens, to be kept alive in order to till the soil and provide food to their masters. Gottfried of Bouillon, the “perfect knight” is chosen as ruler. It is improper for man of flesh and blood to assume the crown of King of Jerusalem. He therefore contents himself with the title of “Defender of the Holy Sepulchre”.

The Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem is established.

Judah Halevi will lament half-a-century later:

Edom was at home in my palace

And the hands of Arabs ruled and bled me ...

SALADIN

1187 — Conquest of Jerusalem by Saladin

The Crusaders are masters of their fortresses.

The knights of the Kingdom of Jerusalem tried to transfer to the Holy Land the complete system of feudal law and custom which existed in Europe.

The Crusaders were however few in an ocean of hostile populace. Brave wandering knights, clothed in armour, actuated by high or base motives, were men of war, not men of land and earth who strike roots for permanent dwelling. After all, this was no Return to Zion. They were bereft of a consciousness of homeland.

In the ninety years during which the Christians ruled Jerusalem — the days of the First Kingdom of Jerusalem — the Mohammedans never gave up their efforts to recapture the land. They made sorties out of Ashkelon from time to time, and even reached the walls of Jerusalem; and at times the battles raged far away from Jerusalem's walls. During all these years, she herself was not involved in the wars.

Gottfried, Defender of the Holy Sepulchre, dies. His brother Baldwin expels from Jerusalem all rivals who seek to ascend the Throne of Jerusalem. He is impervious to the sensibilities which had actuated Gottfried, the Perfect Knight who refrained from putting the crown of Jerusalem upon the head of man of flesh and blood, even his own flesh and his own blood. Baldwin is master of Jerusalem for 18 years. He extends the borders of the Kingdom and strengthens its economic and political base.

The clashes with the Moslems continue all his life, with alternating victories and defeats. Only an adventurous knight of his type, a courageous and arrogant Christian, could meet 20,000 Fatimid soldiers with a force of only 200 cavalry — and get away from the battlefield alive. On another occasion, when Baldwin hurriedly lifts the siege which he had laid on Tyre, and transfers his army to Tiberias, which is assailed by Turkish forces — the Egyptians attack the Judean plains from the south, through Ashkelon, and the momentum of their thrust carries them to the walls of Jerusalem. Inexplicably, they withdraw.

Truth to tell: The Crusaders build Jerusalem, extensively and beautifully. Baldwin tries to restore the ruined city, to ease the tax burden on commerce, to revive the ailing economy of the City. He also

endeavours to settle Christians from the Gilead mountains in the City, in order to augment the number of the Christian inhabitants somewhat. When he dies, his successors follow in his footsteps. They try to develop commerce in the City. Jews are again permitted to reside in Jerusalem. They buy the concession to dye fabrics, and Jewish pilgrims commence again to arrive from the ends of the earth. One of the pilgrims was Rabbi Judah Halevi. Unconfirmed tradition has it that he did indeed arrive in Jerusalem and that here he was trampled to death by a horseman, before he could answer Zion's question — how were her captives faring. The horseman was an Ishmaelite, in spite of the Christian rule. Even if it is a legend, it is true, as though it had occurred in 1920 or 1929. Since the Psalm "On the rivers of Babylon", there never was a song of love and longing for Jerusalem as Halevi's, as if all the chants of his ancestors the Levites, who sang in choir on the steps of the Temple, converged in his soul. Some legends are truer than "fact".

After the heyday of the glory of the Kingdom of Jerusalem, comes its decline, the disintegration of the rule of the knights. There are wars of succession, and the Moslems from the north seize regions of the kingdom. The principality of Edessa falls to Nuri ed-Din.

Throughout Europe the churchbells peal: The Holy Kingdom of Jerusalem is in danger! The time has come for a second Crusade!

Conrad, King of Germany, Louis VII of France, and their knights — take wives, mistresses and a giant entourage, and set forth again to save the Holy Places.

It seems as if in the great excitement they almost forgot to take along their armies. The new Crusaders are beset by innumerable adversities. The Moslems cause trouble, the numerous squabbles between the Crusaders are confounding, and flaming love affairs in the atmosphere of the enchanted East hinder — and the second Crusade disintegrates at the walls of Damascus. Ayoub, Saladin's father, defeats them on the battlefield, their enthusiasm wanes, and they return to Europe, to their own countries, which to them are not a Diaspora.

The knights of the Kingdom of Jerusalem are again isolated. To compound their isolation — there is the war between Baldwin II and his mother, Millicent. First they propose to divide the kingdom between them, with Jerusalem going to the mother, but shortly thereafter Baldwin changes his mind, and proceeds with his army to Jerusalem to imprison his mother in David's Tower. All the while the Church clashes in Jerusalem with the various orders of chivalry which have been established in the City. There are excommunications and counter-excommunications, and between bans and the war of a son

against his mother, the Turks storm Jerusalem. Baldwin and his knights repel them, with the aid of the local population — and return to business as usual.

Baldwin II is the first "Sabra" Crusader king of Jerusalem. Near the Hula lake he suffers a devastating defeat at the hands of the Moslems of Nuri ed-Din, and the king escapes by the skin of his teeth. The Moslems follow in hot pursuit, and even the walls of Jerusalem cannot protect him, for this time the citizens of Jerusalem open the gates before the Moslems without a fight.

The Crusader kingdom crumbles away, and the Arab kingdom goes from strength to strength. The Fatimid Caliphs are deposed in Egypt, and on the horizon appears Islam's greatest warrior — Saladin, Sultan of Egypt.

Saladin, son of Kurdistan, a devout and exacting Moslem, a courageous and fine soldier, strives to unify all Arabs, a rare act indeed.

His adversary is Baldwin IV, a lad of fourteen, a hapless leper, king of Crusader Jerusalem.

A series of battles, peace treaties, and, following upon them — further battles, and again an armistice. The obstinacy and stamina displayed by Baldwin IV and a handful of his knights are somewhat surprising. And then Renaud de Châtillon, who is in charge of the eastern fortresses, decides to break a fresh armistice, make a sortie to Akaba, and from there, by boat, he reaches the coast of Hedjaz and the Holy Cities. Not one Christian comes back alive from this campaign, and Saladin is afforded the excuse for the decisive war against the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem. Baldwin IV dies in Jerusalem, Baldwin V is murdered, Guy de Lusignan mounts the throne.

The Crusaders are disunited by conflicts of authority, jealousy and corruption. Saladin announces a Jihad, and Guy de Lusignan ignores the counsel of Raymond of Tripoli (who has just betrayed his king) and he transports his armies in the sweltering summer of 1187 to the Valley of Tiberias. It is a powerful army — in Crusader terms of that period — 2,000 knights on horseback, 8,000 infantry, many archers and spearthrowers, and members of the military orders — the cream of the Crusader army. They camp outside Zippori. In stifling heat they move their army in between the Horns of Hittin. Saladin plans his battle wisely. He sets the grass aflame and thereby prevents access to the springs and wells. With his light forces he wins the most decisive victory in the history of all the wars with Crusaders: The power of the Crusaders is broken in the battle of the Horns of Hittin. The king of Jerusalem is taken captive by the Moslems. The Horns of Hittin become a symbol

among the Arabs.

After that, the fall of Jerusalem is merely a matter of time. In his march southward, Saladin does not stop to reduce cities offering stubborn opposition; they will fall into his hands later as a matter of course, when most of the country will be his. After capturing Ashkelon on the fourth of September, two months after the battle of the Horns of Hittin — he moves against Jerusalem.

The Crusader fortifications along the way fall swiftly. The monastery at Nebi Samuel, the Church of St. Lazar at Ben-Ania, the churches on the Mount of Olives and in the Valley of Jehosaphat, the Church of Mary on Mount Zion and the Church of Gethsemane — all easily slip into his hands. On the twentieth of September Saladin completes the encirclement of the City.

As always occurs in times of siege, the City is crowded. Christian refugees swarm in from all corners of the collapsing kingdom. Some estimates put their figure in excess of one hundred thousand. There they assemble, without a flicker of hope for aid from the outside. In their midst there are five thousand captives, mostly Mohammedans, but also a good number of Christians — Eastern Christians, Greeks, Armenians, Jacobites, whose hatred for the Frankish Crusaders even exceeds their fear of Saladin.

Rumours spread in the City that the Melekites, (one of the Christian Orthodox sects), have conspired against the Crusaders and have sent emissaries to the Moslem general, to assist him in conquering the City. Rumour further has it that a spy has come from Saladin's camp, laden with coin, to bribe the guards upon the walls; his name is cited: Joseph Albattite, a Melekite.

In the City itself — there are no knights to defend it! The knights of the garrison and the king's knights lie dead in the fields of the Horns of Hittin. The City's king, Guy de Lusignan, is in the captivity of Saladin. The City fathers therefore turn to the most respected amongst them.

Who are the City fathers? Junior Templar and Hospiteleri commanders, and Patriarch Heraclius, whose debauchery and liaison with Pasca De-Riveri, another man's wife, is as notorious as his evasion of service in the Crusader army at the Horns of Hittin. Who is the highest ranking member of the Crusader nobility in the City? It is Ballian D'Avilin who made a miraculous escape from the carnage of Hittin and managed to reach Jerusalem. Ballian assumes command, which is only a burden at this historical juncture, and though Sybil, the wife of the King of Jerusalem, is there, and she ranks senior by the Rules of Chivalry, Ballian reigns for a moment in history. The number of

knights in the City is ... two. Ballian is obliged to administer the oath of chivalry to the fifteen-year old sons of the knights. The sons of the well-to-do middle-class of Jerusalem, who are not aristocrats, are sworn in too, they put on over-large armour and go forth to the city walls, to defend holy Jerusalem from the thousands of Moslem warriors of Saladin.

For the first week of the siege, the adversaries are still balanced. At first Saladin attempts to penetrate the Citadel, the Tower of David. The walls are fortified, however, and the moat is deep. Ballian melts the plated gold from the doors of the Holy Sepulchre, and the fabulous coin collection of Henri II, (which had been placed for safekeeping in the hands of the Hospiteleri), and mints new gold coins, to raise the spirits of the soldiers in the forefront of the hottest battle. The Christians even attempt to sally out of the City and to attack the Moslem regiments in the area of Kubeida, but on the twenty-fifth of September, Saladin concentrates the main thrust against the northern wall, the weak point of the City walls throughout the ages, and he mounts a frontal attack against the wall, from the "New Gate" up to the "Stork Tower" at the northeastern corner of the wall.

Forty catapults are constructed. Their ranges are set in accordance with intelligence transmitted by Moslem scouts on the Mount of Olives. Saladin encamps opposite the Flower Gate (Herod's Gate) of today. From there he sends out his diggers, under cover of shield-bearers and archers, to go down into the moat and to undermine the forward wall, and after that — to dig deep under the foundations of the main wall, near the spot where the Crusaders pierced the wall eighty-eight years earlier.

The situation of the besieged is desperate. None of the mercenaries will volunteer to take up positions in the dangerous section of the wall, even if the king of Jerusalem will double their pay. The besieged commanders in the City ask to negotiate. At first Saladin rejects their plea — contrary to his practice with other towns. He wishes to follow the precedent — breach, capture and massacre — of the Crusader conquest of the City. The besieged threaten to fight to the death, to kill thousands of Mohammedan prisoners in the City and to destroy the mosques on the Temple Mount. The Moslem Emirs press Saladin to accept the surrender of the City. Once it has capitulated, all its inhabitants shall be captives who will be redeemed for ransom. Tedious negotiations proceed on the price. An anonymous Crusader, author of "The Conquest of Palestine" bewails bitterly: "Have we ever read that the Jews abandoned the Holy of Holies without bloodshed and bitter

battles, that they yielded it up of their free will? May the accursed merchants who willingly sold the Holy City and the Messiah, perish!" It is evident that the writer did not perceive the difference between the meaning of Jerusalem to the Jews and its meaning to the Christians. The prices per Christian head were: 10 "Byzants" for a male, 5 "Byzants" per female, 2 per child.

October 2nd, 1187. The gates of the city are opened before Saladin. The Christian heads are counted. The rich ransom themselves and leave hurriedly. The pious Patriarch Heraclius whom we have already met, does nothing to redeem his poor co-religionists. He loads the treasure of his church on the wagons at his disposal, and escapes to Tyre. Forty days later, the Moslems transport fifteen thousand prisoners who have not been redeemed, for labour in the Islamic towns. Refugees from Jerusalem wander throughout the Eastern Christian world, and their co-religionists oppress and exploit them.

The Mohammedans purge the City of the crosses and statues. The churches revert again to mosques, again Jews are permitted to enter the gates of Jerusalem and to dwell therein.

Eighty-eight years of the first Crusader kingdom have come to an end.

As for the Jews, in the manner of Jews: They live in expectation of great happenings. But the great happenings did not come to pass. Maimonides produces at that time, in Fustat, outside Cairo, the "Yad Hahazaka" (The Mighty Hand), code of laws for the sovereign Jewish kingdom soon to be reborn. There are rumours of contacts with and promises by Saladin. Some small improvement does occur. As Al-Harizi put it: Since the Ishmaelites have conquered her, Israelites have settled her. The Jewish community is re-established in Jerusalem, and Saladin even issues a proclamation to the Jews, as reported by the Poet in "Tachkemoni", "And God blessed the soul of the Ishmaelite king in the 4950th Year of Creation (1190 C.E.), and a spirit of wisdom and bravery inspired him; he came up with all his host from Egypt, and besieged Jerusalem, and God delivered her into his hands, and he proclaimed throughout the City, to young and old as follows: Bid Jerusalem take heart, all of the seed of Ephraim who are dispersed at the ends of earth, may return to her". The proclamation was made. The seed of Ephraim did not come, nor did the seed of Judah. Not yet.

"KINGDOM OF JERUSALEM" SANS JERUSALEM
1191 — 1291

The most prominent kings of Europe lead the third Crusade. Friedrich Barbarossa, Emperor of Germany is accompanied by 200,000 knights; and he resolves to meet face to face with Saladin: "On the first of November 1189, in the plain of Zo'an, by the grace of the reviving Cross and in the name of the true Joseph". Unfortunately for Barbarossa, he was killed in an armed scuffle near the border of Armenia (some say that he simply drowned in the Kalik-Adanus River in Asia Minor), and his vast army turned back. Only a few thousand reached the battlefields of the Holy Land.

The two other European kings who bore the Cross were Philippe of France and Richard Coeur-de-Lion. Many noblemen, with their armies join them, and arrive by sea. They come in waves, and deploy opposite the walls of Acre. After a prolonged siege — the city falls. Acre will be the capital of the second Crusader kingdom, which will last for one hundred years on the coastal strip.

It would have been natural for the formidable forces of the Crusaders to march on Jerusalem. Was that not the object for which they had come? Friction and disputes in the Crusader camp delayed the march. The kings of Europe first had to settle their differences, and only then would they be ready to turn to the war against the Mohammedans.

Philippe, King of France, is dissatisfied with the manner in which affairs of state are administered, and from the method of appointment of functionaries in "The Latin Kingdom of Jerusalem" (at that time Jerusalem appeared only in its name, she herself was in Islamic hands), and shortly after the capture of Acre he returns to Europe. Richard Coeur-de-Lion assumes supreme command of all Crusader forces.

It takes Richard two months, after the fall of Acre, to marshal his forces. The Crusaders enjoy *la dolce vita* in Acre; departure therefrom is painful.

The march is not at all a walkover. They move in the direction of Jaffa, along the coast, the vessels of the Crusader fleet securing their right flank. Saladin's troops harass their left flank. A heavy clash takes place near Arsuf, between the Crusader army and Saladin's forces, and the Moslems are sorely defeated; one of Saladin's few setbacks.

The road to Jerusalem is open — at least so it appears to be. The

Crusader troops tarry on the coastal plain. Quarrels within the Crusader camp halt operations, and Saladin exploits the delay in the Crusader camp to reorganise his beaten army, and to scorch the earth in the plain and mountain regions of Judea. He demolishes all the fortresses on the coastal plain and in the mountain approaches, to prevent their being used as bases by the Crusaders.

Richard Coeur-de-Lion is at the fortress of Jaffa. The Crusaders build small forts along the road from Jaffa to Lod, in order to secure their supply route, for the ultimate march on Jerusalem, but Saladin employs his time to greater advantage. He strengthens the defences of Jerusalem, reinforces his army and reorganises it. Henceforth, he will avoid direct confrontation with the Crusaders, and will wear them down in a long series of skirmishes, in the course of which villages and towns are razed, crops are destroyed and water sources are blocked. The Crusaders will not have the means and resources to rebuild the country; they will depend entirely upon supplies from Europe.

The Crusaders bide their time in Jaffa, enjoying the bounty of the land and of the daughters of Jaffa. Their momentum is lost. When the army finally starts to move, it is overtaken by torrential winter rains at Beit Nuba, near Latrun. In the drenched Crusader army, the old disputes flare up as to how power will be wielded in Jerusalem, once it is captured, and once the main force shall have returned to Europe. There are also differences regarding the timing of the offensive against Jerusalem. The army therefore withdraws to Jaffa in January 1192, to winter there.

If there is not fighting, one can negotiate. There are contacts between Richard Coeur-de-Lion and El-Malik El-Adel, Saladin's brother. At first Richard demands all the areas which were in Crusader hands before the battle of Hittin. Gradually, however, he moderates his claim. At one stage, a compromise is suggested à la style of the knights of Europe: El-Malik El-Adel would marry Jane (Johanna), widow of the king of Sicily, sister of Richard Coeur-de-Lion, and the happy couple would be the sovereign rulers of the lands of the kingdom of Jerusalem. The only question left open was whether the Moslem would convert to Christianity, or the Christian queen would turn Moslem ...

The negotiations end in deadlock. The squabbles in the Crusader camp intensify. In England, a revolt breaks out against Richard, and his heart, the Lion's Heart, is in England, not in Jaffa. Jerusalem grows farther and farther away. In a last effort to marshal his men for the conquest of Jerusalem, Richard captures the Southern Fortress on the coastal plain. He thereby establishes the boundaries of his Crusader

kingdom from Tyre till the Southern Fortress. For a period, the quarrelling Crusader factions unite again. Ashkelon, Beit Guvrin, Latrun, Yalu, Beit Nuba, on the threshold of Jerusalem. At Beit Nuba — there is once again a delay of three weeks. They await reinforcements. Richard does not want to take risks. He waits for the contingents of Henri of Champagne, which are due to arrive from Acre. He awaits supplies, and equipment. In the meantime, his forces make sorties into the villages on the mountain crest, to forage for food. The Crusaders arrive as close to Jerusalem as Abu Ghosh and Colonia, just a few miles from the City; they are close enough to see it. In Jerusalem too there is tumult. There are bitter disputes between the Emirs and Saladin, and a mass flight from the City. What better opportunity to storm the city and conquer it?

Apparently, however, somewhere in Celestial Jerusalem it was ordained that Richard Coeur-de-Lion would not capture Terrestrial Jerusalem. He obtains additional and unexpected resources in the form of treasures of gold, silver and valuable goods which fall into his hands when his troops capture a gigantic caravan coming from Egypt. Why does he not mount the assault?

The French contingent presses to start the offensive. Richard vacillates. There might be difficulties in penetrating the defences. The familiar hesitation. Should he fail, will not his enemies in England exploit the setback? Richard can afford the luxury of biding his time. He cannot afford defeat on the battlefield.

The representatives of the Templars, Hospiteleri, the French forces and the barons of the Holy Land, convene, and resolve ... to retreat. On the Fourth of July, exactly five years after the battle of Hittin, the Crusaders withdraw from Jerusalem, defeated, without a fight; again, if there is no war, why not negotiate?

Each party is aware of its adversary's weakness. Neither party will withdraw of course from its declared position, but who will rule in Jerusalem? Two robbers brawling over the loot ...

In a letter, Saladin explains Jerusalem's importance to him: "Jerusalem is as dear to us as it is to you, and its importance to us is greater than it is to you. For it is the site of the night flight of our Prophet to the heavens, and a meeting-place of the angels. Therefore do not imagine for a moment that we shall give her up. The Moslems would not tolerate our relinquishing it. As for the land, it belongs to us, and you have succeeded in occupying it only because of the weakness of the Moslems who were there at the time".

A further Moslem attempt to alter the situation in the field by the

establishment of military facts: They make a sortie to Jaffa and almost succeed in capturing it. They fail, however, and a peace treaty is signed. (It lasts three years and three months). The new Crusader kingdom stretches from Tyre to Jaffa, with an enclave in Lod and Ramla. The Christians are granted the right of pilgrimage to Jerusalem free of toll, but unarmed.

On October 3rd, 1192, Richard departs in a red vessel from the port of Acre to European shores. So ends the third Crusade. The second "Kingdom of Jerusalem" sans Jerusalem, not even in possession of part of the City, as was the situation of the State of Israel during its first nineteen years.

Thenceforth, two truncated kingdoms face one another, sparring against each other, too weak to tip the scales. From time to time a movement arises in Europe to resume the Crusades. From time to time a few knights reach the shores of the Holy Land. From time to time the squabbling heirs of Saladin unite for a short period, but on the whole no significant changes occur in the boundaries of the Crusader kingdom of Jerusalem.

In 1223, after suffering a defeat in Egypt, the "King of Jerusalem", Jean de Briand goes to meet the Pope and Frederick II, Emperor of Germany. The meeting takes place in Italy and results in Frederick marrying Isabelle, the ten-year old daughter of the pauper "King of Jerusalem". Once married to the heiress, all he has to do is conquer the kingdom given in dowry. However, it happens to be occupied at the time by Moslems.

For many years, for centuries, the title "King of Jerusalem" will be an adjunct to a long list of titles of sundry European kings. It is not unlikely that to this day heirs to the title still wander from casino to casino in the cities of Europe.

The child queen soon died, but the widower, Frederick II, has already set his heart on wearing the crown of Jerusalem. The City's ruler at that time is Sultan Al-Kamel; with the aid of his brother, ruler of Damascus, he dismantles the walls of Jerusalem, to prevent their serving as shelter to the Frankish armies. It transpires, however, that Kamel and Frederick have many common other interests: Poetry, geometry, philosophy and young dancers. As a result, their differences are settled without a real battle. More serious disputes arise between Frederick II and the Pope. The German Emperor prepares the ground while still in Europe, for his domination of the "Kingdom of Jerusalem". He will not agree to be an instrument in the hands of the Pope or the barons of the Holy Land. The Pope orders him not to set

forth for the Holy Land. Frederick ignores him. He departs upon a further Crusade, this time without the Cross. If there can be a kingdom of Jerusalem sans Jerusalem, why not a Crusade sans Cross?

He reaches Jaffa at the head of 600 of his knights. Without much ado, following an exchange of letters, gifts and dancing-girls, the Treaty of Jaffa is signed on February 20th, 1229. In accordance therewith, the kingdom of the Crusaders, which now includes also additional regions of Galilee and a corridor to Jerusalem, devolves upon Frederick, independent of any relationship with the Church.

Frederick crowns himself King of Jerusalem at the Holy Sepulchre. He performs the coronation himself, as no high-ranking cleric will dare to disregard the Pope's ban on Frederick II. We witness Jerusalem returning to the bosom of Christendom, which rejected her.

Frederick II returns to Europe to continue his feud with the Pope, and in the Holy Land remain only pale shadows of the Crusader conquerors of distant days of glory. The astonishing weakness of the Moslem enemies of the Kingdom of Jerusalem is the only explanation of its survival in these days of decline and fall.

In Jerusalem — a war of bells versus muezzins, of the Holy Sepulchre against the Dome of the Rock, hatred leading to no decisive solution.

In 1239 Jerusalem slips out of Crusader hands again. In any case they had all but forgotten her in their interminable quarrelling on the coastal plain. The new ruler of Jerusalem speedily demolishes "David's Citadel", inhabited by the Christians in Jerusalem, but when the City reverts to Egyptian domination, the Egyptians bring back the Christians.

In 1241 waves of Crusaders arrive again, with Richard of Cornwall and Tiveau of Champagne and they succeed in temporarily extending the borders of the kingdom, including the widening of the narrow corridor to Jerusalem, and the area to the east — down to the Jordan.

Till the Huwarizmi arrive.

Genghis Khan bursts through from Mongolia and repulses the Huwarizmi, a kingdom astride Syria's eastern and northern borders. The Huwarizmi were the vanguard of the approaching Mongolian invasion. Wherever they went, they sowed chaos and destruction. Arabs and Crusaders alike sought their favour and endeavoured to involve them in their wars. But like a mighty wave, unharnessed and with no long-term strategy, the Huwarizmi flood the vast expanses of the Middle East. Barkah Khan, their leader, is opposed by an alliance of Moslems and Crusaders, and easily overcomes it. He sweeps through

Galilee and the Judean Hills and storms ahead towards Jerusalem. From the direction of Mount Zion he advances on the City, the defences of which were only partially restored after the previous turmoil. A Christian sally against him ends in the death of the last Christian governor of Jerusalem, the last, that is to say, until a **British** High Commissioner enters its gates, but he happened (?) to be a Jew ...

The Christian populace does not wait for help which might possibly arrive from Crusaders on the coast or from the rulers of Egypt. Thousands abandon the City by night, leaving behind the old, children and the sick, who cannot escape. The Huwarizmi penetrate the City, slaughtering everyone in their path. They unfurl Christian banners upon the walls and toll the City bells. The thousands of refugees, who conclude that reinforcements have arrived, return; not one of them eludes the trap. The Huwarizmi destroy, pillage and kill on a scale Jerusalem has not known for many a year. The graves of the Crusader kings are broken into and plundered. Marble floors are ripped up, and everything which is removable is carried away.

When utter destruction is complete — the Huwarizmi depart. What have they to do here? They had neither king nor sanctuary here, neither Messiah nor prophet, not even in legend or dream. Whatever is movable has been seized, the rest is demolished, and they vanish. They also disappear from history.

The Moslem and Christian army which faces the Huwarizmi (and their allies for the time being — the Egyptians) is smashed to smithereens at Gaza. The Huwarizmi have, however, lost interest in the plundered and ruined City, and they vanish. The ruins remain in Egyptian hands; the Christians are dispossessed.

In 1260, the wave driving the Huwarizmi forward, arrives. The Mongols themselves appear on the scene. Hulagu Khan, grandson of Ghenghis Khan, conquers all of Syria and forges southward. The Mongols are just as cruel as the Huwarizmi, but are more civilised. They are cognisant of the wisdom of the West and of its spiritual values. At the Court of Hulagu Khan there are many Christian and Jewish advisers, Jewish physicians and Jewish astrologers. Georgian and Christian regiments assist the Mongols, and missionaries are active in the Mongol camp, hoping to gain through them control over the whole of the Holy Land.

The inhabitants of Jerusalem flee once more. Again, the City is looted and whatever has been restored is again levelled.

Finally, Baibars "the Archer", who represents the tyrant dominating Egypt at that time, confronts the Mongols and defeats their army at Ein

Harod.

Upon his return to Egypt from this victory, he also slays his master, and seizes power over Egypt and Palestine.

In 1262 he mounts a ruthless campaign against the Christians, and within six years he captures all the Christian centres, he demolishes all the churches and fortresses and gains control of the entire land.

Only Acre and Tyre remain in Crusader hands.

In 1291 Acre falls, and with it the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem comes to an end.

The Jews see in these events proof that the City is ordained to them alone. About twenty years before the demise of the Crusader kingdom, and in the midst of the wars between nations and tribes from East and West, Rabbi Moses Ben-Nachman (Nachmanides) arrives in Jerusalem, to renew Jewish life and the study of the Torah therein. He concludes his commentary on the Torah with these words: —

“This day I have seen in thee holiness and bitter reality. I have found in thee a persecuted Jew, a painter, oppressed in great pain ... I have compared thee, Mother, to a woman whose infant has died in her arms, whose milk in her breasts causes her anguish and she suckles puppies. And yet all lovers have deserted thee and thy enemies have become desolate through thee ... The rich and fat land is sorely neglected, for they do not deserve thee, and thou art not meant for them ...”

He further says: —

“Our Land shall not tolerate our enemies. Since we have been exiled, she has not accepted any people or race. They all endeavour to inhabit her, to no avail ...”

Why should not the Sages of Israel feel so, when before their very eyes, within a relatively short period, Jerusalem is swept by Frenchmen, Arabs, Germans, Arabs again, Seljuks, Italians, Turkomans, Englishmen, Mongols, Spaniards, Huwarizmi, Scots and Tatars.

This imbues Nachmanides with hope and faith: Jerusalem awaits her sons.

The relatively large Aliya of three hundred French rabbis around 1200 is not to Jerusalem. Acre is the centre. From there settlements spread in the following generations to Galilee. Jerusalem continues to wait.

VIS A VIS SAFAD AND SHABBETAI ZVI

The expulsion of the Jews from Spain on the one hand, and the conquest by the Turks, on the other, brought about far-reaching and favourable transformations as far as the Jewish inhabitants of the country were concerned, in contrast to the situation under the Egyptian-Mameluke regime which was neither beneficial to the Jewish community nor to the country as a whole.

Surprisingly, however, it was not Jerusalem but Safad which became a spiritual centre, and not of Eretz-Israel alone, but for the communities in the Diaspora. In Safad shone the luminaries whose light continued to diffuse for centuries thereafter, to the most distant dispersions. Suffice it to mention two monumental creations: The Shulhan Aruch of Rabbi Joseph Karo and the Kabbala of the Ari.

Why not Jerusalem? It is not that she stood aloof, but that she stood vis à vis and — to an extent — in opposition.

Galilee occupied an important niche in the history of Jewish learning after the failure of the Bar-Kochba Revolt. The Sanhedrin moved north. The centre in Tiberias developed in particular. In the days of the Arab rule, till the arrival of the Crusaders, Tiberias returned the spiritual hegemony to Jerusalem, where the Ge'on Yaacov Yeshiva was established. However, the Crusaders utterly destroyed the Jewish community in Jerusalem. What caused the ascendancy of Safad as an important centre? Some seek economic explanation — its location between the northern coastal plain and the two flourishing towns of Damascus and Aleppo. It is noteworthy that in the 16th Century a Jewish textile industry develops in Safad, mainly by exiles from Spain. However, it was not the industry which attained renown in Jewish history, but the spiritual achievement, though the material prosperity certainly contributed to the advancement of Torah. Some say, and painters in our time agree, that the enchantment of the climate and scenery of Safad, proved irresistible to intellectuals generally, and in particular to the mystics and poets.

