



הגדה של פסח

הגדת ירושלים

עיצוב ואיור : יעל הרשברג
קליגרפיה : יצחק פלודבינסקי

The Jerusalem Haggadah

GATEWAY TO THE HAGGADAH

Marc Michael Epstein

WITH PHOTOGRAPHS BY ODED ANTMAN



ARYEH EDITIONS

The JERUSALEM HAGGADAH facsimile was produced in Verona, Italy in 1997 by Stamperia Valdonega on a special paper manufactured by Cartiera Fedrigoni. The handbinding of the full leather facsimile and of the commentary volume is the work of Legatoria Recalcati in Milan. The edition is limited to 550 sets, all signed by the artist. 500 are numbered 1-500 and 50 are *ad personam* and are numbered I-L. This commentary volume is set in Monotype Baskerville and printed by letterpress on Old Mill paper.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Yael Hershberg". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

This set is number

A handwritten number "49/500" in cursive script, indicating the set number out of the total edition.

© 1997 Aryeh Editions Inc. and Yael Hershberg

PRINTED IN VERONA, ITALY

ISBN 88-85033-33-4

**Sample Pages
of the Commentary Volume**

For Misha and Shevi

And you shall explain to your child on that day:
“It is because of what the LORD did for me
when I went free from Egypt.”

Exodus 13:8

Prelude

A Vision of Gates in the City of Gates

It is sometime before dawn in the Old City of Jerusalem on an August morning in the last century. The Islamic crescent of the moon, long-ago set behind silent domes and towers, is echoed now only by the minarets' own crescents. The morning star is ascending in the East and hangs over the horizon, shimmering in an ether already, at this hour, thick with the promise of searing, bone-wearingly heat.

The American tourist cannot sleep. He reviews in his mind the images he has of Jerusalem's gateways by night: a donkey, framed by a Mamluk portal, descending the stairs into the inky darkness of the Suq el-Khawajat, two Armenian nuns drifting, black and silent, past the guards at the Gothic gate of the Convent of St. James, who raise their crossed pikes to let them pass without a word, though the hour is late and their sisters are all in their cells, and the evening's last Jew, tall and painfully gaunt, dark, with high cheekbones and deep-set eyes – a Kabbalist perhaps – swaying in solitary prayer in the shadow of Robinson's Arch, before the Western Wall. Dressed in black leather slippers, a brown caftan over a robe of striped cotton, with a red fez perched on his shaven, high-domed forehead above silver pince-nez and long sidelocks, he holds the hand of a boy of six or so – his son? – as he faces the silent Wall and communes in silence with the silence of God. "The LORD is in His Holy Temple, Hush before Him all the earth..." (Habakuk 2:20)

Stillness reigns now too, in the moment before first light – though the black of night had been rent with occasional cries, the bark of dogs, the howls of cats, and the whistle of the hot, dry wind – now is when Jerusalem lies momentarily in her thickest, deepest most heavily pregnant calm, shortly, though not yet, to birth a cacophony of street music – roosters crowing and donkey's braying, the clank of bakers' shovels against the wall of the oven, the cries of the hawkers, mingled with the sound of bells, church clappers, the call of the muezzin and the psalms of the faithful – the din of a City waking up to itself, raucous and pious, heavenly and earthy. The residents toss in their sleep, internally attuned to the imminence of that moment, but for this moment, no one is up in the entire city except the tourist, watching the shadows on the ceiling and reflecting on the last Jew, half-engulfed by the shadow of the ancient archway.

He is startled from his musing by a sudden and insistent light. It is too early for even the first rays of the sun, and the light is preternatural in brightness. The tourist swings his long legs over the side of the bed, pulls on his trousers and tucks his nightshirt into them. Grabbing his Panama hat from the bedstead and fanning himself against the already oppressive heat, he steps out on the balcony of the Petra Hotel, looking toward the source of the light, across the cobbled square of the Citadel, and toward the gateway of the Kishleh.

There, beneath the arch, he sees – bathed in that blinding white light from everywhere and nowhere – a short, rather burly man, bearded, sweating in a black robe, grappling with a creature paradoxically made – a Prince of Fire and Water, a man and yet not a man, gigantic, powerful, awesome. Framed by the gateway they struggle, now this one gaining the advantage, now the other. The American tourist rubs his eyes in disbelief, closes them tight, and opens them again. Now before him there is only the gentle pre-dawn light, and the gate of the Kishleh, silent, foreboding, two white doves huddled, cooing, in its gable, no striving figures, no fire, no water, only the hush before daybreak.

INTRODUCTION

The Kishleh's gate has been replaced with a traffic control arm, but doves still nest in the latticed windows of the former Turkish police stable. Emerging from the Suq el-Bazaar one night long after midnight years ago in Jerusalem, I found myself staring at those windows, and I imagined (or perhaps I saw) the scene I just described – first the tourist on the balcony, then the wrestlers, framed by a gate which is no longer there. It was my first (and only) vision, inspired by a gate which existed once-upon-a-time in a city of many gates. “How awesome is this place,” I thought to myself, recalling the words the wrestling man himself had once spoken, “This is none other than the abode of God... the gateway to Heaven.” (Genesis 28:17) For in this city of so many gates, even the portals of the old Turkish stable can form the backdrop for the vision of Jacob wrestling the angel.

“There are twelve gates to the City” the old Gospel hymn tells us, but in reality there are a thousand – perhaps even more. Gates, doorways, windows, each one with great character, each one a witness to history. And each one holy because it is a gate of Jerusalem. One senses this immediately, almost intuitively on visiting Jerusalem. It is confirmed by the manuscript you hold in your hands. The original was commissioned from Yael Hershberg of Jerusalem, and was completed in the winter of 1996. The patron gave the artist moderate latitude in its creation. Hershberg writes:

I had been commissioned to create a haggadah. One day before I started on it, the patron approached me and announced that the 3000th anniversary of Jerusalem was coming up and that he'd like the Haggadah to tie in with that, and that maybe we could work in the idea of the Redemption too. After I started pushing ideas around on paper I hit on the aptness of Jerusalem windows and doors as frames for the text. Then I started reading about Jerusalem in history, legend, midrash, collecting prophecies about it, and that became the whole Haggadah and then some - Jerusalem is a pretty unlimited subject. What took some work was figuring out where in the Haggadah I could work in these various midrashim and images so that they would fit thematically. The truth is, the two things are very intertwined because the goal of the Exodus was Jerusalem, as it is the goal of the end of our present Exile.

This is certainly the most ambitious and complex project I've taken on. I found that working in the format of a book was a pretty stiff and difficult limitation in contrast to the Esther Scrolls I had illuminated previously, because one page automatically committed me to four, and I couldn't just redo a page I didn't like, since it would mean redoing whatever was on the back side as well. So, I've had to live with my mistakes, which is painful. A great deal of my artistic energy has gone into aesthetic considerations: the handling of the stone, making the ornamented border work with the architecture, making the decorative patterns somehow expressive and finding a way to handle the painting of the pictures in

terms of scale, detail and disposition. My intellectual energy has gone into finding a suitable symbolic language for the iconography.

I've invested much more thought, planning and design in this haggadah than in all my previous work. Aesthetically, I've really tried to achieve a modern restatement of the antique genre of the illuminated manuscript and have tried to keep the aesthetic standard high (which is not to say I succeeded equally well with all pages).

Hershberg is modest. The aesthetic standard is high. Stylistically influenced by such diverse sources as Giotto, Piero Della Francesca, King Rene's Book of Love and various other late illusionistic illuminated manuscripts from France, Flanders, and Italy, Dürer's and Hans Hoffmann's plant studies, as well as by the works of Chardin, Gustave Doré, Balthus, and Paula Rego, the artist has also incorporated a vast body of very subtle iconographic references to various midrashic and exegetic strata. The title of the manuscript derives from the fact that its every page depicts another of the gates, doorways, and windows of Jerusalem and manifests through the eyes of a contemporary Jerusalem woman the words of the prophet Zechariah (14:20): "In that day even the bells of the horses shall be inscribed "Holy to the LORD". In the vision of Yael Hershberg, every gate of Jerusalem, from stable gate to Temple gate, proclaims the awesomeness, the holiness of the place.

When I met Yael Hershberg and saw this haggadah for the first time, I knew that an artist capable of envisioning the Messiah riding down Agrippas through Mahaneh Yehudah, past the sellers of tomatoes and watermelon, past the Clal Building, could love the gateways of Jerusalem as much as I do, and would do them justice as the visionary portals they truly are. She has reproduced each window and doorway, each pillar, arch and lintel in loving detail. Yet this is no mere technical exercise— in painting these sites, she has truly illuminated them— she has conjured the spirit of each one. For those who have been touched by the magic of Jerusalem, each of Yael's architectural portraits recalls the essence of a time of day, a temperature of stone, of air scented with fresh-baked bread, or rosemary, verbena, sunshine, or attar of roses. For those who have not yet had the privilege of visiting Jerusalem, these pages can capture with stunning clarity both a sense of place and the utter permeation of that place by a sense of history.

To view Izzy Pludwinski's sensitively crafted letters against the backdrop of the gateways Hershberg has brought to life is to view tradition, as represented by text, framed by the many layers of history evoked by the architecture. Pludwinski is an extraordinary calligrapher in that the forms of his letters, while traditional, are uniquely expressive. The harmony and visual interest of his work beautifully balance and complement Hershberg's illuminations by means of contrasts in letterforms, color, texture, size and weight of the text. His effective melding of the traditional ethos of the ancient sacred Jewish scribal traditions with a graceful aesthetic is a reflection of his training both as a Sofer STaM in Meah She'arim and his studies under Ann Camp at the Roehampton Institute's prestigious Calligraphy and Bookbinding School in London. Born in New York, he has emigrated to Jerusalem, where he teaches and works. His

calligraphy graces commissions from the Israeli government, various museums, and institutes of higher learning.

Izzy's calligraphy joins with Yael's illuminations to create a manuscript which invites us to perceive the Idea of Jerusalem as a text inscribed on the Space of Jerusalem. This haggadah presents a perfect unity of mirror images— Jerusalem above kissing Jerusalem below. But such happy osculation becomes possible only through an acknowledgement of the many-layered meaningfulness of Jerusalem, both as urban entity— the center of the Land of Israel, the capital of the State of Israel— and as metageographic focus of the universe—the center and capital of the geography of the imagination.

Why precisely does Hershberg find windows and doors such apt frames for the text? She perceives gateways, windows, doors, and thresholds as metaphors for freedom. For just as a gateway provides egress from one physical space and entrée into another, so did the Exodus, in freeing the People of Israel from Egypt (a "narrow place") open up for them the plain of Sinai, where God's revelation was inscribed on their hearts and souls. The haggadah is the ultimate expression of that revelation and its transmission: "You shall tell your child on that day, 'It was for this that God brought me out of Egypt.'" (Exodus 13:8)

But why the gateways of Jerusalem specifically? Well, Exodus does not leave the Israelites standing eternally at Sinai's windswept foothills. There is a progression, represented by the four cups of wine at the Seder: God removes Israel from the burden of Egyptian slavery, saves her from Egyptian oppression, redeems her, in the words of the haggadah text, with "a strong arm and great judgments" and takes her to be God's nation. The fifth cup—the cup of Elijah, the cup of Redemption —symbolizes how God brings Israel into the Land of Promise, and as the text itself points out, into Jerusalem and to the place of the Holy Temple. Every revelation must be preceded by a preliminary and particular redemption and followed by an ultimate and universal redemption. Every exodus necessitates an ingathering.

This is a haggadah of ingathering, of integration. Its users can imagine themselves as having flowed through the letters of the Divine Revelation, moving from the disparate individualism of Egyptian slavery to a unified peoplehood within the Gates of Jerusalem. "This is the gateway to God, the righteous shall pass through it." (Psalms 118:20) The illustration of haggadot has traditionally been dominated by the forward thrust of the narrative of the Exodus. Sephardic haggadot have been characterized by linear, somewhat reductionist biblical illustration, while vignettes of crucial historical events prevail in Ashkenaz. In this Jerusalem Haggadah, the linear progression towards Jerusalem is central, but vignettes of the historical narrative are eschewed in favor of symbolic constructions which are framed by windows, doorways and portals. These openings invite us in, enclose us within a framework of themes which develop into the metahistorical idea of redemption and the idea of Jerusalem, rather than taking attempting to illustrate the "history of the Exodus. Most classical haggadot are self-consciously monumental in conception— this one combines monumental sensibilities with womblike imagery and references, reflecting both a respect for tradition and the sensibilities of a female artist.

The issue of gender and traditionalism is important here, for this manuscript represents a female artist's aesthetic and intellectual means of self-expression from within a traditional Jewish sociological system that can often seem anti-aesthetic. Contemporary traditionalist Judaism often chooses to ignore aesthetic concerns as Hellenizing, and forgetting that there has been a long tradition of Jewish art which in effect Jewish exegesis, that the image; so long as it is not graven and intended for worship, can serve to illuminate the text and has done so among the Jewish people for thousands of years. Furthermore, while a female illuminator is certainly not anathema to traditional Jewish society— there is evidence that women transcribed and illuminated manuscripts in the Middle Ages, and more and more women have been illuminating traditional texts in recent times— there have been few female artists of the stature of Hershberg on the traditional scene, and so she is truly a pioneer. Obviously talented, she is somewhat deferent and evasive concerning what she knows intellectually about the textual antecedents of the iconography, preferring to discuss her aesthetic conception.

To work with this haggadah is to play hide and go seek with the acuity of Hershberg's intellectual vision in the context of a society where such vision is certainly valued, but is looked upon with some suspicion and incredulity when it comes from a woman. When I have succeeded in prevailing upon Hershberg to move beyond her congenital modesty and reveal not only the aesthetic but the textual and iconographic thinking behind these illuminations, I have been richly rewarded. It's a bit frustrating of course— I've spent weeks in abject fear that my interpretation of this or that was overdetermined, only to find that the constellation of associations I was finally able to draw out of Hershberg was ultimately considerably more Baroque than what I had initially perceived on my own. I'll let the artist speak in her own words about the page which illustrates the Ten Plagues, and you will see how the voice of her learning comes through:

This is a very magical doorway from the Meah She'arim neighborhood. It leads to a totally uninteresting and prosaic apartment house— I imagine there was once a different kind of house there. You know, the name Meah She'arim comes from a verse in the Torah portion of Toldot (Genesis 25:19-28:9) concerning Ya'akov Avinu— our forefather Jacob: When he lived with the Philistines in the Land of Gerar, from every seed he planted grew meah she'arim — a hundredfold of produce. According to the understanding of the Sages, something similar happened with the plagues— each one became five, or twenty-five, depending on how vengeful an interpretation you want. Anyway, I liked the idea of using a special but humble kind of doorway to a Jewish home for the plagues, since it was the Jewish homes which were skipped over in the plagues. The page looks sort of upside-down because I followed the interpretation of the MaHaRaL, R. Judah Loewe of Prague, who goes into the rearrangement of the plagues into the acronym D'Tz'aCh A'D'aSH B'A'cH'B. He explains this order as one of ascending levels of nature: the

plagues struck starting with lower forms of life on the ground and in the water, then moving to higher animal life, then to life in the skies, then the sky itself, and finally the destruction of the highest form of life, man - and he also explains the plagues in terms of increasing intolerability. At any rate, the point here is the complete suspension of nature and natural order for the sake of the Israelites. I didn't particularly want to illustrate the plagues, but it's expected, and besides the Haggadah is a teaching device. The doorway is from Hoshea Street. Hoshea means "God shall redeem," and Hoshea is the prophet among the twelve so-called minor prophets who mentions Egypt most frequently – both as a threat: God will return the sinful Israelites to Egypt – and as a witness both of God's power and tenderness: God is invoked as the One who knew and loved Israel from the days of their servitude in Egypt.

So it all fits together – I hope.

Having worked with this manuscript for months now, I am convinced that it does indeed "fit together." It seems to me that Hershberg's work is no less than an attempt to explore the Idea of Jerusalem inscribed on the palimpsest of the Space of Jerusalem, *Yerushalayim shel ma'alah al gabei Yerushalayim shel mattah*. (BT *Ta'anit* 5a) Like a palimpsest – a re-used manuscript parchment on which the different layers of effaced text can still be faintly viewed through the most recent layer – Jerusalem is an agglomeration of meanings, even as the space of Jerusalem as expressed through its architecture is thick with cultural layers.

What is fascinating to note here is that much of the architecture which Hershberg invests with the voice of Jewish history and the echoes of Jewish redemption is, in fact, Arab and British architecture, built by Ottoman Sultans and His Majesty's Mandate government. Though Hershberg depicts some surviving medieval Jewish sites and a good number of later buildings built by Jews, but not particularly or indigenously "Jewish," the predominance of non-Jewish buildings reminds us of the conscious and determined eradication of every trace of Jewish presence and sovereignty in the Holy Land over the 2000 years since the destruction of the Second Jerusalem Temple and the exile of the Jewish people. Thus, ironically, the evocative urban landscape that appears as "typically Jerusalem" and as "home" to Hershberg (and to many Jews) is a hybrid – largely a combination of Turkish architecture conquered by the British and elaborated upon, then won by the Israelis in the War of Independence and the Six Day War.

Needless to say, like the Israelis and the British, the Ottomans were themselves conquerors and the inheritors of earlier strata of architecture. All Jerusalem architecture is a palimpsest, and what Hershberg and others are "reading" through the layers of architecture is a sort of meta-, or more accurately, sub- Jerusalem; a once and future Jewish Jerusalem. The Golden Gate is Ottoman, but incorporates elements which go back to the ancient period of Jewish sovereignty. The Jaffa Gate is Turkish, but it stands on the spot of Western entry to Jerusalem since the most ancient periods. Thus, when a Jew like Hershberg speaks of the ancient stones of Jerusalem, she is not pining for the constructions of Suleiman the Magnificent or of General Allenby, but for the erased and

effaced sub-constructions of Herod and the Hasmoneans, of Solomon and David. Her vision may seem paradoxical to us in that it is based in nostalgia for an urban landscape most present in the fact that it is not present. But this is a common feature of the attachment Jews have always felt to Jerusalem, no matter whose buildings happened to be there.

For the artist of this haggadah, this lost past is made recoverable by the promise of a future completely “rebuilt” Jewish Jerusalem, which is reified and confirmed by the existence of a present partially “rebuilt” Jewish Jerusalem. Zechariah’s reassurance that “there shall yet be old men and old women in the squares of Jerusalem... and the squares of the city shall be crowded with boys and girls playing...” (8:4, 5) has been fulfilled before Hershberg’s very eyes. Has she any reason to doubt that an ingathering of Jews and a rebuilding of the Holy Temple are not imminent as promised by the same prophet in the verses immediately following? Traditionalist Jews like Hershberg see themselves as living in a time of what Agnon described as the “first flowering of redemption”. In this context, Hershberg’s willingness to appropriate and Judaize a particular Ottoman and British urban landscape is understandable, such a landscape represents the locus of former glory and future dreams.

