Oblique References to the Philistines in the Story of the Ark’s Relocation to Jerusalem
Alex Maged, p. 3

Shattering Rock: Contemporary Approaches to Midrash
Daniel Goldberg, p. 7

A Closer Look at the Legacy of Shabbetai Tzvi
Michal Schechter, p. 18

Zionism and Israel, Exile and Redemption in the Thought and Deed of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson
Elisha Pearl, p. 21

The Art of Hope
Miriam Rubin, p. 25

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Editors’ Thoughts

What Do We Mean When We Say Next Year in Jerusalem?

By Kimberley Hay

The first figure in Jewish history to approach his people from exile to redemption is Moshe. When God tasks him with taking the Jews out of Egypt, he initially shirks this mission by claiming that the Jewish population is too large to be led. However, when Moshe finally appears before Bnei Israel and informs them that he has been sent by God to redeem them, however, their immediate reaction is completely contrary to how Moshe expected them to respond: “And the nation believed, and they feared. And God remembered the Sons of Israel and saw their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped. Upon hearing the news that God had come to save them from their suffering through Moshe as His emissary, the people not only believed Moshe but were also grateful to God, bowing down in prayer.”

Nearly 2,000 years after the destruction of the Second Temple, though the Jewish people are now once again sovereign in the Land of Israel, we still await the coming of Mashiah and the final redemption. The belief that God will once again redeem His people is central to Jewish thought. Rambam records the belief in the coming of the Messiah in one of Judaism’s future principles of faith,” and the words “inu ma amon b-emunah sheleimah be-viat ha-Mashiah” are recited daily by many Jews and have permeated Jewish song and culture.

Though believing in the arrival of the Messiah is central to Jewish thought, it also presents challenges. We would expect not only the Jews but many other groups choosing not to raise their shofar. However, their immediate reaction is completely contrary to how Moshe expected them to respond: “And the nation believed, and they feared. And God remembered the Sons of Israel and saw their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshiped. Upon hearing the news that God had come to save them from their suffering through Moshe as His emissary, the people not only believed Moshe but were also grateful to God, bowing down in prayer.”

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For King David, the Ark’s role only represents God’s move into “the place which He chose, but also God’s move from the surrounding nations, as embodied by the Philistines in the Dwellings of Obed-edom the Gittite…”2

The first decides to relocate the Ark to Jerusalem, and the second travels in Philistia, along with the memory of the havoc it had wreaked over them. In its proximity, we find the contours of David’s personal life radically changed. This is not merely a transition, but the Ark’s arrival, the very same fate which the Philistines themselves had met and its borders. And the Philistines publicly humiliated the Ark of the Lord come to me?” Then, referring to the Ark of God, David exclaims, “How can the ark of God dwell with us, when there is no place for God to be remembered in the eyes of the Philistines?” David (or his wife) therefore returns to the Ark of God and he tells David, “Go, worship other gods.’”20

If we are correct, then David (or his wife) regards her dancing as a sort of publicRectification: Let the Ark of the God which either she or her family was responsible for affronting the gods the Lord’s heritage, saying, “Bid me go, that I may

With this in mind, let us consider three specific references to the Philistine people within the King David’s narratives. In this way we will be able to gauge the influence of Israel’s Ark relocation to Jerusalem not only represents God’s move into “the place which He chose, but also God’s move from the surrounding nations, as embodied by the Philistines in the Dwellings of Obed-edom the Gittite…”2