But we are talking of Jerusalem, not of Safad. We have mentioned Safad only to explain why fewer immigrants from Spain, the finest immigrants of that period, settled in Jerusalem.

The famous Cabbalist from Spain, Rabbi Abraham Halevi, comes to Jerusalem. He arouses Messianic hopes. He sees in Christianity the

mortal enemy of Judaism. The capture of Constantinople by the Turks (1453) is to him evidence of the approaching Redemption. From time to time he is obliged to postpone the year of deliverance, as were seers before and after him, but the ferment constantly increased, and reached a high pitch with the conquest of the country by the Ottoman army.

One of the foremost among those who foretold the advent of the Messiah was David Hareuveni. He was a thinker of merit and attained a certain degree of political success. Before proceeding to Rome, he stops over in Jerusalem, where — masquerading as an Arab — he spends days and nights in the Dome of the Rock. The crescent — originally a Turkish, not an Arabian, symbol — revolved several times. This was a sign that the Redemption was close at hand. Unlike Abraham Halevi, however, Hareuveni envisages the Redemption as a matter of real-politik, even of military action, and not with the support of Moslem Constantinople, but ... of Christian Rome. Most astonishing: Yet there is more sense in this about-turn than there is in the about-turn of the crescent over the Dome of the Rock. It is not fortuitous that an immigrant from Catholic Spain sees Islam as the deliverer, while David Hareuveni, whose origin is in an Arab land, sees Islam and the Arabs as the enemy, and conceives of a military alliance with Rome to liberate Eretz-Israel.

In retrospect, today, we are all wise: We know that both hopes were false. In recent times, in any case, when to an extent the theory of David Hareuveni regarding a compact with a Christian state — England — against Turkey, did materialise, it was not religion which was the determining factor, but international considerations.

The Sages of Jerusalem were far from happy with ideas such as David Hareuveni's, for they dwelt in Jerusalem. The Jews of Jerusalem will find themselves in a similar situation also during Bonaparte's campaign, when he proclaims the return of Jerusalem to the Jews, and again during the First World War, when England was fighting Turkey.

The Rabbi of Jerusalem in David Hareuveni's time was Rabbi Levi Ibn-Haviv. He was vigorously opposed to these plans, whether because of his having personally undergone the horrors of the Inquisition, or because of his concern for the fate of the Jews of Jerusalem upon its becoming known that a Jew is mobilising an army and is soliciting cannon of Portugal, with the Pope's support, for the purpose of liberating Jerusalem (in 1523).

Rabbi Levi Ibn-Haviv writes of Hareuveni's plan: —

"In the days of the tidings of fools and liars, may they perish, had I not been then in this Holy City, may she speedily be redeemed, and had I not, with gentle persuasion calmed the people and influenced them,

Jerusalem would have been bereft of all Jews, leaving not even a minyan. This is known to all".

In addition, however, to this external political struggle, the Rabbi of Jerusalem became embroiled in another clash, with the rabbis of flourishing Safad, flourishing both materially and spiritually.

In 1524, the very year in which David Hareuveni attained spectacular success at the Holy See with regard to a Christian-Jewish alliance, an exile from Spain, Rabbi Jacob Beirav, settles in Safad. Truth to tell, he had intended to expound the Torah in Jerusalem, but at that time she was in continuous decline. The self-same Ottoman regime whose gates are open wide to receive the exiles from Spain, actuated as it is by sound political and economic considerations, does not view with favour Jews streaming naturally, or perhaps out of super-natural love and hope, to the Holy City. This is yet another explanation of Safad's ascendancy over Jerusalem. Rabbi Jacob Beirav is not content with the establishment of a centre of Torah in Safad. Whether because of his Messianic expectations or practical needs — Halachic complications relating to Marannos who seek to return to Judaism — Rabbi Jacob proposes the renewal of Semiha, the conferment of rabbinical titles, in other words the re-establishment of the Sanhedrin. In 1538 he convenes in Safad a large assembly of the leading rabbis of Safad and announces the resumption of Semiha.

A storm erupts. The rabbis of Jerusalem, under Rabbi Levi Ibn-Haviv voice their opposition. One of the reasons, which is the relevant one to the subject of this book, is the supremacy of Jerusalem. How dare the rabbis of Safad establish a Halachic historical act of the first order without consulting the rabbis of Jerusalem, and how not in Jerusalem? Quite possibly, the rabbis of Jerusalem feared the political implications of the establishment of a Sanhedrin, lest the authorities in Constantinople look upon it as a stage in Jewish expansion, and would hinder the growing community.

Jerusalem won. In any event, she succeeded in thwarting the attempt to re-establish the Sanhedrin. She did not succeed in preventing, nor did she seek to prevent, the continued spiritual ascendancy of Safad. Rabbi Joseph Karo, author of the Shulhan Aruch, succeeded Rabbi Jacob Beirav as Rabbi of Safad. In the seventies, another great luminary of a different kind came to Safad: The Holy Ari, a native son of Jerusalem.

Again a setback to Jerusalem? Yes indeed, but as always, only a temporary one. Many were Jerusalem's rivals throughout the world, many were its declines, but the wonder is: Ultimately, she prevails over them all.

Indirectly, as if through secret paths, Jewish Jerusalem was put to a grievous test, rooted in Safad. The mysticism of the Ari in Safad gave rise to the movement of Shabbetai Zvi. He appeared in Jerusalem before his "revelation", even though undoubtedly already then the conviction stirred in his soul that he was destined to be the Messiah of Israel. The rabbis of Jerusalem welcomed him cordially, despite certain strange aspects of his behaviour. They even appointed him an emissary to Egypt, to solicit contributions for the Yeshivot of Jerusalem. Subsequently, upon his "revelation" in Gaza, with the assistance of his prophet, Nathan of Gaza, the people of Jerusalem joked: He left as an emissary (Shaliach) and returned a messiah (Mashiach) ...

The rabbis of Jerusalem, who used to admonish him during the two years that he dwelt in their City, for bizarre behaviour, which did not yet amount to sin, did not accept of course the announcement of his messianism. When they learned that he had appointed Rabbi Najarah of Gaza as High Priest, even though he was not a Cohen at all, and that the two were coming to Jerusalem at the head of a festive convoy, to be crowned in Jerusalem, the coronation to include the bringing of a sacrifice on the Temple Mount, they tore their garments as when the Name is desecrated, and sought to prevent him from doing so: "Why do you wish to subject Israel to slaughter and why endanger God's People, Heaven forbid". The choice of words show that the rabbis of Jerusalem were not only troubled by the Halachic problem of ascent to the Temple Mount, but also by anxiety that the Ottoman authorities might interpret this as an affront to the Moslem holy site, fears similar to those existing today, even under Israeli Jewish rule, regarding ascent to the Temple Mount, in addition to Halachic reservations. The rabbis also reported the matter to the Turkish authorities ... Upon learning of the sharp opposition of the rabbis of Jerusalem, Shabbetai Zvi avoided a confrontation with them, and cried in anguish: "Woe! It (presumably: the Redemption) was near and has receded". Nevertheless, he appeared in Jerusalem, was arraigned before the Kadi, either for his attempt to enter the Temple Mount, or for not handing over the funds which he had collected. The Kadi released him, and even permitted him to hold a demonstration, to ride a horse (this was forbidden to Jews) and to circle the City seven times in green vestments. Had he been content with these royal gestures, all would have been well. The rabbis of Jerusalem would not have reacted, particularly since the acts had been performed with the sanction of the authorities, lawfully — as we would say today. But when Shabbetai Zvi sought to prove his messianism through his power to permit that which is forbidden, as by allowing some of his believers who came with him from Gaza, or joined him in Jerusalem, to eat

prohibited fats, the Guardians of the Walls were shocked, and they excommunicated him. The rabbis who imposed the ban included Kabbalists, followers of the Ari, among them the most respected of Jerusalem's rabbis, Rabbi Jacob Hagiz, the teacher of Nathan of Gaza, the prophet who crowned Shabbetai Zvi. Shabbetai Zvi was driven out of Jerusalem, and his excommunicators also informed the rabbis of Egypt, Gaza and Constantinople of the ostracism. Moreover, permission was given to kill him: "The man who propagates these novelties is a rebel against the Torah, and anyone who kills him will be deemed a saver of many lives, and the hand first lifted against him will be blessed by God and man".

He was driven from Jerusalem between the Seventeenth of Tamuz — after he proclaimed the abolition of the fast, this too was no doubt one of the reasons for the excommunication — and the Ninth of Av. According to another version, he repeated the action of a famous earlier messiah, and cursed Jerusalem upon leaving her, but then remorse overcame him — after all he did have a Jewish heart — and he declared his forgiveness and turned the curse into blessing.

Shabbetai Zvi returns to Gaza and from there he starts his royal procession to Smyrna, to the turbulent storm and to his bitter and tragic downfall. At first it appeared that the messiah had prevailed over the Jerusalem which had rejected him and which excommunicated him. The overwhelming majority of world Jewry heeded the messiah and ignored the admonition of the rabbis of Jerusalem. Indeed, during the years of the dramatic events in Smyrna and Gallipoli, it was as if Jerusalem became dwarfed. She did not capitulate, but she did not struggle against the all-engulfing movement either. The Rabbis of Constantinople turn to Jerusalem for guidance and are not vouchsafed a reply. This silence did not signify consent, however. Only after the conversion of Shabbetai Zvi, when the storm had abated, was the solitary stand of Jerusalem recalled. Shabbetai Zvi had believers in Jerusalem too, but her rabbis did not submit to him.

This too was a war of Jerusalem. It was however a sad war, and the victory was also sad. For Jerusalem longed for deliverance no less than any other city, probably more. Its Redeemer, however, had not yet come, the messiah who had sought to be anointed there was not the Messiah, and she rightly rejected him. Verily a sad triumph. Would that Jerusalem had proven wrong, not the messiah.

CONSULS, GOVERNORS AND STATESMEN

Who was the first Western consul to come to Jerusalem?

The British claim this honour, and they are almost right, but not quite. In 1838, Towner Young was appointed consul in Jerusalem. Sooner or later other powers despatched their representatives to this ancient and holy City: Germany, France, Austria, Italy. Why therefore have we said "almost right" and not "absolutely right"? Because the first Western consul to come to this City was ... Pompey, the Roman. He was indeed a consul, though in a "slightly" different sense from the present-day meaning. One of the rulers of the Empire, for a time even the sole ruler — on behalf of the Senate of course — the commander-in-chief of the Army, and the conqueror of the East for Rome. Some "consul"! ... Thus are the meanings of words transformed with the passage of time. He came to Jerusalem as a conqueror, and fought to capture her, but in diplomatic parlance he came as a "peace-maker" in the fratricidal war between the Hasmonean brothers Hyrcanus and Aristobulus. In this respect, however, he was neither the first nor the last to conquer city and country "to ensure peace" following a civil war. Now why did an English consul come to Jerusalem in 1838?

Jerusalem is an out-of-the-way town in the wilderness of the Ottoman Empire, so out of the way that even Bonaparte, on his march from Egypt (1799) did not trouble to pay her a visit. He came up the coast, conquering as he went, and thrust east only when he reached the Valley of Jezre'el, to confront the Turkish army which had tried to block his path, and there he was victorious, at the foot of Mount Tabor. It goes without saying that he did not hasten to pay his respects to the Holy Places in Jerusalem. The Revolution in Paris was still fresh and the anti-religious fervour had not yet cooled. In Egypt he did in fact express the intention of converting to Islam, he donned a green fez, and swore by Allah and his Prophet, but he did not agree to circumcision. He did not go to Jerusalem, though he passed only four hours' distance away by horse. There were neither military need, spiritual impulse, nor political reason therefor, so insignificant was she to him.

When did he remember her? When he issued a proclamation to the Jewish People to return to Jerusalem and establish its State there ...

This is an intriguing episode in itself, but we shall not dwell at length upon it here. Suffice it to mention that the rabbis of Jerusalem were

seized with fear, not akin, however, to the fear of some rabbis and Hassidic Rebbes in Eastern Europe (foremost among whom was the founder of Habad Hassidism) at the prospect of Napoleon bringing with him the revolution, accompanied on the one hand by equality, but on the other — by assimilation of the Jews. The rabbis reject with both hands the one hand and the other and insist: Neither thy honey, nor thy sting! The alarm of the rabbis of Jerusalem during the march of Bonaparte — that is the name by which he was then known, not the Emperor Napoleon, was very real. The Ottoman regime forced them to labour very hard in the fortification of the City, because it suspected them of being in sympathy with France.

Rumours fly in Jerusalem, so write the rabbis there, that Bonaparte is messiah to twelve thousand Jewish soldiers in the French army and that their battle-cry is "The sword for the Lord and for Bonaparte" ... Small wonder that the Turkish authorities are suspicious. The suspicion was, however, unfounded. Even the Jews of France who heard of the proclamation were not overjoyed. Many of them sang in those days: France is our Land of Israel, the Seine — our Jordan, and Paris — our Jerusalem. One hundred years later Paris retorted at the Dreyfus trial: Death to the Jews! Herzl drew his conclusions — and ours, in a most surprising way: He accepted Bonaparte's offer ...

On the threshold of the 19th Century the City was so unimportant that this giant eagle, one of the greatest conquering statesmen of all ages, just waved to her from Jaffa, Ramle or Mount Carmel, but did not bother to go there. The population of Jerusalem at that time was ten thousand at most ... about two thousand of them — Jews.

Nonetheless, his campaign in this godforsaken region, in itself, raised it from oblivion, and placed it again on the map of consequence and of geopolitical thinking. If it is good for France, perhaps it is also of importance to England? ...

From 1830 to 1840 there were occurrences in Europe which affected the future of the land and of Jerusalem.

In the region: The revolt of Mohammed Ali, the Egyptian, and his seizure of Palestine and Syria from the Sultan. France fostered this nationalistic Egyptian movement, but England supported Ottoman Turkey, or at least favoured the prevention of its disintegration. The Egyptian occupation came to an end, leaving unhappy memories. The Jews were not harmed, and in Jerusalem even some of the prohibitions of the "Porte" were removed, such as the prohibition to rebuild destroyed synagogues, but the burden of taxation and the frequent wars retarded Jerusalem's prosperity. Jewish Jerusalem "benefitted" some-

what from the natural disaster which befell Safad, its destruction in an earthquake, and some of Safad's Jews moved to Jerusalem.

Jewish religious revival, which brought Hassidim to Jerusalem, disciples of the Baal-Shem-Tov (Rabbi Nachman of Braslav was in Eretz-Israel in the midst of the confusion of Bonaparte's campaign), and after them, the followers of the Gaon of Vilna, was purely an emotional-religious revival, a reminder that national feeling and faith in the rebirth of Jewish sovereignty are basic tenets of the Jewish religion and of Messianic belief. The disciples of the Gaon of Vilna brought with them his clear pronouncement that settlement of Eretz-Israel is a condition precedent to Redemption.

In the thirties and forties, there is a religious resurgence towards Jerusalem, motivated by none too pure causes, on the part of assorted Christian denominations. Pilgrimages increase, and numerous religious institutions are established: Churches, monasteries and social institutions sponsored by various sects. In saying "none too pure" in respect of this Christian religious revival, we do not imply that among the pilgrims, the missionaries and the founders of the churches and institutions, there were not also men of sincere faith. However, one of the features characterising this period, which lasted scores of years, up to our times, was the guardianship which rival powers sought to spread over religious affairs. It is really not so important to determine what came first: Whether the pilgrims and religious settlers first came to tour the Holy Land and the Holy City, or to live therein, and then invited political guardians from Petersburg and Berlin, or whether the clerics were first despatched, to stimulate political activity. Suffice it to say that the Crimean War between Turkey and Russia broke out as a result of a quarrel over repairs to ... The Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.

Let us return to that first consulate, which **England** established. We have emphasised England's seniority because her Anglican Church, a Protestant denomination, was not so closely attached to concrete religious shrines, as were the Catholic, Greek or Greek Orthodox Churches. All the more remarkable is the fact that the principal duty of the first British Consul, Young, was to extend his protection over the ... Jews, and to foster Jewish immigration. Contrary to certain allegations, Young was not a missionary, and he never sought to capture Jewish souls. The second consul, Finn, may have toyed with the idea, but he too took no practical steps to attain this objective.

The first Englishmen whom we encounter in the thirties and forties in Jerusalem, are the missionary Nicholson and two ... apostates, Amzalag and Levy. We also come across Christians who converted to Judaism,

one of them was even a consul, Creisson, the United States consul. It is noteworthy that the first U.S. consul in Jerusalem turned Jew, well before the Jewish lobby in the United States, and that an **Englishman**, a pure Gentile, strives to ... encourage Jewish immigration to Palestine ...

The chief English diplomatic representative resides in Damascus. In Jaffa there is a commercial representative. What is left to be done by the consul in Jerusalem? Officially, a consul may not grant protection to anyone but the nationals of his country. How many Jews from England could there have been in the land at the time? Yet another surprise: Most of the protected Jews are Russian Jews. An express accord was entered into between London and Petersburg whereby the English consul was authorised to grant protection to these Jews, who fled Russian persecution and had no desire to be at the mercy of Turkish despots. In the long run, England wishes of course to gain a foothold in this region, which increases in prominence with the growing importance of India and of the passage to India, in the light of Russia's constant push towards the Persian Gulf on the one hand and the Mediterranean Sea on the other, and against the backdrop of a declining Ottoman Empire, which must be defended, not out of respect, but in order to ensure that others shall not dismember it. The more subjects under the protection of the flag of England, the merrier. The guardianship over the Jews on the part of England has another aspect too. Between 1838 and 1840, in the days of Foreign Secretary Lord Palmerston, there is a Quasi-Zionist movement in England. The moving spirit is Lord Shaftesbury, who is enthused by the idea of the Jewish Return to Zion. He believes of course that the Jews will ultimately be baptized Christians, but to him their return to Zion was not conditional upon their baptism. On the contrary, like many Christians up to this very day, he is convinced that their return to the Holy Land is a condition which will lead to the illumination of their hearts to the acceptance of Jesus. So be it; this should not deter us from clasping the outstretched hand. As for the hoped-for illumination, it can wait. Undoubtedly, in subsequent developments, leading up to the Balfour Declaration, these Zionist tendencies amongst the English played a certain role.

This is what Lord Shaftesbury wrote when the first English Consul to Jerusalem was appointed:

"How wondrous is this event! The ancient City of the People of God is about to take its place again amongst the nations, and England is the first of the kingdoms of the Nations which has ceased to trample them underfoot ... I shall always remember that the Lord planted the plan in

my heart, in His honour, and bestowed upon me the power of influence to persuade Palmerston to bring to the post a man who can remember Jerusalem in the time of his joy."

Evidently, the religious fervour of the good lord was not Palmerston's sole motivation. The Turkish garrison in Jerusalem and its environs, the zeal demonstrated by Nicholas I for the Holy Places, the precious gifts he sent to adorn the Sepulchre, the reinforcement of the Russian fleet in the Black Sea and Russian penetration into Persia, all these had something to do with it too. So did the French intrigues in the Middle East. Lloyd George and Balfour would later confirm that religious sentiment for the Holy Scriptures, the Holy City and the People of the Bible, combined with imperial considerations, to bring about the proclamation of the Balfour Declaration. After all, Palmerston receives reports from his representatives in the East, that Catholic Arabs hold France in great respect, and Greek Orthodox Arabs revere the Czar, but that there is no one to respect England. What will befall English interests on the day that the Ottoman Empire will be discussed and dismembered?

After England, which was the first to open a consulate, though it had no "objects" such as churches, nor many subjects, to justify a representative political foothold in Jerusalem, the other powers, allies and adversaries alike, followed suit. In 1842 the Prussian consul arrives, in 1843 — the French, in 1844 — the American, in 1849 — the Italian. Of all the Powers, it was Russia, the original stimulant, which lagged behind. Its consul arrived only in the fifties. Rivalry between Consuls increases activity and construction; there is a veritable flood of offers of social and educational services. First, one must provide for pilgrims. Hospices are erected, as well as hospitals and schools. The religious affinity between Prussian Protestants and Anglicans produces a joint central bishopric. Since the Jews are the largest community in Jerusalem as of the middle of the 19th Century — shortly thereafter they constitute a majority — and since most of them are subjects of European countries, they benefit from this competitive race between the powers. Particularly numerous are the institutions established with the aid of Prussia — subsequently Greater Germany — hostels, hospitals (Bikur Holim, Shaarei Zedek) and the Lemel School (under the patronage of Vienna). The Jews of Jerusalem are quite dissimilar from the Jews of Berlin, and they do not exert themselves to establish the German language as the official tongue in these institutions, which enjoy the Kaiser's bounty. Still they are supported, directly, or indirectly through the intermediary of the Hilfsverein, also known as

Ezrah, founded by the Jews of Germany. Needless to say, Germany's motives were purely altruistic: From "The Hebrew Church of the Messiah" to Augusta Victoria Hospital. It goes without saying that the visit of Kaiser Wilhelm the Second — a visit remembered in the history of Zionism through Herzl's meeting with him — had no political-imperial objectives, perish the thought; its sole aim was to dedicate the Saviour's Church. We have almost forgotten to mention: The first bishops of the combined bishopric between the churches of England and Germany (the English subsequently withdrew) were almost all.. converted Jews. And yet — *mirabile dictu* — they brought no hardship upon the Jewish community in Jerusalem. The first bishop was one Michael Shlomo Alexander. So as not to lag behind, God forbid, Russia also appointed as her first bishop in Jerusalem a man who bore a name no less acceptable, perhaps even more suitable than Shlomo: — Levinson. He too was an apostate, of course.

That is not all. We have almost overlooked France. We shall revert to France and her political impact further on, but we first owe her honourable mention in the religious sphere. Till now she had been almost the main religious patron, in her capacity as Catholic state and the prime guardian of the Christian heritage. She cannot therefore allow other churches to usurp her birthright. The Latins were all but forgotten in this rivalry between the Protestants and the Orthodox. The Crimean War, in which Russia failed to achieve what it sought, did nevertheless leave her in a strong religious position, beyond the confines of the Russian Compound in Jerusalem. France contributed at that time a large amount towards the restoration of the Church of Anna and the purchase of the Ecce Homo Arch. All these acquisitions are effected by a priest called Alfons Ratisbonne: Need it be added that he too was a converted Jew?

Is not all this somewhat exaggerated? So many apostates among the Christian communities in Jerusalem in the second half of the 19th Century, on the eve of the Zionist Renaissance? No, indeed not, if one recalls who were the founders of Christianity 1,900 years earlier ... By virtue of the Capitulations, the consuls in Jerusalem had privileges far beyond anything any other consul enjoyed. The British Consulate had pride of place, however. When Turkey entered the First World War on the side of Germany, the first consulate to be opened in the City was shut, of course; shut ... only to reopen a few years later as the office of the High Commissioner of Palestine. The first Englishman to return after the War, came no longer as a Consul, but as a conqueror, in order to make way five years later to the High Commissioner. Seventy years

elapsed between the arrival of "Consul" Pompey and the appointment of a Roman Governor. Eighty years elapsed between the arrival of the first British Consul in Jerusalem and the appointment of a British High Commissioner in Jerusalem, who was, whether by accident or design, a Jew, Herbert Samuel.

We should not omit from our story one further consular episode: Prior to the termination of the British Mandate, a Committee of Consuls was established in Jerusalem to protect international interests and the City itself, during the transition period which has been described as a period of chaos, some say chaos engineered by the British. This unique committee was set up on April 22nd, 1948. It consisted of the American, French and Belgian consuls. The latter two were Catholics, not friendly-disposed to the nascent Jewish State. The Jews of Jerusalem reaped no joy from the committee. However, it was so grotesque in the light of what was occurring in the country and City, that it could not even harm, all the more so since before long a well-known personality of international stature appeared on the horizon, a new sort of High Commissioner, officially on behalf of the United Nations, and actually representing who knows whom — the Mediator, Count Bernadotte.

Even after the Six Days War and the liberation of the Old City, one still heard from time to time of consuls in Jerusalem who continued to hold themselves out as representatives of their Governments in ... Eastern Jerusalem, as if nothing had changed. Officially, after all, even friendly nations did not recognise the unification of the City as the capital of Israel. The State of Israel is not, however, a mandatory power in the City, nor is it like the Ottoman regime which submitted to Capitulations and granted such consuls judicial authority. In Eastern Jerusalem some such consuls still reside, as shadows. At times, their relations with the Foreign Ministry of Israel are vague and undefined, in the absence of mutual recognition. But what does it matter. This City, which remembers the Roman Consul, Pompey, and the fate of the Committee of Consuls of 1948, can safely let these vegetate in their present forsaken existence.

THE INTERNATIONALISATION EGG WHICH NEVER HATCHED

In relating the story of the first consuls against the background of Jerusalem's reappearance on the political map, in the forties of the 19th Century, we have skipped an interesting episode: The proposal to internationalise the City. This was not the name by which it was called. The term had not yet been coined. This was, however, the intention; at any rate it was the first spark of an idea which one hundred years later, in the forties of the Twentieth Century, would flare into a blaze which was fanned on an international scale far larger than the original flame, only to flicker out too, or to be extinguished, leaving embers which shall never again produce fire or even smoke.

France was the originator of the idea.

After the appointment of a British consul to Jerusalem, after the news got round of the Zionist plans — anachronistic as this term may sound — of Shaftesbury and Palmerston, probably against the backdrop of reports of the germination of ideas among the Jews themselves including the establishment of committees, this too in England, to settle the Land, and of repeated trips of Moses Montefiore to Eretz-Israel —

An idea flashed in the brain of the French Foreign Minister, Francois Guizot. He had been French Ambassador to London, and there he had heard rumours of England's Zionist plans. This too formed part of the background to his proposal.

We have said "after" and "against the backdrop" because we have not found a chain of causation. It is a fact, however, that France informed St. Petersburg of England's "Jewish" plans. Napoleon's indifference to Jerusalem and the failure of the Bonaparte Declaration (forerunner of the Balfour Declaration) to the Jews, resulted in the delay by France in grasping the problem of how to thwart domination by England in this sensitive region of the spiritual world and of global geography? France therefore assumes the role of great piety:

"The days of the Crusaders and of the love of millions of individuals, Frenchmen, Germans, Russians, have indeed passed. But if the Christian Governments are able, through negotiation, to achieve something for the security and honour of Jerusalem, by peaceful means, it is their duty to do so ..."

"Governments which decry the weakening of faith should make an example of piety and evince interest in religion, and should ensure a

measure of security and honour for Jerusalem ... Jerusalem must be made a Christian City, it should be separated from the Ottoman District, and should be placed under European guarantee”.

These are excerpts from the letters of Guizot to the Ambassadors of France in the capitals of Europe, instructing them to put out feelers as to the chances of obtaining support for such an arrangement. It is important to note what has been omitted: the Jewish aspect is not mentioned, of course. The weakening of Islam will come about through separation from Damascus, capital of the District. The prime objective: Christian rule. Other sources tell of a plan to transfer the Christians of Lebanon to Jerusalem, to achieve a Christian majority in the City. The modern term, internationalisation, is not used of course. Christian guardianship is spoken of, in which — so hoped and assumed the Foreign Minister of the Catholic country — the French would play a leading role.

Incidentally, Guizot too was able to rely on precedent. Officially, there was such an “international” city already in existence. In the language of political treaties it was called “free and neutral” — Polish Cracow. This was the status which was conferred upon it in perpetuity, “perpetuity” indeed, as the Powers had agreed by solemn compact. The guarantors of the pledge were: Russia, Austria and Prussia, the three countries which carved up Poland between themselves...

The reactions to the original proposal of the latter-day Crusader were negative. Palmerston said: It is nothing but a cunning scheme; its object being to weaken the Sultan and to secure for France a decisive position in the Levant. The British Ambassador to Paris treats the suggestion to transfer Christians from Lebanon as “a very strange idea, these people will not abandon their hills and will not seek to obtain the protection of any European Power.” The “Lebanese” idea and the reasons for its rejection sound interesting today. There is such a thing as acoustics-in-time; Christians in Lebanon have in our times appealed for aid to a Jewish Government in Jerusalem ...

Metternich of Austria objected too. His reasons are also enlightening. He opposed the plan precisely out of concern for the plight of the... Catholics whom Guizot sought to befriend. Metternich fears that the Christians of Jerusalem, most of whom are Greek Orthodox and Armenians, will oppress the Catholics more than the Moslems do. Metternich, the Austrian Catholic, seemed to be more concerned with the sanctity of the City to Islam: “Jerusalem is one of the four cities holy to Islam. This has been forgotten by those who believe of late that all that is necessary is for the Allied Powers to express the wish that

Jerusalem should be a free and Christian city". Perhaps Metternich was also annoyed that Guizot, a fellow-Catholic considered it proper to suggest his plan first of all to Greek Orthodox Russia. Whether or not he was angry, this great statesman was definitely not surprised. Nor are we. In this generation, the game was repeated, when De Gaulle, the observant Catholic and "reactionary", drew apart from the Western Nato Alliance and came closer to the Communist-Marxist Soviet Union, in certain spheres, including our own, while a Socialist Jew, Kreisky, Chancellor of Austria, worried about the interests of Islam in Jerusalem. Who can say that history has no sense of humour?

Neither, however, did Russia become unduly excited about the first internationalisation plan for Jerusalem. The proposal faded away, and with it the dream of the candidate for the... crown of Jerusalem.

Indeed, no sooner had word of the plan spread, that a candidate was found to wear the crown of Jerusalem. True, not yet a descendant of the House of David (can there be a more legitimate claimant?). The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Naples in Paris announces: Since the Kingdom of Jerusalem is being established, and since a kingdom needs a king, he has the ideal candidate — his brother...

All these years Jerusalem is so desolate, oppressed as she is by the ruler of Egypt or the Turkish Sultan, caught betwixt squabbles between Christian sects in the East and in the West, in the Orthodox north and the Ethiopian south, over the keys to the Holy Sepulchre, over ceremonial privilege and over each square yard of the Holy Places. She smiles wanly in the midst of the gloom, upon pale-looking Jews who multiply within her walls whilst they quarrel within her walls, and yet are already filled with expectation that something new and unique is impending... but definitely not awaiting a Neapolitan king. It is doubtful whether anyone in Jerusalem of that period, which did not even boast a newspaper, (it was twenty years before the appearance of the first newspaper in Jerusalem), ever heard of what was discussed about her, of what was so seriously discussed in world capitals.