It is appropriate that such a layered and nuanced construction be wrought by a woman whose own construction— both of gender and identity — is itself so layered and nuanced. Hershberg is steeped both in tradition and post-modernity. She is a lover of and dweller in Jerusalem, but also, in terms of her artistic training, a citizen of the world and of the ages.

Accordingly, while this manuscript can certainly be treasured for its beauty, it also— like all things which are not merely pretty, but profound— presents us with some paradoxes with which to wrestle, like Jacob with his paradoxical angel. It is a work both of realism and vision: the realism of stone and the vision of paint. It is a book which incorporates the best of the new and the old, a skill which rivals the best and brightest of the productions of the medieval illuminator’s workshop, yet emerges from the striking and incisive sensibilities, aesthetic and iconographic, of a traditionalist woman in a postmodern universe.

This text volume, designed to accompany and complement the facsimile of Hershberg’s manuscript, systematically explores the iconography of each folio of this haggadah. It is our opportunity to take a leisurely stroll together through the aesthetic riches and the brilliant iconographic conceptualization of the manuscript. What I have written is not a commentary on the text of the haggadah, for such works are without number and the merit of the least of them far exceeds anything I could hope to produce. It is, however, a commentary on Yael Hershberg’s haggadah— an interpretation of her aesthetic vision according to many commentaries, traditional and innovative (with the recognition that the two are not mutually exclusive). I feel justified in attempting to interpret Hershberg’s vision because tradition tells us that everyone has a contribution to make to *sippur yeziat mizrayim*, the recounting of the Exodus from Egypt, since everyone who expands upon the discussion of the Exodus is considered praiseworthy.

But particular praise is due the artist, whom I quote throughout. Judah HaLevi’s majestic *Kuzari* ends with the statement that Jerusalem will not be rebuilt until Israel

yearns for her to such an extent that they embrace her dust and her stones. (5:28) The art of Yael Hersberg embodies precisely this sort of yearning. The deepness of her attachment to this place – to the echoes of its history and the meaning in its every stone and plant – are what makes the recounting of the Exodus from Egypt come more alive in this work than it has in any haggadah produced in modern times. In one eighteenth century illuminated haggadah it is written: “Everyone who expands upon the discussion and illustration of the Exodus from Egypt (*kol hamarbeh lesapper u'lyayyer*) is considered exceedingly praiseworthy!

Surely this can be said of the work of Yael Hersberg. *VeYehalleluhah beShe'arim ma'ase'hah*: May her praise be heard in the gates she has rendered herein with such love.

Poughkeepsie, New York, *Tu B'Shvat*, 5756/ 1996

The earthly Jerusalem, and Zion and (even) the Temple,
are all illustrations (*zi'urim*)
of very finely honed intellectual concepts.

R. Solomon B. Adret, on BT *Ta'anit* 5

Folio 12 - **KIDDUSH**

Praying in Jerusalem is like praying before the Throne of Glory. The gate to Heaven is there and it is open so that God may hear.
-*Pirkei De Rabbi Eliezer* 35

The haggadah begins with an aerial view of Jerusalem— the clouds are open for prayers to pass through. Jerusalem is the holy mountain— the center of the universe, conduit of prayer from below to above, and of influx from above to below.

Folio 13 - **KIDDUSH (HAVDALAH)**

The Swedish Institute, (Conrad Schick's house)
58 *Rehov HaNevi'im*. German-style architecture (c. 1850)

Jerusalem is called "The valley of vision" (Isaiah. 22:1), that is the valley concerning which all seers have prophesied, the valley out of which all prophets rise. For, as R. Yohanan said, any prophet whose city is not named is a Jerusalemite.
– *Eicha Rabbah*, Proem 24.

A famous doorway that opens on *Rehov HaNevi'im*, the Street of the Prophets. Jerusalem is truly the wellspring of prophets and visionaries, and in peering through the doorway of what has been known in this century as the Swedish Institute, number 58 on this winding thoroughfare, Hershberg playfully reminds us of the double-edged sword of prophecy which can cut with great irony. This was the house of Conrad Schick, who came to Jerusalem in 1846, a representative of an evangelical missionary movement and an architect. Ultimately, he ended up building the *Me'ah She'arim* neighborhood, which is the most concentrated haredi neighborhood in the world today. His vision of Jerusalem was one far different from that of the haredim, his prophetic sensibility one of the Second Coming of Christ, theirs of a Second Coming of the Jewish People— of a time when “there shall yet be old men and old women in the squares of Jerusalem, each with staff in hand because of old age. And the squares of the city shall be crowded with boys and girls playing...” (Zechariah 8:4-5). Ironically, Schick's vision served to further the haredi ideal rather than his own, and the use of his house here is a commentary on that irony.

