



The Half Shekel Journal by Ed Rice
Vol XXVIII Day 9 Wed 4 Feb: The Holocaust

The dim lamp was not sufficient to read about Joseph of Arimathaea and Nicodemus at the garden tomb and the sun was still an hour off. At its arrival would dawn the morning of our last day in Israel. Normal pre-dawn reading of Scripture was done on my Tungsten Palm Pilot with research done on my Compaq lap top. The latter was left in New York, the former had its recharging transformer burned up in Kubbuts Ginossar when a power surge surged through the borrowed converter. When I returned the converter to the Picketts, who borrowed it from the Carpenters, it still smelled a little burnt but we were unable to discern if it carried its own scent or that of my smoked recharger. My Palm seemed unharmed as it drifted off into silent hibernation. I missed it now. It would scroll through chapters of the Bible which could be read in a dark room where a light would awake my sleeping sweetheart. The sun came soon enough and we were off for our last Kosher breakfast in Israel. There were four events on our calendar for this last day, the 9th day of our tour. I recalled with humor how the marketing ploy had made our first 'day' only 1 hour inclusive and so too, our 10th day. Day 9, so called, was to include the sensationalized visit to the Garden Tomb, meant to be a highlight of the trip. For me this highlight waned. There were so many other highlights previous and I had seen so many slides and reactions to the empty tomb that it was familiar and I concerned myself of reproducing one of those canned and processed responses.

Highlights of Caesarea, Tel Dan, Caesarea Philippi, Galilee, Capernaum, Bet She'an, Qumran, the Dead Sea, and Masada swirled through my mind as we boarded the bus and opened our Bibles for the last morning devotion led by an over exuberant but spirit filled Baptist Preacher. Every event of the day was sprinkled with a sweet effervescence of 'I want this to never end' mixed with the bitter herb 'this is the last time we will do this!' We greeted Danny for the last day and applauded his talent and knowledge as he drove us through the majestic country side where we would overlook Bethlehem. I did not fully understand that Bethlehem was under the control of the Jordanians and we, as tourists, were free to visit there but Danny and Ronnie, as Israeli citizens, were barred from entering¹. There is much I remain ignorant of in this hostile environment but one thing constant and increasing is hatred and hostility towards God's chosen people, Israel. The Bible says this hostility will spread to all nations and we have already seen it surging in the Americas.



The city of Bethlehem lay nestled in a valley surrounded by scenic foothills. Wayne and Earldine had previous taken a cab to visit Bethlehem on their own, but Bev and I had little interest in visiting yet another Catholic or Orthodox Church here. Just the same, a

¹ This explanation comes from goisrael.com "Are tourists allowed to enter areas outside of Israeli responsibility (Palestinian areas)? ... Passage to the two major tourist cities of Bethlehem and Jericho in the Palestinian Authority is direct without prior clearance or required authorization. In regard to the rest of the Palestinian areas, it is recommended to forward requests to the IDF Public Relations Office. (Fax: +972.2.5305724). All requests should include the following: name, passport nationality and number, destination, and place of departure into Palestinian Area Crossing if known; If crossing is by car: name and details of driver as well as car registration number should be included. Fax replies will only be sent to Israeli telephone./fax numbers."

'drive by shooting' (cameras) that vaguely identified the city seemed somewhat lacking.

In September of 2008, at Bev's mom's bidding, we attended a briefing at the Corning Museum of Glass. There an xArmy radio man, named Stephen something, as I recall, briefed his experience of being one of the very first US soldiers to enter the first German consecration camps discovered. That two hour presentation, with slides, sharpened my focus on the Holocaust and little did I know then that day 9 of our trip to Israel would widen the vista of such unimaginable vision and present a panorama of horror that would occupy two hours as if it were minutes. Bev and I began the tour of the Holocaust Museum in an alerted numbness.

The million and a half candle memorial for the million and a half children whose names were read aloud perpetually brought us to such somberness that our entry into the museum aisles was hushed and serene. The focus of the progression through this ugly history was an answer to the question "How could such a horror of history come to pass?" The light shed on that answer began in the early life of Adolf Hitler and shown as a flashlight on a path of depravity which widened into a trail, then a road, then a highway that engulfed a nation and embroiled into a world war. Aisle by aisle the diabolical darkness of mankind was exposed to the light of history with newspaper clippings, headlines, and Nazi film footage and photographs that knotted your stomach with graphics of hatred and unimaginable atrocity. Alas our two hour tour was expiring and we had covered less than half the museum. It was not right to haste through any specific era of this presentation of ugly history.



It repeatedly came to my mind that the very theories of evolution and survival of the fittest, which moved Hitler to annihilate an 'inferior species of humanity'; is being taught to my grandchildren in our government school system. It has been said the religion of a nation is that which is taught to its children. The Creator denying secular atheism overwhelming our educational system aligns very closely with the portrayal before me in this Holocaust Museum.

This was declared a hall of remembrance dedicated to ensuring this could never happen again. But one thing we learn from history is that we never learn from history. I recalled several conversations with a Syrian I meet regularly on the streets of Geneva NY, in his mind and mannerism every evil in this world ties back to Israel's existence in the world. It seems too incredible for words that such animosity even exists, let alone that it is being prompted and promoted by America's mainstream media. Could such a history in all its horror be repeated in this world? In America a path has widened to a trail. Our media repeatedly refers to Israel as the occupier of 'Palestine' and Adolf himself said if you repeat a lie loud enough and often enough it will be accepted as truth by the masses.

The Son was bright as we emerged from the museum and headed down through rows of trees. It was "The Path of Remembrance and Reflection" We were told that each tree here was planted in honor of a Gentile who helped the Jews during this unbelievable horror of history. Particular interest was paid to Corry Ten Boom's tree, and Oskar & Emilie Schindler's tree. It was reported that on the day that Corry died her tree died. Such is often perceived as superstition, but for a Christian who knows the God, by whom all things consist, there are no coincidences in this world. This was, after all, called the "Garden of the Righteous." The walkway closes with a large arch with the verse from Ezekiel 37:14, "I will put my breath into you and you shall live again, and I will set you upon your own soil ... "