The situation was entirely different one hundred years later when the idea of internationalisation was raised again, most forcefully; rose again and once again faded away.

A HOME-MADE WEAPON

A few words, parenthetically, about the wars of Jerusalem Jewry of those days.

Not yet Zionism, not Herzl, nor Congresses nor even Hovevei Zion (the Lovers of Zion), but the Jewish community in Eretz-Israel generally, and in Jerusalem in particular, is constantly on the increase. It even expands beyond the walls, to establish new quarters.

There are of course "Wars of the Jews", not between Sepharadim and Ashkenazim, but between the Ashkenazim themselves. The Sepharadim, whose community was older and better-established, have their Chief Rabbi, the Rishon-Lezion, a central authority. The Ashkenazim are divided, between Hassidim and Prushim, as well as between the various "Haluka" (distribution) bodies.

These "Wars of Jews", unlike big and little wars, rebellions and skirmishes between Gentiles, did not entail bloodshed of course. There is a different "secret" weapon: Excommunication. According to available records, during the 19th Century, bans and denunciations were declared in vast numbers, unparalleled in the Diaspora. The cause was occasionally important; at times it was trivial. They are not yet "heretics", like Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, nor suspected Zionists like... Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook. There are, however, serious excommunications: of the Memel School, and of Sir Moses Montefiore. There is a ban on Y. D. Frumkin, and on Yechiel Michel Pines. There is even a "war" between... the first Hebrew newspapers, between the Havatzelet and the Halevanon. Such were the "Wars of the Jews".

It goes without saying that all the excommunicators and excommunicated fervently believe that they were fighting the war of Jerusalem, that only they were her guardians, the defenders of her walls, the term "walls" being used figuratively of course, symbolically. Years are yet to pass, filled with bans and denunciations, till the Jews will fight for actual walls, with real weapons, almost — Heaven protect us! — like the Goyim.

HANUKKA CANDLES 1917

The world is divided into two camps, fighting over their spheres of influence. The conflict encompasses the Globe — the First World War. Furthermore, so it has always been, in each camp there is already a tug-of-war as to the division of spoils after the expected victory.

Palestine becomes involved in the War due to its situation as a border area between Turkey and British influence, to its constituting a region which rival powers have struggled to dominate, and to its long history and heterogeneous population, which afford an excuse to various parties to lay claim, and to appear to represent legitimate interests.

The Turks, on the advice and under the command of their German allies, attack the Suez Canal through Sinai in the beginning of 1915. The British have concentrated in Egypt a large military force, poised to invade Palestine from the south. It is now becoming apparent why Britain pressed so hard ten years earlier to sever Sinai from Palestine and to attach it to Egypt...

The armies are locked in battle for two years. The Turkish forces, under the German General Kress von Kressenstein, with the aid of specialised German units (heavy and medium machine-guns, heavy field artillery, anti-aircraft guns, signals detachments and a squadron of reconnaissance and observation planes) make a series of sorties against the British forces situated in the Canal Zone and Sinai. The British forces consist mainly of the Desert Cavalry Corps (whose core are Anzac detachments), under the command of General Chatwood. In Palestine, Jamal Pasha, the tyrannical and ruthless governor, terrorises the inhabitants. On the correct assumption that the entire population hates the Turks, he treats them all — Arabs, Christians and Jews — as enemy aliens. The Turks do not maintain sufficient supplies to feed the inhabitants, locust consumes crops, epidemics take a heavy toll of the hungry population, and the healthy and the young are seized for forced labour, or compulsory service in the Turkish Army. Hardly a soul does not hope for the speedy conquest of the land by the British.

The Turkish military high command was entirely German, from General von Falkenheim whose headquarters were in Istanbul, through General von Frankenberg — who was in command of the battlefield in Palestine — to General von Kressenstein who was in direct overall command of the forces. The Turkish force consists of an army of

150,000 soldiers, including approximately 20,000 Anatolian Turks, and the rest — Syrians, Arabs and Jews. Their immediate commanding officer is Jamal Pasha. Their equipment is obsolete, and the soldiers at times wander about foraging for food. Many try to desert.

Only a few years earlier, the inhabitants of Jerusalem had cause to boast about the new railway line to their City. Many saw in it the harbinger of progress to the Eternal City (is progress possible in Eternity?). The railway line is taken apart in the first years of the War. The sleepers and the rails are used to build a line from Acre to Safad, and onward to Damascus. In ancient times, the golden Menorah was removed from Jerusalem. In the Middle Ages the Cross was removed from the City. Now ... rails are removed. A depreciation of values.

A German officer is appointed commander of Jerusalem, over the offended head and above the curtailed authority of the Arab mayor. There is no point in asking how so the mayor is Arab when the majority of the population of Jerusalem is Jewish. General Bach often spoke disparagingly of the Arabs and ridiculed them, and he criticised the neglect, filth and inefficiency of the Turks — though he did not always distinguish between Turk and Arab.

Nachum Wilbushevitz is on the staff of the Jerusalem municipality. He is the City Engineer, and is the brother-in-law of Avshalom Feinberg of Hadera, one of the founders of the NILI underground movement, which seeks to hasten the arrival of the British, by furnishing them with intelligence regarding the deployment of the Turkish forces in the country. Nahum Wilbushevitz draws the German-Turkish defence lines of the map of Jerusalem. In pitch darkness, the map will be delivered to the vessel Managam, off the Atlit coast.

In Cairo, Aaron Aaronson will confer with British Intelligence officers and they will read the map and will take decisions — from here Jerusalem shall be taken. How did the map which had been drawn by Wilbushevitz in Jerusalem for the German command, come into the hands of Aaronson at British headquarters? The question is superfluous.

The British thrust is from the south, along the coast. Gradually, they lay down a railway line and a sweet water pipe-line, starting at the Nile. They also dig wells in the sand-dunes of northern Sinai, and move a heavy army through the dunes.

General Murray hurls his men twice against Gaza, and twice he fails. The Turks and Germans prove just a little more stubborn than the attacking British. Murray is ultimately relieved of his command in April 1917 and is replaced by General Allenby.

Edmund Allenby resolves to conquer Gaza by way of Beersheba.

Both ends of the front were bombarded, but the main effort was concentrated on Beersheba. The battle of Gaza was just a diversion, part of the complicated scheme worked out by the Chief of Intelligence on Allenby's staff, Colonel Meinertzhagen.

Though they were taken by surprise, and notwithstanding the fact that some of the Turks in Beersheba were thoroughly drugged by the opium which Meinertzhagen had parachuted to them, the Turks fought with great tenacity, and the Battle of Beersheba was not easy. It fell on October 31st. Allenby rushed up his 20th and 21st Corps and the Cavalry Corps, towards the coast, north of Gaza, with the object of isolating the Turks in the town. By mid-November, the British were firmly established along the Yarkon River. At this juncture the 21st Corps turned east and entered the Judean hills.

Winter in the hills of Jerusalem. Allenby had promised Jerusalem to His Majesty's Prime Minister as a Christmas gift. He was not thinking of Hanuka. In Damascus, freezing in winter, Lishansky and Belkind, men of Nili, await execution for spying for Britain. It is winter in the hills of Jerusalem, and the road to the City is open.

The Anzac and the 54th Divisions were to secure the arterial roads by holding a line of defence on the plain. Three divisions were to push up to the mountain ridge; The Yeomanry Cavalry Division — through the Bet Horon Ascent, and the 75th and 52nd Divisions along the Jaffa-Jerusalem road. The plan was for the Yeomanry Division to thrust in the direction of Ramallah and to cut Jerusalem off from the north, thereby to compel the Turks to evacuate the City. Another brigade was due to move up along the railway line to Jerusalem, and to cut it off from the south. All the battles were planned to be fought about six miles from the Holy City, not in the City itself, because of its sanctity.

After taking the important salient of Nebi Samuel on the night of November 21st, the soldiers of the 232nd Brigade were subjected to heavy counter-attacks. The Turks sought to recapture this summit, commanding the approach to Jerusalem. North of Nebi Samuel, the Turks repulsed the Yeomanry Division step by step and successfully defended El-Gib — Biblical Gibeon. Even a prophet and seer like Samuel, who dwelt in Gibeon, did not foresee the Yeomanry Division's asses in the distant future.

The Yeomanry Division was halted on the Bitunia and Zeitun ridges. The 75th Division fought at Nebi Samuel. The 52nd Division was blocked on the Beit-Likia-Gibeon road.

The 21st Corps was pinned down. Rain fell in torrents and the mist was thick. Allenby ordered his troops to halt.

Two weeks had elapsed since the regrouping.

The 20th Corps relieves the 21st. The lessons of the failure of the previous offensive have been learnt: They were caused by insufficient access roads, by the absence of the depth needed by the artillery to enable it to lend support to the mobile force. General Philip Chatwood, in charge of the 20th Corps, alters the battle-plan. Using the only paved road under his control to move his artillery, he hurls the 10th and 74th Divisions against the defences to the west of Jerusalem, in the region of the present-day Har Hamenuhot — Dir Yassin line and the Ein-Karem hills. There the force was to wheel northward and sever the Turkish supply route to Shechem, in the area of the strongpoints of Tel El-Ful and Shuafat. Another force was to move north from the direction of Hebron, by way of Solomon's Pools, to attack the Turkish positions south of Jerusalem, from the rear, on the Beit-Jalla ridge now known as Giloh.

In Jerusalem, regrouping is taking place too. Defences are strengthened and troops are positioned. The Germans order: no retreat. The Turks rush supplies to the City from Trans-Jordan. Boats transport the materiel across the Dead Sea and 200 trucks haul the supplies to Jerusalem. Additional hospitals are organised in the City, some specially for wounded prisoners-of-war.

On the eve of the eighth of December, there was a heavy downpour, and the forces crawled forward very slowly. At night the 179th Brigade reached the valley of Wadi Sarar and took the hill overlooking Ein Karem. At dawn — the main advance commenced.

The Seventh Turkish Army numbers 16,000 soldiers, stationed in trenches hewn in the Jerusalem rock, in three-tiered strongpoints, wherefrom heavy fire covers every inch of the slopes descending towards the City. Morale is low. Thousands have fallen in the battles of recent weeks. Ten thousand Arabs and five thousand officers have already deserted. General von Falkenheim decides to withdraw to Shechem.

The order is issued: All Jews are to leave the City.

Rain and heavy mist.

A further order: The German, Austrian and Turkish headquarters are to withdraw to Shechem. The City is not bombarded from afar. Nor do the Germans propose to despatch the Turks to fight in the City's streets. Respect for the eternity of the City, respect to which Jerusalem is not accustomed. This is an exceptional event in its history, perhaps in all history. A battle rages for Jerusalem, yet she herself does not fight. Jerusalem had witnessed upon her walls, within her walls, within her

Sanctuary, war and bloodshed and slaughter. She herself was this time spared all these. From a distance she will witness the campaign to capture her. All her inhabitants suffer oppression, hunger and pestilence. She, however, is not grieving, she is waiting, tense.

The brunt of the battle on December 8th falls upon the 60th Division. Its men scale the Dir Yassin ridge and capture it. Turkish resistance is less stubborn than anticipated on the basis of previous encounters. It is raining, however; the mist is heavy and does not permit a swift mobile war.

British headquarters are not aware of the decision to evacuate the City. The 53rd Division is biding time, the southern wing of the 60th Division is exposed. Will the Turks launch an offensive now? There are moments of deep concern at British H.Q.

The British order is to move slowly, to act with caution, to dig in, and to wait.

The Turks, however, are already beaten. On the night of the 8th of December, convoys of Germans and Turks slink out of Jerusalem on their way to Shechem. At dawn, on the 9th of December, the last Turk abandons Jerusalem. Governor Izzat Bey is not inclined to stay behind and to surrender in person the British. He leaves a letter.

One can visualise the sound of bugles and the columns of marching troops, as General Allenby entered Jerusalem on the 11th of December, to accept its capitulation. The City, however, had in fact surrendered two days earlier: To the cook of the 230th Division's Officers Mess.

A British Lieutenant awoke on the morning of December 9th; the mist reminded him perhaps of Britain, and what is an English morning without ham and eggs? Ham is obtainable, but where can one get hold of eggs?

In the Arab village of Lifta a cock crows. If there are cocks, there are surely also hens. Our lieutenant sends the cook to get some eggs in Lifta, before the battle is joined.

The Officers Mess cook goes along and comes across an Arab waving half a bedsheet nailed to a broom, and bearing a letter. The lieutenant reads the letter and his stomach heaves (there were no eggs). He realises that the battle is over and he calls his commanding officer. The C.O., an anonymous major, reads the letter and hurries to Jerusalem to accept its surrender. A colonel in the artillery peruses the letter too and runs to overtake the major. The letter and the surrender reach Brigadier Watson and he gives them back to the Arab. Finally General Shea, of the 60th Division arrives, and he condescends to accept the City's capitulation for the third time — temporarily ...

Till General Allenby comes on December 11th, and the City surrenders to him, to the accompaniment of trumpet blasts, and between two columns of troops; all this a month and nine days after the Balfour Declaration.

Four hundred years of Ottoman rule in Jerusalem have come to an end. Henceforth events would follow upon each other in quicker succession. The present era is fast approaching.

P.S. The City was not taken on Christmas Day, but two weeks earlier. The Ottoman withdrawal took place on the day the first Hanuka candle was lit.

"Ha'Ivri", the Hebrew paper appearing in New York, wrote on the 29th Kislev 5678 (1917): "Yerushalem too, our Holy City, has fallen to the British, who are continuing to score victories in the Land of our Forefathers and of our hopes. This 'City which is compact together', which 'Every king Covets', has changed hands and rulers several times during the War between the Nations. This Holy City, centre of Judaism in the past and in the future, is now in English hands.

"Under ordinary circumstances one might debate whose rule is more beneficial, Turkey's or England's... One thing is axiomatic for us, a basic premise of which we are absolutely certain: Ultimately Yerushalem will be **ours**, the Holy City will again, in the near or distant future be the capital of Jewry, and any state which conquers her is merely a **temporary occupier** as far as our Nation is concerned.

"Since the present conqueror, the British Government, has declared publicly and clearly that it desires to fulfil the ancient hope of our People — 'the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish People' — the conquest by England is not a temporary occupation for Britain, but an **eternal** conquest for the Jewish Nation...

"The capture of Jerusalem will this time be the starting-point for days to come, for our future and for the realisation of our most cherished and stupendous hopes.

"This our Lord hath made — we will rejoice and be glad in it."

One remark as to the spelling of the Hebrew for Jerusalem: Ha'Ivri writes: "Yerushalem", not "Yerushalayim": An expression of the longing for the great Return, to the Biblical spelling, less letters in the name, but spiritually full and complete — "Shalem".

BLOOD IN THE SHADOW OF THE MANDATE

A. From the days of the "Jewish Guard" to the "Haganah"

In Zionist terminology and the history of the pre-State Yishuv, Arab riots were known as "events". Do the "events" form part of our subject — "Jerusalem at war"? From the military standpoint, the answer is negative. Ambushes by marauding gangs, robbery and murder, and defence action against them, are not war. If however, the term war in general, and the war over the Hebrew character of Jerusalem in particular, are aspects of a political struggle in all its facets, then undoubtedly these activities constitute an integral part of the war for the City, or of the war between Jew and Arab over the determination of the fate of the City, and ipso facto of the country. In the first year of British rule, there were several attacks on Jews in Galilee. Their political anti-Zionist character was not evident, however, even in the attack on Tel-Hai. Gangs roamed the region; the question of rule by France or by England had not yet been settled. They included ordinary robbers, whether as a continuation of the anarchic Ottoman rule, or as a "normal" concomitant of the change of regimes.

Physical opposition to the Jews on a political basis, and expressly against Zionism and the Balfour Declaration, began on Passover 5620 — April 1920 — in Jerusalem.

This occurred not only in disregard of the fact that Jerusalem was the centre of British military government, but rather due, in great measure, to this fact. Almost from the first moment, it became apparent to the Arabs that the top military establishment was not at all happy with the Balfour Declaration. Allenby, Bols and Storrs — the three men who set the course of the administration until the appointment of the High Commissioner, did not even try to conceal their hostility to Zionism. In his first speech in Jerusalem, upon entering the City, Allenby did not mention the Balfour Declaration; in the first wave of outrages that bloody Passover, the mobs cried "Slaughter the Jews — the Government is with us", and they knew what they were saying. The Arabs heard very quickly that Hogard, military governor of Jaffa, had asserted: "If there will be a slaughter of the Jews, I shall stand at the window of the Governor's House and shall smile". He was reprimanded and transferred to Shechem, but the incitement of the mobs of

Shechem Arabs to go in hordes to Jerusalem that Passover was his handiwork.

This does not mean to say that the Arabs would otherwise have been enchanted with the Zionist achievement. The Arabs of Hebron swarmed en masse to Jerusalem without instigation on the part of such a British governor, but were it not for their awareness of the fact that the military government would avoid taking drastic steps to prevent their action, they would not have dared. The permission to demonstrate, which was granted so readily, was also a clear hint.

On the political level, the inspiration originated in Damascus. This is a matter well-worth remembering. In Jerusalem there was a newspaper called "Suria el-Janabiya" (Southern Syria). Its editor, the historian Aref el-Aref, whipped up the incitement: "Instead of the pen, we shall wield swords, instead of ink — we shall use blood". The military censor — military government still existed — passed the newspaper without a murmur.

In 5620 — 1920, Passover, Easter and the Moslem holiday of Nebi Musa, fell on the same day. In a demonstration which had received official British sanction, banners were displayed inciting to slaughter. They quoted the holy slogan: "Impose Mohammed's religion by the sword". On the occasion of Easter, again the spectre of ...the blood of Jesus who was crucified by the Jews in Jerusalem, was revived. "The Jews are the enemies of the Cross and the Crescent; death to the Jews!" British policemen and officers stood by and watched ...

When a delegation of Arab leaders called several years later upon the High Commissioner, Lord Plumer, and warned him that unless Jewish immigration is halted, they would not be responsible for law and order, he replied curtly and confidently: "I am responsible for order here, not you", and there was no trouble during his tenure.

In 1920, however, Allenby was still in authority. On Sunday, April 4th, which was the first of the Intermediate Days of Passover, about 600 Hebron Arabs, armed with clubs, daggers and swords, arrived at Jaffa Gate in Jerusalem, and were greeted vociferously by their brethren from Shechem, their erstwhile adversaries, but now their comrades in the fulfilment of the holy objective of killing Jews. Aref el-Aref was the principal speaker. He proclaimed: "If we do not use force against the Jews, we shall never get rid of them". With cries of "Itbah el-Yahud" (slaughter the Jews!) and "Nishrab dam el-Yahud!" (We'll drink the blood of the Jews!), they burst into Jaffa Road with acts of violence, assault and robbery. The demonstrators were led by a British police officer. Suddenly, after a short consultation between him and Arab

policemen, the demonstration made an about-turn and burst into the Old City and the Jewish Quarter. The British police officer apparently got to know that a defence unit was waiting to accord the marauders an appropriate welcome in the New City, while there was no one to defend the Jews of the Old City, except for one solitary Jewish policeman. The Haganah forces had not managed to smuggle a defence unit into the Jewish Quarter.

Nevertheless, even there, in the crowded alleys, the people of the Old Yishuv tried to defend themselves, to block lanes and houses. It is right and proper here to stress that an injustice has been done to this "Old Yishuv" in describing it as lacking the will and ability to defend itself.

In its inception, Zionism was in the habit of painting everything only in black and white. The Diaspora was one large ghetto, all bad and cowardly. The Old Yishuv in Jerusalem, which subsisted on the "Haluka", contributions from abroad, was an extension of the Diaspora, and was therefore a ghetto too, despicable and spineless. This description, which is understandable against the background of the Zionist break with the Jewish past, requires rectification, for the sake of truth. In fact, even in the Diaspora all was not dark in this respect. Most of the members of "Hashomer" in Eretz-Israel, who came with the Second Aliya, and most of the original members of the Haganah were former members of "Haganah" cells in the Diaspora. Here too, however, it should not be forgotten that the Old Yishuv, especially those of its members who left the walled City and built the new quarters of "Mishkenot Shaananim", "Nahlat Shiva" and "Me'ah She'arim", organised a permanent guard against robbers, which was called "The Jewish Guard". Its members, mounted on horses, would make the rounds every night in the wilds of those days. This aspect too should not be overlooked. We say "too" because their single-minded devotion to the City, generation upon generation, till a Jewish majority was reached in Jerusalem, and the new quarters which they established, yet before the first Zionist set foot in the City, are also part of the War for Jerusalem.

The Jewish Quarter, however, was nevertheless unable to defend itself against the hordes. The brunt was borne by the houses on the outskirts of the Quarter.

Outside the walls too, in the quarter of Givat Shaul, the Arabs of Lifta perpetrated a "pogrom". The riots lasted three days (the model was Czarits Russia; there too the Czarist Police used to allow the rioters to rampage for two days, and would appear on the scene on the third...).

In all: Six Jews were murdered, and over two hundred were

wounded. Women were raped, synagogues were burnt, and property was pillaged. Cemeteries were desecrated.

This occurred not in Kishinev, but in Jerusalem, under the new regime.

There were also four Arab dead and scores of wounded, most of them at the hands of the Jewish defence force.

What was this force? It was not yet "The Haganah" (with a capital H), an organised and trained force on a national scale. It was set-up to meet an emergency. Its first chief was Ze'ev Jabotinsky, still at that time in British uniform, an officer in the King's Rifles. He was assisted by Pinhas Rutenberg.

Two weeks before the disturbances, Jabotinsky despatched an urgent cable to London, warning against impending events. In Jerusalem, he got together a group of men and began to train them in the Lemel School yard and in the Alliance School, deliberately in the open. Most of them were members of "Maccabi", students of "Bezalel" Art School, and a few members of the "Hashomer" units, such as Zvi Nadav who succeeded in bringing a few weapons from the coast. Despite the sharp ideological and social differences which split the Jewish population, a kinship arose between the Old Yishuv and the Zionists upon the outbreak of the disturbances, and shtreimel-wearing Jews assisted the Zionist defenders that Passover.

There were four battalions, each in charge of a quarter or group of adjacent quarters. The force despatched to the Jewish Quarter in the Old City upon the outbreak of the riots was unable to penetrate the gates, which were blocked by rioting mobs. The rioters were therefore more successful there than in other places. Jabotinsky placed the emphasis on overt action, in line with his general political concept, and on a constant demand to turn the Jewish battalions into the official army of the Jewish National Home. Already in his capacity as a member of Vaad HaTzirim (Committee of Representatives), he openly served warning upon Governor Storrs, and at times made demands upon him, and he informed him quite simply that he was organising a defence force. His personal weapons were seized. On April 7th he was arrested together with nineteen other Jews and was put on trial. Concurrently — for the sake of equality — one of the leaders of the rioters, Haj Amin el-Husseini, was indicted. There was a quick court-martial: Jabotinsky, who admitted to organising the defence force, was sentenced to fifteen years imprisonment with hard labour. His associates were sentenced to three years' jail. The transfer of the Jewish prisoners to Acre Jail turned into a demonstration of solidarity and

defiance, with crowds of Jews demonstrating at every station in support of the condemned prisoners. Jewish Jerusalem declared a general strike. The 26th of April was designated a day of national fast, as a mark of protest. The same day, however, the Balfour Declaration received international ratification at San Remo and the mourning turned into rejoicing.

The British authorities used the transfer of power from the military government to a civilian High Commissioner as an opportunity for pardoning the prisoners. For the sake of "balance", however, Haj Amin el-Husseini was pardoned too. The "balance" was, however, "slightly" unequal: He was appointed head of the official Arab institutions for the whole period of the Mandate.

In comparison with later developments, the extent of the events in Jerusalem in 5620 — 1920 was of course meagre, but the political outcome was momentous. Henceforth the Arabs would learn again and again: Even if they could not physically liquidate the Jews, nor even — and this was one of their objectives — frighten them and prevent their Aliya and settlement, the Arabs would reap political fruits. Three waves of bloody riots: 1920, 1921 to 1929, and 1936 to 1939, were Arab debacles in the field, but were at the same time political triumphs in the shape of three British White Papers, each blacker than its predecessor. The last was also very red, with the blood of the six million Jews who were murdered: After all the Germans are more capable and systematic than the bands of marauders from Shechem and Hebron who went for Jews with daggers and clubs, and later with rifles and grenades. The Mufti, who was raised to his high station by the British, by the first High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, dwelt during the Second World War in Berlin in the proximity of Hitler and Eichmann, and created a Jerusalem-Berlin axis for the extermination of the Jewish People, and in any case for the denial of its freedom in its Land.

As for Jabotinsky, as a mark of solidarity with him for organising the City's defence, he was placed at the head of the Ahdut Haavoda Party list in the elections to "Knesset Israel", and the title "Defender of Jerusalem" was conferred upon him even by his adversaries in the Zionist camp, who sought to deny him recognition in other spheres. He defended the City; she defended his title.

This was the first bloody conflict over Jerusalem in modern times, in which Jews were involved, the first murder of Jews in the Old City, the first attempt to drive them out once again, and the first link in a bloody chain of decrees, expulsion and destruction, till the Return to the Old City upon its liberation on the twenty-eighth of Iyar 5727 — 1967.

B. Peace did not Descend Upon her from Mount Scopus

“From the crest of Mount Scopus, peace be upon thee, O Jerusalem”. This was not merely a beautiful song that was sung for many a year. Save for Naomi Shemer’s song on the eve the Six Days War, never was there a song more beautiful. Not only was it a song, it was also the dream and hope of some academics who gathered on Mount Scopus, in the first buildings erected there for the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, overlooking the Temple Mount; perhaps the intention was also — perish the thought! — that it should serve as a substitute for the Temple Mount? Ye shall bring forth the old from before the new; faith from before science ...

A battle also raged round this university: its opening ceremony was conducted by Chaim Weizmann and Arthur James Balfour. What was its purpose and mission? To be a university like any other in the world, or to fulfil high hopes as the spiritual centre of the Jewish People, and — who knows — perhaps more than that, perhaps of the whole world, Torah and light out of Zion? If Jerusalem is not a city like all others, its university must be different from all others.

Behind this debate lurked another struggle, the struggle over the essence of Zionism... Is its object the establishment of a state like all the rest, to bring about the normalisation of the Jewish nation, or is this possibly superfluous, or unattainable, and what has to be done is to establish a spiritual centre à la Ahad Haam or à la Martin Buber? Along this division, views diverged also as to the character of the University... The state-minded Zionists desired an institute of higher education, to produce teachers and civil servants in all spheres of state and society... The “spiritual” Zionists wanted to engage in research and in the dissemination of ideas, to turn the University into a Celestial Jerusalem of sorts, leaving the terrestrial counterpart to the rule of Englishmen and Arabs... Israel should be content with spirit alone...

It was not chance which placed J. L. Magnes, a Reform rabbi from the United States at the head of the University. “Reform” implied all facets of the liberal-universal trend in Judaism. Though a large segment of Reform Judaism was in the twenties anti-Zionist, the first Chancellor of the University was not. Magnes was a Zionist, very distant however from the political brand. As Weizmann too leaned increasingly at that time towards Ahad Haam’s version, the first cultural and scientific institution of the Jewish-Zionist community was moulded with this character of “spiritual” Zionism.

A noted historian of the calibre of Professor Joseph Klausner, for example, whose views were in sympathy with political Zionism, and whose studies in the history of the Jews were imbued with this approach, was not allowed, almost to the end of his days, to teach Jewish history. He was given only the Chair of Literature. On the other hand, Norman Bentwich, a senior official of the Mandatory Administration was invited to occupy the Chair of International Relations. Most important of all, an ideological circle, Brit Shalom, formed around Magnes, with the prime object of reaching an understanding with the Arabs, at the price of relinquishment of the idea of a Jewish State and even the abandonment of the goal of a Jewish majority in the Land.

A revival of sorts of "Celestial Jerusalem". Celestial, of course, only in the hearts of the good men at the top, the professors, whilst below, on terra firma, in Arab hearts and brains, the plan for the total liquidation of Zionism continued to brew, liquidation even of the spiritual peace-loving brand, all this apart from the cauldron which was brewing in Europe.

What a dreadful disproportion between those visionaries on Mount Scopus and the fate in store for the Jewish People. At times there was tumult and storm in soul and in body also up there on that magnificent mountain. Patriotic student associations, which vociferously proclaimed their opposition to Brit Shalom were established. The leaders of the future underground movement came from Mount Scopus. The professors on the mount foresaw a great academic future for the student Avraham Stern, who distinguished himself in languages and classical poetry, and became an authority on Homer. He chose, however, to descend from Mount Scopus not only to Terrestrial Jerusalem, but still deeper, to the underground movement, to fight for the Commonwealth of Israel, and the rebuilding of the Temple on its Holy Mount. From Mount Scopus 35 students also set forth on foot to the besieged Etzion Bloc in 1948, on the eve of the establishment of the State. None returned. They fell in battle, members of the Haganah, forerunner of the Israel Defence Forces.

Three weeks before the proclamation of the State, the University, and the adjacent Hadassah Hospital suffered a grievous physical and moral blow. They were chosen, these good people, these naive dreamers, so un-nationalistic, so un-militant, as the target of a murderous attack. A convoy of professors, doctors and nurses was ambushed, and they were butchered, whilst Englishmen stood by and prevented aid from reaching them. The murderers did not inquire

which of the victims wanted a Jewish State and who was ready to relinquish it for the sake of peace with them, the murderers ...

Such an event was not foreseen by the men of Brit Shalom on Mount Scopus. Their "Celestial Jerusalem" was over-celestial, too high up, too detached from the reality of the times, from the reality of the people, even from the reality of living Jerusalem, Jerusalem fighting for survival.

Under the first armistice agreement, Mount Scopus was cut off from the City, and was demilitarised. Only once a fortnight were a few Jewish policemen, or quasi-police, and a number of scholars, permitted to go there to look after the many books and the book-dust which had accumulated on the shelves and between the pages, and had spread over the noble ideas which were so unreal as far as a People and a City who really wanted to live, were concerned. Till Mount Scopus was liberated, liberated from demilitarisation, liberated from illusions.

The separation of Mount Scopus from the City, and its demilitarisation, was as unreal as a "Celestial Jerusalem" replete with high ideas which is not firmly anchored in Terrestrial Jerusalem, in real Jerusalem, till the end of days, until the Mountain of the Lord's House shall be established on the top of mountains, as is written, as has been prophesied.

C. The War over the Blowing of the Shofar in Jerusalem

Hebron is one of the most ancient cities with which our fate is entwined, from Abraham the Patriarch, through David who established his kingdom therein, and therefrom — in Jerusalem. Hebron is one of the four Holy Cities in which the old Jewish community settled, but not even a handful of settlers came to Hebron from the later, the Zionist, waves of immigration.

On the other hand, Tel-Aviv: No historical roots (save the Biblical reference, but there, in Ezekiel, it is spoken of "the Diaspora of Tel-Aviv"). She is entirely the product of Aliya, built on sand, secular in the main, but packing considerable clout in commerce and in industry. Within a short period — already in the twenties — its population exceeds the number of Jews in Jerusalem. It is an all-Jewish town and becomes the metropolis of the New Yishuv, the nerve-centre of internal politics, though not the centre of historical anxiety. This right is retained by Jerusalem, be it due to the admixture of old and new, or to the presence of the Wailing Wall and Jewish Quarter amidst hostile Arabs, or to its being the centre of the British administration, in turn polite and hostile, correct and treacherous, between bloodlettings, between lulls, between White Papers.

Jewish Jerusalem did not undergo the industrial and commercial transformation which occurred in Tel-Aviv. However, she did not preserve the antiquated character of Hebron either. She maintained her Jewish majority, though it was not the new Yishuv which could take the credit therefor. It was attained at the end of the last Century, spreading out beyond the walls, from the Old Yishuv in the Jewish Quarter, to build many new quarters. The high birthrate of the Old Yishuv, enabled it to hold its own against the multiplying Arab population. What a false picture has been created of the Old Yishuv: Jews who came to die in Eretz-Israel, in other words, the aged! If that were the case, how come this large natural increase in the Old Yishuv?

All the same, the resurgence of Jewish Jerusalem was brought about by the New Yishuv: The central National Institutions were located in Jerusalem — the Zionist Organisation and the Vaad Leumi (National Council). This could no doubt be ascribed to the fact that Jerusalem was the British administrative centre. Thereafter came the Hebrew University as a spiritual centre, in the spirit of the new winds which were blowing, against the ages-old spirit concentrated in the large and

expanding Yeshivot.

The absolute majority in the City continues to be Jewish, and yet, during the entire period of the British Mandate the mayor was never a Jew. This was one of the aspects of political "balance".

But all the while, the Jewish Quarter within the walls contracts, and the power of the Wakf, the supreme Moslem religious authority, constantly grows, with Haj Amin Al-Husseini pulling long strings and striving to turn Jerusalem into what it had never been: The centre of Islam. This is not just a matter of personal ambition. He well understands: The country's fate will be determined in Jerusalem. It is he who makes a mosque of the Dome of the Rock, which till then was merely a monument, the site of the legendary Foundation Rock ("Even Hashetiya"), of the historic Temple, and of the dream of Mohammed's ascent. The Mufti orders sermons there every Friday, most of them of course virulent incitement to Jihad (Holy War) against the Jews.

The Mufti seeks also to restrict the power of the Jews down there below, at the Wailing Wall. It is fronted by a filthy narrow alley, bordering on the Moghrabi Quarter, a slum in every sense of the word. Most of the visitors to the Wall are residents of the Jewish Quarter or of Me'ah She'arim, in other words mainly non-Zionist, who await the Messiah. Haj Amin is not worried by the prospect of the advent of the Jewish Messiah (that is a Christian fear), he is alarmed by Zionism, and notwithstanding certain whisperings, he does not believe in the existence of an abyss between the Old Yishuv "Guardians of the Walls", and the Zionists. He claims that the means which they employ differ, but that their goal is one: the Redemption of Israel, the Return to Zion. The Zionists are on the whole irreligious, yet they sing and dance "David King of Israel lives", and even the heretics among them sing "May the Temple be built!". Where will the Temple be built? Adjoining the Theatre in Tel-Aviv? Or in the Valley of Jezreel? He, Haj Amin, who concentrates in his hands religious power and secular-national authority, understands perhaps better than many Zionists, where this Zionist so-called secular "National Home" is leading: Willy-nilly, it leads to the Temple Mount.

True, Zionism, for ideological reasons, does not place emphasis on the rebuilding of Jerusalem. It is concerned with agriculture, in the Valley of Jezreel, in the Sharon, or with the centres of commerce on the Coast. Yet it is manifestly clear: The country's fate will be determined in Jerusalem.

The riots of 1929 break out in Jerusalem, on the 17th of Av (August 23rd), as a sequel to the dispute over the Wall. We have seen — in

earlier chapters — that the Fathers of the Church derived pleasure from the sight of Jews bewailing their destruction at the Wall. Events proved that there is power in lamentation. The tears poured into these stones did not accumulate there. Through hidden channels they percolated throughout the Diaspora, united with the rivers of Jewish blood, and suddenly created a renaissance movement. Rivers to Zion against the Rivers of Babylon. The Wall was not only a relic of the Destruction; that is one aspect. Its other, inner, aspect is that it constitutes a reminder of greatness, of Sanctuary and of Majesty. Where its weakness is found, in lamentation, there lies also its puissance, the faith and the hope. One descends to the Wall, but the Wall itself elevates. It draws, at least twice a year, on the Eves of the Ninth of Av and Yom Kippur, scores of thousands, also from the new Zionist Yishuv, some of whom pray, others who do not, but yet they are attracted to it. The attraction is the power of true and living history. This too is one of the battles of Jerusalem, the struggle of Jews for her. And when you stand at the Wall, the deeper it goes, the higher you proudly raise your head, upward, upward. Such is its strength.

Violence erupts ostensibly over a trifle: The Mufti establishes a new sort of mosque. From its minaret the muezzin loudly proclaims his prayers, which drown out prayers of the Jews below. He opens a gate at the southern end and converts the Wall into a street through which Arabs mounted on donkeys that deposit their droppings on the way, constantly pass to and fro. In the name of the sacred "status quo" he demands of the British to prohibit old Jewish men and women from bringing chairs with them, to rest upon on hot fast days, and to forbid the erection of a partition between men and women worshippers. This is not a synagogue, it is a street, owned by the Wakf, for here, in this corner, Mohammed tied his magic horse, which had transported him in his vision in the night. Did he indeed? Did tradition really relate this story? Strange to tell, no one bothered to check. Today it is an established fact: There is not a trace of this story in ancient Islamic tradition, nor in later tradition. Haj Amin told the tale and sanctified it for strictly political purposes, virtually out of thin air. It is not an original legend but a deliberate myth. Nonetheless, it is the nature of these things, particularly when they emanate from such a central figure, that they acquire authority and potency. The Wailing Wall alley becomes "El Burak", after that legendary horse.

The conservative English are very sensitive to the "status quo"... They remove the partition in the middle of the Yom Kippur prayers, and prohibit chairs from being brought to the Wall. They will also forbid the

blowing of the Shofar at the conclusion of Yom Kippur services, after the Ne'ilah prayer.

The war against Zionism focusses on Jerusalem, and the war for Jerusalem is concentrated on the religious front par excellence, notwithstanding that the Zionists, or most of them, are not concerned with this front. This, however, is the law of Jerusalem ab initio: Holy and secular are inter-twined within her. The majority of the Psalms, which are prayers, were composed by the founder of the Kingdom, David. The day of national mourning, the commencement of the Nation's exile — the Ninth of Av, is the day of the Destruction of the Temple. The destruction of the religious centre is the loss of political sovereignty.

The 1929 riots erupt because of the Wall.

To combat attempts to curtail the right to pray at the Wall, the patriotic youth movements, particularly Betar, call for a demonstration on the Ninth of Av. The demonstration is legal. However, the unfurling of the national flag and the singing of "Hatikva" are illegal ...

This was the purported cause for the outbreak of the riots on the 17th of Av, 5689 (1929). Once again: They started in Jerusalem and thence they spread to Hebron, Safad and other localities. This is how it is described in the Haganah Book:

"Jerusalem was selected by the organisers of the riots as the centre of their actions, because of its standing as a city sacred to millions across the globe, and as a centre to which the eyes of all the inhabitants of the land are turned. The inciters knew that whatever happened in this City would not bear the stamp of local disturbances in a remote corner of one of the cities of the East, but would reverberate round the civilised world".

This Arab reckoning was correct. They erred as to the physical stamina of the Yishuv generally and of Jerusalem in particular. This was no longer 1920, not in Jerusalem anyway. In spite of the first blow — seventeen dead — the attempts of the mob, which was incited on the Friday in the mosques, failed, and the rioters did not penetrate the centre of the City or the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. The arms available were inadequate — a solitary machine-gun was brought from Tel-Aviv, and was transferred from quarter to quarter, but as it was the first to be used by the Haganah, it terrified the Arab mob and dispersed it. Only the quarters which were distant — in those days — suffered, homes were evacuated, and their inhabitants were housed in central buildings. Beit Hakerem and Bayit Vegan bore the brunt of the attack from the murderous village, Dir Yassin. Ramat Rahel was reduced to

ruins, but was not abandoned. Even an accusing and denouncing poet has extolled this defence of Jerusalem:

"Tonight thy gates are being shelled, my Holy City!
Thy guardians have girded thee with a protective girdle
Their names: Pioneers... Unknown soldiers so to speak;
And now they are standing and shooting on thy threshold

No Arab shall penetrate the defence belt;
Rest tonight, hearken unto the shooting!
A Jewish soldier is **praying with his gun** for thy safety.
May the rifle please thee more than a melodious organ.

In Safad and in Hebron and in isolated Kfar Ivri,
But within thee, Mother of Cities, no Arab shall penetrate!
For with a defence belt have pioneers girded thee
And every body on guard is like a Western Wall."
(Uri Zvi Greenberg: A Defence Girdle and the Speech of Ben-Hadam).

In Hebron, there could be no pretext of provocation by Betar. It had no "Zionist" community at all. Yet sixty Jews, children, women and old men were butchered there. The survivors were evacuated from the town. In Safad too there was a veritable pogrom. Hulda was reduced to ruins in the course of battle against the Arab onslaught. In Motza there was a massacre. Jerusalem was saved. Jews continued, however, to quit the Jewish Quarter and only 4,000 remained.

But as we have seen, even defeat in the fighting would bear the Arabs political fruit. The second White Paper. A Wailing Wall Committee was also established, and it pronounced Arab-Moslem ownership over the Wall, the Jews being granted "the right to pray", almost as an act of grace. The blowing of the Shofar was forbidden. Throughout the world, even in Communist Soviet Union, it was permitted. In Jerusalem, at the Wall — not. Evidently, the Arabs, and the English in their wake, realised the power of the Shofar blast, perhaps more than many Jews.

Since then, year after year, "offenders against Law and Order" were there, members of Betar or the Irgun Zva'i Leumi. Year after year they blew the Shofar at the end of the Ne'ilah prayer. Searches carried out by the British at the narrow entrance to the Wall did not avail. The Shofar was always there — and also "reserve" Shofars were ready. At the end of the prayers, the Shofar would be sounded and the ever-swelling congregation would burst forth in song, "Next year in rebuilt

Jerusalem!", followed by "Hatikva". The British would pounce on the congregants and search for the criminal, who would be protectively encircled by the devout and joyous worshippers. Occasionally, the culprits were apprehended and jailed.

This too is a chapter in the history of fighting Jerusalem. As if to serve as a reminder: In ancient times, in all the wars of Israel, the Shofar was sounded before battle was joined, and after it was over. Psalm 47, recited before the blowing of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, is a song of war and triumph of ancient Israel:

"... He subdueth peoples under us,

And nations under our feet.

He chooseth our inheritance for us,

The Pride of Jacob whom He loveth. Selah...

The princes of the peoples are gathered together

The people of the God of Abraham

For unto God belong the **Land's defenders**; He is greatly exalted."

How could it enter the minds of English governors and generals that they could succeed in wresting Jerusalem from the hands of a People who continue to sing the Psalms of David their King, of three thousand years, in this Jerusalem, and to blow the Shofar of faith and trust?

D. The Fighting Underground in Jerusalem

Unlike the first two waves of riots, the third — termed "The Revolt" by the Arabs — in the years 1936 to 1939, did not start in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem was not the centre of Arab activities. Perhaps the cause was the change in method. No longer mobs of villagers, nor worshippers in the mosques at the end of prayers, who attack Jewish quarters. For the first time there are para-military forces, concentrated mainly in the central hill region, and acts of terror carried out by members of these gangs. Such acts were perpetrated also in Jerusalem. During the three years of riots, 61 Jews were killed in Jerusalem, out of a total of 450 Jews murdered.

The political struggle took place mainly in London. Within the country, the influence of Shechem grew, whilst in Jerusalem, rivalry increased between the leading Arab families, the Husseinis, the Nashashibis and others.

On the Jewish side, the riots of 1936 — 1939 brought forth a new force which would leave its imprint upon, and at certain stages would establish facts in Jerusalem — the Irgun Zva'i Leumi underground movement, and its offshoot, following a split, Lehi, the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel.

Though their main strength came from the movement of Jabotinsky, Defender of Jerusalem of 1920, they became in the course of time, especially after the death of Jabotinsky, in 1940, independent forces.

Their Jerusalem character was expressed in three spheres:

(a) The ideological-political. In the Irgun Zva'i Leumi (and particularly in the Lehi — mainly under the influence of its spiritual leader Yair, and indirectly inspired by the poetry of Uri Zvi Greenberg) — the focal educational emphasis was transferred from Herzlian Zionism, from the problems of the Jews and from the urgent need for a Jewish state as the solution, to principles of messianism and redemption, the revival of Jewish Sovereignty in the Promised Boundaries, and the rebuilding of the Temple as an expression of the Redemption. These principles brought Jerusalem to the forefront of consciousness and aspirations.

(b) The personal level: The two central figures of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi were David Raziel, the commander, and Avraham Stern — Yair, the ideologue and poet. Both were men of Jerusalem, both were students of the Hebrew University on Mount Scopus. David Raziel also

studied at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva and absorbed there much of the spirit which in those days was still confined within the four walls of that Yeshiva, but was destined to burst forth and spread into broader dimensions in our times. It is noteworthy that the revered Rabbi Abraham Yitzhak Hacohen Kook tried to establish an organisation in the twenties, called "Degel Yerushalayim" (The Flag of Jerusalem), the corner-stone of which was that self-same basic messianic Zionism. His organisational effort failed, but his spirit took root and bore fruit.

The very beginning of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi was in Jerusalem, when Avraham Tehomi, commander of the Haganah in Jerusalem, withdrew and set up "The National Haganah", against the background of his opposition to the policy of the Haganah. He had demanded the severance of the umbilical cord of dependence upon the Histadrut Labour Union and the political parties, and conversion of the Haganah from a militia or home guard of sorts, into a military force. He himself subsequently returned to the fold of the Haganah, after the 1936 riots, but the "National Haganah" became the Irgun Zva'i Leumi.

(c) The military aspect: Already in the initial period of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi, when it was involved on the Arab scene and opposed the restraint policy and demanded retaliation, it carried out operations in Jerusalem; in November 1937, "the restraint was broken", as the Irgun Zva'i Leumi put it. In Jerusalem too, bombs were thrown in Arab localities, and though the Haganah originally opposed action initiated by Jews against Arabs, ultimately it too set up "The Mobile Force", as a unit which ambushed the gangs and even was engaged in seeking them out. It was brought into being also in Jerusalem, by Yitzhak Sadeh, and its first action took place in the vicinity of Beit Shemesh, not far from Jerusalem.

Jerusalem was the seat of the British Military Court which sentenced members of the Underground to death or long years of imprisonment, in the same Russian Compound in which British police, courts and central prison were located.

Beginning 1939, with the publication of the third White Paper, the effect of which was so devastating to Zionism and Jewry, when the Irgun Zva'i Leumi shifted the struggle from the "Arab Front" to the "British Front", this City, site of the headquarters of the British Administration — High Commissioner, military high command, courts and civil government — became the scene of most telling operations.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, the Arab front evaporated. The Arabs expected a Nazi victory and the conquest of the

country by Rommel's army. However, even after this fond hope vanished, and when the War ended, the Arabs did not resume hostile operations till the passing of United Nations resolution on Partition. These were the peak years of the Hebrew underground's fight against British rule.

Several attempts were made to assassinate High Commissioners, especially Sir Harold MacMichael, who is embedded in Zionist memory for his enmity. Once — on the very eve of his departure from the country — he was wounded as he was leaving the City, when fire was rained on his car by members of Lehi. In the days of "Am Lohem" (Fighting Nation), the joint body consisting of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi and activist groups within the Palmach, there was a plan to seize Government House, the High Commissioner's mansion, and to capture the High Commissioner himself, and hold him hostage to secure the opening of the gates to immigration. The plan foundered when the Haganah high command discovered it and the members of the Palmach who had been party to the conspiracy were punished. Lehi members were arraigned before a military court in Jerusalem, and refused to recognise the authority of the British to try them, declaring *inter alia*: "What are you doing in our Jerusalem? Go back to London. When our ancestors were prophets, kings and Levites in this City, yours still climbed the trees in accordance with the theory of your Darwin".

The Russian Compound, which was several times the target of the Underground's attacks, became a mighty fortress nicknamed "Bevin-grad". The fighters penetrated this fortress too. Military camps, including the largest in Jerusalem, "Schneller", were attacked again and again. The Commander-in-Chief of the Army, Barker, was obliged to issue an order to his soldiers, placing all Jewish shops, cafés and cinemas out of bounds, because Jewish fighters were everywhere. The most spectacular action in Jerusalem was the blowing up of an entire wing of the King David Hotel, which was occupied by the Chief Secretariat of the Government of Palestine. The operation was carried out in broad daylight by the Irgun Zva'i Leumi. Ninety people, most of them senior Government officials, were killed. On King George Avenue, opposite the Jewish Agency building, the British Officers Club was blown up by the Irgun Zva'i Leumi, and many officers were killed in the explosion.

Underground fighters escaped by many ways, including tunnels, from the Central Prison in Jerusalem. The Lehi radio announcer, Geula Cohen, made her escape from the Government Hospital in the Russian Compound with the aid of Arab members of Lehi. Fortune

smiled in Jerusalem also on the co-author of this book, who escaped from his British guards whilst being brought handcuffed to the City for medical treatment.

During the period of the "Resistance", in which the Haganah too resorted to direct armed action against British rule, "Black Saturday" occurred. Thousands of members of the Palmach and Haganah, and the heads of the Jewish Agency, were arrested. The Jewish Agency building was seized by Army and Police, heavy damage was caused to the interior of the building and many documents were taken. Martial law was repeatedly imposed, whole quarters were placed under siege and house-to-house searches were conducted. There was often indiscriminate shooting at innocent pedestrians. The fighters of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi and Lehi found shelter in the poor districts and in the orthodox quarters, from Meah She'arim to the Bokharian Quarter. Here they encountered unreserved support, every house, every heart, every roof, every cellar, and even every synagogue were wide open to the fighters, as bases for storing weapons and printing pamphlets, as points of departure upon missions and as refuge thereafter. The British were well aware of this secret and their searches in these areas were ruthless. These people constituted a majority of the Jewish population in Jerusalem, and actively suffered the tribulations of the fight to expel the British, more than in any town in the land.

The prisoners of Zion were constantly visited in jail by the saintly Rabbi Arie'el Levin, the "Jerusalem Zaddik" from the poverty-stricken, faithful, quarter of Mishkenot. He not only paid regular visits to the prisoners; he would also run personal risk by acting as liaison with the Underground movements and by transmitting important messages.

In the death-cell of the Jerusalem Central Prison, Meir Feinstein of the Irgun Zva'i Leumi and Moshe Barazani of Lehi soared to Heaven in a chariot of fire. They had resolved that there would be no execution in Jerusalem. At their request, two hand grenades were smuggled into their cell. It was their intention to hurl one into the party which would accompany them to the scaffold, and to take their own lives with the second, but as Rabbi Goldman, who had been with them in the evening and had prayed with them, had said that he would be present at the execution, they cancelled the original plan, so as not to harm him, and exploded the grenades between their chests, on the eve of the Second of Iyar 5707 (April 21st, 1947).

In the newspaper "Davar", the poet Nathan Alterman wrote:
Let us not turn our eyes away. In vain do we ignore
The majesty of that moment of night.

In vain are we silent, for the tongue of fire speaks
In which the two set themselves aflame.
The death cell grew taller that night.
Facing
Princes of the rulers of continents
In a flash, like rats to their hole they slunk
Like a thief caught red-handed — — —
Let us not turn our eyes away, in the bloody cell
The hour of sacrifice burnt on, it shall not flicker,
It is equal to hours of nations
Which dwell upon them as upon jug and bread.

In hours such as these the loser of the battle is
The enemy
Who grinds his teeth.
Such an hour, which burns not in vain
Was the two lads' hour.

The Sages of Israel enumerated ten measures of beauty and of wisdom in the world, of which nine were bestowed upon Jerusalem. By the same token it can be said that of ten measures of suffering which the Jewish community fighting for the freedom of Israel endured, nine befell Jerusalem, and that of ten measures of blows which were inflicted upon the British regime, upon person and prestige, nine were dealt in Jerusalem, the centre of its wicked rule, which sought to stifle the hopes of Israel.

In November 1917 General Allenby entered Jerusalem in triumph, as a liberator. In the eyes of the Jewish People he was also the harbinger of Redemption to the People of Israel in its Homeland.

In November 1947, after thirty years of fickle rule, British dominion ended, with the resolution of the United Nations at Lake Success to partition the country, and with the beginning of the period of chaos fomented by the beaten, humiliated and vengeful British Administration.

In Jerusalem the period of chaos commenced the day after the United Nations Resolution.

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE

Thirty years after the conquest of Jerusalem by the British, the United Nations, in its session at Lake Success on November 29th, 1947, resolved upon the partition of Palestine into three parts: A Jewish state, an Arab state and Jerusalem — internationalised.

About one-hundred thousand Jews were destined to live in internationalised Jerusalem, and about an equal number of Arabs. The inhabitants of the city were to be entitled to apply for citizenship of the Jewish or the Arab state, at their option.

The General Assembly resolved that an international trusteeship administration should be established by the first of October, 1948. The United Nations were to appoint a Governor who would be neither Jew nor Arab, and would not be a citizen of either state. The Governor would be assisted by legislative, judiciary and executive agencies. A special police force was to be formed. Its members would be neither Jews nor Arabs; it would be entrusted with the protection of the Holy Places. The Trusteeship Committee of the United Nations appointed representatives of Australia, Nationalist China, France, Mexico, the United States and the United Kingdom to draw up plans for the administration of Jerusalem.

The Arabs rejected the partition plan outright. They opted for war, intending to seize the whole of the country. The Jewish Agency accepted Partition as the lesser evil, for the sake of attaining a Jewish State and as the only means of extrication from the British White Paper straight-jacket. The British Administration did not co-operate with the efforts to bring about Partition and to establish international rule in Jerusalem.

The leaders of the "Yishuv" — the Jewish Community — in Jerusalem, chose to bide time, to see which way the wind was blowing. They did not have to wait long before it swept into a storm. Already on the 30th of November, shots were fired at a Jewish ambulance on its way to the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus.

The Arab war against the establishment of the Jewish state commenced in Jerusalem the day after the United Nations Resolution, though Israel's War of Independence began only the day after the Declaration of Independence, with the invasion of Eretz-Israel by the armies of the Arab states. In this struggle, all Jewish Jerusalem was in

the forefront of the battle, not only the men in uniform.

On December 2nd, an Arab mob swarmed out of Jerusalem's Jaffa Gate and began to rob and destroy shops in the Mamillah Commercial Centre, and to set them on fire. The shopkeepers locked themselves inside their shops. Some were stoned, others were stabbed and shot. The British Police blocked lower Jaffa Road and prevented Haganah forces from reaching the Commercial Centre and repulsing the attackers. The Haganah leaders still hoped that it would prove possible to localise the fire and to prevent a general flare-up. They refrained therefore from retaliation against the Arabs. However, the Irgun Zva'i Leumi fighters infiltrated through the British lines and the Haganah patrols, and burned garages belonging to Arabs, as well as the Rex Cinema on lower Princess Mary Avenue.

It was becoming crystal-clear: War would decide the fate of Jerusalem.

Who were the combatants?

The Arab fighters in Jerusalem, between the adoption of the Partition Resolution and the British evacuation, belonged to several gangs and to the para-military organisations "Nejada" and "Futuwa". The commander of the Jerusalem front was Abd el-Kader el-Husseini, a relation of the Mufti of Jerusalem, head of the Arab Higher Committee. It is hard to determine what were the exact size and armaments of the Arab gangs, but they definitely numbered several thousand semi-regular fighters.

The Arab Legion of the Kingdom of Jordan was a well-organised and well-equipped force. It consisted of regular regiments of the British Army, whose members were Arab soldiers armed with British weapons. All but five of its fifty officers were British. Notwithstanding denials and the official British prohibition on the participation of the Legion in the hostilities, a number of its units were stationed outside Jerusalem and took part in the fighting yet before the British evacuation.

In the months subsequent to the Partition resolution, the British authorities continued their policy of thwarting the Partition resolution, of creating utter-chaos and of encouraging the Arabs in their endeavours "to throw the Jews into the Sea", so that all would see perforce how necessary they, the British, were and would beg them to stay.

The British Army and Police looked the other way most of the time, as the Arabs engaged in open warfare and when units of the Arab Legion participated in the clashes. The British often cast their deterrent weight into the fray to compel the Jewish forces to withdraw from positions, or to seize weapons which were found in Jewish possession; (often these

arms turned up later in Arab hands). Numerous British soldiers also deserted with their guns and joined Arab groups; some of them were later involved in widespread sabotage operations in Jewish Jerusalem.

The Jewish forces in Jerusalem consisted of: A few thousands who belonged to the various branches of the Haganah: the "Him" (Home Guard) numbered some 1,500 men. The "Hish" (Field Force) numbered 1,000. The elite crack-force, the "Palmach" was a mobile organisation which operated only from time to time in the Jerusalem sector, in accordance with the needs of this front and others. The arsenal of the units of the Haganah and Palmach in the initial period of the War was quite small: Rifles, submachine-guns, a few light and medium machine-guns, a small number of mortars. There were no tanks, no artillery, no air support.

The Irgun Zva'i Leumi ("Etzel") and the Fighters for the Freedom of Israel ("Lehi") operated in Jerusalem too. On the coast these organisations were disbanding and joining the ranks of the Israel Defence Forces, while in Jerusalem, which was not included in the proposed State of Israel, they continued their independent existence. The high commands of the two organisations reinforced their contingents in Jerusalem. Seven hundred members of the Etzel and one hundred and fifty of the Lehi, were armed with light weapons only, but with relatively large stores of explosives. They had been trained in the main for fighting in built-up areas. There was no joint command of the fighting forces in Jerusalem, nor were their actions always co-ordinated.

The organisations differed also in their attitude to the British. Etzel and Lehi continued to regard the British as the enemy and had no compunctions about attacking them, though they too curtailed the number of actions which they initiated against the British. The Haganah and Palmach endeavoured to avoid direct confrontation and clashes with the British. At times they were obliged to surrender their weapons and to retreat when a British detachment would appear in their sector of operations.

Just as there was not a clear-cut confrontation of force facing force and army facing army, for there were numerous forces and armies, so too it was not a war of city against city, and there was no defined front-line. The isolated Jewish Quarter within the Old City was an island amongst the Arabs, two thousand Jews within the walls, but only thirty of them soldiers at the commencement of the fighting. All around — Arabs. The Jewish areas in western Jerusalem were also encircled by Arab quarters. The City was like a mosaic, with innumerable front-lines

scattered throughout the City. Shots from here, sniping in the evening from there. Careful, that part is Arab! And here it is dangerous to pass.

The character of the front dictated the nature of the fighting in Jerusalem, sniping, mining and dynamiting. The City was divided into separate districts, each fighting for its life. Arab domination of the communication lines to Jerusalem enabled them to cut off the Jewish section and to block the supply of arms and ammunition. Convoys of food supplies got through only occasionally, when the British agreed to use their influence with the Arabs. It was clear that the moment the British vacated their positions on the Jerusalem — Tel-Aviv highway, the Arabs would also grab all the pumping stations along the water pipeline from Rosh Haayin to Jerusalem — and the water supply to the City would be cut off.

Dov Joseph, who was appointed Governor of the City by the Jewish Agency (and subsequently — Military Governor on behalf of the provisional Government) rations the meagre bread and conserves the scant water. He appoints guards and inspectors over the all but empty warehouses, counts the water cisterns, and orders them to be repaired and filled, while there is still water in the taps. Prepare! Once again, as in ancient sieges ... The City, as it were, rubs her eyes and her water resources. She recalls...

A simple reckoning: If the population consume 10 litres of water per person daily, the City can hold out 115 days. If the ration will be cut, and reduced to 5 litres, the City can survive 250 days of thirst. By then, the rains will come, and the cisterns will fill up again. Radios were placed where there was still electricity and were connected to loudspeakers on the main street-corners. In this manner the populace were able to learn of the progress of events in the country, how to conserve water, how to cook on wood, how to prepare a meal from the Halamit leaves which the children pick in the fields, and how to grow vegetables in the yard and on the roof; how to live. Some leave Jerusalem, but the overwhelming majority stand fast.

The first few months were mostly a period of static warfare. The Arabs would snipe, throw grenades, and would mine. In the border quarters, Haganah fighters dug in and conducted "trench warfare" of sorts with the neighbouring Arab quarters. Road-blocks and defensive walls were thrown up in every direction. In the Old City, strongholds are established in flats, and the windows become firing-points. The ring closes.

The underground organisations Etzel and Lehi took the initiative in the first months of the War. They attacked Arab quarters in the heart of

the City, struck at concentrations of Arab gangs and filled the hearts of the Arab population with terror, to induce them to vacate these quarters. A surprise attack was made upon Shuafat, and many houses were blown up and damaged in the Arab village of Lifta, in Romema and in Sheikh Badr in the northern part of the City. Fighters also penetrated Katamon, where they blew up Arab houses and headquarters, and bombs were thrown into Arab groupings at Jaffa Gate and Damascus Gate. The main objective was to relieve the western part of the City of the danger posed by the Arab quarters astride the main road to the coast.

Thus began the flight of the Arab inhabitants from the northwestern section of the City.

In February and March 1948 the entire city, becomes a front-line.

In the service of Arab gangs, British soldiers plant devastating bombs in the centre of Jewish Jerusalem. The Haganah men at the roadblocks do not yet dare to stop British military vehicles. As a result, the Palestine Post building is blown up. Soon this newspaper will free itself of the burden of the name Palestine and will properly change into the Jerusalem Post. In the course of the same chain of events, British military trucks laden with dynamite, explode in Ben-Yehuda Street. Similarly, a truck-load of explosives manages to penetrate the courtyard of the National Institutions — the Head Office of the Jewish Agency in Jerusalem.

The Haganah, Etzel and Lehi retaliate. They plant explosive charges, sabotage vehicles and headquarters, and shoot British soldiers. Etzel specialises in blowing up buildings and cars. Lehi sends its men to strike at British military personnel.

On February 11th, hundreds of Arabs storm Yemin Moshe opposite Mount Zion. One lone fighter blocks the descent of the Arab forces into the quarter; He hops from house to house and shoots from all the windows, to fool the enemy. And there he falls, Kirschenbaum of the Etzel. With great effort and outstanding heroism, the attack is then repulsed by the men of the Haganah and Etzel. When the attackers are repelled, the British open fire upon the positions of the defenders. The Arab commander of the Old City, Sheikh Yasin Abu-Bakhri, is killed in this assault. Within the City there is mining of and sniping at busses which maintain the link between its various parts. Both sides have good marksmen. Many civilians are killed, to no advantage to either belligerent. There is no defined combat zone in Jerusalem at this time.

In February, the Haganah commander in Jerusalem is replaced. David Shaltiel, till then head of the Haganah Intelligence, assumes

command. The instructions he receives are "to relieve the Old City and the whole of Jerusalem" with the departure of the British.

Food convoys continue to go up from the coast to the City. They are shot at in Abu Kebir and at Azor on the outskirts of Tel-Aviv, at Beit Dagon, Al-Kabab, Dir Ayub, Shaar Hagai, Saris (Shoreh) and at the Castel, at every station on the trail of anguish they pay a toll of blood, and forge on. As of December, the Palmach is in charge of securing the safety of the convoys. The going grows more difficult all the while. After three months of siege, shortages are felt in the City. At the end of March, an attempt to break through with a convoy of food from the coastal plain fails for the first time. Most of the road is held by the Arabs, and the British do not intervene to prevent them from attacking convoys travelling to Jerusalem. In the City there is no meat, fish, milk, eggs, vegetables nor fruit. The emergency food supplies can last two weeks. The whole City is a front-line. Every Jerusalem Jew is at the front: facing the fire while hunger stalks at home.

One cannot even bury the dead in Jerusalem. Funeral convoys ascending the exposed slope of the Mount of Olives, come under fire. Winter! A slanting rain pours down and pelts the mourners who slip on the muddy hill. From the parapets of the Old City wall, and from the top of the Mount of Olives, gangs direct their fire: At the funeral of one Jew, two are buried.

The first months of the War are months of serious setbacks.

In the Old City: The inhabitants try to slink out, to escape from the Jewish Quarter. Shops are closed and schools are shut. The food convoys, brought through the City gates by the British Army, supply meagre bread. Few of the residents of the Quarter have faith in the ability of the fighters to defend them. The residents who belong to the "Old Yishuv" are full of complaints and accusations. Some try to obtain British or international protection, some even believe in the possibility of getting accustomed to life under Arab rule. Some of the Quarter's inhabitants want to flee. The Haganah imposes a curfew whenever a British convoy reaches the Quarter, so that the population should not leave with it.

The end of March arrives; four months of this strange and difficult war of besieged Jerusalem have elapsed. She was not prepared in advance for this War. The central objective had been: To attain statehood. This explains the reconciliation with the idea of internationalisation of the City, the initial neglect in readying its defences and the disregard of the need to liberate it.

In the Old City, a battle breaks out between soldiers of the British

Army and of the Haganah. The British attempt to seize a mortar. There are British dead and Jewish dead. The British retreat. They will not again try to confiscate arms or to arrest defenders of the Quarter. They will content themselves with sniping and with shelling from a distance, at regular intervals.

A few weeks before the British evacuation, an understanding is reached with Etzel in the Jewish Quarter. Stock is taken of the weapons and ammunition, and the men are mustered, in preparation for the final battle.

The food convoys do not get through. There are many setbacks. There are alternative routes on the coastal plain, which bypass the Arab villages and towns, but the eastern section of the road to Jerusalem cannot be bypassed. The new armoured vehicles: "Sandwiches" or armour plate filled with concrete, crawl slowly up the way to Jerusalem, and on the roads to the Etzion Bloc, to Atarot, and to Hartuv. The Fifth and Sixth Palmach Regiments suffer heavy casualties escorting the convoys. It is no longer possible to move convoys through the road-blocks. The time had come for a change of policy.

David Ben-Gurion has said: "The Arabs' reckoning was correct: The surrender of Jewish Jerusalem, its conquest or its destruction would have constituted a grievous blow, possibly a mortal one, to the Jewish community and would have broken the Jews' will and their ability to withstand Arab aggression".

It was resolved to mobilise all resources in the country, at the risk of exposing other fronts for lack of men and munitions, to concentrate three regiments in one sector (till that time not even one whole regiment had ever participated in a single strike) and to force open the way to Jerusalem. This was to be known as Operation Nachshon.

A rectification of past errors, in the absence of an international army to impose internationalisation...

Just a few hours before the battle is joined, in the dark of the night, the first plane with arms from Czechoslovakia arrives. Rifles, machine-guns and ammunition are swiftly unloaded, and the weapons are cleaned of the thick grease on their way to the forward base.

On the eve of the third of April, after stubborn attacks by the Etzioni Brigade, the Castel is taken. Hulda and Dir Muhisin are conquered. At midnight the positions commanding the road are seized. The first Nachshon convoy, consisting of 60 trucks is on the move to Jerusalem.

In an effort to block the road again, the enemy concentrates his main effort in violent attacks upon the Castel. Abd el-Kader El-Husseini, head of the gangs in the Jerusalem region, hastens from Damascus upon

learning of the fall of the Castel. An Arab counter-attack which he leads, brings his men very close to the command post on the hill. Dawn is about to break, moments in which the scales of battle are delicately balanced. Three Arabs approach the command post, (which was apparently thought to be abandoned) and Abd el-Kader El-Husseini is killed. In the following days, the Castel changes hands several times.

Only three convoys get through to Jerusalem during Operation Nachshon. The City breathes somewhat easier. However, the difficulty in securing vehicles and civilian drivers is the Achilles Heel of the Operation. The achievement was not exploited to the full.

On the evening of the occupation of the Castel by the Palmach, the men of Etzel and Lehi took the offensive against the Arab village of Dir Yassin, which was stuck as a wedge in the Jewish part of northwestern Jerusalem. The strike was co-ordinated with the Haganah commander: "The seizure of Dir Yassin and its occupation are a stage in our overall plan", writes Shaltiel, who demands that the attackers also hold on to the village, and do not content themselves with blowing up houses and subsequent withdrawal. Shaltiel explains that it is important that enemy forces be prevented from gaining control of the village. Etzel and Lehi claim all along, as does the Palmach, "We are an assault-and-conquering force, not occupying contingents". There are not enough men.

Two loudspeakers approach the village and demand that the Arabs evacuate it. Only one of the loudspeakers works. In the village houses, the gang members dig in and snipe. There is no choice but to take the village in house-to-house fighting. The village is stormed; there is street fighting. The attackers suffer losses in dead and wounded. Houses are blown up. Most of the villagers do not escape. About 230 Arabs are killed.

A shrill cry goes up from the Arab world. "Massacre at Dir Yassin". It describes in detail how women and children were killed and butchered. However, instead of fanning the flame of a "holy war" in Arab hearts, the horror stories sow terror among the Arabs. Disintegration in the Arab civilian rear accelerates, the collapse results in the flight of multitudes. The Haganah Command, the Jewish Agency and numerous other bodies condemn the assault on Dir Yassin. The fact, however, remains: That night, April 9th, which witnessed the capture of the Castel and Dir Yassin, with all that it entailed, determined the fate of the entire battle. On April 13th, the Arabs ambush a convoy to Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus. The convoy is trapped at Sheik Jarah. The Arabs attack on all sides, for hours, setting the cars on fire,

killing tens of doctors, nurses and patients. The British Army does not intervene, does not interfere. The men of the Haganah are stationed 600 yards away but are helpless to protect or aid. Some describe it as a reprisal for Dir Yassin. If that were the case, then what was avenged by the slaughter scores of years earlier in the Old City, in Hebron, in Safad, etc. etc. and yet again et-cetera? But even if the ambush on the road to Mount Scopus was indeed revenge, and not a stage in the War, one thing is certain: The 9th of April, with the conquest of the Castel and of Dir Yassin, saved Jerusalem, and with it — the State of Israel.

Again the road to Jerusalem is threatened. The regiments of Operation Nachshon have been sent back to their brigades. Palmach Brigade "Harel" is being organised, to secure the road to Jerusalem. Saris, Beit Surik and Bidu are captured. On April 15th convoys set out again for Jerusalem. In Operation Harel there are giant convoys of 250 to 300 trucks. Three such convoys get through during this Operation, and more would have gone through...

But the Harel Brigade is urgently needed within the City of Jerusalem.

For the situation within the City hangs in the balance. The British are preparing to evacuate the City. Every section which they vacate must be seized; otherwise the Arabs will grab it. Now is the time, now is the need for Operation Jebusite. The Commander of the Operation is Yitzhak Sadeh.

The Harel Brigade moves in the direction of Jerusalem, a gigantic convoy. The going is rough. In Jerusalem, the Brigade pushes north: Towards Nebi Samuel, Atarot and Sheikh Jarah. The offensive fails, due in part to active British intervention. An attempt to occupy the Mount of Olives fails too.

One more objective of Operations Jebusite was to establish contact with the Mekor Haim Quarter, by occupying Katamon, the district in which rich Arabs of Jerusalem and senior British Government officials resided. In a night assault, at the end of April, Regiments Nos. 4 and 5 of Harel and Regiment No. 1 of Etzioni assault the area of the Convent of St. Simon.

A violent battle ensues, over the Convent, the fences and the houses surrounding it. The Convent is captured and the Arabs counter-attack. The Palmach hold on at heavy cost in blood.

Their stubbornness pays off. The Arab flight from Katamon begins. The Arabs attempt another offensive, with the aid of an armoured car and a cannon. But the Arab infantry do not join the attack.

In the evening, reinforcements arrive from Kiriath Shmuel. The scales

are tipped. The Arabs flee Katamon and the German and Greek colonies.

Southern Jerusalem is in our hands.

After the last convoy of Operation Jebusite passes up the road to Jerusalem, the gate is slammed shut behind it.

Latrun, Shaar Hagai and the positions to the east thereof constituted the bottlenecks along this road. Katana, Saris, Beit Mahsir and Dir Ayub. Villages. Words of a song about burnt armoured cars in Bab El-Wad, the Arabic name of Shaar Hagai, the gateway to Jerusalem.

A siege within a siege, of the Old City of embattled Jerusalem. Within the Old City there is a lull of sorts, from the beginning of May till the British evacuate. An agreement is reached to unify the forces of the Haganah and Etzel in Jewish Jerusalem. Food convoys do not arrive and the last convoy of Operation Jebusite is unable to return to the coast.

May 8th: Four British tanks move through the Jewish sections to ensure the maintenance of the cease-fire. The same day, the water-supply from Rosh Haayin stops flowing, for "technical reasons". Operation Maccabee was therefore hatched.

Beit Mahsir, Hamasrek, names the whole country knows and shall ever remember. The fate of Jerusalem hangs upon the teeth of Hamasrek (the Comb). This tree-crowned hill commands the road to Jerusalem and the entire approach from the coastal plain; it is one of the vital positions of Beit Mahsir. The battles of the road to Jerusalem are the battles of Jerusalem. It cannot be stated with certainty where the die was cast in the War for the City, within Jerusalem or on the Road.

Seven weeks shall elapse between the last Jebusite Convoy and the next convoy to reach Jerusalem. Jerusalem is again besieged.

Thursday, May 13th, the third of Iyar 5708. A British officer enters the home of Mr. Weingarten, head of the Jewish Committee of the Old City, and hands him the inner keys of Zion Gate: "From the year 70 to the present day, the keys of the Walls of Jerusalem have never been in the possession of Jews. This is the first time in 1,800 years that you have this privilege".

Friday, May 14th, the New City, the fourth of Iyar 5708.

The British will probably leave only tomorrow.

At 6 a.m., however, in the Generali Building, and in the Anglo-Palestine Bank building, in the heart of "Bevingrad" — the British Security Zone of Jaffa Road — British soldiers in full gear prepare to leave.

An armoured car appears. Sir Alan Cunningham, the High

Commissioner, departs. He makes a quick inspection of the troops standing at attention and takes the salute. The High Commissioner returns to his car. He leaves for Kalandia air-field, to fly from Jerusalem. Soldiers spring into the awaiting trucks.

The British leave Jerusalem. Every Jewish heart throbbed with joy when they arrived as liberators on Hanuka 1917. Was there a Jewish heart which regretted their departure on the fourth of Iyar thirty years later? Not likely. Hearts may have been troubled, but certainly not distressed. How high were Jewish hopes when they arrived. How grievous were the disappointment and bloodshed by the time they left, unwillingly and grudgingly. One more distant foreign empire abandoning the country. May it be the last! In the City itself there is apprehension. What now?

Operation Kilshon (Pitchfork) is, it is true, ready, its objective being the seizure of the areas which the British are vacating. The pitchfork has three prongs: The occupation of the Police School and Sheikh Jarah in the north, the seizure of "Bevingrad", Notre Dame and the New Gate in the centre of the City, and in the south — Allenby Barracks, Bakaa, the Railway Station, and the Government Printing Press.

Operation Kilshon was planned, however, only to take over the British security zones, as if there had been no intention of capturing the whole of Jerusalem.

The City is empty of British forces. The Arab Legion of Jordan has not yet attained full strength. This could be the hour of liberation of the whole of Jerusalem. But if there has been no forethought, how can there be a happy end?

The plan is to defend the Jewish sections; Jerusalem is expected to be internationalised. All efforts will therefore be concentrated henceforth on the defence of the New City, and on forcing open the road from the west.

The Haganah and Etzel start Operation Kilshon. Etzel mans the Sheikh Jarah front and takes up positions also in central Jerusalem. Haganah forces seize all the other operational sectors. Most of the objectives of Operation Kilshon are taken without a fight. Only at Allenby Barracks and El-Alamein Camp is there fighting. Allenby Barracks are in our hands. El-Alamein Camp is in no-man's land. Part of Abu-Tor Quarter falls into our hands. A Lehi unit storms Notre Dame on its own. It seizes it and endeavours to break through to the Tower of David. The unit runs into difficulties when an Iraqi force attacks its flank. It is obliged to retreat.

The Haganah forces then storm Notre Dame and wrest it from the

Iraqi troops.

The afternoon of Friday, May 14th. Tel-Aviv:

David Ben-Gurion proclaims the creation of the State of Israel. The invasion of the country by the armies of the Arab states begins. There are no newspapers in Jerusalem. In most homes there is no electric power into which radios can be plugged. Only few hear of the Declaration.

Will Jerusalem be the State's capital? Will it be an international city? An Arab city? No political decision is taken in respect of Jerusalem. Ben-Gurion declares: "The problem of Jerusalem is first and foremost a question of military capability. At this time, the main objective is thorough military preparedness to capture the road to Jerusalem and to liberate the whole of the City". As for the status of the City —

A month later Ben-Gurion will say: "... Jerusalem is within the State of Israel; for the time being, unfortunately, without the Old City ... and there is no distinction between Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv..."

On the 14th of May a State of Emergency is declared in Jerusalem. All males, including men with families, from the ages of 18 to 45 are called to the forces. On Saturday night, heavy shelling commences from French Hill, from Nebi Samuel, from Beit Hanina and from Beit Naballa. The Legion's artillery unleashes a heavy barrage, yet before the arrival of the Legion's main forces from the direction of Jericho.

The Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood contingent leaves its bases at El-Arish and Rafiah and proceeds in the direction of Beersheba and Hebron. It reaches the southern approaches of Jerusalem without opposition. It entrenches opposite Ramat Rachel. Have the Moslem Brotherhood come to "save" Jerusalem from the Jews, or are they perhaps hastening to seize Jerusalem, the precious spoils-of-war, before it will be snatched by another Arab country? Perhaps the most important factor cementing Arab "unity" against Israel, is the long-standing below-the-surface rivalry between mutually-hostile Moslem states, sometimes even at war with each other. **Three thousand four hundred years** had elapsed since the letter which Eved-Hafa, Governor of Jerusalem, sent to Egypt appealing for aid against the Habiru. Jerusalem was "liberated" so to speak only once by Egypt, in the days of Saladin, who came from Egypt, though he was not an Egyptian. He wrested Jerusalem from the dominion of the Cross, for Islam, not necessarily for Egypt. This should be realised also today when observing the struggle of Israel against the surrounding Arab countries.

On May 18th, the advance party of the Legion reaches the deserted Latrun positions. The next day, the Legion's armoured and infantry

battalions arrive by way of Jericho to Jerusalem. Another column advances on Jerusalem from Ramallah.

It is now a month that the City has been subjected to continuous shelling. With the British withdrawal, the bombardment increases. In the south, the Egyptians join in the shelling, from the Mar Elias position and the Beit Jalla peak, with 4.2 inch shells. The shells crash into the streets of Jerusalem by day and by night. There are hundreds of killed and wounded. Late in the afternoon, daily, there is a half-an-hour lull; the British officers who set the ranges of the Legion's guns knock off for tea.

Mount Scopus is shelled, Hadassah Hospital is badly damaged, enemy planes pass from time to time over the City and drop shrapnel bombs and incendiary bombs. In the month following the Declaration of Independence, the shelling causes 1,700 casualties.

Already on May 14th, on the eve of the Declaration of Independence, Atarot had to be evacuated. The settlers withdrew to Neveh Yaacov. The next morning Neveh Yaacov was attacked too, and that night its inhabitants withdrew to Mount Scopus. Thus fell the two Jewish settlements to the north of Jerusalem.

At the end of May, the settlement of Beit Haarava and the potash works on the north-western shore of the Dead Sea — were also vacated. Defenders and workers were transported by boat to Sdom.

The siege of Jerusalem had lasted already several weeks. The weekly food ration per adult was 3 ounces of grits, 3 ounces beans, 1 ounces yellow-cheese, 3 ounces coffee, 2 1/2 lbs. bread, 2 ounces margarine — 900 calories a day; not much.

There is a radio station in the City, successor to "Jerusalem Calling", the Mandatory Palestine Broadcasting Service. The Palestine Post still appears, as well as a stencilled news bulletin. The central social event: The meet at the water distribution point — receiving the meagre water-ration and dodging the sniping and shelling. During all these days of battle and shelling, the electric power station still supplies a little electricity to both sides of the City, the Jewish and the Arab. The Red Cross proposes that the power station be placed under its control and offers to supply it with fuel. The Arabs reject the proposal, and our forces capture the power station. However, there is not enough fuel in the City to keep it going at full strength.

Arms and ammunition were occasionally brought by light planes. Heavier planes did not exist, but even had they been available, there was not a runway in Jerusalem on which they could land. Therefore only a tiny trickle of war materiel could come by air. The Legion had

established itself firmly at Latrun and it prevented the passage of convoys along the road going by the Latrun monastery and the village.

At the end of May, efforts were redoubled to create an alternative route. In the vicinity of Beit Muhisin, the road forked off towards Beit Jiz and Beit Susin. From there a four mile road had to be cleared, — to link up with another dirt road which intersected the Hartuv — Shaar Hagai road and turned towards Beit Mahsir, Saris and the sections of the highway which we held.

Work on the road proceeded from both ends, by labourers who came from Jerusalem and with heavy equipment which was brought up from the coastal plane. Equipment and supplies for besieged Jerusalem were transported also on men's backs, over the unpaved section. At its end, trucks waited to carry the goods to Jerusalem. The City's breathing capacity was thereby extended, and fuel, ammunition and arms, as well as manpower reserves, trickled in. Thus the "Burma Road" came into being.

What was the situation in the enemy camp?

The Legion commanders were aware that vital material might infiltrate into the besieged City. Though they may not have known the exact location of the "Burma Road", they were cognisant of the fact that siege in itself would not bring Jerusalem to her knees. On May 19th, the Legion's direct assault upon the City commenced.

The Arab Legionnaires sang: "O'Abu-Talal (King Abdullah), do not worry. Your sword is dripping blood and is red". The Iraqi soldiers shouted: "We shall plunder the Jews' wealth and drink their blood". This was not sheer oriental "poesy", or metaphor. Twenty-five years later a Syrian officer would be awarded a medal for doing just that. Arabic poetry is absolutely literal.

Nearly the whole of the Arab Legion is concentrated in Jerusalem: 9,000 soldiers, 72 heavy armoured cars equipped with cannon and machine-guns, 50 light armoured vehicles and about 90 pieces of artillery of various calibres. Within two weeks — so they hoped — they would finish the job in Jerusalem.

The commander of the Sixth Regiment of the Arab Legion, Abdullah Bek E-Tel, who fought in the Old City of Jerusalem, claims that he was not allowed to capture the whole of Jerusalem, and that most of the Arab quarters outside the walls were deliberately abandoned by the King of Jordan and the Commander-in-Chief of the Arab Legion, General Glubb-Pasha, in collusion with the Government of Israel. According to this alleged agreement, the City was to be divided between the two parties, and the Kingdom of Jordan was to annex the area of the Arab

State envisaged by the U.N. Partition Resolution west of the River Jordan. A similar charge would be made by Jews against Ben-Gurion's Government: That the Old City was not taken when the opportunity had existed because of an agreement with Abdullah, which gave it to him. The truth is buried in documents which are still secret.

In the days between the Declaration of Independence and the entry of the Legion into Jerusalem, irregulars and the "National Guard" carried on the fight. Fadil Bek, one of the leaders of the gangs, who was the Mufti's henchman, promised that the hour of the fall of the Jewish Quarter was near, and when that occurred, the Jews would — he vowed — be put against the wall, to teach them a lesson.

On the night of the 16th and 17th of May — Abdullh E-Tel relates — the Jews attempted to capture the gates to the Old City, and were repulsed. The Arabs thereupon counter-attacked and struck at the Jewish Quarter. They succeeded in hemming it in still further. The Jewish defenders quit Zion Gate, the Old City wall was abandoned and many houses on the outskirts of the Jewish Quarter were destroyed. At this stage, King Abdullah authorised Abdullah E-Tel's regiment to move into the Old City, for the purpose of defending it and seizing the Jewish Quarter. Though King Abdullah may not personally have thirsted for Jewish blood, he did not refrain from appearing as "the sword of Allah and Mohammed his Prophet wreaking vengeance upon the infidels...". This, however, did not avail him the day he was assassinated by a "truer" zealot than himself.

The eve of May 19th: The Legion spreads out in the City. One thousand two hundred residents of the Jewish Quarter are crowded in the cellars of Batei Machseh and in the Johanan Ben-Zakkai subterranean synagogues. Their hearts are filled with dread. At a moment when the area still held by the Jews has been reduced to about 100 x 200 yards, at a moment when the rabbis of the Quarter recommend surrender to the Arabs in order to save lives — the Palmach burst into the City through Zion Gate.

On the previous night, another force attempted to smash its way through Jaffa Gate — and was repulsed with heavy losses. All night efforts continued, to extricate the wounded from the area between the Gate and the Tannous Building. This ill-fated attack diverted the attention of the Arabs from the men of the Fourth Harel Regiment ("The Crack Regiment") who climbed the steep slope to Mount Zion from the direction of Abu-Tor and seized the positions on the hill almost without casualty.

From there they mounted the assault on Mount Zion on the eve of

May 19th.

The "Davidka" mortars pound Kfar Hashiloah (Silwan village), the Tower of David area and the block of shops adjacent to Zion Gate. The heavy explosions cause tremors in walls and hearts in the Jewish Quarter. A charge of dynamite is brought up to the Gate, sappers ignite the fuse, and beat a quick retreat. There is a mighty explosion. Zion Gate is smashed open. 0240 a.m.

The Palmach rushes in through the Gate. The Jewish Quarter seems to have been saved. Contact is established with the New City, supplies and ammunition pour in. Reinforcements of about 70 men reach the Quarter, men of the "Him" and the "Hish".

The Palmach men who breached the Gate were, however, dead tired after four continuous nights of fighting, and went down to Yemin Moshe to reorganise. They were needed in other places. They were an assault force, not a holding unit — this was the oft-repeated defence of the men of the Palmach against Ben-Gurion's accusation in subsequent years, that they were responsible for the loss of the Old City. Zion Gate was abandoned. Shaltiel does not allot forces to hold the bridgehead to the Old City. The trap is once again snapped shut.

The night which could have marked the Quarter's salvation, signalled the beginning of its fall.

The Jewish Quarter will fight on for another ten days.

In the north of the City: Legion forces capture Sheikh-Jarah, but their violent offensive against the Notre Dame-Musrara area grinds to a halt. Abdullah E-Tel, accuses his fellow-officers, the British commanders of other Legion regiments, of treachery.

The Legion also shells the Hebrew University buildings and the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus several times. Abdullah E-Tel claims that this was his own initiative, contrary to express orders issued by his British superiors. It was reported that the Governments of Britain and the United States had intervened with the Jordanian Government and King Abdullah to avoid damage to these institutions of science and medicine. Abdullah did in fact transmit orders to this effect to the Legion units, and therefore the Jordanian forces were content with the encirclement of Mount Scopus, and the prevention of access thereto. In fact, except for its activities within the Old City, the Arab Legion took no action to decide the battle after May 25th.

In the south of Jerusalem, the Egyptian Moslem Brotherhood kept up the pressure. They attack Ramat Rachel. Their forces, which were supported by light armour and a number of 3.7 inch Howitzers, were based on Bethlehem, Beit-Jala, and Beit-Safafa. Their headquarters

was the Mar Elias Monastery. There was a limited measure of co-ordination between them and Legion troops who were encamped in the south of Jerusalem.

The offensive against Ramat Rachel opened up on May 21st. As the attack intensified, the "Him" soldiers and the few settlers abandoned the village and withdrew to Jerusalem. Hundreds of Arabs, laden with sacks, swarmed into the houses, in search of loot. At night, a "Him" unit reached Ramat Rachel, drove out the looters who were armed mainly with clubs and knives, and together with the settlers, re-occupied the village.

Ramat Rachel was again attacked the following day, again abandoned, again looted. A battalion of the First Regiment, the "Etzioni", was rushed forward again to eject the invaders. It found most of the village's houses in ruins. It was decided to reinforce the defences against the Egyptians massed opposite, and no longer to leave the defence to the settlers and the "Him" forces. Three companies of the Haganah, two of Etzel and two of Lehi were to defend Ramat Rachel. However, only two Etzel companies and a platoon of the First "Etzioni" Regiment reached the destination and they absorbed the full brunt of the heavy assault of May 25th. The Egyptians were supported by armoured vehicles and half-tracks, and secured a foothold on the eastern fringe of the Kibbutz. Part of the defending force retreated and reported in Jerusalem that the village had fallen and that the rest of the defenders had been killed. The thunder of battle continued, however, to be heard from the south of the City. The remnants of the defending force — most of them wounded — gathered in the dining-hall, and there the wounded too carried on the fight, from roof and windows. They tried to halt the enemy's armour with Molotov Cocktails and succeeded in repelling a number of infantry assaults with light firearms. They were helped by considerable confusion in the Arab ranks, who did not distinguish between their own forces, the Etzel, and Arab civilians who hastened to loot. The looters were joined by many soldiers who turned to pillage yet before the battle was won — for fear that others would beat them to it. Jewish reinforcements arrived at night and found the majority of the defenders wounded, in the dining-hall. Most of the Arab attackers were not even aware of their presence in the dining-hall. Thus Ramat Rachel withstood the onslaught.

The fledgling Air Force of the State of Israel carried out at the same time a number of sorties against Shuafat, the gun emplacements at Nebi Samuel and the troops on the Ramallah Road.

Let us return to the Old City:

After the Palmach burst in through Zion Gate, reinforcements numbering a few score entered the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. The Palmach did not stay, however, to hold the Gate, and lack of co-ordination between the commander of the Quarter and headquarters in the New City resulted in failure to despatch to the Quarter even defenders whose homes were located there. The vital artery linking the Quarter with our troops on Mount Zion was severed.

That night, the Legion too joined in the fighting in the Old City. Cannon and mortars bombarded the Quarter night and day. Supported by heavy armour and heavy machine-guns, the Legionaries stormed the Quarter in house-to-house fighting, and took one position after another. The area held by the Jews contracted continuously. The Legionaries seized positions in the Street of the Jews. Headquarters within the Jewish Quarter and its hospital had to be removed, as they were in the front line of battle, and suffered direct hits. The Porat Yosef Synagogue was completely demolished by Legion sappers — a vital defence position was lost. The number of wounded constantly increased. Not all civilian residents of the Quarter were eager to assist in this battle to the death. We have seen that some called for surrender. Many, however, fought valiantly, dug trenches, baked bread and moved supplies, or attended to the burial of the fallen, within the walls — by special Rabbinical dispensation — as it was impossible to remove the dead for burial on the Mount of Olives. Boys aged twelve and upward hurried from post to post with weapons, ammunition and messages — as there was no other means of communication between the positions. Arab snipers were on the lookout for these lads, and Arab shells found them too. In the synagogues and cellars, prayers and wailing increased. A butchery was imminent.

Telegrams pleading for help were despatched to headquarters in western Jerusalem: "We have no arms, no ammunition. The defenders are wounded. Rush reinforcements!"

Shaltiel replies: "Hold fast. We shall parachute ammunition".

The ammunition is parachuted — into Arab hands.

Telegram: "Ammunition will not help as there is no one to man the guns. Break into the Old City and rush reinforcements!" Shaltiel replies: "Hold on. Aid will come. Tonight, tomorrow, the day after at the latest".

The Quarter's rabbis press the commander to capitulate, to allow them to lead a surrender party to the Legion.

Despairing cables: "Help!"

"Shaltiel: "Tonight we come!"

On the night of May 24th an attempt was made to break into the Old City. Palmach soldiers penetrated Zion Gate, with explosive charges to blow it open. In the vicinity of the Gate, they were exposed to the fire of heavy artillery and machine-guns. The explosives blew up in their hands. The attempt failed. Yet City Headquarters telegraph Yemin Moshe: "Our boys have broken into the Old City. They are dancing the Hora on the City Wall". The commander of the Quarter hurries over and sees the true situation. Telegram to headquarters: "You're mistaken, friend. The dance is the Debka, not the Hora". The bombardment of the Quarter goes on, room-to-room fighting.

Only 450 yards separate the Palmach positions on Mount Zion from the Quarter. Yet there is no one to bridge the gap in answer to the pleas for help.

An attempt is made to stall for time, to negotiate through the representatives of the Red Cross. To gain a respite, a cease-fire is requested for the removal of the dead and wounded. The Legion refuses, and calls for the surrender of the Quarter.

Indecision at Old City Headquarters. Moshe Rosnak, the commander, is hard-pressed: on the one hand, by residents of the Quarter who burst into his headquarters in hysteria and terror; on the other — Shaltiel's orders: Do not surrender, help is on the way!

In the Old City they hear a radio broadcast: The spokesman of the Government of Israel announces at the United Nations that the Arabs have not agreed to a truce because they want to conquer the Old City. The logical conclusion: The commanders of the New City have given up hope of relieving the Quarter, and are therefore seeking international support. Hope is lost. Despair spreads also among the fighters. They will not hold out even till the Ninth of Av, to add a link to its centuries-old chain of blood, to add another Destruction to its tragic record of anniversaries. For are they not standing and lying above the skeletons of the warriors of previous Destructions, and are not their positions precisely above the emplacements of the ancient past? Some years later, archaeologists would uncover there a Jewish home which went up in flames on the last day of the battle, and even food remnants. Skeletons were not found. What will happen to our skeletons here?

The area of the Quarter grows still smaller. The hospital is removed to Batei Machseh. The wounded are bandaged and return to man their posts, only to be brought back again to the hospital a few hours later, wounded again, or dead. A truce is again requested, for the removal of the wounded. The Legion agrees on condition that the Palmach withdraw from Mount Zion. City Headquarters refuse. They promise

relief within two days. A sharp exchange of telegrams between Rosnak and Shaltiel.

Rosnak: "Instead of 'Zionism', let us have ammunition, instead of advice — reinforcements".

Shaltiel: "Organise your men. Impose strict discipline upon the civilian population. Open fire only upon definite targets... The alternative — extermination".

Lag Ba'Omer: One fourth of the area of the Quarter is lost on that day. The northern section of the Street of the Jews is ablaze. The "Hurva" Synagogue of Rabbi Yehuda the Hassid falls into Arab hands. An Arab flag is unfurled above it.

A girl seizes a white apron and tries to walk towards the Legion, to sue for surrender. The "flag" is torn from her hands.

Friday, May 28th. The Arabs are only 15 yards from a shelter holding hundreds of Jews. Rosnak: "It is a matter of hours". Shaltiel: "Try to hold out another two days". Rabbi Mintzberg and Rabbi Hazan go, with Rosnak's permission, to negotiate the evacuation of the dead and wounded. An attempt to stall, and to calm demands of residents to capitulate. The Legion does not shoot at the bearers of the white flag. Rabbi Hazan returns: The Legion demands that the representatives of the Haganah should come to discuss surrender.

The Operations Officer of the Palmach peers through a turret on Mount Zion. He is planning to break into the Quarter. The delegation with the white flag passes before his eyes.

Telegrams: Shaltiel insists — no surrender.

The Arabs insist: Unconditional surrender of the Quarter. They will not agree to a cease-fire for the evacuation of the wounded.

At Headquarters in the Jewish Quarter a vote is taken, in the presence of officers, leaders of the community, representatives of the soldiers. All but one favour surrender.

Moshe Rosnak, commander of the Quarter and Mr. Weingarten, representative of the inhabitants, sign the Deed of Surrender. Abdullah Bek E-Tel accepts the surrender.

340 men are taken prisoner. 1,500 old men, women, wounded and children, move between two rows of Legionaries. Behind them — an Arab rabble sees its prey slip between its fingers. In the background, the Jewish Quarter is in flames. These civilians are transferred to western Jerusalem.

The defenders of the Quarter sense, the Governor of the City of Jerusalem knows: Not everything possible was done to save the Jewish Quarter. The Old City has fallen. Thereafter, annually, on the

anniversary of the fall of the City, memoirs and detailed accounts would be written and the debate would flare up anew: Why? Wherefore? Why had the Old City fallen? The term "mehdal" (= neglect), which was widely used to describe the action and inaction which led to the Yom Kippur War, had not yet been coined.

The war of Jerusalem is waged also at a considerable distance from the City, in the Valley of Ayalon, over Latrun.

The urgency of clearing the road from the Coast to western Jerusalem arises again, in greater intensity. In the battles of Operation Maccabee, on May 16th and 17th, the villages of Latrun and Dir Ayub were captured, and two convoys managed to get through. The villages had fallen into our hands after the forces of Ka'ukji had abandoned them and before they were reached by the Arab Legion. When Givati Brigade was called south, to block the Egyptian column coming up through Ashdod towards Tel-Aviv, the Legion entered the Latrun positions on May 18th. As of then, numerous attempts to regain these positions proved abortive, and no one knows for sure the extent of our losses in the fields of the Valley of Ayalon that summer, opposite the forbidding police fort.

In the first stage of Operation Bin-Nun, the new, Seventh, Brigade and the 2nd Regiment of the Alexandroni Brigade stormed the enemy positions. Many men of the two regiments leading the offensive were killed in battle. Many more fell in attempts to extricate their comrades. The Legion, encouraged by its success, counter-attacked and captured the Radar positions near Maaleh Hahamishah. As a result, the eastern sector of the road to Jerusalem became exposed too.

Colonel Marcus (Micky Stone) from the United States was placed in command of the front. On May 28th he assumes command of the Etzioni, Harel and Seventh Brigades, which are the Jerusalem Front brigades at that time. He groups his forces for a massive offensive on the Latrun front.

There is a series of bitter battles over the monastery, the police fort and the positions surrounding them. All the attacks fail. A last effort is made on the eve of June 9th. Colonel Marcus hopes to capture Ramallah and to cut off Latrun from the rear. The plan is still-born and the troops withdraw at dawn.

The First Truce commences two days later. The Jerusalem — Tel-Aviv highway is still blocked.

Just a few hours before the beginning of the truce, Colonel Marcus is accidentally shot by a sentry at his headquarters in the Monastery of

Abu-Ghosh. The man who was our great hope in the bloody battles for Latrun, is killed. He dies for Jerusalem.

The First Truce lasts a month.

In Jerusalem there is sniping and scattered shooting. The New City begins however to arise from the ruins. The stream of supplies by way of the "Burma Road" steadily increases. The western City, Outer Jerusalem — severed from the Old City — endeavours to reorganise.

And once again the question of the status of the City arises.

Consular commission, United Nations committees, discussions beyond the seas and behind closed doors, an international city? A divided city?

Count Bernadotte is in Jerusalem... a Mediator of sorts, who has come to obtain by political means what the Arabs were unable to attain by military action. The term "shuttle diplomacy" was also still to be coined.

He demands the demilitarisation of the City. His ultimate objective is to cede Jerusalem to Abdullah, with municipal autonomy to the Jewish community. In the first stage, Bernadotte tries to demilitarise Mount Scopus by appointing United States observers to replace the Israeli troops stationed there. He obtains the demilitarisation of Government House (the High Commissioner's residence) occupied by the Red Cross, in this manner. Bernadotte knows that in order to succeed, he must ensure that Jerusalem should not benefit from the truce obtained through his mediation, (June 11th to July 9th). Jerusalem must therefore remain on the verge of hunger and thirst at the end of the period of truce — precisely as she had been at its commencement.

The Government of Israel protests — but does not declare its absolute opposition to the Bernadotte plan. It hopes for internationalisation of Jerusalem, and rejects suggested restrictions on immigration, but as regards Galilee and the Negev, it is ready to bargain.

In the meantime, the Arabs categorically turn down Bernadotte's proposals. Their formula is: "... The Arabs are fighting in Palestine for total victory or death with honour".

The ten days' battles break out at the end of the First Truce. The Israel Army's first armoured units decide the outcome on numerous fronts. The centre and north of the country are under the absolute control of Zahal, the Israel Defence Force. The road to the Negev is opened. Cairo and Amman are bombed from the air.

In Operation Danny, in the ten days' battles, our forces captured Lod and Ramla, the precious springs of Rosh Haayin, an alternative road to Jerusalem (through Ishua — Kisla — Tsova). Most of the

length of the railway line to Jerusalem falls into our hands.

Against Latrun, our assaults again prove fruitless. Armour and air support too are unable to tip the scales on this crucial front, and the highway to Jerusalem past the police fort remains blocked.

The ten days' battles prove that Zahal is dominant in the area. So Bernadotte hastens to obtain a Second Truce, to save the Arabs.

In Jerusalem itself there is no truce. In bitter fighting, Etzel units and detachments of "Yehonatan" (graduates of the Gadna, the Youth Contingents) capture the village of Malha to the south of the City. Mount Scopus had already been demilitarised, in a separate agreement of June 7th. The United Nations was to be in charge of security in the whole area, which included also the Augusta Victoria compound and the village of Issawiya. The agreement was never implemented as worded.

On the eve of the 17th of July, a last attempt is made to break into the Old City. At 5:45 a.m. the following morning, the Second Truce will commence. The assault upon the Old City is postponed for various reasons until the very eve of the Truce. Shaltiel is more concerned about the southern front than the Old City front. Not many hours are left till the commencement of the Truce, when at last the men make the attempt to break into the Old City. This time the three organisations co-ordinate their efforts: Palmach, Etzel and Lehi. The Palmach was to pierce the wall near Zion Gate with the aid of the "Cone", a special type of explosive not yet tested in battle. A Lehi battalion was to breach the Old City Wall between Jaffa Gate and the New Gate, and to capture the College de Frères. The Etzel forces, who numbered over 1,000 men in Jerusalem, were to burst through the New Gate with conventional explosives. The three forces would then spread out within the Old City and mop it up.

The Haganah commander in the City, Shaltiel, promises — at a meeting with an Etzel staff officer — that he will not call off the offensive even after the commencement of the Truce. The feeling is that this time the Old City will be liberated. At first the attack is set for 10 p.m. It is Friday night. Shaltiel keeps stalling. The attack begins close to midnight. Trouble starts when a Lehi truck carrying dynamite is hit. Towering flames light up the point where the breach was to be attempted, and the whole area is covered by intense fire. Bringing up a further "Cone" to the wall in this sector is no longer possible. The "Cone" was also the cause of the failure of the attempted breach by the Palmach, by way of Zion Gate. The "Cone" was too big to be moved through the tunnel which was dug, up to the vicinity of the wall. It was

also very difficult to transport it, whilst crawling under a hail of fire from the wall. A fire which broke out near the New Gate illuminated the Etzel's intended point of breach, and there was no choice but to wait for the fire to burn itself out. Precious hours pass. Every hour is worth its weight in history.

The Etzel men were told that the two other units had already broken into the Old City and were advancing. 3 a.m., July 17th: The "Cone" is no longer relied upon. Conventional explosives are brought up, under cover of heavy fire, to the New Gate. The Gate is pierced. A bitter grenade battle rages. An Etzel unit breaks into the City and takes up position in a small recess adjacent to the wall. The battle is fierce. A message is relayed to combat headquarters: Will fighting be allowed to continue after the hour for the entry of the Truce into force? Shaltiel replies: He will use force to deny supplies and prevent access to troops who will break the truce. "We shall treat you as rebels and shall resort to force against you as against an enemy".

The Haganah calls off the supporting fire exactly at 5:30 a.m. The Arabs hold their fire too. It is worth their while.

The Etzel unit abandons the breach in the wall.

The Arabs renew the fire several hours later. The truce will begin in Jerusalem only on July 18th at 7:30 p.m.

Why was the offensive called off? Shaltiel's instructions from his superiors were: "To cease fire at 5:45 the following morning if by midnight he should be notified by the Truce Committee that the Arabs have also agreed to the cease-fire", but no such notification was received at Shaltiel's headquarters! This is not the only enigma, not even the most serious one, regarding the events of the night during which fateful decisions and preparations should have been made. Undoubtedly, there are deep secrets buried away in hidden archives. In those days there was no Agranat Commission, (which investigated the errors and neglect of the Yom Kippur War of 1973).

The Old City was not liberated. The Second Truce commenced.

Bernadotte will now seek to achieve for Abdullah what the Legion could not attain: To deliver the whole of Jerusalem into Arab hands.

Bernadotte endeavours to justify every Arab breach of the truce as being a reply to an earlier Israeli "provocation". He makes no effort to renew the water supply to Jerusalem nor does he provide for access to the Holy Places in Jerusalem and free approach to the Hadassah Hospital on Mount Scopus. Bernadotte sets his sights upon the demilitarisation of Jerusalem: "This historic City, which belongs to the world, must be demilitarised. Opponents of demilitarisation will

face economic and diplomatic sanctions, and if these will not suffice, military force will have to be employed". The Government of Israel states that it is "prepared to discuss the demilitarisation of Jerusalem, on condition that this will not affect the administrative status quo" (August '48). In Jerusalem there is a gentleman who bears the title of "Israeli Consul in Jerusalem". There is also a post of "Consul of Jerusalem in Tel-Aviv"...

The United States supports internationalisation. Only one state supports the true interests of the Jewish Nation, upon which even the Government of Israel does not insist: The Soviet Union. Its delegation to the United Nations strenuously opposes any change in the U.N. Resolution of November 29th.

In the beginning of September '48, Colonel Meinertzhagen, who had been Chief of Intelligence of the staff of General Allenby, conqueror of Palestine, writes:

"London, September 2nd, 1948:

Bernadotte, the Swedish mediator is no doubt a decent chap, but he made one serious mistake... He tried to give Jerusalem to the Arabs... Jerusalem is the core of Zionism... To give it to the Arabs stamps Bernadotte at once as a partisan and completely out of touch with the meaning of Zionism... In formulating this horrible proposal he has signed his own death warrant... The terrorists will get him sooner or later, and everyone else who stands between Israel and Jerusalem..."

**NEITHER CORPUS NOR SEPARATUM
OR
HOW JERUSALEM WAS NOT INTERNATIONALISED**

Herzl respected the power of the Vatican and did not ask, with Stalinist cynicism, How many divisions has the Pope? For the objective which Herzl sought to reach, the opinions and pressures of the Catholic Church carried great weight. In any event, the Church was capable of marshalling religious arguments in support of non-religious motives.

"We desire only the secular land. The Holy Places will be extraterritorial", he assures the cardinal in a preparatory conversation prior to the meeting with Pius X. But the cardinal replies: "It is impossible to think of the two as separate from each other". Three days later, His Holiness, in person, rejects Herzl's plea to support Zionism. Non possumus, no. We cannot, repeats the man seated on the Throne of Peter, Shimon Keifa, the Fisherman of Tiberias. Christianity will not recognise the Jewish People as long as the Jews do not acknowledge the Messiah. If he, Herzl, should bring the Jews to the Holy Land, the Church will send all its priests there to baptise them. Pius mentions the Temple; it has been destroyed, forever. Is there any intention to rebuild it? No? Nevertheless Jerusalem can never return to Jewish hands.

Herzl ventures to ask: "And what about the present situation, Holy Father?"

"I know, it is embarrassing that the Turks occupy Our Holy Places, but we must be patient. We cannot assist the Jews to regain the Holy Places".

The intention is clear: Better a Moslem in Jerusalem than a Jew. The reasons are clear too: Jewish sovereignty over Jerusalem, with the option — if not the actual duty — to rebuild the Temple, contradicts a basic tenet held by the Pope, head of the Catholic Church, though perhaps not by all Christians. Today many Christians of non-Catholic denominations (this term is more accurate than "Protestant"), see the Return to Zion, Zion in literal sense — Jerusalem, and the rebuilding of the Temple, as condition precedent to the Resurrection of Jesus. Notwithstanding the skepticism of a believing Jewish heart, there is no reason to reject the first stage. Thereafter? Let us live and see. We shall cross that bridge when we reach it.

The strongest Christian church, however, today still negates the

Zionism of Jerusalem, even though it is ready, for pragmatic reasons, to compromise, and to accord *de facto* recognition to non-Jerusalem Zionism, that is to say to a Jewish State in part of Eretz-Israel, preferably in its Philistine-Phoenician-Greek region.

On the part of Islam, there should not have been such weighty religious problems. Jesus, as Messiah, as the Redeemer of whom the Prophets foretold, contradicts fundamental principles of Judaism, which believes in the Messiah still to come, who will gather the Jews from all dispersions and will rebuild the Temple. There were, in addition, sharp religious differences between Judaism and Christianity regarding the concept of Son of God, Immaculate Conception and the Holy Ghost. With Islam there were no such problems. Mohammed did not presume to be a Messiah. Mohammed did not curse Jerusalem, nor did he prophecy its destruction, as Jesus did. The legend regarding his night flight and his ascent to heaven with Gabriel from the Foundation Stone, does not in itself preclude Jews from returning to Jerusalem nor even from rebuilding the Temple. Against this background, efforts were made in the first decades of the Arab conquest to enable Jews to pray on the Temple Mount, to build a synagogue there, or — as some scholars believe — to see in the Dome of the Rock, not a Moslem mosque, but a quasi-substitute for the Temple, as appears in many paintings of the Middle Ages.

In Islam, however, more than in Christianity, political and religious elements interfuse. The Arabism of Land and City is of less importance than its Islamism; (let us not forget that there are also Christian Arabs). There is therefore a different significance to each of the three components of the expression "Holy to three religions". These three sanctities are different types, different qualities and of different specific weight. Moslem sanctity is purely mystical, it relates to a night vision, a miraculous event — ascent to heaven with an angel. Jewish sanctity is historical *par excellence*, though it is founded upon a deep religious base, devoid however of mysticism. The fact that the City was the seat of Jewish dynasties, the country's capital in the periods of the First and Second Temples, even the fact that the word "Bayit", House, is used in Hebrew for Temple, and is employed to denote eras — First Bayit, Second Bayit — indicates an historical and strong political base. Christian sanctity is linked to events in the life of the founder of Christianity; his disciples even attempted to sever the religion from the territorial element, and it was only for popular-psychological needs, and later political interests, that importance was conferred aslo upon the physical place.

This is the reason (in addition to the change in the situation) for the use of the term "international", in lieu of "inter-religious", which was given to the proposed status of the City.

The history of the proposal as it unfolded about one hundred years after it was first raised by a French foreign minister, then too due not only to purely religious motives, is as follows: —

In the days of the efforts to obtain the Balfour Declaration, Zionist leaders established contact with the Pope. (During the First World War, Italy was allied to England, though formally the Vatican was neutral). Momentarily, the statesmen of the Vatican almost smiled, for statesmen they were even when garbed in crimson mantles. Cardinal Gasperi and Pope Benedict XV express to Nahum Sokolov their sympathy towards Zionism, whilst they demand the establishment of an area reserved to Christianity, including mainly Jerusalem and Bethlehem, but also Tiberias, Nazareth and Jericho. "We shall be glad to see the land in Jewish possession", says Gasperi. "I think that we shall be good neighbours" adds the Pope.

However, when the Vatican realises that the Balfour Declaration envisages a National Home in all parts of the land, including Jerusalem, a change of heart occurs. Behind the reversal, French and Italian political influences may have been at work, as they began to feel that England was cheating them and endeavouring to grab too much for itself, more at least than suited them. The same Cardinal Gasperi said on the morrow of the capture of the City by Allenby: "The Turks were the best guardians of the Holy Places. Now trouble may begin. The Zionists may provoke clashes. The bells of the Vatican are not pealing in joy over the capture of Jerusalem. It is not easy to take back part of the heart which has been given to the Turks, and to hand it over to the Zionists".

This is not really surprising. On the contrary, historians find it more difficult to explain the moments of Vatican support for Zionist aspirations. A passing episode. The Church may really have suspected the Zionists of intending to rebuild the Temple. Zionist protestations that they did not entertain such a notion were genuine, genuine from the subjective standpoint of the Zionists, who wanted to establish a National Home, a secure refuge, no more. It seems, though, that the Vatican possesses deeper historical — perhaps even metaphysical — insight. The fear may have crept into their minds that God might indeed be behind all this, perhaps the Heavenly Father has forgiven the Children of Israel, and has exculpated them from their real or imaginary sin?

The Pope hastens to bless the Franciscan Order which was established in 1230 and confers on it the guardianship of the Holy Places. In the Council of Cardinals he expresses his pain over the very thought of granting privileges to heretics in the Holy Land and Holy City. Shortly thereafter, in 1919, the Vatican announces that it prefers international rule. Zionism might endanger the position of the Christians in the country. There are Bolshevik elements in Zionism...

It did not matter that the British Mandatory authority failed to give the Jews what it had promised; no special standing whatever in Jerusalem, though the Jews are the largest community in the City since the middle of the 19th Century. It is to no avail that the Jews do not even demand the return of the Temple Mount, and that they have to struggle for the right to pray at the Wailing Wall. No use. The Vatican is endowed with deeper vision. Is it at all possible that the Jews will be content with the present situation? Can it be that they will not desire to return Jerusalem to its ancient glory? The Pope is deeply concerned by the diminishing number of Christians in Jerusalem. There is even a suggestion to transport to the Holy Land... half-a-million Christians from Malta. Not serious of course.

For the time being, the idea of internationalisation is pigeon-holed and awaits another opportunity. It comes with the exacerbation of the Jewish-Arab conflict and with the plan to partition the country.

First there was the Peel Commission of 1937. In the modern history of the country, this was to be the second division of the land, Trans-Jordan having been severed before, with "Jordan" created out of thin air. In the Peel Report it was proposed to set up a separate Jerusalem region which "would be demilitarised and remain neutral in perpetuity". Peel did not define exactly the duration of "perpetuity". Three years? Seven? It was also hard to define the meaning of the term "demilitarisation", especially since in those very days Nazi Germany had unilaterally abrogated the demilitarisation of zones established by resolution of the League of Nations. One point was crystal-clear, the meaning of "neutral". For the region would be supervised by... Britain. It would supervise of course, as the Mandatory Power, on behalf of the League of Nations, but as permanent Mandatory. And since the City could not be isolated from the world, Lod, Ramla and Jaffa would be included too, in its corridor to the Sea. Spiritual and mundane interests would thus combine, and in the Peel terminology, "the holy trust of civilisation" would be preserved.

The Peel plan did not come to pass, but civilisation was put in the meantime to severe tests, and not in Jerusalem. And it was not the

simple Cross which threatened the world, but the crooked cross, the Swastika, while at Nazi headquarters in Berlin sat the Mufti of Jerusalem, a pure Semite, one of the leaders of Islam and of the Arabs of the Holy Land, Haj Amin Al-Husseini; a not-so-holy Alliance. Did he discuss there the fate of Jerusalem after the expected Nazi victory, once the rightful owners of Jerusalem, the Jews, were removed for good? Haj Amin was in Berlin not only to plan, with Eichmann, the extermination of the Jews and the expulsion of the British from Palestine. He was also one of the founders of the new Pan-Islamic movement. According to his plan and intention, Jerusalem was to become the centre of Islam. We have already had occasion to mention that in the history of Islam there was a constant tug-of-war for hegemony between Baghdad, Cairo and Damascus. Jerusalem had never been suggested as a centre, just as Christianity never sought to move the Vatican there.

Haj Amin was the first to devise such a scheme. This probably caused friction on the Berlin-Rome Axis, as Mussolini saw the Middle East, and Palestine in particular, as his sphere of influence, as part of his reward for joining Nazi Germany in the conquest of the world. When the archives of the Vatican are opened one day, treaties between the Vatican and Il Duce on the fate of Jerusalem after the victory, will no doubt be found. Such conflicts between allies, contradictory promises to different collaborators, are frequent occurrences in all wars. Palestine too was promised to many at one and the same.

Be that as it may, only part — one-third — of the desire of many Gentiles, was fulfilled, and “only” six million Jews were exterminated, including thousands who were transported past the firmly closed windows of the Pope, to Auschwitz. There remained Jews in the world and in the Land, and they were even fighting for their Land and their City, that is to say — the rightful owners were alive, and fighting. Because of this, the Palestine problem generally and the problem of Jerusalem in particular, was placed on the agenda of the Nations and became a source of headache to them, by day and by night. The Jewishness of the country generally and of Jerusalem especially, greatly disturbed many.

For the third time therefore it was proposed, and this time implemented. Divide! Both the Land and the City.

In the beginning, however, “Divide” was pronounced upon the City in the most literal sense, divide it from the country. Ultimately, the division took place within her; as the poetess Naomi Shemer has put it — through Jerusalem’s heart.

How was it to be severed from the country? As a *Corpus Separatum*, a separate entity. Basically, this meant a return to the Peel Plan though no longer under a British Mandate, of course, but rather contrary to all British plans, as the outcome of the disintegration of the Mandate thanks to the Jewish struggle. In addition, no longer would Jerusalem have access to the Mediterranean Sea through a wide corridor, but only the City itself, an enclave, would be internationalised. A slice of territory, a living limb, and not just any limb, but the heart itself. At least for the Jewish People, Jerusalem is the heart of the Land; only in non-Jewish conception can she exist separate from the Land, and only in Emancipationist Jerusalem, descended from Moses Mendelsohn's "Jerusalem" — is a Celestial Jerusalem possible without its terrestrial counterpart. For Jews who prayed "And to Jerusalem, Thy City, return in mercy", the name in *Pars Pro Toto*, a detail which symbolises the whole, a City which stands for the whole country, just as the term Zion has developed from the name of a hill within Jerusalem, to cover the whole of Jerusalem, and from there to spread to the whole country. Though there were periods during which the People dwelt in the Land yet not in Jerusalem, she remained the object of their yearning, and never was she forgotten. And when the poignant drama took place in the Zionist Congress over the Uganda Proposal, how did Herzl express his loyalty, and the devotion of the group who voted with him for examining the possibilities of Uganda? Raising his arm, he swore, "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning". Clearly he meant Terrestrial Jerusalem, the heart of the Land. And if it is the heart, how can it possibly become a *Corpus Separatum*, a separate body? For a limited period an artificial heart can function. Upon the establishment of the State of Israel, the fate of Jerusalem had not yet been settled. Various suggestions were made as to the site of the temporary political centre (its temporary character was always stressed). Ben-Gurion proposed Curnub in the Negev. Golda Meir suggested location of the Government ministries on Mount Carmel. Finally, Sarona in Tel-Aviv was chosen. What, however, is the life expectancy of a heart as a *Corpus Separatum*? This is a legal-political term, of course, but somehow, when it is applied to Jerusalem, it reminds one of another Corpus, which is a word sanctified by Catholicism — *Corpus Christi*, the Body of the Messiah. A special holy day has been assigned to it by the Roman Catholic Church. It is not unlikely that the choice of this particular term — *Corpus* — for the United Nations plan to establish Jerusalem as an internationalised legal entity, separate from the Jewish and Arab states, was by design. The moving power behind the plan was

Christianity, Catholic as well as Protestant. Moreover, in the struggle over the Partition scheme, the opponents of which were numerous not only among the Arab and Islamic States, the creation of this separate entity became a condition precedent to the agreement of Christian States par excellence — such as the South Americans — to the entire Partition Plan. As for the Vatican, which found it most difficult to swallow the very bitter pill of a Jewish State in the Holy Land, this was its price for agreeing to compromise. Jerusalem as a separate body contained the germ of the return of Christian rule to the City, which had ended with the demise of Crusader Jerusalem. It was a new chance, perhaps the last, because were Jerusalem to belong, in part or in whole, to a Jewish or Arab State, or even become its capital, all that would indeed be left to Christianity would be Holy Places or — a term which was often suggested because no headway was made in implementing internationalisation — functional supervision of the Holy Places. This would not be much of an achievement, because no one would really want to get involved in the purely religious affairs of others. The maximum which Christianity could expect would be to find itself holding... the keys to the Holy Sepulchre, which for hundreds of years were held by a Moslem. The Turkish regime was never eager to be in charge of the Holy Sepulchre, but the Christian communities requested the Turks to retain the keys, because of the quarrels which constantly erupted between the sects, such as the Ethiopian and Coptic Christians, over rights in the Sepulchre.

It was not only the Church which demanded and pressed for internationalisation. Russia desired it too. Its motive was no longer that which impelled the Czarist government — concern for the Holy Places and the wish to revive the days of Byzantium, whose successor the Czar claimed to be, as heir to the Greek Church. The object of the Soviet Government was simply to gain a foothold in the Land and City. In fact, in the Greek Orthodox Church in Jerusalem no great pleasure was evinced at the prospect of internationalisation, because it knew full well that this would only strengthen the position of the Catholics in the City. On the other hand, the Vatican also feared that through this back door, atheistic Communism would gain a foothold in Jerusalem.

The attitude of the Moslem Arabs to the Plan was no less complex. Their initial stand was of course total opposition, just as they had objected to Partition, because after all, it entailed the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine. However, when they realised that the Jewish State was a fact and that the alternative to internationalisation of Jerusalem was that at least its western part would be annexed to the

State of Israel, they began to support internationalisation, since in this separate region the Jews would be surrounded by Arab villages, and numerically the one hundred thousand Jews in the City would thus be matched by one hundred thousand Arabs. The Arabs' plan was upset however by Abdullah. Whether because of a secret understanding with Israel, or regardless thereof, Abdullah preferred to rule the Old City, the historical heart of the land. The Temple Mount and the Holy Places — they are Jerusalem's Crown, its fame and glory, and — by the way — its irresistible attraction to world tourism. In an internationalised Jerusalem he would have no standing, and were he to have Shechem and lose Jerusalem, his invasion of the West Bank of the Jordan River would have been a very bad bargain. His seizure of the Old City increased still further the hostility of the Arab States towards him; the invasion by the Arab States was aimed against the establishment of the State of Israel, but also against Abdullah. His objective was not only the strangulation of the Jewish State, but also to grab the maximum, ahead of the occupation by the rival Arab, the Syrian, the Egyptian or even the Iraqi. Abdullah, who was both cunning and a realist, opted therefore to be content with a portion of the City, especially since this was Jerusalem proper, rather than fight Israel and risk losing all. This was the alternative which faced him. But if that was in fact the case, why indeed did not the Israel Army finish the job by capturing the whole of the City, and after it — as a matter of course — the whole of the country, up to the Jordan? For it goes without saying that had the Old City of Jerusalem fallen, Abdullah would have withdrawn the Legion to the East Bank of the River.

This is the biggest and most perplexing "Wherefor" in the history of the battle for Jerusalem in 1948, militarily, politically, and deeper than that — psychologically.

What was the Jewish attitude to the internationalisation plan? It was complex, perhaps more complex than anything Jerusalem had witnessed since the thicket from which Abraham our Father extracted the ram on Mount Moriah, when he brought Isaac down from the altar.

The situation appeared to be that the Jewish delegation to the General Assembly of the United Nations had agreed, none too enthusiastically, to the Partition Plan, whilst obstinately bargaining for the Negev in particular, but not insisting on Jerusalem. At one stage it wavered even as regards the Negev, and was prepared to agree to a compromise whereby a so-called Arab corridor — actually British — would connect the Gaza Strip and Trans-Jordan. The Americans insisted on this, the good President Truman pressed hard for it. Were it

not... for the Soviet Union which literally raged over the acquiescence of the Zionists. Soviet support of Zionism at that time was not intended to result in a British base remaining in the country. As for Jerusalem, there were conflicting views in the Jewish world — on the one hand, supporters of internationalisation, on the other — supporters of the partition of the City. Though militarily it was possible to conquer the whole City, this was not done, so as to avoid arousing widespread opposition in the Assembly, among “friends”. This in any case was the fear; whether or not it was justified is another matter. One should not forget that on the eve of the Declaration of Independence, Truman — backed by a majority of the Congress — sought to prevent it. This was due of course, already then, to pressure by the oil companies which, at that time, were also the producers, not only the purveyors. Even in respect of this crucial decision, Ben-Gurion managed only with difficulty to override submission to the demand. On internationalisation, however, he was over-ruled, and it was resolved by five votes to four in favour of internationalisation. It is noteworthy that one of the supporters of internationalisation was the representative of religious Zionism, Rabbi Meir Bar-Ilan, his reasoning being that we could not possibly agree to partition of the City, to hand over the Old City and the royal crown of the Temple Mount to an Arab king. To him, internationalisation was preferable, with all the options for the future which it left open. “Agudat Israel” too, supported internationalisation, mainly because of its reservations towards Zionism. The Government of Israel actually appointed a representative to liaise with the U.N. official who would implement internationalisation. In the militarily difficult days of the siege of Jerusalem, some leaders publicly called for the speedy arrival of the soldiers of Sweden and Norway, who were to form the garrison which would guard the internationalised zone. A citizen of Jerusalem, a well-known publisher whose son had fallen in the attempt to save the Etzion Bloc, expresses his disgust, in the columns of “Haaretz”, in August 1948, at being sent, in Jerusalem, to “the Israeli Consul in Jerusalem”, to obtain a permit to leave the City and to return to it... Many of the Jewish Agency officials leave Jerusalem for the Coast, to the “capital”.

The duty to submit to United Nations resolutions, and the fear that the whole Partition scheme might be shelved, should we succeed in capturing the entire City and country, are the outwardly visible causes. There was, however, a deeper stratum which blocked taking an unambiguous decision, even after Arab rejection of Partition releases us from our formal undertaking: The latent Jewish fear of ruling over

the whole of the City, including the Places holy to Christianity and Islam. For two thousand years, she had been ruled by Romans, Byzantines, Arabs, European Crusaders, Seljuks, Turks, and British. None of them were afraid of governing the City; quite the contrary, they fought to dominate it. Only we, or at least an important and decisive group amongst us, were seized with fear: Too complicated, trouble with all the religions of the world, pressures, disputes, world-wide religions. Abdullah did have the ambition to be King of Jerusalem. We, however, had no king... Worse than that, we did not even dream of majesty, at most we strove for independence, to be masters in our own house. The only exceptions were perhaps extremist groups, within Etzel and Lehi, particularly those to whom the poetry of Uri Zvi Greenberg, the most Jerusalemite of Israel's poets, was living prophecy.

This leads us perhaps to the root of the problem: From inception, Zionism is torn between two poles, between the positive pole of the struggle for complete redemption, with all that it entails in prophetic and messianic fulfilment: the entire land for the whole People, and the rebuilding of the Temple on the Mount, on the one hand, and on the other — the negative pole, an escape valve for cases of hardship, a solution to the "Jewish problem", a need for political normalisation. For the latter purpose, perhaps the existence of the state suffices, because every nation has its state, and this is proof of normalcy. Jerusalem, accordingly, is not essential, the Temple and Messianism can surely be dispensed with; doubly so for a generation which has undergone such terrible suffering because of Galut, the Diaspora, and is now given independence. The soul of Zionist leadership swayed between these two concepts, the concept of Geulah, Redemption, which is unthinkable of course without Jerusalem, and the modern Zionist concept in the centre of which are "independence" and "state", and not "redemption", which is an experience of the spirit, of prayer, of vision. At times the split ran down the soul of each individual. Just as Land and City were partitioned, so was the soul cleft. It can also be put the other way round: Because the soul was torn within itself, between a deep Messianic urge and modern Zionist auto-emancipationist needs and desires, therefore the land and City were divided. But how does one justify to the inner soul agreement to partition? One excuses it by the state of weakness and by the need to avoid risking all and endangering what has already been achieved. One explains that Messianism should be left to future generations, and in the meantime one should be content oneself with partial results.

Be that as it may, it is not surprising that many Gentiles, not

necessarily enemies, did not believe, and to this day do not believe, that the Jews have really given up the idea of the Temple as an expression of the Redemption. How could they relinquish it? Was this not the very essence of Jewish prayers throughout the generations?

Yet the fact remains: The Executive of the Jewish Agency, and now the Government of Israel agreed, and awaited implementation of internationalisation. True, there was opposition, there was the Herut Movement on whose flag and in whose song and heart were emblazoned the words "Both banks of the Jordan!", there were men of Lehi who dug-in in Jerusalem and believe in the modern prophet of Messianism, Uri Zvi Greenberg, and Yair-Stern's Principles of Rebirth, in which the objective of Lehi is stated as being an undivided sovereign Commonwealth of Israel, with the Temple as its physical expression. These groups were however a minority, and did not determine policy. Israel was not fighting for boundaries and territory, it was struggling for sheer existence. The Jews of Jerusalem were under siege, they were shelled, they were starved, some left for the Coast. People awaited not the advent of the Messiah, but the end, peace, whether through internationalisation or final partition. The Old City had already fallen, and shells continued to pound the New City.

A Trusteeship Committee had been appointed by the United Nations to carry out the plan. It had no idea how to start. Internationalisation might have become a reality, had an international force been despatched to implement it. No such force was formed. Physically, Jerusalem was divided. Delegations of Jerusalem Jews and pressure by the opposition (Herut) — petitions and canvassing of signatures in the street — demand the annexation of Jerusalem by the State of Israel. The internationalisation resolution is still in force, however. The shelling of Jerusalem by the Legion, and the invasion of cis-Jordan by Abdullah, should ipso facto have terminated all Jewish obligations to accept Partition, which were incumbent upon Israel only for the sake of preserving peace. And the U.N. is hardly functioning at all. How fortunate it is that it does not function; that is its only redeeming quality.

In the meantime, the United Nations have appointed a Mediator, to accomplish what the Peace-making Commission and sundry consuls have failed to achieve. The Mediator — Count Bernadotte — did not arrive to implement all clauses of the Partition Resolution, but to seek a "compromise" between this resolution, itself a compromise, and Arab demands...

To enhance the authority of his position, the Mediator sets up

headquarters in Jerusalem.

Not all Bernadotte's aims and proposals, his demand to shut the gates of the country during the periods of truce, to Jewish young men, even if they were survivors of the Holocaust, or his proposal to sever the Negev from the State of Israel, will be discussed here. We are concerned with Jerusalem. And as regards Jerusalem, there was an innovation in Bernadotte's plan. The Count comes up with a truly interesting compromise between the alternatives of maintaining the situation de facto, i.e. division of the City between Jews and Arabs, and implementation of the original internationalisation plan. Bernadotte's "compromise" is brilliant. **The entire City to Abdullah**, whilst assuring "autonomy" to the Jewish majority... including of course also the privilege of weeping at the Wailing Wall.

Shock in Israel.

Ben-Gurion notes in his diary that should anyone suspect Bernadotte of acting in concert with British Intelligence, it would not be a groundless suspicion... The entire plan was in the spirit of the British White Papers; Abdullah, who was set up by the British as the monarch of a kingdom which they had artificially created, was the fig-leaf to cover their last attempt to return to the country and rule it. It was therefore not sheer coincidence that the sharpest reaction came from those who fought the British most bitterly. The members of Lehi greeted Bernadotte not far from their camp in Talbieh with banners: "Stockholm is yours, Jerusalem is ours", "Your efforts are in vain, we are here". The Lehi newspaper on the Coast, "Mivrak", issued a clear warning: "Get rid of Bernadotte!" The Government of Israel accused him, the United Nations representative, of acting contrary to U.N. resolutions whereby Jerusalem was to be an international city. Thus the internationalisation scheme turned into an Israeli plan, and when, in the end, Bernadotte condescended to withdraw his first proposal, and revived the internationalisation proposition, he was considered to have made a compromise... in Israel's favour. Bernadotte was fully aware that the underground movements would try by force to thwart the realisation of his plans for Jerusalem. He therefore called for "6,000 soldiers to implement the demilitarisation".

Radio Lehi in Jerusalem issues a warning. A quiet demonstration of jeeps outside a press conference of Bernadotte in Jerusalem is a physical expression of the threat. Bernadotte, however, will not turn back. There are two hundred members of Lehi in Jerusalem. Only four are needed, however. On Friday, September 17, 1948, at three minutes past five, four armed passengers of a jeep stop Count Bernadotte's convoy in

Jerusalem. They shoot and kill Bernadotte and the French Colonel seated next to him. "The Homeland Front assumes responsibility for the deed. In the Official Gazette of the State of Israel the following announcement is published: "The Fighters for the Freedom of Israel and a group of persons calling themselves "The Homeland Front" are terrorist organisations..."

Bernadotte, however, is dead, and his Plan dies with him.

Lehi restored Jerusalem to the State of Israel. On September 17th, Colonel Meinertzhagen writes in London: "... Count Bernadotte has been shot dead in Jerusalem by members of the Stern gang; a shocking and unforgivable crime, but inevitable after he tried to give Jerusalem to the Arabs... The real culprits who are responsible for the crime are the United Nations generally, in particular the British Government".

In the meantime, the Israel Government, against the backdrop of the situation in Jerusalem, acted more and more as if Jerusalem were already part of Israel, though at the start, a majority in the Cabinet were for internationalisation. Ben-Gurion maintained that facts count, not words, and that the most urgent need was to secure the link between the City and the Coast, by widening and protecting the road to Jerusalem. This was done, in the good old spirit of practical Zionism. In the interim, the slayers of Bernadotte had acted from the Lehi camp in Jerusalem, by order of the Lehi central command. A storm erupted in the world and at home. For Jerusalem, however, it meant: An end to the internationalisation plan. Of all people who were appointed to mediate and to enforce, Bernadotte enjoyed the greatest respect. He was therefore also the most dangerous. The plan survived on paper for yet a long while. After facts were accomplished on the spot, and western Jerusalem became for all intents and purposes part of the State of Israel, internationalisation was adopted as the objective of the Arab States, excluding Abdullah. It was raised again in December 1949.

It does not require much imagination to picture what would have occurred had the plan been carried out, and had the United Nations taken over the City, as envisaged. Even though for a variety of reasons, there were among the Jews, including certain members of the Cabinet in Israel, admirers of the U.N. — they viewed it almost as fulfilling a universal ideal — time and experience had cooled this ardour. Government by the U.N. would also have meant a U.N. Army. The punishment ultimately dealt Hussein's army in the Six Days War, could hardly have been inflicted on an international army, especially considering the composition of the United Nations.

When the U.N. resolved in 1949, to implement internationalisation,

Ben-Gurion reacted swiftly and resolutely. He moved the highest organs of the State of Israel, the Knesset, the Government, and the Supreme Court — to Jerusalem. His determination may have been caused in part by the knowledge that there would be no opposition from Abdullah on the other side of the Old City Wall, though Abdullah had broken the agreement in respect of free access to the Wailing Wall and Mount Scopus, and notwithstanding the fact that Legionaries had paved the floors of their houses with tombstones from the Mount of Olives. It is possible that Ben-Gurion's firmness resulted also from his knowledge that the U.N. was impotent to act against Israel in Jerusalem. Deep down, remorse over missed opportunities must have played its part too — opportunities to liberate the whole of the City. At one stage Ben-Gurion had proposed liberating the City by capturing the villages surrounding it (Israel was always concerned lest the Holy Places be damaged), but the Cabinet defeated his proposal by a majority of 7 to 5; he termed this decision a "tragedy for generations to come". Two months later, the High Command of the Israel Army put forward a similar plan: Conquest of the western bank of the Jordan within three days. This time Ben-Gurion objected, for strictly political reasons. All this weighed heavily upon him, and therefore he activated the Jewish chain-of-reaction: Rejection of the U.N. Resolution on internationalisation, by establishing a political fact — final annexation by law. This action was not recognised of course by the Great Powers. At first, their representatives even refrained from coming to Jerusalem, whether for the submission of credentials to the President, or for visits to the Foreign Ministry, but gradually they relented. Only some governments established their embassies in the City. The Big Powers, the U.S. the Soviet Union, Britain and France of course, have not done so to this date. Before he became President, Gerald Ford had demanded the transfer of the American Embassy to Jerusalem. Everything that has occurred, and that has not occurred, has proven: We shall decide Jerusalem's future.

This gives rise to the question: That wall, of which Naomi Shemer has sung as standing in the heart of Jerusalem, perhaps it was not so much in Jerusalem's heart as in our heart? And just because it divided our heart, therefore, for so many precious years, did it cut through Jerusalem's heart too? Till it was smashed. The wall in our hearts, or was it only the wall in hers?

THE RIVEN CITY

With all that has befallen this City, for better and for worse, sacred and secular, for the sake of Heaven, and in bloodshed and destruction, never had it gone through — it is doubtful whether any town in the world has — anything like the division that sundered her for nineteen years, between 1948 and 1967. Superficially, one might say that there was one more city which was split in two, between two states, Berlin, but there is a great difference between the two partitions, in fact Six Million differences.

Two hundred years ago, in 1783, a Jewish philosopher, Moses Mendelssohn, dwelt in Berlin, and wrote a book entitled "Jerusalem". His subject, as we have mentioned, was only Jerusalem-On-High. His hope was that she would prevail, and bestow upon the world love, brotherhood and friendship. One hundred years later, in the self-same Berlin, the antisemitic theory which gave rise to Hitler and the Final Solution, reared its ugly head. It arose in Berlin, notwithstanding that in this Berlin, and out of their devotion to Berlin, Jews erased all mention of Jerusalem from the prayer book.

Berlin too was partitioned, following upon Hitler's defeat, between two spheres of influence, between two types of regime, but with Germans on both sides of the line of demarcation.

If there is a link between Berlin and Jerusalem, more real, more serious, than that book which was written in Berlin in innocence and naiveté, it is that because of this Berlin, the Jewish People in Europe was exterminated, and our Land and this City were partitioned. Were it not for this Berlin, millions more of European Jews would be living in the Land of Israel, and the situation of country, of State, of Jerusalem and of the Jewish Nation, would have been entirely different. Nor should it be forgotten that in this Berlin the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, Haj Amin Al-Husseini, helped weave the web of the Holocaust, his chief desire being to assist in the extermination of the Jewish People, so that he, his compatriots and co-religionists, could establish their sovereign state here, in Jerusalem. He failed to achieve his goal, but he did live to see the annihilation of one-third of the Jewish People.

So much for the connection between the two cities and the two partitions. As for the differences: The partition of Jerusalem had not been inevitable, and the alternative thereto need not have been

internationalisation. The real alternative to Partition was: All of Jerusalem, and with it — the whole country, up to the Jordan, in Israeli hands.

The split which brought about the division of the City was within Nation and heart, as we have indicated. Between the two parts of the City, divided for the first time in history, there was a marked disproportion. In size and numbers, western Jerusalem in Israeli hands was larger. Its population was over 100,000, as compared with 40,000 on the eastern side. However, the division looks entirely different when quality and history are the criteria. The core of Jerusalem was there, within the walls, in the section which remained in Arab hands. To this day, when one speaks anywhere in the world, of "Jerusalem", one refers to all that was contained in that part of the City. Jerusalem's heart remained there, and the hearts of part of the Jewish People yearned to that portion of the City — in spite of the creation of the State, in spite of Ben-Gurion's vigorous political action in moving Knesset and Government to Jerusalem, and in proclaiming it the Capital — contrary to, indeed flouting, the renewed resolution of the United Nations Organisation to internationalise the City. Notwithstanding all this, she, western Jerusalem, did not become a substitute for that which has no substitute.

The Nation found an observation-point: Mount Zion, site of David's Tomb. From its roof, from the "Temple Observation Point" set up there, scores of thousands of pilgrims peered towards the Wailing Wall, though the Wall itself was not seen, but only the ruins of the Jewish Quarter, the domes of mosques and churches — the holy places of others. The yearning was expressed, therefore, not only in prayer, the fervour of which had not abated; there was added the longing to gaze at the spot. In many respects, the intensity of the feeling for the Wall mounted, for it was the first time in thousands of years that there was no access to the Wall of the Destruction, whilst in the past, even under the darkest tyranny, though the Mount was out of bounds, the Wall was approachable. Now one could no longer even weep there. The enemy — even the "good" Abdullah — may have done us a service, in renegeing on the agreement regarding free access to the Holy Places, and in not enabling us to reach the Wall. The official excuse was: The Arab Legion could not assume responsibility for fear of possible terrorist acts against worshippers going to the Wall.

This may have been a genuine reason, not merely an excuse, for the self-same famed Legion was helpless to protect its own king; Abdullah was assassinated as he was leaving prayers at the El-Aksa Mosque,

prayers which were presumably a token of his devotion to Holy Places generally. No doubt there were within the walls and in the other parts of the City which had remained in Arab hands, Arabs whose thoughts dwelt on the western side, as many of them had fled therefrom, leaving homes behind, but there in no comparison between the longing of a man to his home and street, and the yearning of an entire nation to its Holy of Holies. The Holy Places of the Moslems and Christians had remained in their possession. The Holy Places of the Jewish People also remained in their hands... in Arab hands.

"How doth the City sit solitary" (Lamentations 1:1) was never so painful as in those years, for on the other side of the Old City wall, only ten, fifteen minutes' walk away, dwells the Jewish People which has a State of its own, a government, an army, "and she herself is in bitterness", she the real Jerusalem, solitary, "because none come to the solemn assembly", as is written, as is experienced in reality.

Again an act of grace by Providence and History and their bizarre instruments, the kings of Amman. Tel-Aviv could not rival Jerusalem. It did not become the capital. Amman, a nondescript townlet dared to rule her. Not only did the kings of Jordan do naught to build up the portion of the City in their possession, but quite the contrary, they weakened it by transferring government departments to Amman, whether to strengthen their position or because of a justified distrust of the Arabs on the western bank, who lost no love on the Hedjazi Beduin princeling who had been imposed upon them, in the main with British support, but was not one of them. It happened more than once that the Legionaries upon the walls had to turn their fire inward, into the Old City, and not outward, at the "Zionist enemy". Indeed, the "Zionist enemy" did not do a thing to provoke them into shooting westward, and when the Legionaries did do so, it was because of false alarms, or on the "private initiative" of a few of them. There were from time to time casualties from this "nervous" shooting from atop the walls, but though there was hardly a Jew who would agree to concede that we had waived our claim, even Ben-Gurion deemed it politically expedient to declare time and again that he was prepared to sign a treaty with Abdullah for one hundred years status quo... If this was prompted by the consideration that Abdullah was a "moderate Arab", who was ready to recognise Israel and establish a bridge to peace, unlike all the other bloodthirsty rulers, his assassination offered an excellent opportunity to abrogate all agreements and waivers and to liberate the City. The opportunity was missed. In one stroke it had been possible to capture the City. This was not the Lebanon, it was Jerusalem, and

murder had taken place there, and an upheaval had ensued. Yet Israel did not budge. It waited to be coerced.

The coercion finally came in 1967. The Hand of God was not even necessary; a finger was sufficient. Pocket-king Hussein compelled Israel to liberate the City.

Its shame — rather: our shame — was removed. To our disgrace — it was not “our fault”. If the Six Days’ War was forced upon us, the liberation of Jerusalem was forced upon us seventy-seven fold. Forced by Heaven? Forced on earth? Or was it by the inner power of the City?

One of the antisemitic Arab leaders in Jerusalem once said, in the heat of fury against the ascendancy of Amman: If anyone should mention the name Amman or the Kingdom of Jordan, in the wide world, it is doubtful whether many people would know of what he is speaking and where they are located, but let him say “Jerusalem” — at once they will know.

The crucial point however is: How is it that everyone knows what and where Jerusalem is? The answer, of course, is: This is due to the deeds of the People of Israel, its warriors, its Kings, its Prophets and its Sages in the City, and to this City. Their deeds have made this City what it is.

This compelling power is stronger than any other, even stronger than the vacillation and fears within us.

There is a Celestial Jerusalem, there is a Terrestrial Jerusalem, but there is also an Inner Jerusalem, the innermost essence of the Land, the innermost being of the Nation, the innermost core of history, and it thrives. It demolishes many walls.

AND WHEN THE SUN STOOD STILL

The Song Festival of Independence Day, 1967: The song of Naomi Shemer, a prophetic message which thrilled hearts at the close of a depressing Independence Day. A truncated military parade (due to the limitations of the Armistice Agreement), with Legionaries in scarlet keffiyas keeping watch atop the walls. In the Hebrew University stadium a poem by Nathan Alterman is recited. One stanza is expunged. Too "activist".

On the morrow — Egyptian troop concentrations in Sinai. What a miracle that Alterman's stanza had not been recited. Someone might have said that this had provoked Egypt...

By the beginning of June, the Straits of Tiran were already blocked and the call-up of the Reserves was proceeding at a quick pace. The "good" and moderate Hussein flies to Cairo to sign a pact with Nasser, but few believe that Hussein will risk a military adventure should war break out.

On the morning of June fifth, after the annihilation of the Egyptian Air Force on the ground, the armoured divisions of the Israel Army take the offensive against the Egyptian Army in Sinai.

In Giv'at Hamivtar, the hill commanding the Jerusalem — Ramallah road, the Legionaries take up positions. Reserve units of the Jerusalem Brigade who had earlier been demobilised, are re-called to their bases.

A few minutes after ten, the machine-guns of the Legion begin to spit fire along the entire length of the City demarcation line. Mortars join the chorus. The whole front erupts.

The Prime Minister of Israel, Levi Eshkol, transmits a message to king Hussein: "We are engaged in a defensive battle on the Egyptian front. We shall not start action in the Jordanian sector unless Jordan attacks us. Should Jordan attack Israel, we shall fight back with all our power". But Hussein does not know of the massacre of the Egyptian Air Force. He hears of Egyptian "victories". He feels that he should leap onto the victory bandwagon.

There is an artillery and mortar barrage against the whole of Israeli Jerusalem. The order-of-the-day to the El-Hussein regiment is to assault Mount Scopus at midnight.

Noon: The Legion's patrol force is ordered to seize Government

House (the High Commissioner's mansion). Before the troops got under way, Cairo Radio had already announced the occupation by Jordan of this important position, which commands the whole southern part of Jerusalem and the road to Bethlehem. The Legion captures the building only at 1 p.m. There is a short battle. Government House is taken by our troops. Our forces continue their progress towards the strong-points in the Sur-Baher area, with the object of blocking the Jerusalem — Bethlehem road.

The Jordanians heavily shell all parts of the City. The first casualties are brought in. Most of the inhabitants of Jewish Jerusalem go down to the shelters. In eastern Jerusalem there are hardly any shelters. Its residents begin to flee, on foot and by car, towards Hebron and Jericho.

Afternoon. Approval is received from the Chief-of-Staff to link up with the force stationed on Mount Scopus. The Harel Armoured Brigade, under the command of Uri Ben-Ari is to attack from the Castel-Radar direction, advance along the Nebi Samuel — Beit Hanina road, and reach Mount Scopus from the North — from the direction of the Jerusalem — Ramallah road.

No order has been issued to capture the Old City. Begin and Allon press Eshkol: Now is the time! The Cabinet meets in the evening. The instructions given to the General Staff are: "The Government of Israel wants the Old City". The Minister of Defence, Moshe Dayan, does not order a direct assault upon the Old City. He hopes that it will fall without a battle once the City is encircled.

All the while, western Jerusalem is subjected to incessant shelling.

In a night battle, clearing minefields with bare hands, and with the support of tanks and armoured infantry units thrusting up towards the hill-tops, the Harel Brigade captures the blood-soaked positions of the 1948 battles: Sheikh Abdul-Aziz, Bidu, Yalu, the Radar, Beit Ikse, Nebi Samuel. The obsolescent tanks of the Brigade manoeuvre on the narrow mountain roads, and reach the Jerusalem — Ramallah highway.

Armour clashes with armour, with scores of Jordanian Pattons. Our Shermans prevail. There is a battle for Giv'at Hamivtar, in northern Jerusalem. It is captured. We lose it in a counter-attack. We regain it. The Paratroop Brigade led by Motta Gur is summoned from the Coast, just as it was about to be despatched to Sinai, for a parachute operation. After being assigned its objectives, Regiment 66 bursts forward, captures the Police School, and carries on to Ammunition Hill. Not many of its men will still be alive and well by dawn.

Five hours of fighting, from fences to trenches, from trenches to

bunkers, facing a highly fortified objective, including scores of turrets spitting fire, and hand-grenades thrown into trenches. Five hours during which the Regiment's battalions press forward, not calling for reinforcement, only requesting to remove the casualties. The advance continues.

Neither did the Legionaries leave their positions.

Only a few of our men at the spearhead got through unscathed. Since the Destruction of the Temple, Jerusalem had not witnessed such a battle of Jews for their City, over every foot of their City. This time they were not defending her, however, but fighting to regain her. No longer were they the partisan-style forces of 1948, who scurry from post to post with inadequate weapons in their hands. This time it is the Army of Israel.

The Regiment will meet the armour of Harel Brigade at noon the following day, on the other side of the hill, on the slopes of Mount Scopus. At the same time, another unit of the Regiment captures the Ambassador Hotel. Regiment 71 pushes south, from the Police School, in the direction of Sheikh Jarrah and the American Colony. In a bitter battle, it makes headway, in house-to-house fighting. Regiment 28 and the Brigade patrol-force pass through the lines of Regiment 71, along Damascus Road and Saladin Street, towards the Rockefeller Museum. The Legion positions, which are surprised at the sight of the paratroopers coming up from their rear, hastily organise for a stubborn battle of resistance. Israeli tanks manoeuvre in the streets and assist in wiping out nests of snipers in the windows, and on the rooftops. Some of the soldiers come closer than intended and are trapped in a series of searing battles in the alleys leading to Damascus Gate.

The morning of June sixth. The spearhead of Regiment 71 is at Rockefeller Museum. Regiment 28 takes up positions overlooking Damascus Gate and the section of the Old City wall between Herod's Gate and Damascus Gate. Most of the northern quarters are in Zahal's hands.

Concurrently, the Jerusalem Brigade mounts an attack upon the village of Abu-Tor. The men of the Brigade sweep down the slope of the hill, and in heavy house-to-house fighting they forge one more link in the chain of encirclement of the Old City.

The only missing link is the Mount of Olives. Reports of a Jordanian armoured brigade moving in the direction Jerusalem from Jericho delay the capture of the Mount of Olives. First the brigade has to be disposed of; only thereafter will the paratroopers storm the Mount of Olives.

Along the road up which the Jordanian armoured column is

approaching Jerusalem, from the Jordan River Rift, the planes of the Israel Air Force pound the tanks. After having dealt a knockout blow to the Egyptian Air Force, the men of Zahal's Air Force are available to attend to the Jordanians. Some tanks are destroyed, others are immobilised and are abandoned. Not one tank reaches the Mount of Olives.

Still the City has not been penetrated, City with a Capital C...

On the night between the sixth and seventh of June, the patrol unit of the Paratroop Brigade was due to carry out an operation in the direction of Augusta Victoria Hospital. It loses its way, and is trapped on the bridge crossing the Valley of Jehosaphat. A stone bridge. It is caught in the fire from Legion positions along the Old City wall, in the vicinity of Shaar Haraḥamim (The Gate of Mercy). Burnt jeeps, a burnt tank. The bridge over the Valley of Jehosaphat is a death trap. There is a heroic battle to evacuate the wounded.

Only on the morrow will the Mount of Olives be assaulted.

The overnight delay enables the Legion commander in the City — Taha Ali — to withdraw his troops from all positions towards the Mount of Olives, and from there to Jericho. The gap which remained open eliminates the need for the Legion force in the City to make a suicidal effort to break out.

On the twenty-eighth of Iyar — it is eminently fitting to use the Hebrew date — on Wednesday, at five o'clock in the morning, when all forces are arrayed to capture the Mount of Olives and Augusta Victoria, the Army High Command gives the signal to break into the Old City.

The positions of the Legion suffer direct hits from Air Force planes which bomb and machine-gun them. Napalm incendiary bombs set the Legion position upon the hill on fire. The onslaught on the Mount of Olives commences. The Legion's resistance is broken. The Air Force has strict orders: The Old City within the walls in not to be bombed, definitely not the Temple Mount...

From atop the Mount of Olives, Colonel Motta Gur observes the Temple Mount and the Old City, spread out before him. He orders the move into the City.

This is the first time in the history of the City that it is penetrated from the east. In the past, the deep ravines of the Kidron Stream and the Valley of Jehosaphat deterred all invaders from endeavouring to break in from the east.

The half-track of the Brigade Commander bypasses the battalions climbing to the Lions Gate in the eastern wall of the Old City. In front

of the Gate, a bus is burning, tanks straddle the road. The half-track rams the Gate and bursts in. There is shooting in all directions, but resistance is weak. The half-track goes up the winding way onto the Temple Mount. Hardly a shot is fired on the Temple Mount.

The alleys are mopped up. Here and there sniping goes on. The men race to the Western Wall and unfurl the flag above it. A flag is raised also over the Dome of the Rock. A shofar is blown. The tears of generations of lamentation are wiped away.

We have returned to the water cisterns

To the market and the square

A shofar calls on the Temple Mount

Within the Old City.

And in the caves in the Rock

Thousands of suns brightly shine

Again shall we descend to the Dead Sea

By Jericho way.

(Naomi Shemer — "Jerusalem of Gold")

On Wednesday at 11, the Battle for Jerusalem is over.

At five-thirty in the afternoon Prime Minister Levi Eshkol arrives at the Wall and makes the following announcement:

"It is a great historic privilege to stand here now, at the Western Wall, the remnant of our Holy Temple and our historic past. I consider myself the emissary of the entire Nation, of all generations of our People, who yearned for Jerusalem and its sanctity. I say to the inhabitants of Jerusalem who suffered so much in 1948 and who courageously and calmly withstood the shelling of these days: The victories of Zahal, which have removed the danger to the Capital of Israel, shall be a source of encouragement and comfort to you and to us all. May you be comforted with Jerusalem. And from Jerusalem, the Eternal Capital of Israel, greetings of peace and security to all citizens of Israel and to our Jewish brethren the world over. Blessed be He Who has kept us in life, has sustained us and had enabled us to reach this day".

The battle was over, we have said.

BUT THERE IS NO MENORAH ON THE MOUNT

Upon the Mount, and below it, one of the most moving and strange acts now took place. The conqueror of the Mount, Motta Gur, proclaims: The Temple Mount is in our hands.

The Chief Army Chaplain blows the shofar in great emotion at the Wall.

The Prime Minister recites the blessing "Shehecheyanu" — Who had kept us in life — from a thankful heart, the heart of the entire Nation, Who has kept us in life and sustained us, to stand again... at the Wall.

The Wailing Wall, relic of the Destruction. An Israeli soldier clinging to the Wall and weeping becomes the symbol of the victory.

What is happening? Why at the Wall? Why not upon the Temple Mount? It was not that anyone was deterred by Halachic prohibitions. Surely not Gur nor Eshkol nor that sobbing soldier, nor the crowds who began to stream to the Wall. It was not the Halachah which held them back from celebrating on the liberated Mount. The two thousand years **Galut, exile**, propelled them, us, and the torrent of their emotion, of our emotion, to the Wall of Tears. A veritable surrealistic scene. Irrationality within the irrationality of the miracle of the liberation. Profound and disturbing. Emancipationist, forced, Zionism proves stronger than liberating-historic Zionism.

The soldiers of Zahal burst in through Lions Gate, and thereby confer on the Gate the true meaning of its name. They race towards the plaza of the Mount. They speed diagonally, across this vast and wondrous plateau, **and they seek the way to "The Wall"**. They ask Arabs: **How do you get down to the Wall...** The Arabs, frightened, show them the wicket and the steep steps leading to the Moroccan (Moghrabi) Quarter. The liberators spill down the steps through the wicket. The troops who conquered the Temple Mount run, as if under a spell, and descend to the Wall, to the Wailing Wall, and cleave to it with great fervour and moving tears. A tremor spreads to all the people, in town and country, and on the fronts where fighting is still going on.

We have returned to the Wall!

Had we penetrated the Old City through Zion Gate or Jaffa Gate, had we reached the Wall on our way to liberate the Mount, it would have made sense. This would have been understandable and natural.

But that was not what had happened. **We were on the Mount**, yet spontaneously, without any order from above, without deliberation or forethought — we descended to the Wall, our ascent to the Mount was only the means for descent to the Wall.

Yet the Wall is not even one of the walls of the Temple. It is part of the wall built by Herod round the Temple, and its sanctity is derived only from the proscriptions of foreign rulers of the City, who forbade us to ascend the Mount. The Wall was a relic, a remembrance, a substitute, and therefore it was the **Wailing Wall**, because it reminded us only of the Destruction, and the shame of our being **below**, while the enemy is above. Two thousand years this majestic mountain, saturated with the blood of zealots and warriors, waited expectantly. It awaited the advent of Jewish liberators. And here they are, here they come, rushing onto it, in supreme heroism. But what is this? Where are the liberators running? Why are they racing westward and going down? To the Wall? The Sanctuary itself is in their hands, and they are running to the substitute! What is happening, Lord God of the Hosts of Israel? The Mount was purchased and conquered and purified again and again in ancient times, of our initiative and volition. To the Wall we were pushed, pressed, we had no option. What is this?

The holiness of the Wall cannot possibly be disputed. It has been sanctified by the tears of Israel for some two thousand years. Its stones are saturated with all the hopes, the love and the longing of Israel. What suffering have the People of Israel undergone, to what humiliation have they submitted, for the sake of approaching it, at least it, and through it to relay prayers and entreaties to the Mount, there, above, to the Temple Site. Symbols become sanctified. We recite a **blessing** even over the **bitter herbs** on the Seder night, though they are bitter, and are intended to remind us of bitter days, of a bitter Galut (exile). Even after the Temple is rebuilt, this corner should be retained as a reminder of the days of the captivity and destruction of the City; as a reminder, not as a substitute.

True, in the first moment one of the soldiers raised the flag of Israel on high, upon the Mount, but someone much higher-up hurriedly ordered the flag to be lowered. He too, the then Minister of Defence, was thrilled, no doubt by the liberation of the City; of course he too had a Jewish heart, but this Jewish heart had not crossed the Galut (Diaspora) sound barrier, and the voice of the Galut is the voice of lamentation at the Wall, down below.

In the same initial spontaneity someone ordered the demolition of the slums of the Moghrabi Quarter which were a disgrace to Wall and

worshippers. Here too, the line was drawn very quickly and tightly, without continuity or completion, and no order was issued to cleanse the whole of the Old City from all that had accumulated in it during the years of our subjection here.

So it happened that we talk of ... rehabilitation of the **Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem**. The ears do not appear to hear what the mouth says. There is a Jewish Quarter in ... Jerusalem. There is an Armenian Quarter, a Moslem Quarter and also a Jewish Quarter in the very heart of Jerusalem. In Prague and in New York — yes, but in Jerusalem? A **Jewish Quarter**?

Most serious of all: The Temple Mount was captured, it was not liberated. We are still below, the enemy is still above, as if we are not living in the State of Israel, in the days of Zahal (the Israel Army). Regression to the Galut mentality, the deliverance has not yet arrived. Of the two roots from which Zionism grew: The root of the sovereign will for Redemption, for Return, for Renaissance, the Jerusalem root, and the other, the root of compulsion, persecution, hardship and disillusionment-with-emancipation, the second, negative, root prevailed. Zionism has been forced upon us. The liberation of the Land was forced upon us, and to crown it all, this miraculous war, the liberation of Jerusalem, was forced upon us, to our shame. It was Hussein's stupidity which **obliged** us to liberate Jerusalem's core.

To the extent that memories and feeling played a part — undoubtedly they did — they only reached the Wall. **No higher**, not to the determination of **decisive** historic facts, the ultimate Redemption. The Mount was liberated, and deserted.

A scared, vacillating Rabbinate, suffering from Galut-mentality, joined hands with the policy of an Israeli Government on whom the whole business had been forced, and which well-remembered that its principal aim always had been: **Access** to the Wall. Architects will plan the Wall plaza in a manner which will invite spectators to ascend to the Temple Mount to enjoy the magnificence of Islamic mosques, and thereafter to **descend** to the Wall.

In addition to these two, a third factor swiftly entered the picture. It was so obvious that immediately the Mount was conquered by the Jews returning to Zion, it should be expropriated from the possession of the religio-political-nationalistic-inciting Moslem Wakf, even if the mosques on the Temple Mount would come through the battles unscathed, and that the Jews, by Halachic prescription and as an expressing of age-long yearning, would resume prayer on the Mount, though the Temple had not yet been rebuilt and the Redeemer had not yet come? Was there

anything more natural? more historic? Was there a more appropriate symbol of liberation? Hasmoneans and Zealots had fought for the Temple Mount, not for the Wall.

Yet suddenly, the Jews abandon the Mount and **go down** to the Wall of Tears ...

At that moment the Moslem Arabs clearly realised: The battle was over, but they had not lost the war, its outcome had not been decided. The core of El-Kuds remained in their hands.

This sheds light also upon that astounding event: The visit of President Anwar Sadat to Jerusalem. In his memoirs, he candidly tells that he had planned his prayer at El-Aksa as the climax of his visit. However, even without this evidence, anyone with an historical perspective clearly understood: Prayer at El-Aksa was no less important to Sadat, perhaps it was even of greater moment, than the blinding political aspect of the event at the Knesset. In fact, the prayer was designed so to speak to "atone" for the political "sin" of coming to the Knesset. Thanks to modern communication media, a matter of most serious consequence occurred; people not only heard, but for the first time they — millions of spectators throughout the world, most of them naive — saw this visit and this prayer on this Mount, in the two mosques. Upon their minds, which till then had been clean slates, was indelibly engraved recognition of the fact: This mountain is Moslem, so holy is it to them, the whole majestic mountain. **It is theirs.** It did not occur to anyone amongst us, neither to Chief Rabbi, nor Prime Minister, nor Minister of Religions, to stand up and say then and there, over the same visual-suggestive communications wavelengths: With all due respect to the place of worship and to the worshipping guest, the name of the mountain is The Temple Mount, and so it is called because of the Temple, which — not the Wall — is the holiest place to the Jewish People, who have been praying throughout the generations for its restoration, and upon this Temple Mount Zealots have heroically battled in Sanctification of the Name.

No one said this for all the world to hear and to see. Within our camp, none of its so very "enlightened" members said that Sadat's prayer was a mystical rite and that it was no less provocative than the prayer by someone called Rabbi Levinger at... our Cave of Machpelah, or the blowing of the shofar by Rabbi Goren. In the West, there may have taken place a separation of religion, state and nationality. Here, however, in the East, from Lebanon to Egypt, from Algeria and Libya to Saudia to Iran, it is still the religion of Islam, with all it entails, which carries colossal political weight. Therefore, only therefore, did Sadat

come to pray on the Mount. He is the Defender of Islam and of its Holy Places in Falastin and El-Kuds. This, and its suggestive impact upon hundreds of millions of viewers, not only amongst the Moslems, is the essential meaning of the visit.

It is noteworthy also that Sadat went from the Mount to the Holy Sepulchre, as if to say: This City is holy to Islam and Christianity. He did not come, he was not taken, to the Western Wall; the Jews have no Holy Place in Jerusalem...

Sadat's visit on the Temple Mount was a sequel to our neglect on the morrow of liberation of the City. We failed to establish the facts of our sovereignty over the Mount and of our prayers upon it, at least **alongside** Arab prayers there, if not more than that. The very minimum upon which we should have insisted was the return of the Dome of the Rock to its original purpose: A monument to ancient sanctity, the site of the Temple and Altar, and — let it be — also of the "ascent" of Mohammed, but not a mosque. For that there is El-Aksa... till the Redeemer shall come to Zion and shall build the Temple where it belongs. That was a grave dereliction of duty.

Our descent from the Temple Mount to the Wall served notice on the Arabs that Jerusalem was still theirs. Hope was not lost. For us it proved that Zionism was still "schizophrenic", split between a liberation movement on the one hand and "normalisation" and "emancipation" Western-style, on the other, similar to separation of religion and state, or — from our standpoint — of state and history. 'Twere as if we had no roots here, and were indeed invaders. The term "**Bayit**" (house or home) which came to replace the "state" in Zionist terminology, with an addition "**National** "Home", replaced also the basic term "**Bayit**" which appears in the name of the Temple (Beit Hamikdash). We speak of Bayit Rishon (First House) and Bayit Sheni (Second House), and in both cases we refer to the Temple and not to a purely political home.

Who can tell whether this descent from the Temple Mount, was not the cause of many other downfalls?

True, because of that same rush, through inertia, to the Wall, that longing to the source of tears which had become sanctified — rightly — not all was abandoned: We clung to the Wall, to the Wall once again, yet cling we did. True, only a **Jewish Quarter** in the Old City, yet it is a **Jewish Quarter** there. In other words, we stopped half-way. **Still no decisive steps.** Ben-Gurion spoke of a "tragedy for generations to come" when the opportunity to complete the liberation of the Land was missed in 1948. The generations of which he warned contracted to one only. Historical necessity expresses itself in strange and different ways,

and leads man and Nation to their destiny, from which there is no escape. Were it not so, how could we have returned to Land and City after such trials and tribulations along all the highways and byways of the world? The ultimate end cannot possibly be descent. It is inconceivable therefore that the wheel shall not come full circle, that we should remain forever at the foot of the Mount, at the Wall, symbol of the lament of generations.

The struggle goes on, the political one — externally, the spiritual one — at home.

This is a struggle the like of which no city has ever known, for its body and its soul, for the terrestrial as well as the celestial, for the temporal and the eternal. There are ups and downs in its history as there are in its topography. Psalms have arisen from this City and have become prayers recited by most of humanity. Lamentations poured forth here have clung to tongue and heart for thousands of years, prophecies sparked here have illuminated the world, songs-of-songs of love have shone here, sorrows of existential wisdom and divine sadness have flickered here, and hope for redemption of Nation, Man and World have quivered here.

Can it be that all this was caused by the place? The landscape, the climate, its location between continents and cultures, its rocks, its skies?

Perhaps these too played a part, undoubtedly they did, but the undeniable fact remains: Everything great that has been created here, has been accomplished by one nation only. Not only was it inconsequential before David conquered it, and built it, but also thereafter, after it had become famous among the nations, after it was conquered by many nations, and inhabited by all kinds of nations, as related in the pages of this book, nothing great, nothing of moment was ever created therein. Even that faith which spread across the globe from Jerusalem is derived from Judaism and the spirit which moved it was a Jerusalemite spirit, whatever the fusions which this new religion subsequently underwent.

If to this one adds one further incontrovertible fact: The devotion of this People to this City, unparalleled in the annals of nations, countries and cities throughout the world; whether one understands it or not, one cannot be impervious to this reality, so real that there is nothing more real: The City and the People are one! Its importance and power would never have come about were it not for this Nation. All the blood spilled over her after the destruction of the House of this Nation in Jerusalem, and all the wars fought over her since then, till the return of this Nation to her, desecrated many things but accomplished nothing; neither prophecy, nor wisdom, nor science; nothing was created.

Only now has she been reborn, as though the days of her youth have returned, **as though she were pregnant**. All the fierce love which we have loved her for thousands of years, all that spiritual and physical power

saturated with suffering, which we have sunk in her, above and below the surface, whether garbed in kapota and streimel or in the uniform of the Army of Israel, or without uniform, in the days of her Destruction and of her revival, in prayer and in rivers of tears from afar, with the Voice of the Torah and the Sound of Explosion — through all this she has awaited Them.

Indeed, waited she has. She became as a widow (Lamentations 1:1); the Midrash wisely distinguishes: **as a widow** and not actually a widow, for her husband **shall** return to her.

Return he did, Heaven and Earth joining forces to bring this about, by dint of free will and by dint of compulsion, by dint of a miracle which is more real than reality, and by dint of reality which is unsurpassed in miraculousness.

All these loudly proclaim:

The City is once again pregnant with a great revival, which only one nation in the world can perform, can become rejuvenated therein, and fulfil all the prophecies which her sons prophesied within her.

The struggle is not over; the vision is not yet complete. The eyes of enemies and the jealousy of foes, and actual grasping talons threaten to seize her from Israel Reborn. All kinds of objectors to liberation will stir within her. But the grand design points in one sole direction: Culmination of the Redemption. The historic progress over thousands of years is crystal-clear: the devotion of the Nation to her, and the monumental fact of her barrenness and obstinacy under the occupation of scores of nations and foreign rulers who have passed through her and have dwelt within her, yet she never became to them what she was to us. She never became at their hands what she became at ours to the entire world. This is the Grand Scheme as a backdrop to day-to-day developments: From its resettlement and reconstruction to the attainment of a Jewish majority yet before Zionism and without "Zionist" persuasion, and to its becoming the Capital of the State of Israel through Zionism as the modern expression of the profound and constant idea of Redemption. All efforts to diverge from this destiny, to dwarf it, are frustrated by the joint opposition of Heaven and Earth, body and soul, free will and compulsion, as they frustrated all schemes to separate Jerusalem from Israel and Israel from Jerusalem, and as they frustrated all attempts to split her. The reunification of Jerusalem is a symbol and example of the whole Grand Design. The experience undergone in this City and by this City is a symbol and an example for the Master Plan. In the future too struggles and suffering loom, but we are cognisant of the inherent greatness within them, which will emanate

from them.

Whatever the illusion from time to time may be, whatever the sacrifice, there is no permanence in the division of the Nation just as the partition of the Land cannot subsist. It has been proven by this City: She cannot be divided, neither horizontally nor vertically, not even between Heaven and Earth.

In this City we ascended the Altar to be sacrificed. In this City we are now descending from the Altar to rebuild her once again, to renew Majesty and Prophecy within her.

A WORD OF ADVICE TO THE VISITOR TO JERUSALEM *

Whether you are visiting Jerusalem from abroad, or are a native son or daughter of Jerusalem and Israel, should you wish to understand this City, to know her, look at her from four different vantage points:

A. The view from the Israel Museum

In the Roman Wing of the Museum stands the statue of Emperor Hadrian. It was discovered a few years ago near Beit-She'an in the Jordan Valley. A tourist stumbled upon a piece of metal and uncovered it. Archaeologists determined that it was the statue of Hadrian, one of the greatest rulers of the Roman Empire, which stretched from the British Isles to Persia. It was he who crushed the last great rebellion, the Bar-Kochba Revolt, in a war which lasted three and a half years. His fierce hatred of Judea and its People stemmed from the loss of scores of thousands of Roman soldiers in two rebellions. About twenty years earlier, in 118, the revolt of the Jews in North Africa, which Trajan quelled, and now, in 136, Bar-Kochba. The name of this land was to be obliterated. Hadrian decreed that "Judea" was to be erased from the public record; he gave it the hateful name "Syria Palaestina". And the province of Syria has been our mortal enemy to this very day. He added "Palaestina" because of Philistines who, in the distant past had inhabited the area approximating the district known today as the Gaza Strip, and who had vanished without having left a trace. How did an Emperor from Rome know at all of this long-forgotten people? The answer no doubt is that he must have had a learned Jewish aide, a leader of Peace Now, or Peace **Then**, who advised Hadrian of the appropriate name for this rebellious land, so as once and for all to extirpate the name of Judea and its connection with the Jews. (At Titus' headquarters on Mount Scopus, two generations earlier, there were three Jews, Tiberius Alexander, Agrippa II, and Joseph ben-Matityahu Flavius, and one Jewess). This Jew probably whispered into Hadrian's ear, and the name has reverberated to the present time: Palestine ... Falastin, derived from ancient Philistines.

Stand before that striking statue, beautifully cast in bronze, approach

* The authors have written this chapter for the English edition (1991)

it, peer into Hadrian's eye-sockets and ask:

Mighty Emperor, do you know where you are standing? where is Syria Palaestina? where is Aelia Capitolina? and above all, where is your Empire? You are in **Jerusalem**, the Capital of the Jewish State in Eretz-Israel. Forever!

B. The view from Mount Gilo, Bethlehem, or: The Bethlehem View

Gaze upon Jerusalem from Bethlehem-in-Judea, climb from there to Mount Gilo, and see, and grasp, the events which took place here. Bethlehem is the cradle of the Kingdom of David, the cradle of the longing for the Messiah of the House of David. It is also claimed to be the cradle of Christianity. With good reason the Fathers of the Church transported Mary of Nazareth to bear her son in Bethlehem, for the Redeemer **had** to be born there. As Jesus was the Redeemer, so said the Church, the purpose and function of the Jewish People were at an end. The destruction of the Temple and of the City were interpreted in Christian theology as punishment for the denial of Christ, even beyond the Gospel account of the share of the Jews in the guilt of delivering him up to the Roman Governor, Pontius Pilate, for trial and crucifixion. Read Herzl's account of his meeting with the Pope in 1903. Read of His Holiness' assurance that the Jews will never rebuild Jerusalem. Then walk round the City and see her so beautifully rebuilt. View the Midnight Mass on the screen of Israel Television on Christmas Eve, broadcast from Bethlehem to seven hundred million Christians worldwide. Since the liberation of Jerusalem and Bethlehem in 1967, the Mass is conducted under the protection of the **Army of Israel**. There are Christians in Jerusalem and in Bethlehem, and there is freedom of worship.

C. A different Christian view

Teddy Kollek, who was Mayor of Jerusalem for a quarter of a century, one of its greatest builders, has related that on a visit to Canada, he met with a leader of a large pro-Israel Christian group, which strongly supports Israel's efforts to rebuild Jerusalem. He asked the Mayor: "Since you are in charge of the development of Jerusalem, why don't you rebuild the Temple?". Kollek was taken aback, and asked: "What is the hurry?" (A surrealistic situation: A Christian urges

the Mayor of Jerusalem to build the Temple, and the Jewish Mayor queries the urgency!) The man explained: "Millions of Christians believe that our Messiah will return provided that the Jewish People will first return to its Land and will rebuild its Temple".

Jerusalem has therefore a new challenge: If Christians see the re-establishment of the Temple on the Mount as a pre-condition, let us join forces with them; they should help us fulfil this condition, particularly politically, since the Mount is still occupied by Moslem edifices — and then we shall see...

D. The all-encompassing view

"A city that is compact together"? This Psalm 122 is often quoted and misquoted. The misquotation occurs when one reads into the word "together" a meaning which the sublime divine Jerusalemite so-very-Davidic Psalmist never intended. The Psalm expressly speaks of "the tribes of the Lord, for a testimony to Israel", "for there are set thrones for judgment, the thrones of the House of David", and "For my brethren and companions' sakes I would fain speak peace concerning thee". The Arabs are not our brethren and companions; they are our enemies. And clearly they are not of the tribes of Israel compact together in this City.

One further expression needs to be set right. Jerusalem is "holy to three religions". True, it is holy to Christianity, regardless of one's attitude to the myth wherefrom this sanctity derives. It is holy to Christians because they believe that Jesus was crucified, and was resurrected, in Jerusalem. The faith of believers should be treated with respect.

The historical link of Islam to Jerusalem is based on a dream of Mohammed, who was transported upon a magic horse to the Temple Mount, and from there he ascended heavenward upon it.

In other words, Jerusalem's sanctity to Christianity and to Islam is based on **events** which occurred in the City, according to their respective beliefs. Is there any comparison between these beliefs and Jerusalem's holiness to Jews? For us, it is holy not because of myths and miracles, but by virtue of its having been, for over one thousand years, the real, tangible, Capital of the Jewish Kingdom. Miracles did take place here, and legends were woven here, but the **foundation** undoubtedly is historical fact. There is no common denominator between our ties to Jerusalem and those of Christianity and Islam.

Jerusalem must be seen and understood from all viewpoints. The

harsh names which have clung to its various parts should be noted: Vale of Repha'im [Ghosts], Valley of Kidron (derived from the Hebrew word signifying melancholy), and most ominous — The Valley of Hinnom [Gehenna] so full of dread. But lift your eyes from these depths and gaze upon the Temple Mount above. At your feet are Repha'im, despair and Gehenna, a few steps away from each other, yet you are above, enveloped in hope and in vision. This is the juxtaposition of curse and blessing, destruction and redemption. The Sages of Israel have said that on the day the Temple was burnt, the Messiah was born. Abraham our Father went from the furnace to the Land of Canaan; one-third of the Jewish People were exterminated in the furnaces of Europe, and the remnants set forth to establish their sovereign state in Eretz-Israel. This is our destiny, our national goal.

THE AUTHORS

Dr Israel Eldad: 1910 — 1996

Scholar, writer and Zionist revolutionary, Israel Eldad was born in Galicia, Poland, in 1910. After graduating from the Rabbinical Seminary in Vienna and obtaining his doctorate in philosophy, he returned to Poland to teach Jewish studies at the Teachers College in Vilna. Invited by Menachem Begin, he joined the Warsaw leadership of Betar, the youth movement of Ze'ev Jabotinsky's Zionist Revisionist Party. In 1938, he first met Avraham Stern, founder of the underground Zionist movement, «The Fighters for the Freedom of Israel — LEHI» (The Stern Group).

Arriving in Palestine in 1940, he joined the underground as a member of the LEHI High Command. During the crucial years of World War II, when the British Mandatory Government of Palestine was trying to appease the Arabs by conducting a policy of repression against the Jewish community, Eldad made broadcasts, wrote articles for underground publications, and edited wall newspapers, illegal bulletins pasted on the walls at night, (since compiled in a book entitled «Let the Walls Speak»).

While attempting to escape arrest by the British Police, Eldad suffered a serious back injury. For two years he remained in British prisons, his body encased in a cast. Dramatically freed from his guards by LEHI comrades in 1946, he resumed his activity in the underground, until the State of Israel was established.

He has written *Ma'aser Rishon* (The First Tithe), which relates the story of the Hebrew underground and his part therein, he is the author of *Hegyonot Mikra* (Reflections on Scripture), a challenging commentary on the Pentateuch, and of *The Jewish Revolution*, a collection of stimulating and provoking essays (in English) combine the passion of the patriot, the logic of the scholar and the sweep of the historian.

He published four volumes of his articles, collected from various newspapers and journals: *Dagesh Hazak*, *Hegyonot Israel*, *Hegyonot Yehuda* and *Hegyonot Hag*. He translated into Hebrew eight volumes of Friedrich Nietzsche's *Philosophy*.

He died at his home in Jerusalem on January 22, 1996

Dr Arie' Eldad

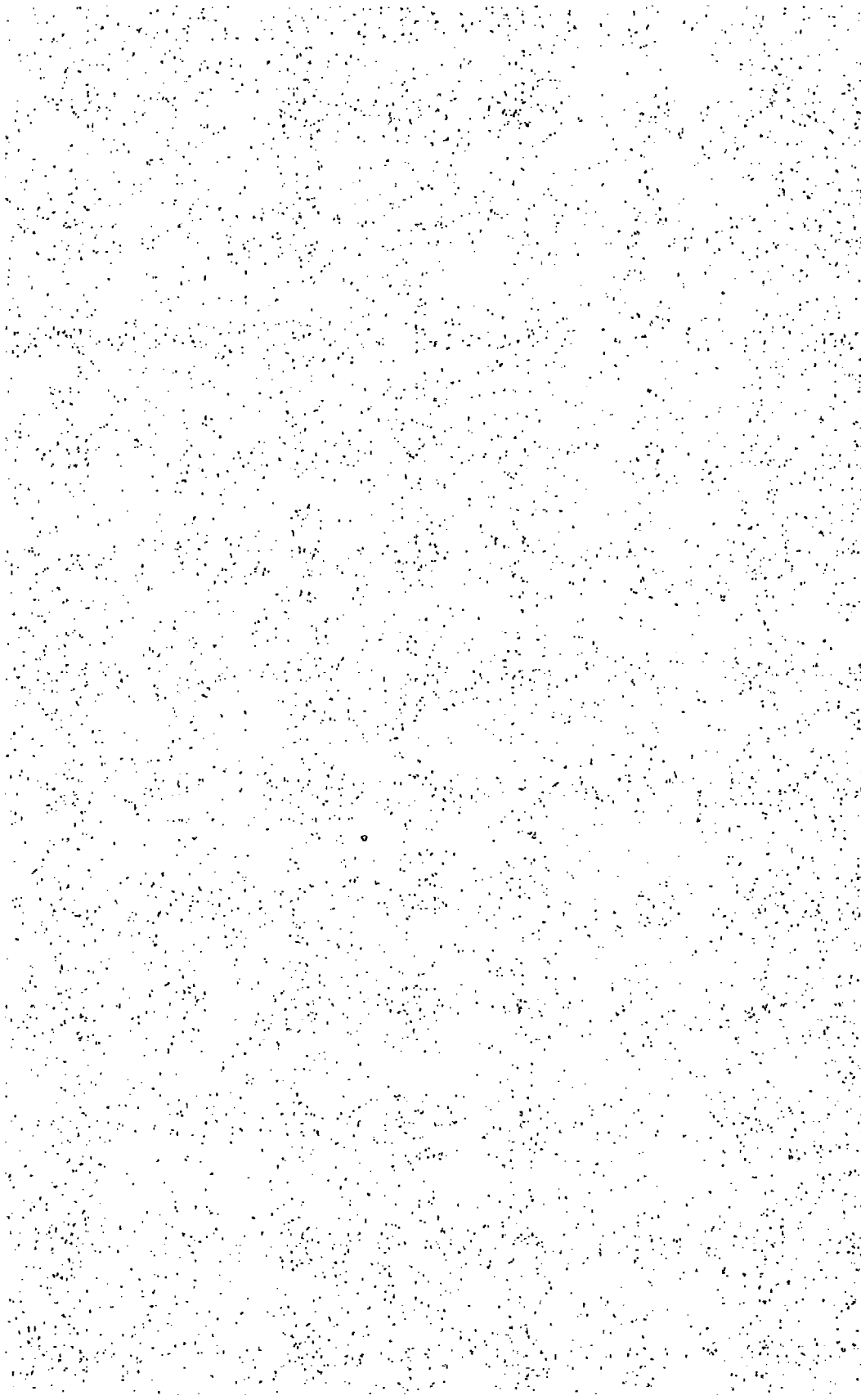
Son of Israel Eldad. Born in Tel-Aviv in 1950, he grew up in Jerusalem. Since the age of 14, he participated in the youth programs of the Israel Broadcasting Network, as actor, editor and script-writer, and in presentation of programs.

He graduated from the Tel-Aviv University School of Medicine, and has since been an Army physician, in the Medical Corps. He has served in the Jordan Rift, in Sinai and in Lebanon. He is a Brigadier-General, and since 1997 — Surgeon-General of the Israel Defence Forces Medical Corps.

He specialised in Plastic Surgery at the Shaare Zedek Medical Centre in Jerusalem. Since 1989, he has headed the Burns Unit at Hadassah University Medical Centre, Jerusalem, and he is Chairman of the Israel Burn Association. He is the author of numerous articles on burn treatment

Arie' Eldad has written «Cat in the Bag — Stories for Big Children», originally broadcast on the Israel Broadcasting Network, and «Sinai Intoxication». Both books have been published by leading Israeli publishing houses.

He and his wife and five children live in Kfar Adumim, a new settlement in the Judean desert, situated between Jerusalem and Jericho.





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