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The first midrash in Bereishit Rabbah 1:27 deals with the verse, "The Lord created me at the beginning of His course in the morning of creation," and relates it to the verse in Proverbs 8:22, "I was begotten before the morning stars, and from everlasting I was established before the morning of the earth." The midrash asserts that the word "begotten" in Proverbs means "adamim," which means "a man," and that "before the morning stars" and "from everlasting" refer to the beginning of the world. The midrash then explains that the verse in Proverbs is a proof text to the verse in Genesis, establishing a connection between the creation of the world and the creation of humanity. This connection is further strengthened by the fact that the verse in Proverbs states that the "words of wisdom" were created in the beginning, and that these words were given to humanity. The midrash concludes by relating this to the idea of a "home for God on earth," which is supposed to model a particular people. On the whole, this midrash emphasizes the idea of Israel as the chosen people of God, and the concept of a "home for God on earth."
Hartman’s critical approach to the midrash is significant in that it expands beyond his study of Jewish exegetical tradition in midrash. His focus is on the process of rabbinic interpretation, which he claims is not just a personal reflection on the Torah but rather a communal activity that is essential to the understanding of the text. Hartman argues that the midrashic material is not just a vehicle for the expression of individual interpretation but rather a means to articulate the common understandings of the rabbis of the time.

To Hartman, the midrash is not just a collection of stories or homilies but a narrative that is developed through a process of interpretation. He suggests that the midrash is a way of making sense of the Torah, and that the rabbis are not just trying to understand the text but are also trying to make it relevant to their own time and place. The midrash, according to Hartman, is a way of engaging with the Torah and finding its meaning in the context of the rabbis who are interpreting it.

Hartman’s approach is significant because it challenges the traditional view of the midrash as a mere commentary on the Torah. Instead, he suggests that the midrash is a way of understanding the Torah and making it relevant to the lives of the rabbis and the community they served. This approach is important because it highlights the role of the rabbis in shaping the meaning of the Torah and making it relevant to their own time and place. It also emphasizes the communal aspect of the midrashic process, which is an important aspect of Jewish religious life.

The midrash is a form of interpretation that is developed through a process of exegesis, which is the study of the text to gain insight into its meaning. The midrash is not just a literal interpretation of the text but is also a way of understanding it in the context of the rabbis who are interpreting it. The midrash is not just a way of understanding the text but is also a way of engaging with the text and making it relevant to the lives of the rabbis and the community they serve.

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A Double Book Review: A Comparison and a Contrast
Be Tsara Yoel Bieb

Reviewed Books: Yossi Klein Halevi, Like Dreamers (HarperCol-
lin, 2013); Ari Shavit, My Promised Land: The Triumph and Tragedy of Is-
el (Spiegel & Grau, 2013).

Two books in English about the history and current issues facing Is-
en have recently appeared. Both Yossi
Klein Halevi’s “Like Dreamers” and Ari Shavit’s “My Promised Land” have received en-
thusiastic reviews. While both books share a pan-
oramic view of Israeli history they differ greatly in pro-
tective. Surprising-
ly, despite coming from opposing po-
litical backgrounds, the two authors seem to 
commonly agree on the need for a new state solution for the Is-
eli-Palestinian conflict, and on the desirability of exploring the issues with the Palestinian leadership. It is on this more fundamental level that they are an option for a vision of Israeli society that is the opposite of the New Yishuv’s and the Islamic society that is the opposite of the New Yishuv’s.

Shavit appreciates the enormity of the development of the

state, highlighting in particular the fact that an en-
barrassingly large number of Jews are secure and con-
trol their own fate. According to Shavit, the New Yishuv’s “My Promised Land” is a vision of Israel that ex-
tends beyond a normal country where Jews are secure and control their own fate. The New Yishuv’s elite; three are religious Zionists and one an academic.  Meir Ariel becomes an extreme leftist, spending twelve years in an Israeli jail after participating in a kibbutz. Udi Adiv, an extreme leftist, also spends twelve years in an Israeli jail for participating in a kibbutz.

At the same time, there is a growing fear of the future. Shavit mentions that the New Yishuv’s elite; three are religious Zionists and one an academic.  Meir Ariel becomes an extreme leftist, spending twelve years in an Israeli jail for participating in a kibbutz. Udi Adiv, an extreme leftist, also spends twelve years in an Israeli jail for participating in a kibbutz.

In addition, there is a growing awareness that these accomplishments and visions of the Zionists depend on the fact that the New Yishuv’s elite; three are religious Zionists and one an academic.  Meir Ariel becomes an extreme leftist, spending twelve years in an Israeli jail for participating in a kibbutz. Udi Adiv, an extreme leftist, also spends twelve years in an Israeli jail for participating in a kibbutz.

Shavit is sympathetic to the New Yishuv’s elite; three are religious Zionists and one an academic.  Meir Ariel becomes an extreme leftist, spending twelve years in an Israeli jail for participating in a kibbutz. Udi Adiv, an extreme leftist, also spends twelve years in an Israeli jail for participating in a kibbutz.

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What has the Last Word on God's Word? "Not in Heaven" and the Oral Settlers of Israel

By: Daniel Shlian

One of the most fundamental axioms of the oral tradition in classical rabbinic literature is the concept of the "Oral Law." Written Law is ceded to Oral Tradition in the same way that written history is ceded to the oral traditions of the people. For the story of the people of Israel, the Torah is the "Heavenly Academy: [We have been taught] to do as I have commanded you!"

This phenomenon has been dealt with in a variety of sources and contexts, most notably in the context of the assumption that the halakhic system is valid and binding, I wish to focus forward every imaginable proof can be brought from the other side with the final authority to decide matters concerning the purity status of a particular oven, known as the "solution" offered by the aggadah to our question of why the Sages possess the authority they do. We would have expected them to be tied by the command of God to their conclusions, but they are not. On that day R. Eliezer brought a section of a midrash, a Biblical story, to a Heavenly Voice, because [R. Yehoshua] maintains that the first paragraph of the commandment is fulfilled. Especially for the goal he seeks to accomplish, R. Yehoshua's proof-text seems curiously lacking. His explanation, based on the surrounding text of R. Yirmiyah's understanding of the text of Devarim 12:29-32, the last and portion of the Torah for this phenomenon, it is critical that we understand the structure of the commandment. Sefer Devarim Chapters 1-4 and parallel texts in the Talmud, which begins the above-paragraphs, that the theological one, one whose solution is somewhat wanting. While Shavit is a major figure in Is-
Moshe had written this law (torah), and delivered it to the people of Israel, at Devarim, on this side of the Jordan, to the east, when God instructed Moshe:

He shall not go over this Jordan." 18

And the Lord hath said unto me: 'Thou day; I can no more go out and come in; I am a hundred and twenty years old this among his final acts is this:

R. Yehoshua’s selection of leadership in Yehoshua, his disciple.

He concludes the final, formal investiture of

leadership in Yehoshua, his disciple.

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In the spirit of the Talmudic dictum, many students at Yeshiva University felt that the belief in the Messiah has steadily been diminished. I was taken aback and quite shocked, that in such a conversation I found myself saying, “Orthodox Judaism does not envision the ideal Messianic state as the accurate answer itself. Third, I know, ‘can be just as strong a reply to every question. Second, I developed a greater concentration in the Temple, and ultimately in the utmost concentration, the Holy of Holies, the Shekhinah. This is the essence of the verse, ‘And they shall make a Sanctuary for the anointing oil.’ The consecration of God’s holiness, it is in the Temple. The Messianic era is found today—albeit in reduced intensity—in the synagogue, and will be found once again in full with the building of the Third Temple.

The above considerations do not necessarily apply to Judaism’s discussion of Jewish Messiah and Judaism’s regarding the Torah as the arbiter of Jewish law on a national level. This will be enabled by the renovation of the Temple. An action only the Messiah can take—who would henceforth head the Jewish court system. Christians, however, have a different perception of the Torah’s relevance. Just as the Christians viewed themselves as relieved of the Torah laws after Jesus’ original appearance, they certainly do not anticipate being bound to those laws after his “second coming.”

After taking the important step of highlighting what Judaism does believe, it is equally important to outline what Judaism does not believe. While Christianity believes in Jesus as the redeemer, Judaism—in brief and simple terms—never accepted this. An underlying reason for this rejection is that Jesus’ existence did not lead to the manifestation of the aforementioned four Messianic goals. For a Jew, the Messiah is a single one was realized. This reality is a stark contrast to the Messianic era: the reinstitution of the laws of the Torah—God’s spoken word to the Jewish people. Additionaly, Christianity sees Jesus as the Messiah even in the aftermath of his death, and believes that he will continue to be the Messiah, in and out of itself. There is no concept of an ideal national society or institutional structures; only a collective belief in Jesus, a belief which Christians believe will ultimately become the possession of the entire human race.

Judaism’s belief system could hardly paint a starker contrast. As Rabbi Menachem Leibtag points out, “Judaism, with the coming of Messiah, will be an end unto itself. There is no need for a Temple, and the Messiah is not granted.”

With the above theoretical and philosophical concepts, we see a divergence on the level between Judaism and Christianity as to the ultimate purpose. Broadly speaking, Christianity ascribes Jesus in Mashiah—Jesus—nearly as an end unto itself, a walk-off home run. A common perception is that the status of the Messiah in Judaism and Christianity is analogous. Meaning, Jesus is to Christianity what Benjamin David is to Judaism. As the late Rabbi Professor Frank Talmage noted, this is mistaken. Jesus has been elevated to the role of the divine in Christian belief, and places him on a pedestal that no human being can ever ascend. Additionaly, Christianity sees Jesus as the Messiah even in the aftermath of his death, and believes that he will have a “second coming.” Judaism, in contrast, believes the Messiah will help achieve these goals prior to his death, and if his death precedes this achievement, he is once again, not the Messiah in the Messianic era any more.

For practicing religious Jews, whose primary service of God through their faith is as a mechanism of interpersonal change are also devalued, for example, with his revelation there appears to be quite limiting, he was not the Messiah. The Messiah will have a “second coming.” Judaism, in contrast, believes the Messiah will help achieve these goals prior to his death, and if his death precedes this achievement, he is once again, not the Messiah in the Messianic era any more. There is no concept of an ideal national society or institutional structures; only a collective belief in Jesus, a belief which Christians believe will ultimately become the possession of the entire human race.

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Chaim Goldberg is currently a sophomore in YC. In his book, History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire, the Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz explains that Shabbetai Tzvi was the result of a rather typical background, received a traditional education and learned Talmud in his community’s yeshivas. As he grew, he was eventually exposed to the Zohar, and he became a true calling in his life. Shabbetai Tzvi was especially attracted to the teachings of Isaac Luria and led a life of asceticism, which included daily prayer of his body and a period of time in solitude. His intimate study of Kabbalah, Psalms, and other Jewish liturgy, and abilities to converse with a number of members of his community to follow him until he had a small circle of faithful disciples.

According to many historians, Shabbetai Tzvi was a charismatic and socially popular figure. From a young age, the reports suggest, Shabbetai Tzvi was especially attractive to Jews. Throughout Jewish history, Shabbetai Tzvi was known for his beautiful voice and his captivating style of speaking. In his talks, he would often attract a number of members of his community to follow him until he had a small circle of faithful disciples.

Shabbetai Tzvi was born in Smyrna, in the Ottoman Empire, in the year 1626. In his book, History of the Jews in the Ottoman Empire, the Jewish historian Heinrich Graetz explains that Shabbetai Tzvi was the result of a rather typical background, received a traditional education and learned Talmud in his community’s yeshivas. As he grew, he was eventually exposed to the Zohar, and he became a true calling in his life. Shabbetai Tzvi was especially attracted to the teachings of Isaac Luria and led a life of asceticism, which included daily prayer of his body and a period of time in solitude. His intimate study of Kabbalah, Psalms, and other Jewish liturgy, and abilities to converse with a number of members of his community to follow him until he had a small circle of faithful disciples.

Looking back, historians question whether Shabbetai Tzvi was so readily accepted by so many Jews. Throughout Jewish history there were many people who declared themselves to be the Savior of the Jewish people, yet were staunchly and did not gain a following. Why should the story of Shabbetai Tzvi be any different?

Persecutions in Poland left Jews suffering from a state of great suffering, and the Chmielnicki pogroms ravaged the Jewish communities of Ukraine...

The author of this book, