



ארגון יד לבנים  
סניף ירושלים



עיריית  
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## סרן משה (מוסה) וורטמן ז"ל



בן דרורה ואליעזר

נולד בניו-יורק

בתאריך י' בתמוז תשי"ג, 23/6/1953

התגייס באוגוסט 1971

שרת בחטיבת גולני

נפל בקרב בלבנון

בתאריך ט"ו בסיוון תשל"ה, 25/5/1975

נקבר בהר הרצל

אזור: ד חלקה: 4 שורה: 4 קבר: 5

הותיר אחריו הורים, אח ואחות

בן 21 בנפלו

### קורות חיים

בן אליעזר ודרורה. נולד ביום י' בתמוז תשי"ג (23.6.1953) בניו-יורק ונקרא ע"ש אחי אמו, משה נאמן ז"ל, שנפל בקרב על נבי-יושע במלחמת העצמאות. כשמלאו למשה ארבע שנים, עלתה המשפחה לישראל. הוא התחיל ללמוד בבית-הספר היסודי 'בית הילד' שבירושלים, המשיך וסיים את לימודיו בבית-הספר התיכון שליד האוניברסיטה העברית. משה היה נער מוכשר. התמזגו בו כושר חשיבה ותפיסה מהירה עם דמיון ומעוף. לימודיו לא היו לו דרך ההרגל והשגרה בלבד; הוא שקד על נושאים שהתעניין בהם והעמיק בלימודים מעל ומעבר לנדרש בתכניות-הלימודים המחייבת. עם-זאת, למד גם נושאים שלא היו קרובים ללבו כדי לצאת ידי חובה. משה היה חבר בתנועת-הנוער 'הצופים'. הוא אהב את נופי הארץ ובמיוחד קסם לו מדבר-יהודה. הרבה לטייל ולהדריך טיולים במסגרת התנועה ובמסגרת החברה להגנת הטבע. משה נודע כטייל וכמדריך מעולה, היודע להדביק את חניכיו בהתלהבותו ולשתפם בידעותיו הרבות. הוא גילה אהבה רבה לבעלי-חיים והתעניין במיוחד בדגים; ערך ניסיונות בהכלאת דגים ובריבויים, רכש ספרים רבים בנושאים אלה ובמשך השנים התחיל להתעניין אף באוקיאנוגרפיה ושאף לחקור וללמוד את הים. בגיל צעיר החל לנגן בגיטרה קלסית ובבגרותו ניגן גם בגיטרה

חשמלית ואף יסד להקת נגנים עם חבריו, להקה שערכה הופעות במקומות שונים בארץ. תחביב-נעוריו היה האלקטרוניקה. הוא השתתף בקורסים לנוער, קרא ספרים בתחום האלקטרוניקה, בנה מכשירים ואבזרים שונים, עסק בתקשורת רדיו עם חובבים ברחבי-העולם והחליף ידע בהתכתבות עם אלקטרונאים צעירים בארצות שונות. משה היה חובב-ספורט מושבע והצטיין בענפי-ספורט רבים. הוא זכה בפרסים בתחרויות טניס בבירה, היה חבר באיגוד הטניס לנוער, חבר בנבחרת האוניברסיטה העברית כשחיין וכשחקן כדור-מים ועסק אף בשיט. משה הרבה לקרוא ספרים בתחומים רבים ואהב במיוחד ספרי היסטוריה וביולוגיה וספרות יפה בעברית ובאנגלית.

משה גויס לצה"ל באוגוסט שנת 1971 והתנדב לקומנדו הימי. אהבתו לים, נטייתו להתמודד עם אתגרים קשים ורצונו לשרת בחברת חברים כלבבו, הביאו אותו להתנדב לחיל זה. לאחר שנה ורבע של שירות בשייטת הועבר לשרת בחטיבת גולני. תחילה היתה זו מכה קשה בעבורו, אך משהכיר בייחודה של החטיבה, החליט כדרכו להקדיש את כל מרצו, את יכולתו ואת מסירותו לתפקידו החדש. משה נשלח למוצב בחרמון וכעבור זמן השתלם בקורס- קצינים.

כשפרצה מלחמת יום-הכיפורים, צורף לסיירת 'שקד' ולכוח-המשימה בפיקודו של אריק שרון. הוא נלחם בקרבות הקשים בחוה הסינית, נטל חלק בחציית התעלה ובקרבות פנים- אל-פנים לטיהור הבונקרים והגיע עד לפרברי איסמעיליה. כשנסתיימו הקרבות, נשלח לאזור מזרע-בית-גיאן ונתמנה למפקד מוצב 'שני' במלחמת ההתשה. מסיפורי חייליו ומפקדיו ניתן ללמוד על עוז-רוחו, על כושר-המנהיגות שלו ועל תרומתו הרבה לליכוד היחידה בימים הקשים. במכתביו למשפחתו ולידידתו מספר משה: "למרות התנאים הקשים אני מרגיש מצוין ועובר את אחד השלבים המעניינים בשירותי. יותר משנותן אני לחיילי, מקבל אני מהם. אני יודע את מגבלותיהם ואני יודע להעריך את יכולתם ואת הכוחות הצפונים בהם. תן בהם אמון, הוכח להם שאתה מבין אותם ושאתה מכבד אותם על המאמץ שהם משקיעים, הראה להם שהם יכולים לשפר את תדמיתם ואת כושרם, ומעל לכול, היה להם מופת אישי. בחיי האזרחיים בודאי לא הייתי מכיר מגון כזה של רבדים חברתיים, לא הייתי מבין לעולמם השונה, וכרבים מחברי, הייתי חש בחרیפות את החיץ שבינינו. ומוזר, דוקא בתנאים קשים כשלנו, כשלומד אתה להכיר את





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האדם כמות שהוא, בלי העטיפות המכסות אותו, נראה לך כי למרות ההבדלים העצומים ברקע התרבותי רב הוא המשותף והמלכד. נראה לי כי מצאתי דרך אליהם והייתי רוצה כי יאמינו כמוני, שאם ישקיע כל אחד את מיטבו במאמץ המשותף נוכל לחיות במקום נפלא שיושב בו עם נפלא".

בשנת 1974 נשלח משה לקורס-מ"פים ובסיומו נתמנה למפקד הר-דוב. לדברי חבריו לנשק, פקודיו, מפקד הגדוד ומפקד-החטיבה, התגלה משה כמפקד מעולה, רב-תושייה, בעל מחשבה מקורית ואישיות סוחפת. הוא ידע להשרות סמכות מבלי להיתפס לנוקשות וניסה בכל הדרכים, אף במחיר התנגשות עם הממונים עליו, לשפר את תנאי חייהם של חייליו, לשמור על רוח טובה, להכיר את בעיותיהם ולהקדיש הרבה ממרצו גם לענייני סעד וחינוך. הוא שימש להם מופת אישי וזכה להערצתם.

באפריל 1975 עמד משה להשתחרר. למרות התכניות הרבות שהיו לו לגבי עתידו - לימודי הרפואה וחברתו הקרובה - נעתר לבקשת מפקדיו והתחייב לשירות נוסף של תשעה חודשים בצבא הקבע. על לבטיו בנושא כתב להוריו בין השאר: "...אני עדיין מתלבט בבעית החתימה. ורגעים אלה, כמו זה שאני שרוי בו עתה, אינם מסייעים כלל ועיקר לקביעת מסקנה מוגמרת ומגובשת. למען האמת, זו הפעם הראשונה שאני מוצא את עצמי כל-כך בלתי החלטי. בעבר, כשצריך הייתי להתמודד עם בעיות, הן כאזרח, הן כחייל והן כקצין, הייתי מגיע במהירות יחסית לאומדן נכון של גדלים ומשימות ומחליט ללא התלבטויות מיוחדות, וכשעמדתי בפני משימה ונוכחתי בחשיבותה - ידעתי להחליט ולבצע... לפעמים אני גם מוצא את עצמי מיצר כי בצבא, על-אף כל הדברים שאני חב לו (למי היה מזדמן בחייו האזרחיים לשוט, לצלול, לצנוח, לטוס, לירות, לטייל, להכיר ועוד...) אבדתי כמה מן התכונות שהייתי רוצה כי תלווה אותי. נדמה לי כי אבדתי הרבה מן הרגישות, מהחוש ליופי שפעם ידעתי. יש בי מצבור על עייפות, של עול כבד ואפרוריות, אך מצד שני אני יודע ומכיר כי כדי שגם אני וגם כל היקרים לי יזכו לחיות את החיים שהם רוצים בהם - חייב אני להישאר במקום בו אני נמצא ולתרום את מה שאני יכול למקום הזה ולארץ הזאת. אלה הם שני קטבים ואין גשר ביניהם. וזוהי האמת הפשוטה..."



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במאי 1975 יצא משה בראש היחידה לפשיטה בשטח לבנון. הוא נפל בקרב עם מחבלים שהתחזו לחיילי צבא-לבנון, ליד הכפר עיתא-א-שעב ביום ט"ו בסיון תשל"ה (25.5.1975). הובא למנוחת-עולמים בבית-העלמין הצבאי שבהר-הרצל בירושלים. השאיר אחריו הורים, אח ואחות. אחרי מותו הועלה לדרגת סרן.

משפחתו השתתפה בהוצאה לאור של הספר 'ברקים ברמה' לזכרו ולזכר חיילי ומפקדי גדוד 'ברק' שנפלו במלחמת יום-הכיפורים ואחריה.



## TRIBUTE

# Memories of Moshe

**In response to last week's article about New Profile, 'In Jerusalem' is reprinting an article that appeared in this paper 23 years ago in which a father remembers his son who was killed in combat in Lebanon in 1975**

• By ELIEZER WHARTMAN

**T**ime is no healer. Any bereaved parent can attest to that. Time may assuage the grief, but the wound never heals.

Memorial Day, when the nation remembers its war dead, is the worst. Though you sense the sympathy of those around you, you are isolated, wrapped in your own anguish.

You see your son everywhere. And nowhere. You grasp at shadows. Could that soldier with a jaunty gait be Moshe? Could that snatch of laughter be his?

We lost Moshe in 1975. He fell in a clash while leading a patrol inside Lebanon to seek and destroy terrorists before they could enter Israel. He paid with his life so that all of us could live free from terrorism.

The pain of his death is something that only a parent who has lost a child can comprehend. But beyond that pain, Moshe – and many like him – has given us a perspective which in these dark days we desperately need. For sometimes, looking about at the moral disintegration, the rampant materialism, the cynicism and despair, we tend to see only isolated stumps and fail to perceive the forest. Through our son and his comrades, we can still retain the pristine vision.

While we sit comfortably in our homes and talk of the need for bridging the gap between the "two Israels" and creating a bond between the haves and the have-nots, the educated and the near-illiterate, that bond is being sealed in blood by men on patrols, who come from all backgrounds and all communities.

For them, the gnawing away at the national dream is as irrelevant as it is incomprehensible. They do their task without seeking compensation or recognition.

PERHAPS ONE can find some clue to the character of this

generation in a letter Moshe wrote just before he was due to be released from the army after serving three and a half years. Seeing the situation in the North, he had agreed to the army's request to stay for nine more months.

"By nature I don't have to struggle too hard to make decisions," he wrote. "If I think something is worth doing, I don't hesitate. But this time I'm torn by indecision. On one hand, everything in me cries out for Iris [his girlfriend], for a chance to study and do all the things I love. Often in this lonely outpost my thoughts reach out to my beloved bookshelf. My mind's eye wanders to the now mute guitar, the unused tennis racquet and swimming trunks, and a pang goes through me. I feel the fatigue of these last few years, the awful, unending responsibility and the grayness of life. But on the other hand, I understand that without me and my friends being here along this border, I shall never be able to enjoy the pleasures of that room. These are two polarities, and there's no bridge between them. It's as simple as that."

I have been trying to think how I can explain Moshe and his generation to people who live far away.

THAT CHALLENGE was brought home to me while we were sitting shiva. A journalist from Finland called and said he wanted to learn about the human element behind the dry press report of the clash. He told me that in Finland (as in most countries), clashes between Israelis and terrorists are reported as brief snippets. He wanted to give his readers a more in-depth picture of the Israeli soldier.

Curious to know how Israel appeared to the Finns, I asked him what image the papers conveyed. Israel, he said, resembled a little Spartan state in the Middle East, armed to the teeth, determined to swallow up its weaker neighbors – an obstinate, belligerent nation

that posed a threat to world peace and could bring about a confrontation between the two superpowers and possible world destruction.

How could I tell him in words he could understand what is involved in Israel's struggle for its very existence?

Then it came to me. "Israel today," I said, "is Finland in 1939, when the Russian juggernaut moved in to destroy its small neighbor. A handful of brave Finns stopped the Russians with their bodies, determined to preserve Finnish independence."

"Israel today," I went on, "is like England in 1940, when another monstrous apparition was bent on its destruction. The only thing standing between Britain and annihilation were a few courageous pilots who took to the skies daily to combat the Nazi air fleets. With desperate courage, they halted the carnage and defeated the murderous foe. In the case of Finland and Britain, the challenge was to remain free; in Israel's case the issue is to remain alive," I said.

"In a much broader sense, Israel is not only struggling for its life but is protecting the entire free world. If Israel were to go under, the military dicta-

torships of the Middle East would slide into the Soviet orbit. If the Middle East goes, so does Europe, for that continent lacks the inner fortitude to stand up to the Soviet Union. Then we would be faced with the specter of an irresolute America, forced to stand up alone to a gigantic dictatorship. The implications of such a confrontation stagger the mind. Never – in our day as in 1940 – have so many owed so much to so few."

The Finn began to comprehend what is involved in what appears to be simply an "interminable, squalid, regional conflict."

Moshe was one of 137 men – olim or sons of North American olim – who fell in the defense of Israel since 1948. We who fought in the War of Independence little dreamed that our children would be called upon to fight – and fall – in future conflicts. They lie in a score of military cemeteries, with the dead of the Sinai Campaign, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the Litani Campaign, the Lebanon War, the seemingly endless wars of attrition, border skirmishes, and the toll of military accidents.

We, the bereaved, are taught

by our tradition that excessive grief is harmful. We dare not give ourselves over to self-commission, to ceaseless longing for our beloved dead. We must live a double life – one for us and one for them: meaningful lives, each in his own way stretching out his hand to those who need help. We have a sacred duty to speak out about injustice, intolerance and indifference. For the sake of our sons, we must not be silent.

IN OUR hearts there will always remain the image of our young sons stepping out into the danger, sure of their faith in Jewish survival in a world completely disinterested in it.

Hannah Senesz, the paratrooper who sacrificed her life attempting to save Jews trapped in Hitler's Europe, put in words what our sons mean to the Jewish people – to free men everywhere: "There are stars whose light reaches the earth only after they themselves have disintegrated and are no more. And there are men whose scintillating memory lights the world after they have passed from it. These lights, which shine in the darkest night, are those that illumine for us the path."





TIME IS NO healer. Any bereaved parent can testify to that. Time may assuage the grief, but the wound never heals.

Memorial Day, when the nation remembers its war dead, is the worst. Though you sense the sympathy of the people around you, you are isolated from them, wrapped in your own anguish.

You see your son everywhere. And nowhere. You grasp at shadows. Could that soldier walking with a jaunty gait be Moshe? Could that snatch of laughter be his? Could that be Moshe coming up the road, knapsack slung loosely over his shoulder, striding eagerly towards the house?

We lost our son Moshe in 1975. He fell in a clash while leading a patrol inside Lebanon to seek out and destroy terrorists before they could enter Israel. He paid with his life so that all of us can live free from terror and sudden death.

The pain of his death is something that only a parent who has lost a child can comprehend. But beyond that pain, Moshe – and the many like him – have given us a perspective which in these dark days we desperately need; for sometimes, looking about at the moral disintegration, the corruption, the general disillusionment, the ceaseless grasping for material things, the cynicism and even black despair, we tend to see only isolated stumps and fail to perceive the forest. Through our son and his comrades, we can still retain the pristine vision.

WHILE WE SIT comfortably in our homes and talk of the need for bridging the gap between the "two Israels," and creating a bond between the haves and the have-nots, between the educated and the near-illiterate, that bond is being sealed in blood by men on patrols, men who come from all communities, from affluent homes and hovels, the Ashkenazim and the Sephardim, from Rehavia and Savyon, from Katamon and Beit She'an.

Although vast differences may separate them in terms of background, they are forging an unbreakable, seamless comradeship in arms.

They know well what is taking place on the home front, but for

## Memories of Moshe

Eliezer Whartman remembers his son, Moshe (right), who was killed in action just 10 years ago.



them the gnawing away at the national dream is as irrelevant as it is incomprehensible. They do their task without seeking compensation or recognition.

How can one convey the inner conflict that tears our children apart, as it does our nation? How can one describe the tragic dichotomy that forces our children to lead the kind of lives they don't want to; that our sons loathe war and yearn for meaningful lives touched with joy; that this generation, even in wartime, sang hymns of peace, not odes to victory? How does one convey the ungraspable fact that even after 37 years of bloodshed, this generation never learned to hate the enemy, that they hated war, hated killing, even though they were forced to kill.

Perhaps one can find some clue to the character of this generation in a letter Moshe wrote just before he was due to be released from the army,

after serving three-and-a-half years. Seeing the situation in the north, he had yielded to the army's request to stay on for an additional nine months.

"By nature I don't have to struggle too hard to arrive at decisions," he wrote. "If I think something is worth doing, I don't hesitate. But this time I'm torn by indecision. I'm suspended between two poles. On one hand everything in me cries out for Iris [his girlfriend], for a chance to study and do all the things I love. Many times in this lonely outpost my thoughts reach out to my beloved bookshelf, my electronic lab. My mind's eye wanders to the now mute guitar, the sheets of music gathering dust, the unused tennis racquet and swimming trunks, and a pang goes through me. I feel the fatigue of these last three-and-a-half years, the awful, unending responsibility and the greyness of life. But on the other

hand I'm realistic enough to understand that without me and my friends being here along this border, I shall never be able to enjoy the pleasures of that room. These are two polarities, and there is no bridge between them. It is as simple as that."

I have been trying to think how I can interpret Moshe and his generation to people who live far away.

THAT challenge was brought home to me while we were sitting *shiva*. A correspondent from Finland called and asked if it would be possible to learn something of the human element behind the dry press report of the clash. The reporter, a non-Jew, told me that in Finland (as in most countries) clashes between Israelis and terrorists are reported in a brief snippet of news in the inside pages of the newspapers. He wanted to provide his readers with a more in-depth picture of the Israeli soldier, what

motivates him, his interests, his background, who he is and why he is that way.

I was curious to know how Israel appeared to the Finns, and so I asked him what image the newspapers conveyed. He was frank. Israel, he said, resembled a little Spartan state in the Middle East, armed to the teeth, determined to swallow up its weaker neighbours – a tough, obstinate, unyielding, belligerent nation that posed a threat to world peace, and could bring about a confrontation between the two super-powers and possible world destruction.

How could I tell him in words he could understand what is involved in Israel's struggle for its very life?

Then the thought struck me. "Israel today," I told him, "is Finland in 1939, when the hideous Russian juggernaut moved in to destroy its small neighbour. A handful of brave Finns, fully aware of the odds

against them, stopped the Russians with their bodies, determined to preserve Finnish independence.

"Israel today," I went on, "is like England in 1940, when another monstrous apparition was bent on that country's destruction. Then the only thing that stood between Britain and annihilation were a few courageous pilots who daily took to the skies to stop the murderous air fleets of the Nazis. Those men knew that with each successive mission their chances of survival grew less, and yet, with desperate courage, they halted the carnage and held off and defeated the murderous foe."

"In the case of Finland and Britain, it was the challenge to remain free; in Israel's case the issue is to remain alive."

"In a much broader sense Israel is not only struggling for its life, but is protecting the entire free world, for if, God forbid, Israel were to go under, the military dictatorships of the Middle East would slide into the Soviet orbit. If the Middle East goes, so does Europe, for that supine continent lacks the inner fortitude to stand up to the Soviet Union with its immense military machine. Then we would be faced with the hideous spectre of an irresolute America, sapped by indecision and vacillation, forced to stand up alone to a gigantic totalitarian dictatorship. The implications of such a frightful confrontation stagger the mind. Never – in our day as in 1940 – have so many owed so much to so few."

The Finn began to get a glimmer of what is really involved in what appears to be simply an "interminable, squalid, regional conflict."

MOSHE was one of 137 men – olim, or sons of olim from North America – who fell in the defence of Israel since 1948. We who fought in the War of Independence little dreamed that our children would be called upon to fight – and fall – in future conflicts. They lie in a score of military cemeteries, with the dead of the Sinai Campaign, the Six Day War, the Yom Kippur War, the ill-fated Litani Campaign, the futile, heart-breaking war in Lebanon which has taken from our ranks 17 more lives, the seemingly endless

wars of attrition, border skirmishes, and the inevitable toll of accidents, the hazards of national service.

Their names are inscribed on a stone in the AACI Memorial Forest near Sha'ar Hagai. There is a plan to convert that hallowed ground into a site for pilgrimages of individuals and of missions from abroad, Jews and gentiles – a vivid reminder that some Jews gave more than money to ensure that Israel would live.

We, the bereaved, are taught by our tradition that excessive grief is harmful. We dare not give ourselves over to self-commiseration, to ceaseless longing for our beloved dead who will not return. We must live a double life – one for us, and one for them: meaningful lives, each in his own way stretching out his hand to those who need our help. We have a sacred duty to speak out publicly about injustice, greed, intolerance, fatalism, and indifference. For the sake of our sons, we must not be silent when we encounter injustice, because, as Edmund Burke once pointed out, "the only thing needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do absolutely nothing."

To thwart our enemies, our children have given their lives. In their sacrifice for human freedom and justice, their deaths take on immortal significance. They live on through those who continue the struggle, a struggle that will go on until the end of recorded time.

In our hearts there will always remain the image of our young sons stepping out into the darkness and the danger, sure of their faith in Jewish survival in a world completely disinterested in it.

Hannah Szenes, the immortal paratrooper who sacrificed her life in an attempt to save Jews trapped in Hitler's Europe, put in words what our sons mean to the Jewish people – indeed to free men everywhere:

"There are stars whose light reaches the earth only after they themselves have disintegrated and are no more," she wrote. "And there are men whose scintillating memory lights the world after they have passed from it. These lights, which shine in the darkest night, are those which illumine for us the path."



# A letter to the world from Jerusalem

• By ELIEZER WHARTMAN

*The following op-ed was adapted from one first written for the 'Times of Israel,' a fledgling weekly established shortly after the Six Day War. After the war, the Israeli government announced preparations to return all the captured territories except for Jerusalem, in exchange for peace.*

*The response came at the Khartoum Arab Summit Conference that year, at which it was announced that there would be no negotiations and no recognition of Israel.*

*Israel came under tremendous international pressure to re-divide Jerusalem, which caused the author to sit down in a "white heat of anger" and write this piece.*

I am not a creature from another planet, as you seem to believe. I am a Jerusalemite – like yourselves, a man of flesh and blood. I am a citizen of my city, an integral part of my people.

I have a few things to get off my chest. Because I am not a diplomat, I do not have to mince words. I do not have to please you, or even persuade you. I owe you nothing. You did not build this city; you do not live in it; you did not defend it when they came to destroy it. And we will be damned if we will let you take it away.

There was a Jerusalem before there was a New York. When Berlin, Moscow, London and Paris were forest and swamp, there was a thriving Jewish community here. It gave something to the world which you nations have rejected ever since you established yourselves – a humane moral code.

Here the prophets walked, their words flashing like forked lightning. Here a people who wanted nothing more than to be left alone, fought off waves of heathen would-be conquerors, bled and died on the battlements, hurled themselves into the flames of their burning Temple rather than surrender; and when finally overwhelmed by sheer numbers and led away into captivity, swore that before they forgot Jerusalem, they would see their tongues cleave to their palates, their right arms wither.

For two pain-filled millennia, while we were your unwelcome guests, we prayed daily to return to this city. Three times a day we petitioned the Almighty: "Gather us from the four corners of the world, bring us upright to our land; return in mercy to Jerusalem, Thy city, and dwell in it as Thou promised."

On every Yom Kippur and Pessah we fervently voiced the hope that next year would find us in Jerusalem. Your inquisitions, pogroms, expulsions, the ghettos into which you jammed us, your forced baptisms, your quota systems, your genteel anti-Semitism, and the final unspeakable horror, the Holocaust (and worse, your terrifying disinterest in it) – all these have not broken us.

They may have sapped what little moral strength you still possessed, but they forged us into steel. Do you think that you can break us now, after all we have been through? Do you really believe that after Auschwitz we are frightened of your threats and blockades and sanctions? We have been to hell and back – a hell of your making. What more could you possibly have in your arsenal that could scare us?

I HAVE watched this city bombarded twice by nations calling themselves civilized. In 1948, while you looked on apathetically, I saw women and children blown to smithereens, this after we had agreed to your request to internationalize the city. It was a deadly combination that did the job: British officers, Arab gunners and American-made cannons.

And then the savage sacking of the Old City; the willful slaughter, the wanton destruction of every synagogue and religious school; the desecration of Jewish cemeteries; the sale by a ghoulish government of tombstones for building materials, for poultry runs, army camps – even latrines.

And you never said a word. You never breathed the slightest protest when the Jordanians shut off the holiest of our holy places, the Western Wall, in violation of the pledges they had made after the war – a war they waged, incidentally, against a decision of the UN. Not a murmur came from you whenever the legionaries in their spiked helmets casually opened fire upon our citizens from behind the walls.

Your hearts bled when Berlin came under siege. You rushed your airlift "to save the gallant Berliners." But you did not send one ounce of food when Jews starved in besieged Jerusalem. You thundered against the wall which the East Germans ran through the middle of the German capital – but not one peep out of you about the other wall, the one that tore through the heart of Jerusalem.

And when the same thing happened 19 years later, and the Arabs unleashed a savage unprovoked bombardment of the Holy City again, did any of you do anything? The only time you came to life was when the city was at last reunited. Then you wrung your hands and spoke loftily of "justice" and the need for the "Christian" quality of turning the other cheek.

The truth is – and you know it deep inside your gut – some would prefer the city to be destroyed rather than have it governed by Jews. No matter how diplomatically you phrase it, the old-age prejudices seep out of every word.

If our return to the city has tied your theology in knots, perhaps you had better re-examine your catechisms.

For the first time since the year 70 there is now complete religious freedom for all in Jerusalem. For the first time since the Romans put the torch to the Temple everyone has equal rights. (You preferred to have some more equal than others). We loathe the sword – but it was you who forced us to take it up. We crave peace – but we are not going back to the peace of 1948 as you would like us to.

We are home. It has a lovely sound for a nation you have willed to wander over the face of the globe. We are not leaving. We have redeemed the pledge made by our forefathers; Jerusalem is being rebuilt. "Next year" – and the year after, and after, and after until the end of time – in Jerusalem!

*In memory of my son Moshe who fell in a clash with terrorists in 1975 in Lebanon.*

*The only capital in the world without a single embassy*



AFTER NETAN YAHU MADE HIS SCURVILLOUS DEAL WITH SHAS, FREEZING THE RELIGIOUS STATUS QUO, 15/7/94

THIS IS STILL TIME

OPINION

## A Plea for Tolerance and Sanity

Eliezer Whartman

Jerusalem, the city expected to exemplify the ultimate Zionist ideal of becoming a light unto the nations, is endangered today by a number of factions whose views are diametrically opposed to this ideal. First there is the very real danger that the city will be redivided, and that it will cease to be a fully sovereign capital. Its enemies, both within and without, are bent on turning it into a two-headed monstrosity (with both heads constantly warring) unlike any other capital in the world.

If the Arabs of Jerusalem wish to participate in the governing of the city, they have the right - which they have never exercised, to vote on election day. Frankly, I think that they are fools not to have done so.

But an equally grave danger to the *Yerushalayim shel ma'ala* (celestial Jerusalem) comes from the other extreme - the Orthodox camp. I deliberately lump all factions together: the medieval Orthodox, the territorial Orthodox, and the so-called "modern" Orthodox, for they are destroying the Zionist dream from within.

They all have one common denominator: intolerance. None of them, be it the Mea She'arim Aguda bloc, the Mafdal Great Synagogue Jewish-run bloc, the Gush Emunim bloc, and the Meimad-Riskin bloc, will accept me, a Conservative-Reconstructionist Jew as an equal, authentic, legitimate, religious Jew. This cuts to the very heart of the matter: For if I am not equal, and they are the sole arbiters of what is Jewish, (and worse, empowered by the State to be so), then what am I doing here?

I came here because I was Jewish. Perhaps I was naive. However, I shall continue to fight against those who maintain that there is only one authentic version of Judaism. The entire religious establishment, from the chief rabbis down, follow the motto: "You serve God in your way, and we in His."

All non-Orthodox Jews are beyond the pale. Worse, those who should support me do not. The Association of American and Canadians (AACI), refuse to fight for religious pluralism, maintaining "that would split the organization." The Conservative movement in Israel - with all due respect for its considerable achievements with the TALM school system, and Camp Ramat - is simply neo-Orthodox.

My fellow Conservatives have failed to grasp the fact that unless a religious movement is egalitarian, pluralistic and relevant, it will not survive. It will certainly not attract the Sabra who rightfully reasons that if all he is offered is neo-Orthodoxy, he might as well opt for "the real thing."

Which brings me to the third danger to Jerusalem, and the State: secularism. This is a distortion of Judaism. One cannot arbitrarily separate the religious and nationalistic components of Judaism. To view Jerusalem and Israel through a secular-nationalistic lens is to get a two-dimensional view of the capital and the Jewish State. It is a total misreading of Jewish history and the Zionist ideal - and it will lead to our becoming just an-

other piece of territory in the Middle East. To a considerable degree, secularism in Israel came about because of a revulsion for the Orthodox interpretation of Judaism, which, in the old countries and in Israel, stressed ritual and not the binding moral code of Judaism. Orthodox leaders here, because of their intolerance and their failing to exemplify what Judaism should stand for, have produced generations of newcomers and Sabras estranged from religion, who are unaware that there are other versions of it. They threw the baby out with the bath-water.

The problem facing the western olem in Israel is what may be called the 'Either-Or Syndrome.' Everything is either black or white. One is either Orthodox or secular. One is either for Peace Now or War Forever ... it makes life simple.

This way of looking at things stems, in a great measure from the countries of origin of most Israelis: Eastern Europe and the Moslem

The problem facing the western olem in Israel is what may be called the 'Either-Or Syndrome.' Everything is either black or white. One is either Orthodox or secular. One is either for Peace Now or War Forever ... it makes life simple.

states - two areas of the world not particularly renowned for democratic proclivities. Unfortunately, the apple doesn't fall far from the tree. The Sabra has grown up with the 'Either-Or Syndrome.'

I am neither pro-Labor nor pro-Likud. Both of these parties (never really wedded to Judaism) have cynically sold out our Jewish heritage, selling the birthright to the predatory Orthodox parties for political gain. These in turn have raided the national treasury "for the preservation of authentic Judaism," and have committed all kinds of mind-boggling acts for the greater glory of God.

The immediate danger facing Jerusalem is that the city is passing into the hands of the ultra Orthodox. One out of every two children in grade one in the city's schools is ultra-Orthodox. The haredim now are the swing vote in the municipal council. Within a generation they will be the dominant force in the council, and we shall be faced with a municipal theocracy.

Neither they nor their children serve in the armed forces. They demand and receive benefits far out of proportion to the taxes they pay. (Why pay taxes to a despised Zionist state?) Their birth rate is several times that of the other sectors of the population. (Their sons don't fall in battle).

The net result is a flight of the non-Orthodox population, (particularly the younger ones) from the city, which of course only increases the strength of the Orthodox.

We Jews have a penchant for suicide. When the Romans were beating at the gates of Jerusalem, the various factions within the city were at each others' throats, a model case of the free floating hostility that marks our city today. What can be done?

There should be no state support for religious institutions or functionaries. These should be funded privately, as they are in the US.

Religious issues should be brought before an impartial commission made up of rabbis of the three denominations: Orthodox, Conservative and Reform. The Knesset and municipal councils are not proper places for debating religious matters.

There should be no compulsory religious court jurisdiction over family matters. If both sides wish to bring their case before a religious court, that is their right but they should not be compelled to do so.

No institution should receive public funds if its members do not serve in the IDF and do not pay allegiance to the flag.

Reform and Conservative rabbis must be given the same rights as Orthodox rabbis, and their synagogues be provided with the same state funding and recognition.

The offices of the chief rabbis, established under Turkish and British rule, should be abolished. They are superfluous, and often harmful. The same holds true for municipal religious councils.

All men and women of military age should be compelled to serve in the armed forces. Those who cannot serve for religious reasons, should spend an equivalent amount of time in public service.

The teaching of Jewish consciousness and Zionism should be reinstated into the school system.

Schools which do not meet the minimum state curricular requirements should be shut down.

Equal time should be allowed to all denominations of Judaism on publicly-owned media.

The need for electoral reform for both the city and the state cries out to high heaven. The present system, based on proportional representation, has been a total, unmitigated disaster, and must be replaced by a system based on constituency representation. No one represents you or me in the municipal council or the Knesset. No legislator feels he owes any accountability for his actions to any citizen, only to the party chiefs who put his name on the ballot. I would suggest to readers that they go see our municipal council in action. It is a lesson on how representative democracy does not work.

Jerusalem's Arab population comprises almost 30 percent and is growing by leaps and bounds. In another few generations, they may be the majority. If Jerusalem is to remain the Jewish capital of Israel, Orient House and its allied organizations and institutions working to create an Arab capital in Jerusalem should be shut down. And it goes without saying that the unspeakable Arafat should not be permitted to set foot in the city.

It is written that God allocated 10 portions of beauty to the world, and nine of them went to Jerusalem. We, the first Jews in two millennia to live in the capital of a free, sovereign Jewish state, have a precious heritage to preserve. May we be equal to the task.

Eliezer Whartman is editor of the Israel Press Service, an independent feature syndicate

HOW CAN WE HAVE THE CITIZENSHIP TO TURN TO AMERICAN JEWRY, ASKING THEM TO SUPPORT HIS GOVERNMENT? (OF COURSE AIPAC WILL SWALLOW ANYTHING!)

POB 18331

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JERUSALEM, IS.



REPORTS FROM New Orleans, where leaders of the Council of Jewish Federations met in emergency session, speak of an atmosphere of panic. "All of us have received dozens of calls from terrified, insecure Jews whose support for Israel is now wavering because of the move to change the Law of Return," former council president Shoshana Cardin told the highly agitated assembly.

"The seriousness of this issue is not fully understood in Israel. This doesn't only affect a few converts who make aliya," she stressed. "It concerns the perceived disenfranchisement of millions of American Jews who fear that they will be written out of the mainstream of the Jewish people."

Well, council members, for 40 years you have sown the wind; now you are reaping the whirlwind.

For four long decades, while your Conservative and Reform colleagues in Israel suffered the stigma of being second-class Jews, you were silent. You came to life only when your own status was threatened. Though we have been victims of an ongoing, bigoted campaign which far transcends the current issue, there has been only a deafening silence from you. Now you are panicking because the "Who Is a Jew" amendment to the Law of Return would negate the authenticity of Conservative and Reform rabbis abroad and, more specifically, their conversions to Judaism.

Now you're frightened to death that those conversions will be declared null and void and that possibly your son or daughter, or father or mother, your in-laws – or even yourself – will be regarded as a goy.

You brought it on yourselves.

Your major Jewish organizations, the federations, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee, the B'nai B'rith, the Anti-Defamation League, the Conservative and Reform leadership, never took any meaningful action for 40 long years while we called in vain for your help.

Our rabbis are not recognized by the state; they cannot serve on rabbinical courts or municipal religious councils, they cannot officiate at weddings, divorces or funerals. Our synagogues do not receive state assistance for construction or maintenance, as Orthodox synagogues do; the public is warned away from our institutions by paid ads inserted in the newspapers by state-salaried rabbis.

23 NOV 1988

We are maligned by posters and leaflets printed by rabbinical authorities, and pilloried by rabbinical leaders in the media. Our rabbis are not represented in international religious conferences sponsored by Israel; all our efforts even to initiate a discourse with the chief rabbis are rebuffed. Children of marriages performed by non-Orthodox rabbis are labelled bastards; religious leaders here refuse to accept the testimony of non-Orthodox rabbis abroad attesting to the Jewishness of ex-congregants wishing to marry or divorce in Israel.

And you never said a word. I know, for I wrote to you repeatedly, and never even got a reply.

# Reaping the whirlwind

IN YOUR ZEAL to preserve the image of Jewish unity, you stifled any outcry of protest about social injustice in Israel. The federation-owned newspapers almost never criticized what transpired in the Jewish state. You reasoned that any protest would hurt fundraising, and that is what Zionism is all about.

You knowingly distorted the Zionist ideal. Israel was to be the refuge of the wretched refuse from the teeming shores of Morocco and Yemen, from the *mellahs* of Tangiers and Fez, from the ghettos of Biay-

the ties linking Israel and world Jewry are weakening and may disappear in a few generations.

Now it is only when you fall victim that you come alive. You are now genuinely alarmed.

I WAS DRIVEN out of an Orthodox congregation in Jerusalem because I was a Conservative Jew. The synagogue membership was made up in large measure of retired American Orthodox rabbis and laymen. Only one member lifted his voice in protest.

## Eliezer Whartman

stok and Mintz. You helped them get to Israel, but it was not a proper place for you and your children.

You accepted the Israeli maxim that funds should flow to Israel, and policy from it. You were silent about the lack of religious pluralism, about the manner in which the funds you dispatched were squandered, and about the unspeakable denial of funds to the disadvantaged, the handicapped, the universities, the hospitals and homes for the aged by irresponsible governments who gave generously to party institutions, granted draft exemptions to anti-Zionist yeshiva students and sacrificed every ideal of Judaism on the altar of expediency. As far as you were concerned – or conditioned to believe – Israel had only two problems: the Arabs, and a chronic lack of funds.

By your silence, you tacitly encouraged the Orthodox to run riot here. I refer not only to Shas, Degel Hatorah, Aguda and the National Religious Party, but to the entire religious establishment, from the chief rabbis on down – including the so-called modern Orthodox, who have never accepted our authenticity as religious Jews with equal rights.

In the absence of any protest on your part, the cynical secularists in both the Likud and Labour parties – who couldn't care less about religion and tradition – sold us down the river. They yielded to every demand made by the religious establishment. Both parties, and quite a few smaller ones, were prepared to sell their birthright, if not for a mess of pottage, then for a few ministries. And when we cried out in pain, there was no reaction from you.

By thinking that your financial contributions alone could solve anything and everything, you helped create the Israel which so alarms you today. Worse, by helping to create such an Israel, you have helped estrange your own children from it, for they do not wish to be associated with a country that outrages Jews abroad.

Just as bad, you have helped to estrange our children from the faith of their fathers, for they equate religion with Orthodoxy, and are repelled by it. Lacking a religious bond with Jewish children abroad,

I asked to meet with American Orthodox leaders here. They were uninterested. (Meimad, their political party, refused even to consider the status of Reform and Conservative Jews.) I wrote to 100 Conservative and Reform rabbis in the U.S. and Canada. I got two replies.

The two chief rabbis to whom I turned told me flatly that there could be no religious pluralism in Israel because, in their own words, neither the Conservatives or Reform accept Halacha. Shlomo Goren, the former chief rabbi, told me that he would recognize Conservative and Reform rabbis only if they constituted a separate sect like the Karaites and Samaritans.

When I protested that he was writing out of the fold two-thirds of world Jewry, most of whom live in the Diaspora, he told me, as did the two incumbent chief rabbis, that there was only one authentic version of Judaism and that, of course, was Orthodoxy.

If Conservative and Reform rabbis in any other country were prevented from carrying out their duties, there would be an enormous outcry from the major Jewish organizations. Only in Israel is this religious intolerance countenanced. It is the religious establishment, aided by the silence of world Jewry, which created the environment in which religious extremism could flourish.

This kind of intolerance should have been squelched at the formation of the state. Now that the overseas limb of Judaism is threatened, Diaspora Jewry is becoming alarmed.