Hershberg's use of *Rehov HaNevi'im* further emphasizes the importance of vision and the visionary in the construction of the ideals of Judaism and the idea of Jerusalem. The first rubric of the seder is Kadesh, and the first liturgical action is Kiddush—sanctification. The Street of the Prophets is an appropriate place to begin our architectural vision of Jerusalem because the prophets' special calling was to admonish Israel to Kedusha –holiness– so that the vision of the future they treasured would come to pass. There is comfort in the kiddush prayer. It can almost seduce us into complacency, for its message is one of chosenness. Kiddush praises God “who has chosen us from every nation, and raised us up above every people.” But it is the prophets who temper the comfort of the prayer of kiddush by calling us to stand

witness to the next line of the prayer “...who has sanctified us with His commandments.” Israel is chosen for special scrutiny. She is only sanctified insofar as she conforms to Divine Will.

The message of the prophets links past, present and future. It is as ancient as the oldest stones of the Land of Israel, it is as old as the last generation, it is as present as the current generation and it is as new as the next. The Street of the Prophets performs a similar function as part of the Jerusalem landscape. It runs between the older and the newer parts of the New City, leading from the artist's own neighborhood, *Zikhron Moshe*, an island of relative tranquility between the often frenzied modernity of downtown Jerusalem and the shtetl-like bustle of *Me'ah Shearim*. It thus bisects two integral parts of the modern Jewish experience, European and post-European, and leads directly to the Old City. Israel's prophets were and are those visionaries who link the Old City with the New, Jerusalem Above with Jerusalem Below.

Like the havdalah blessing on this folio, the street divides between the holy and the quotidian, and it points toward the center of God's universe, echoing the words of havdalah “Here is the God of my salvation: I will trust and have no fear!” (Isaiah 12:2) I like to imagine the artist perched in her rooftop studio in *Zikhron Moshe*, flanked by the downtown area and *Me'ah Shearim*, the past generation and the present one, gazing down the Street of the Prophets toward the eternal vista of the City which exists both in and beyond time.

Folio 14 - ***BIRKHAT SHEHEKHIANU***

Sha'ar HaRahamim (The Gate of Mercy/Golden Gate)
Old City. Ottoman style (17th c.)

Iwanted to do something grand and triumphant and suggesting the Geulah (redemption).

—Yael Hershberg

The theme of time and timelessness continues in the third illumination of the haggadah. The *shehehianu* blessing is the blessing of renewal. It thanks God for sustaining, preserving and bringing us once again to this season of liberation, of possibility. All that is old is renewed. One says shehehianu over things which one has never experienced before as well as for things which one lovingly revisits time and again after long absences. It is the quality of Mercy within God which is praised in the shehehianu blessing, for God mercifully renews each day, continuously, the work of creation.

The midrash (Genesis Rabbah 56:14) relates that Jerusalem received its name as the result of an embrace between antiquity and renewal. Abraham, who gave the world a new understanding of God, called Jerusalem *Yireh*, (Genesis 22:14), “future vision” which represents renewal, and Melkhizedek, who was Shem, Noah's son and the representative of the most ancient lineage of priests, used the name *Shalem* (Genesis 14:8), “peace”, “stasis”, or “completion”, which represents stability and the comfort of tradition. Shlomo Carlebach teaches that one of the first and greatest lessons of renewal

was taught to our earliest ancestor Abraham by Melkhizedek, in front of the site of the Gate of Mercy. Melkhizedek brought Abraham a gift of bread and wine, to teach him that everyone wants freshly baked bread—future vision, new ideas, renewal on every level— but that everyone needs a bit of the old wine— the peace, integrity and deepness of tradition and respect for our forebears— as well.

The artist writes: “The Golden Gate is said to be the gate to the courtyard of the Temple, its inside facing the Holy of Holies. Its foundations were built by King Solomon with stones given by the Queen of Sheba; they survived both destructions. It is reported that it opened by itself at the start of *Shabbat* and *Rosh Hodesh*.”

The actual gate is sealed, and fronted by a Muslim cemetery. Both of these measures were legendarily taken by Israel’s enemies to prevent the coming of Elijah the Prophet, who will lead the Jewish Messiah into Jerusalem through the Gate of Mercy, but who, being a *Kohen*— a priest— cannot traverse a cemetery. Note that here the gate is dramatically unsealed and, while the cemetery is not depicted, the rebuilt Temple is.

Across from the gate on the Mount of Olives is an ancient Jewish cemetery built not to prevent the Redemption, but rather in the hope of it, and of the Resurrection of the Dead. It is with the divine quality of Mercy that the dead will be revived. In the liturgy God is called “the One who revives the dead with great mercy.” Mercy is lifegiving because it is an eternally renewing quality. *Rahamim*, mercy, derives from the root *rehem*, womb, and symbolizes the quality of life which is renewed again and again by God, but which is also present within the body of woman. The linkage of *shehehiyanu* with the Gate of Mercy is central here. Like the Gate, the wombs of Israel’s matriarchs have often been sealed, opening only with Divine intervention in response to the heartfelt prayer of those women. This is the truest evocation of *rahamim* —womb-mercy.

