

"Let us arouse a crusading spirit in the people - encourage civic pride, and inspire a drive towards the revival of spiritual values."

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## The Cemeteries at Hebron

A TOKEN OF THE GOVERNMENT'S STRANGE AMBIVALENCE TOWARD THE JEWISH PRESENCE IN HEBRON IS THE SHOCKING STATE OF THE JEWISH CEMETRIES IN THIS, THE SECOND HOLIEST CITY IN ISRAEL FULLY TWO YEARS AFTER THE SIX DAY BATTLE

For centuries the pious and the scholarly have gone to their final rest in Hebron. Among the rabbinical patriarchs buried beneath its sacred ground are the Hese Avraham and the Sdey Hemed. They were joined some 40 years ago by the Yeshiva students and the handful of residents who clung to Hebron's sanctity only to be murdered in the bloody Arab riots of 1929.

The state in which Hebron's Ashkenazi and Sephardi cemeteries were found after the liberation of the city in 1967 almost defy description. The Arabs, frustrated in three attempts to conquer the living had stooped to conquering the dead.

Both cemeteries were in a condition of utter chaos and desecration. The Ashkenazi cemetery along with a section given over to the martyrs of 1929 were completely ploughed up. Tomato patches and grape vines had been planted on the sites. The Sephardi cemetery was in only slightly better repair and one Arab had the effrontery to build a house directly above some of the graves.

The Ministry of Religious Affairs at first made a great show of rectifying the situation. The tomato patches were uprooted and a fence built around the Sephardi and Martyrs Cemeteries. At this point, all work stopped. Some weeks later the Ministry announced the appointment of an Arab as custodian of the three Jewish cemeteries

in Hebron. He turned out to be the same Arab who had built the house and planted tomatoes and grapes on the burial grounds. His salary is being paid by the Government of Israel. The new appointee showed his gratitude by adding a toilet and some new grape vines to the site. So much for official Jewish kindness!

The Jewish settlers of Hebron have had to settle for a good deal less kindness from their government. They have made four requests of the Ministry of Religious Affairs; that a fence be constructed around the Ashkenazi cemetery; that the house and toilet standing on the burial grounds be demolished; that the Jewish cemeteries be placed under the care and authority of a Jewish superintendant, and that a monument be erected listing



LATRINE built by Arab in Jewish Cemetery at Hebron.

the names of all those buried in the three cemeteries at Hebron.

None of these requests could possibly be considered unreasonable ..... yet not one has thus far been honoured by the Israel Ministry of Religious Affairs. What is Mr Zerah Warhaftig afraid of ?



JEWISH CEMETERY AT HEBRON..... grapevines planted by Arabs