American Jewish leaders should understand that you cannot contain bigotry. Once it takes root, it expands. The religious establishment, working hand in hand with the large and small political parties, declared you a religious leper 40 years ago. Your money was kosher; you were not.

Now you and we have reached the inevitable, mind-boggling, destination. Ultra-Orthodox parties, whose members do not serve in the army, who live largely off *haluka* – charity, including your contributions – wield the balance of power. Bigotry, intolerance, mysticism, revivalism, charms, rabbinic blessings and im-

the concept of a "chosen people" being a "light to the nations." A hideous meaning never intended by our sages is being given to the quotation "*Ki mi-Tzion tetze Tora...*" The Tora is leaving Zion, and the word of God is forsaking Jerusalem.

I HAD A SON who was killed while leading a patrol against a band of terrorists. He died protecting Israel, so that the country could live free from fear. Did he die so that the right of his family to live in dignity could be bartered and traded by those who never have and never will serve in the army?

Your mission is to come here and meet with Israeli leaders to implore them not to amend the Law of Return by adding the need for halachic conversion. But that amendment is simply the tip of the iceberg. By limiting your protests to that law alone, you are guaranteeing that we non-Orthodox Jews living here will continue to remain second-class Jews.

You must demand:

□ religious issues should be brought before an impartial commission made up of rabbis of the three denominations of Judaism. The Knesset is not a proper place for debates on religious questions.

□ There should be no state support for religious institutions or functionaries. These should be supported privately, as in the U.S.

□ There should be no compulsory religious court jurisdiction over family matters. If both sides to a dispute wish to bring their case before a religious court, that is their right, but they should not be compelled to do so.

□ No institution should receive public funds if its members do not serve in the armed forces, or do not pay allegiance to the flag of Israel.

IF YOUR demands are not accepted, tell your constituents at home to earmark their gifts to Israel. Tell your people not to give less, but to give wisely: to schools of higher learning; to the aged and handicapped, to hospitals; to their religious counterpart institutions in Israel. Above all, don't give a blank cheque to the Jewish Agency, whose allocations permit the government to free vast sums for political parties and their institutions, for anti-Zionist schools, and the like. Tell your people to do as the Orthodox do: pinpoint their contributions.

The election was not simply a passing aberration. The fundamentalists are growing by leaps and bounds. Their percentage of the population will be far greater in another four years. That fact, coupled with our electoral system, will ensure their getting even more power in 1992. And they will use it, as they assuredly will in the municipal elections this February.

Your stature at home will largely be determined by the moral character of the Jewish state. The two go hand in hand. You must help us. Anything less would be a travesty of justice.

The writer is editor of the Israel Press Service, an independent feature syndicate. POB 18331

ELWHARTMAN@GMAIL



## THE SIN OF SURVIVAL

Limitations of space in a paid ad prevented me from clarifying my proposal to free Gilad Schalit: "RETURN GILAD SCHALIT OR ELSE", J.P. 26/12. I will do so here:

**This statement was written before the air attack on Gaza on Dec. 27.**

1. The attitude of the world in condemning Israel for planning to do what they, the world, did in their mass bombing of German cities in World War II is simply outrageous hypocrisy. It's a double standard - the pot calling the kettle black.
2. Even worse is the harping criticism of Israel by the Larry Derfnerns: "Accept Hamas's Offer", J.P. 25/12, blaming Israel for the unforgivable sin of ensuring Israeli survival. Their statements evoke the bitter comment that it's easier to take Jews out of Galus than the Galus out of Jews. Equally incomprehensible is the Post editorial of 28/12: "The IDF mission is not to bring down the Hamas regime but to bring quiet to the South."
3. The aim of the allies in their bombing of German cities during World War II was to destroy, maim and kill. Most of the thousands of victims were women and children.
4. Israel, in contrast, could warn Hamas that if Gilad Schalit were not released, and the ~~Kasaming~~ stopped, Israel would give notice to the inhabitants of neighborhood A in Gaza that the Israeli Air Force was going to level their neighborhood. Israel would give the occupants three days to leave the area. There would be no loss of life.\* Needless to say, Gaza would be totally embargoed.
5. If Hamas persisted in keeping Schalit and continued the bombing, neighborhood B would be targeted. Ultimately Hamas would be forced to release Schalit and stop attacking us. All this without Israel having to release a single imprisoned terrorist. There would be no more Kassam-launching neighborhoods, and Hamas would be gone forever. **Our aim should not be to chasten Hamas, but to destroy it! Eight years!** It would send a clear message to Hamas's masters in Tehran and their junior partners in Damascus. If anyone has a better plan, let him state it.
6. Of course there would be a terrible outcry from our own breast-beaters and from the world. Resolution after resolution would be passed at the U.N. But we would be safe, and that's all that matters.

\* THE U.S. DROPPED TWO  
ATOM BOMBS ON JAPAN

Eliezer Whartman  
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# The Jerusalem I Remember



Eliezer Whartman

**M**y first glimpse of Jerusalem was in October 1947. I was a young student from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York coming to what I thought would be a one-year period of study at the Hebrew University. Since then I have never looked back. After Jerusalem, you can't go home again.

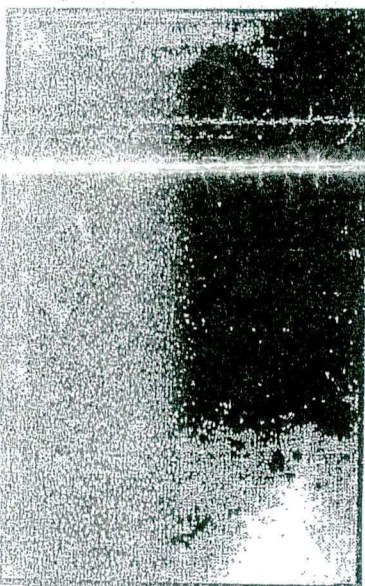
The Jerusalem I remember began at the university on Mount Scopus where a scant half dozen buildings accommodated some 800 students. It was clear that a war was brewing and the university surrounded by Arab villages would be a prime target. The school year ended abruptly when rioting broke out. Tension grew as the UN decision on partition neared.

On the night of the UN vote, I was awakened at Kiryat Anavim and was excitedly informed that we were going to have a Jewish state. We danced until dawn. I then caught a bus back to Jerusalem. After passing through crowds of Arabs stoning and cursing the vehicles (some cars never made it back to Jerusalem), I found people had gone mad with joy, celebrating in the streets. The next day an Arab mob, screaming "Death to the Jews!", looted and burned the old commercial quarter near Mamilla (now Agran) Street. Furious, I asked a British policeman why he didn't do anything to stop the destruction. His answer was: "We haven't got any orders." Hagana men, their arms linked, prevented Jews from attacking the Arabs. It was my first taste of haggana, Jewish self-restraint.

I remember standing on a rooftop, watching as a convoy of doctors, nurses and university personnel on their way to Mount Scopus was firebombed. Seventy-eight people were shot or burned to death as British tanks unconcernedly rolled by. I remember the bomb outrages when scores of sleeping men, women and children were blown to bits by a truck bomb set off by British soldiers. I remember the bomb which blew up The Palestine Post building and claimed even more

The paper, in stenciled

**'I have never looked back. After Jerusalem, you can't go home again.'**



The writer in 1948 - taken at the Schneller base before leaving on a night patrol.

form, appeared the next day with David Courtney's famous column telling the British that truth was stronger than bombs. That day I joined the Hagana.

The world may be outraged today when viewing scenes of besieged, battered Sarajevo, but there was relatively little interest manifested when Jerusalem came under bombardment and siege. The grisly job was done by British officers, Arab gunners and American-made cannons. For two and a half months as the city thirsted and hungered, artillery mounted on Nebi Samwil pounded Jerusalem and caused thousands of casualties. (Over 10,000 shells fell on the city from May 15 to June 5). The guns fired 23 hours a day; at 4 pm promptly, the bombardment would stop while the British officers had their tea, and would then resume precisely at 5 pm.

I remember Drora, a welfare

officer and my bride-to-be, desperately hugging her bundle of medications and letters as she ran, under a constant rain of shells, from house to house where the battalion wounded were billeted because there was no more room in the hospitals. I would return, dead tired from fighting on some front, not knowing if she were dead or alive.

I remember "the parade" we put on when we marched through town, a ragtag "army" to raise the spirits of the people. I remember how our platoon would leave Schneller, our base, at night to go somewhere on the perimeter. Every night we chose a different spot to fool the Arabs into thinking we had a big force in the city - often passing through the darkened streets of Mea She'arim, eyeing shadows of praying Yeshiva students. I recall the hated notches threatening to raise a white flag and Dov Yosef, the military governor, warning they'd be shot if they did.

I remember our military seder in the Beit Hakelem Teachers College, with men who would never participate in another seder, or see next year in Jerusalem. I shall never forget the first convoy that broke through from the coast bringing sacks of flour, beans, lentils, and a score of dead and wounded men, cut down as they fought their way through the Bab El Wad (Sha'er Hagai) pass. We wept openly in the streets, for the food, and for the men. And then the good news: the opening of the Burma Road and the cease fire.

Then came the quiet years, when Jerusalem sat brooding, perched at the top of a hill at the end of a road leading nowhere. There was a mass feeling of claustrophobia - we were unable to move more than a few kilometers in any direction except west. It was the story of a city slowly vegetating. There were casual snipings by Arab legionnaires from behind the crenellated Old City walls. Then came the short-lived, ill-fated Sinai campaign, and more graves on Har Herzl.

A brief ray of light broke through. It was the capture and trial of Adolph Eichmann, the clerk-turned-extremist. I was covering it for American radio networks, listening to harrowing testimony from the man in a cage that at times made me run out into the Beit Ha'ani courtyard to see if the sun was still shining, wondering how a world could have been so callous to have witnessed the slaughter without raising a finger to stop it. I recalled 1948, when the only thing that prevented an Arab butchery in Jerusalem was a handful of determined men, many of whom lay in the cemetery on the hill.

Again the growing tension. Israel was isolated for the third time. A dictator closed the ~~TRANSJORDAN~~ ordered UN personnel out of ~~the~~ and openly prepared for war, while the world again passively looked on. I remember filling sand bags and piling them around our family shelter in Nivot. A few meters away Egged had parked scores of buses and thousands of jerrycans of gasoline. One hit and the whole neighborhood would have gone up. At the other end of our neighborhood a heavy mortar position had been set up, awaiting

the inevitable day.

On Monday, June 5, 1967, driving my wife to work at the university, I heard over the radio the incredible news that Israeli radar had detected an imminent attack by a large fleet of Egyptian planes, and that great aerial and land battles were taking place. Rushing to the Government Press Office to prepare a broadcast in New York, I listened to the whistle and crash of incoming shells and the splatter of machine guns firing over the old building in the Russian Compound. At night, I furiously typed by candlelight, unaware of what was taking place at home. Finally, after the last broadcast, I was driving a blacked-out car through a blacked-out city shuddering under the constant barrage, when I saw a pencil-like ray of light prying the darkness. I drove to its source at the Histadrut building on Straus Street, climbed the tower and found a group of officers using a searchlight to direct our planes above to their targets. The officers told me to come back the next day "if you want to see the end of the war in Jerusalem." I came back the next day at 7 am, and told them I had a scheduled broadcast at 10:30 am that I couldn't break, and kindly asked if they could please end the war before then. Smiling, they answered they would do their best. It would take about three hours and I should be patient. And so for three hours I watched a battle go exactly according to plan. Rabbi Goren, shofar in hand, joined us in the tower, anxiously waiting for Mordechai Gur, then commander of the paratroopers who were fighting their way to the walls, to let him know when to join them.

At 9:50 am Gur informed us that he was going to break in at the Lion's Gate. We watched a plume of smoke rise over it. A few minutes later he summoned Goren, who ran faster than any man I had ever seen. Promptly, at 10 am Gur informed us: "Har Habayit b'yadeinu" - the Temple Mount is in our hands. Weeping, we embraced one another. Then, to our astonishment, we heard over the intercom that the first troops had just reached the Suez Canal. Stunned, I realized that I had two great scoops of the war. Back at the Press Office, I hurriedly cleared censorship and typed a few words of copy, scurried to the broadcasting booth in the main post office and informed the world that the Jewish people, after two millennia of heartbreak, had just returned to the site of their ancient Temple. As I walked back from the booth, elated, I recalled the bitter struggle for the city in 1948. The faces of the comrades, dead and alive, swam out of the mist. I marvelled that I had the privilege of being herald to the world of the news that the prayers of a hundred generations had just been answered.

A few days later, as member of a press tour, I accompanied Levi Eshkol on a walk through the Old City and the Mount of Olives Cemetery. We were witness to monstrous deeds - the destruction of all but one of the 52 Jewish houses of worship that had graced the Old City, some of them having stood for centuries, and the unspeakably callous profanation of the Jewish cemetery on the Mount

of Olives.

Eshkol offered to return everything except Jerusalem in exchange for lasting peace. He was met with a response of "no negotiations, no recognition, no peace!"

And then came the great leap forward in the city's development under a gruff, vigorous, demanding, stubborn, "burgomeister." New parks, new schools, thoroughfares, an explosion of buildings were all constructed under Teddy's domain.

But then came tension again. The Yom Kippur War struck us as we were a nation at prayer. The city filled with the furious sounds of army trucks racing about on the holiest of days. Sirens wailed. There was the sudden disappearance of all our young men from the afternoon service.

I waited in anguish for word from our son, Moshe, who would soon be fighting his way up through swamps and underbrush to the outskirts of Isma'iliya. He was to come home for a brief 24 hours, and then be sent to the Syrian front. I remember Moshe, a captain in Golani, quietly weeping over the fresh grave of his closest friend, muttering that "sooner or later we will all wind up here."

It came sooner than he thought. Two years later he, himself, fell while leading a patrol against a band of terrorists in Lebanon. Our crying into the night "Why?" echoed David's keening for his dead son: "Would that I had died in your place!" I could see the bloom slowly fading from my wife's face, woodenly going through the motions of living, and then another funeral. Drora was gone.

The came the Peace for Galilee War. Again, more graves on Har Herzl. Dear God, there must be an end to all this. How much more do you want from us? And then, slowly, I realized that He does not create evil, man does, and that God gives man the intelligence, courage and stamina to eradicate evil, disease, war, poverty, and illiteracy that are the scourge of mankind.

And now we are saddled with the intifada. The sons and grandsons of those who burned and looted the commercial center are mouthing the same curses and threats uttered by their fathers and grandfathers.

What then is the summing-up? Which Jerusalem do I remember? I remember the Jerusalem of blood, hunger, rage and tears. The Jerusalem of shattered homes, broken bodies, mass funerals. The Jerusalem of widows, orphans and bereaved parents. And I remember the Jerusalem of gold, of heroism, sacrifice and tranquility, of children playing in the streets where young men fought and died, of old men sunning themselves in parks, of lovers strolling through new neighborhoods. I remember the Jerusalem of solidarity and brooding. Today, Jerusalem is in the very heart of the country, a teeming capital, with great thoroughfares, sprawling suburbs, promenades, parks, museums, concert halls, gleaming public buildings, a superb university, a crossroads through which someday roads and trains will radiate out to the cities of three continents - a marvelous heritage to leave to our children.

"He will build Jerusalem, bring home his scattered people, and will heal the broken-hearted."

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# A parent's appeal to the state religious and secular schools: Which values are you teaching?

READERS MAY recall Saul Bellow's novel *Herzog* about a man, buffeted by a world he could not understand, who sought release by writing letters (he never sent) to all and sundry: to statesmen, generals, politicians, professors, civil servants, philosophers, writers, the whole gamut.

Finally, in frustration and despair, realizing that the world was mad and who was he to set it right, Moses Herzog laid down his pen. He had no more letters to write.

I should like to take up the pen and write a few letters myself, and like Herzog's, they won't be sent. The first letter goes to the principal of our Jerusalem neighbourhood state religious elementary school.

Dear.....

I'm sorry to intrude with this letter into your crowded schedule, for I know how busy you are.

The religious trend in Jerusalem's educational system is constantly growing. As you know, 60 per cent of the city's elementary school children are now enrolled in religious schools. In the kindergartens, the percentage is even higher. These trends for the city is clear. According to demographic forecasts, by the year 2000 - only 10 years away - 40 per cent of the city's population will be Orthodox (mainly ultra-Orthodox); 20 per cent will be Arab; 20 per cent will be secular Jews.

I assume that you welcome the trend. I should like to tell you briefly something about your school which you may not know, for it took place 13 years ago. It was originally a secular school. Shortly after it was built, Orthodox parents laid siege to it - literally: they set up tents outside it, and a year later squatted in it, claiming that the city owed them a school. The Jerusalem municipality decided on a Solomonian judgment: it assigned the upper floor to the secular trend, and the lower went to the religious trend.

A group of non-Orthodox parents whose children attended the secular trend sought out the principal of the religious trend with a proposition. In order to encourage better understanding between storey one and storey two, we said, let us arrange a number of joint programmes. We suggested, as a starter, that the children hold a joint Hanukka party.

The principal thought it a good idea, but added that permission could be needed from the people in authority above him - the National Religious Party. The answer came the next day: the principal had been instructed that there was to be no mingling of the children, no

J. Herzog

Eliezer Whartman

12/4/90

joint Hanukka party or anything else.

Four months later, when a Pessah Seder display in the secular section was destroyed by Orthodox parents, we realized that a house divided could not stand, and so the municipality built a separate school, a few metres away from the existing one, which went to the Orthodox trend. The children of the two schools were separated by an iron fence - through which they spat and taunted each other.

I realize that you are not responsible for the division between the two schools (which still exists), but my question to you is: are the schools growing together or moving further apart?

Like us in our day, so today a considerable number of parents who send their children to secular schools are non-Orthodox Jews: Conservatives, Reform, Reconstructionists. Do your schoolchildren and staff of course recognize us and our children as authentic religious Jews? Do they recognize that our understanding and practice of Judaism, while different from yours, is as religiously valid as yours - in short, that we have the right to be different, that Judaism is pluralistic, and that no single version of our common faith is more kosher than any other? Is your school getting this across to the children? In all fairness, I must add that if the graduates of your school, who are now adults, are any indication, the school is either not teaching that message, or the children and their parents have rejected it.

Sincerely,

ELIEZER WHARTMAN

P.S. I have a number of questions to pose to your secular counterpart across the fence.

## ISRAELIS OR JEWS?

To....., Principal, State Elementary Secular School, Jerusalem.

I have just written a letter to the principal of the state religious elementary school across the fence from you. I wrote of my concern that the school was not teaching tolerance, and that the children, like their parents, didn't believe in religious pluralism.

I have a question, and pardon its bluntness: are you and your staff turning out Jews or Israelis?

I'm not writing flippantly, for at one time I taught in a secular high school, and later in a secular university, and have some insight into the

school system. Moreover, three children of mine have gone through the secular trend.

I enrolled them with a heavy heart. I had no choice. As a non-Orthodox, but nevertheless religious Jew, I knew what the end result of that education would be. They would emerge - as secular parents and children are proud to state - Israelis first, Jews second. My priorities are just the reverse. For me Jewish history did not come to a halt in the year 70 CE; to be resumed only in 1948. I still lug around the spiritual baggage which your pupils decisively label as *galut*.

I pinned a lot of hopes on the Jewish Consciousness programme to heighten Jewish awareness which the Education Ministry launched years ago. I was appalled when it was abandoned because of the lack of teachers qualified or willing to teach the course.

My daughter, aside from one other, was the only one in her class to observe her bat mitzva in a synagogue. For the parents of the other girls, it was an occasion to throw a party. For them and their children the siddur is a closed book. (I don't ask them to believe in its contents, simply to be familiar with them.)

We Jews are part of a worldwide religious community. For better or worse, the tie between the pupils in your school and Jewish children in San Francisco, Lyons or Johannesburg is a common religious faith. If our children are to be estranged from that faith, what will link a child abroad with a child in Jerusalem in another two or three generations, when the impact of the Holocaust will have abated and Israel is simply just another country in the Middle East?

I realize that religion cannot be

imposed upon children. And frankly, judging from the quality of religion and religious leaders in this country, had I grown up here, I too would probably have been an agnostic.

But whether we like it or not, we are identified by the world as Jews. Why not teach our children pride in their heritage? Why not implant within them the consciousness that this is our land, with no ifs and buts, and that they don't have to feel apologetic about affirming their right to it? Why is it that Arab children fiercely assert their right to ownership, while so many of our children are on the defensive?

Proportionately, there are more secular than religious Jews emigrating, an indication of the quality of their attachment to this land. When the secularists leave, are they taking with them Jewish values that will enable them to survive as Jews, to withstand assimilation, although they are separated from the language, culture and soil of Israel? I think you know the answer to that question.

I'm troubled by the fact that all of our holidays, which, as you know, have both a national and a religious significance, are losing the latter. Are Pessah, Shavuot and Succot, which are both Jewish and harvest festivals, to be observed simply by folk dances and odes to nature? Is Yom Kippur to become simply Bicycle Day?

We live in a violent, intolerant, apathetic and fatalistic society. Who is to blame? The parents blame the schools; the schools blame the parents; both blame the "environment." Are you teaching values or simply subject matter?

I realize that you're very busy, as is your Orthodox counterpart. Maybe the two of you could get your separate acts together.

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# 'They assumed that I was a seasoned veteran'

Eliezer Whartman's combat boots earned him admiration, but his English wasn't appreciated

By Daphna Berman

Eliezer Whartman was the only soldier in his Jerusalem Haganah battalion with real combat boots – a holdover from his days as an American soldier in World War II. The boots, as well as his past military experience, quickly garnered respect among the Sabras he fought alongside during Israel's War of Independence, but in many ways were misleading. "They assumed that because I served in the American army, I was a seasoned veteran," Whartman, who served in the U.S. army's information and education department, recalled this week with a smile. "But in the American army, I was the man behind the man behind the man with the gun, whereas here, I was wielding one. This was my first armed conflict."

Whartman, who was born in Philadelphia and is now 87, was studying to become a Conservative rabbi at the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York when he decided to enroll at the Hebrew University for a year. He arrived in October 1947, just one month before the partition plan was announced.



Above, Whartman in 1948; right, this week in Jerusalem.  
Photo and reproduction by Uriah Tadmor / Jini

When the rumblings of war began many foreign students returned home, but Whartman said the thought never crossed his mind. After the bombing of the Palestine Post building in February 1948, he volunteered for the Haganah and soon became a machine gunner in the Etzioni brigade. He learned to use a rifle and a machine gun during evening training sessions. "Our task was to hold the city at all costs and when I say all costs I really mean it," he said. "So many of my friends

were wounded and killed, but we held the city."

The transition from rabbinic student to soldier in besieged and beleaguered Jerusalem wasn't easy. With little water or food, the battalion survived mostly by eating *hubeza*, the mallow plant growing in Jerusalem. They patrolled at night, always at a different perimeter to give the impression that they were more numerous than they were. And during the day, they would sometimes put on

impromptu parades – each soldier wearing a different uniform – to boost the morale in the city and assure civilians that there was a fighting force in Jerusalem. He recalls the feeling of "watching history unfold" before his eyes.

Whartman quickly discovered, however, that English was something of a liability during the volatile transition to statehood. Because he had "pidgin Hebrew," he communicated for the most part in his native tongue, and he was confused for a British soldier several times. After the Jewish Agency building bombing in March 1948, he rushed in to offer help but was accused of being a British spy until he shouted several times in basic Hebrew, "I am a Jew." In another incident, he was nearly shot by friendly fire during a night patrol. "After that, you didn't hear a peep of English come out of my mouth until the end of the war," he said. When David Ben-Gurion finally announced the creation of the State, Whartman only heard belatedly because, as he put it, "we were concerned with survival and conquest." He asserts, "People sometimes call me a hero because I fought in



the war, but I wasn't a hero. I was fighting for my life. People talk about the miracle of 1948, but it was no miracle. It was paid in full with blood."

When the war was over, Whartman, who went on to become a broadcast journalist and eventually settled here, married Drora Neeman – a fellow student at the Hebrew University. The oldest of their three children, Moshe, was killed during an IDF patrol in Lebanon in 1975. Sixty years later, Whartman says the War of Independence continues to "root me in this country." He added, "The fact that I had a hand – however small – in creating a Jewish state after 2,000 years is overwhelming. And I've never really lost that feeling."

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