

Jerusalem: Crossroads of the World #6: Mount of Olives

On the Border:

Kings II 2:36 And the king sent and called for Shimei, and said unto him: Build thee a house in Jerusalem, and dwell there, and go not forth thence any whither. 37 For on the day you go out, and pass over the brook Kidron, know thou for certain that thou shall surely die; thy blood shall be upon your own head.' 38 And Shimei said unto the king: 'The saying is good; as my lord the king hath said, so will thy servant do.' And Shimei dwelt in Jerusalem many days.

Samuel II 15: 23 And all the country wept with a loud voice, as all the people passed over; and as the king passed over the brook Kidron, all the people passed over, toward the way of the wilderness. 24 And, lo, Zadok also came, and all the Levites with him, bearing the ark of the covenant of God; and they set down the ark of God--but Abiathar went up--until all the people had done passing out of the city. 25 And the king said unto Zadok: 'Carry back the ark of God into the city; if I shall find favour in the eyes of the LORD, He will bring me back, and show me both it, and His habitation; 26 but if He say thus: I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let Him do to me as seemeth good unto Him.' 27 The king said also unto Zadok the priest: 'Seest thou? return into the city in peace, and your two sons with you, Ahimaaz thy son, and Jonathan the son of Abiathar. 28 See, I will tarry in the plains of the wilderness, until there come word from you to announce unto me.' 29 Zadok therefore and Abiathar carried the ark of God back to Jerusalem; and they abode there. 30 And David went up by the ascent of the mount of Olives, and wept as he went up; and he had his head covered, and went barefoot; and all the people that were with him covered every man his head, and they went up, weeping as they went up.

The Shechinah's Resting Place

Ezekiel 11: 23 And the glory of the LORD went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.

Eichah Rabbah: the Shechinah (Holy Spirit) made ten journeys: from one cherub to the next. . from the wall to the city and from the city to the Mount of Olives, as it is written in Ezekiel 11. . Rabbi Yohanan said: the Shechinah sat on

the Mount of Olives for three and a half years in the hopes that Israel would repent and they did not. . .

11th century Cairo Genizah letter

Since the destruction of the Temple, the people of the land of Israel gather on the Mount of Olives on Hoshana Rabba and encircle it seven times. The first time they face the Temple and say the Hoshana of “Even HaShtiya” [which is about the Temple] and then they complete the whole order. I heard this from Rabbi Zechariah who exiled himself to Jerusalem for atonement and heard the prayers that day on the Mount of Olives.

The Beginnings of Redemption

Zechariah 14: 1 Behold, a day of the LORD cometh, when thy spoil shall be divided in the midst of thee. 2 For I will gather all nations against Jerusalem to battle; and the city shall be taken, and the houses rifled, and the women ravished; and half of the city shall go forth into captivity, but the residue of the people shall not be cut off from the city. 3 Then shall the LORD go forth, and fight against those nations, as when He fighteth in the day of battle. 4 And His feet shall stand in that day upon the mount of Olives, which is before Jerusalem on the east, and the mount of Olives shall cleft in the midst thereof toward the east and toward the west, so that there shall be a very great valley; and half of the mountain shall remove toward the north, and half of it toward the south. 5 And ye shall flee to the valley of the mountains; for the valley of the mountains shall reach unto Azel; yea, ye shall flee, like as ye fled from before the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah; and the LORD my God shall come, and all the holy ones with Thee. 6 And it shall come to pass in that day, that there shall not be light, but heavy clouds and thick; 7 And there shall be one day which shall be known as the LORD'S, not day, and not night; but it shall come to pass, that at evening time there shall be light. 8 And it shall come to pass in that day, that living waters shall go out from Jerusalem: half of them toward the eastern sea, and half of them toward the western sea; in summer and in winter shall it be. 9 And the LORD shall be King over all the earth; in that day shall the LORD be One, and His name one.

Motta Gur to the paratroopers before they entered the Old City, June 7, 1967: We occupy the heights overlooking the Old City. In a little while, we will enter it. The ancient city of Jerusalem, which for generations we have dreamt of and striven for- we will be the first to enter it. The Jewish nation is awaiting our victory, Israel awaits this historic hour. Be proud. Good luck.

Massuot: Proclaiming the New Year

Mishnah Rosh HaShanah 2:4 And from where would they light the signal fires? From the mountain of oil (har hamishchah) to Sartaba, and from Sartaba to Grofina and from Grofina to Chavran and from Chavran to Bet Baltin and from Bet Baltin they continued to signal until the whole diaspora was lit up like a bonfire.

Pinhas Rutenberg (1879 - 1942)

ברצוני להיאסף אל עמי בהר הזיתים בירושלים, ואני מבקש שיינתן לי הכבוד להיטמן בין שורות העמלים הצנועים. אני מבקש לערוך את הלוויית לפי מסורת ישראל בלא זרים ובלא הספדים. אני מבקש את בני אחיי אברהם, אלכסנדר ודוד אשר אהבתי לאמור אחריי קדיש. צוואתי להם לקנות דעה והשכל כדי להיות בנים נאמנים לעמם, משרתיו הענווים והצנועים. כל נכסיו הועברו ויועברו לאוצר פינחס רוטנברג ומוקדשים לנוער העברי. האישים שירצו לעשות למען מטרה זו יוכלו למסור את תרומותיהם לאוצר זה. אולם בקשתי שלא לערוך כל אספי כסף עממיים להנצחת שמי. אני מבקש כמו כן לא לקרוא רחובות, נחלות, כפרים ומושבות בשמי (מתוך 'דבר', 5.1.42).

שרה ברנע

Shmuel Yosef Agnon (1887 - 1970)

As a result of the historic catastrophe in which Titus of Rome destroyed Jerusalem and Israel was exiled from its land, I was born in one of the cities of the Exile. But always I regarded myself as one who was born in Jerusalem. In a dream, in a vision of the night, I saw myself standing with my brother-Levites in the Holy Temple, singing with them the songs of David, King of Israel, melodies such as no ear has heard since the day our city was destroyed and its people went into exile. I suspect that the angels in charge of the Shrine of Music, fearful lest I sing in wakefulness what I had sung in dream, made me forget by day what I had sung at night; for if my brethren, the sons of my people, were to hear, they would be unable to bear their grief over the happiness they have lost. To console me for having prevented me from singing with my mouth, they enable me to compose songs in writing.

The Graves of the Prophets

Haggai 1: 1 In the second year of Darius the king, in the sixth month, in the first day of the month, came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet unto Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, and to Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest, saying: **2** 'Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying: This people say: The time is not come, the time that the LORD'S house should be built.' **3** Then came the word of the LORD by Haggai the prophet, saying: **4** 'Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your cieled houses, while this house lieth waste? **5** Now therefore thus saith the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. **6** Ye have sown much, and brought in little, ye eat, but ye have not enough, ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink, ye clothe you, but there is none warm; and he that earneth wages earneth wages for a bag with holes. **7** Thus saith the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways. **8** Go up to the hill-country, and bring wood, and build the house; and I will take pleasure in it, and I will be glorified, saith the LORD. **9** Ye looked for much, and, lo, it came to little; and when ye brought it home, I did blow upon it. Why? saith the LORD of hosts. Because of My house that lieth waste, while ye run every man for his own house. **10** Therefore over you the heaven hath kept back, so that there is no dew, and the earth hath kept back her produce.

Heroes of 1948

Letter written by Esther Cailingold on May 23, 1948, one week before she was killed in the final battles for the Old City of Jerusalem, at the age of 22

Dear Mummy, Daddy and everyone,

I am writing to beg you that whatever may have happened to me, you will make the effort to take it in the spirit I want and to understand that for myself I have no regrets. We had a difficult fight and I have tasted of hell, but it's worthwhile because I am convinced that in the end we will see a Jewish state and realization of all our longings. Remember, we are soldiers who have the greatest and noblest cause to fight for. God is with us. I'm proud and ready to pay the price it may cost us. Please, please do not be sadder than you can help. I've lived my life fully if briefly. And I think that's the best way. . . here in our own sweet land. I hope you will enjoy from Mimi and Asher the satisfaction that you miss in me. Let it be without regrets. Then I too shall be happy.

Remember me only in happiness.

-Esther

Dominus Flevit – Site of the Red Heifer?

Mishnah Middot 2:4 All the walls [of the Temple compound] were high except for the eastern one because the priest who burnt the red heifer stood on the Mount of Olives and he had to see the doorway of the Temple when he sprinkled the blood.

Mishnah Para 3:6 They would make a ramp from the Temple Mount to the Mount of Olives, arches upon arches to guard against graves and the heifer and all those who prepare it go out to the Mount of Olives.

The Goat of Atonement

Mishnah Yoma 6:4 They made a ramp because of the Babylonians who would pull its [the scapegoat's] hair and say "take [our sins] and get out!" . . .

Graves in the Kidron Valley

Samuel II 18: 18 Now Absalom in his life-time had taken and reared up for himself the pillar, which is in the king's dale; for he said: 'I have no son to keep my name in remembrance'; and he called the pillar after his own name; and it is called Absalom's monument unto this day.

Chronicles II 24: 20 And the spirit of God clothed Zechariah the son of Jehoiada the priest; and he stood above the people, and said unto them: 'Thus saith God: Why transgress ye the commandments of the LORD, that ye cannot prosper? because ye have forsaken the LORD, He hath also forsaken you.' **21** And they conspired against him, and stoned him with stones at the commandment of the king in the court of the house of the LORD.

Gittin 57b R. Hiya b. Abin said in the name of R. Joshua b. Korhah: An old man from the inhabitants of Jerusalem told me that in this valley Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard killed two hundred and eleven myriads, and in Jerusalem he killed ninety-four myriads on one stone, until their blood went and joined that of Zechariah, to fulfil the words, Blood toucheth blood. He noticed the blood of Zechariah bubbling up warm, and asked what it was. They said: It is the blood of the sacrifices which has been poured there. He had some blood brought, but it was different from the other. He then said to them: If you tell me [the truth], well and good, but if not, I will tear your flesh with combs of iron. They said: What can we say to you? There was a prophet among us who used to reprove us for our irreligion, and we rose up against him and killed him, and for many years his blood has not rested. He said to them: I will

appease him. He brought the great Sanhedrin and the small Sanhedrin and killed them over him, but the blood did not cease. He then slaughtered young men and women, but the blood did not cease. He brought school-children and slaughtered them over it, but the blood did not cease. So he said; Zechariah, Zechariah. I have slain the best of them; do you want me to destroy them all? When he said this to him, it stopped.

Rabbi Obadiah Bertinoro (c.1450-1516)

I have taken a house here close to the synagogue. The upper chamber of my dwelling is even in the wall of the synagogue. In the court where my house is there are five inhabitants, all of them women. There is only one blind man living here, and his wife attends on me . . . Most of those who come to Jerusalem from foreign countries fall ill, owing to climactic changes and the sudden variations of the wind, now cold, now warm. All possible winds blow in Jerusalem. It is said that every wind before going where it listeth, comes to Jerusalem to prostrate itself before the Lord, Blessed he He that knoweth truth. . .

מיומני הנזיר, רב דוד כהן
הלכתי להשיב רוחי מסביב לעיר הקודש על ההרים הקדושים מסביב לי וחי רוחי, במר נפשי מאוד. ישבתי
ממול "יד אבשלום" והוצאתי תנ"ך של כיס שלי וקראתי... רוחי חי ונפשי התפשטה בכל המראה הנהדר
המשתרע שם, בשבילי הנביאים שדרכו שמה ורוחי בתקווה ותוחלת וציפייה לנבואה שתתגלה. ובליבי, גם
ציפייה על הישיבה הגדולה, בית המדרש, שייבנה שם, שזה ימים אחדים ערכתי תוכנית לה, וקראתי למרן
הרב שליט"א, ושבה המילה האחרונה: "תחיית רוח הנבואה."