The theme of *rahamim* is integral to this haggadah, crafted by a woman. Hershberg often invokes the midrash which asserts that it was because of “the merit of merciful women that Israel was redeemed from Egypt.” (BT Sota 11a) Jewish women refused to abide by the Pharaoh’s decree that they separate from their husbands, and at risk of their lives continued the Jewish people. They hid their children when Pharaoh ordered them destroyed. It was because of the intervention of the Jewish midwives that Jewish children were saved, and because of the intervention of Yokheved and Miriam (Moses’ mother and sister), and later of Zipporah (Moses’ wife) that Moses himself survived.

The Gate of Mercy is like the body of a woman, specifically her womb. It may be sealed now, but this illumination depicts it opening miraculously at the right historical moment, just as the Beloved of the Song of Songs— read on Passover and included in this haggadah, is a walled garden and a sealed fountain, ready to spring open at the touch of the Lover.

The plants and animals here and elsewhere within the haggadah are fraught with symbolic significance as well: “Through use of and delight in natural forms we give praise to the Creator,” Hershberg writes. “The visible order points to the hidden order. Natural forms reveal the attributes of the Creator and hint at the Order (SEDER) of the universe.”

The lion is a polyvalent sign in Judaism. One of the primary Jewish symbols, the lion represents Judah, the leader of the tribes: “Judah is a lion's whelp” (Genesis 49:9).

It can also represent the entire Jewish people: “Lo, a people that rises like a lion, Leaps up like the king of beasts.” (Numbers 23:24) It can even be a symbol for God: “A lion has roared, Who can but fear?” (Amos 3:8) Here, in the words of the artist, it is a symbol of “God's ever-present guardianship over Jerusalem, the physical focal point of His special relationship with Klal Yisrael— the Community of Israel.” The lion in the medieval bestiary was a symbol for the Resurrection of the Dead. Its cubs were believed to be born unformed and lifeless, the lioness licked and gave shape to them, and the lion roared over them to bring them to life. Though the Gate of Mercy is sealed up, and a graveyard has been laid in front of it, this illumination proclaims that the renewal of shehehianu cannot be stopped. Like a roaring lion, renewal will burst through and redemption will come.

We see the lily, a symbol of Israel herself, springing forth from closed to open, its stamens like blazing suns, as surely as the Gate of Mercy will one day spring open. The winged forms in the initial rubric Barukh (Blessed) represent the hope of the reader that the blessing of renewal will ascend on high and be accepted. The lion and the lily are, of course, classical symbols of Christian redemption, present in a host of medieval illuminated manuscripts. Here they are appropriated and returned to their original and indigenous Jewish constellation of symbolic valences. This sort of appropriation is common in medieval Jewish manuscripts. It is interesting and intriguing to see such adoption and adaptation confirmed in a modern example of the illuminator's art. Here, a traditionalist Jewish woman echoes, in a more subtle, less jarring way, the sort of appropriation present in many of the paintings of Marc Chagall, where Christian symbols are given a Jewish cast in order to appropriate and “redeem” them.

Folio 15 - **URHATZ, KARPAS, YAHATZ**

5 *Rehov Bnei Brit*

All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full” (Ecclesiastes 1:7). “All streams flow into the sea”: All Israel enters Jerusalem each year at the Festivals. “Yet the sea is never full”: Jerusalem is never filled up.

— *Kohelet Rabbah* 1

In this illumination, the painted side panels of a vintage Jerusalem doorway suggest dream-like views of the Old City of Jerusalem bathed in golden light. In the niche above the door is a bowl of vegetables for dipping as *karpas*. The dream panels flanking the text may be read as referring to the symbolism of *karpas*. On the left, the view is from the Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives. As they committed the bodies of their friends, teachers and loved ones to this sacred ground, Jews throughout the ages took comfort from their belief that, as assuredly as God makes the *karpas* vegetables rise from the ground each spring, their beloved dead would be resurrected at the time of the ultimate redemption. “Death will be swallowed up forever” and the salty tears (echoed by the salt-water) which accompanied their departure will be “wiped from every face.” (Isaiah 25:8)

The right-hand panel depicts the once and future pilgrimage to Jerusalem through the Jaffa Gate, also called *Bab el-Halil*, the Gate of the Beloved (Abraham). The artist's

choice of a doorway from *Rehov Bnei Brit*, “Children of the Covenant” Street to form the wider framework of the page becomes clear in the context of the references in the illustration to God’s Covenant with Abraham. As Abraham’s descendants stream through the Jaffa Gate in a lively and celebratory, yet stately pageant, we are reminded of God’s promises to Abraham: that those descendants would be as numerous as the dust of the earth and the sand on the seashore. The dust of the earth again recalls the vegetables of karpas, and the seashore evokes the salt water into which the vegetables are dipped. The artist notes that “the transformation of the lowly vegetable into an element of the seder table is analogous to the process of spiritual growth.” One might add that such growth is not achieved except through hard labor and tears, of which the salt water is once again symbolic.

Folio 16 - **HA LAHMA ANYA**

Italian Consulate (Palestine Post/Jerusalem Post/Maskit Building)

12 *Rehov HaRav Kook* (early 20th c.)

Kotel HaMa’aravi (The Western Wall of the Temple Mount)

1st century CE

One of the most surely, indigenously Jewish elements in the architecture of Jerusalem is the remnant of the *Kotel HaMa’aravi*, the Western Wall of the Temple Mount, the retaining wall around the Mount which Herod built to support his expansion of the Temple precincts in the first century of the Common Era. If the Kotel could speak— what stories would it tell! This illumination depicts the *Kotel* as the illustration to *Ha Lahma Anya*, “This is the Bread of Affliction,” the introit to *Maggid*, the segment of the *seder* where the actual story of the Exodus is told. It is initiated with an invitation to all who are hungry to come in and eat, and to all who are spiritually needy to come and celebrate Passover. Here, the old, in the shadow of exile, raise on high the fragmentary *mazzah*, the unleavened bread which symbolizes the lowliness of affliction and the lightning speed of redemption, before the young in a gesture of teaching, which is the purpose of the Haggadah. This action takes place against the backdrop of the only remaining fragment of the Holy Temple, where the remnant of the Divine Presence is fabled to rest like a cooing dove. The sense of fragmentation which prevails here is very much reflective of the traditionalist theology that Jewish joy is incomplete, because redemption has only begun. The artist reflects that “our present affliction is the continuing absence of the Holy Temple, the *Beit HaMikdash*”.

The wheat in the small oculus above refers both to the origins of the *mazzah* and to the Temple Mount as a wheatfield before its purchase by King David. The legend of the two brothers who had once lived there bears repeating because it answers the prevailing sense of fragmentation found in this illumination, an answer echoed by the text of *Ha Lahma Anya* itself. Once, on the top of Mount Moriah, there lived two brothers. One was blessed with a lovely wife and a large family; the other lived alone, and had no children. They lived in houses close together on a hilltop, and each had a

little field in which he grew his wheat and a little bin in which to store the threshed wheat, with the threshing floor lying between the bins. As the grain ripened, each could not sleep as he contemplated the plight of his brother. The brother who had a family worried that his brother was all alone in the world, with only the yield of his wheatfield for joy, and he feared that his brother did not have enough grain to make him happy. The brother who lived alone worried that his brother had too many mouths to feed and not enough grain. Each brother would venture stealthily out at night to carry wheat to his brother's bin, and each would waken in the morning to find that he had the very same amount of wheat he had before he gave away his wheat! One night, the brothers met each other on the threshing floor between their bins. And right there, right in the middle of the threshing floor, they each dropped their wheat, embraced and wept. It was on that spot that God declared that the Holy Temple should be built, where all lack, loss and fragmentation should be redressed, where every need should be satisfied as lovingly and with such thoughtfulness as in the story of the brothers. The Temple was the place where both Israel's need for God and God's need for Israel could be simultaneously fulfilled. But when Israel lost her altruism, her optimism, her indomitable sense of goodness, when causeless enmity was practiced by her children as expertly as unconditional love was practiced by the two brothers, God allowed the Holy Temple to be destroyed. (Costa, *Mikveh Yisrael* #59)

The text of *HaLahma Anya* charts the transition from fragmentation and affliction ("This is the bread of affliction...") to integration through invitation and incorporation ("Let all who hunger enter and eat..."), to redemption, ("Next year we will be free in the Land of Israel"), much as the illumination points in that direction. The darkness of exile gives way to the light of ingathering, but the process is not complete— even in Israel Jews strive to be "free"; even in Jerusalem, the Temple is not yet built.

It is appropriate that the doorway which flanks this scene of potential waiting to be fulfilled is from Rav Kook Street. R. Abraham Isaac Kook (1865-1935), who became the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine in 1921, strove to hasten the redemption with every fiber of his being, throughout his entire life. In spite of his staunch Orthodoxy, he was a fierce supporter of the integrity and, in fact, of the sacrality of *Klal Yisrael*, the entirety of the community of Israel, wherein the old and the young, the religious and the secular, the whole and the broken each have a part in repairing the lack, loss and fragmentation in the story of Israel's destiny. Fiercely traditional, he was radical in some ways. For instance, in opposition to the traditionalist camp, which continues to envision the restored Jerusalem Temple exactly on the model of the Second Temple, with a resumption of the offering of animal sacrifices, he speculated that at the time of the rebuilding of the Temple, Jews would have evolved to a point where animal sacrifices could be eliminated, though grain offerings would be maintained.

Rav Kook seems to be a significant influence on Hershberg. He was a haredi rabbinic authority who embodied the possibility of living with one's feet in several different territories of the religious imagination. Hershberg manages to subtly introduce him here as a sort of present/absent representative of the *tikkun*, the healing for fragmentation, even including the wheat in the oculus as a reference to his more radical teachings.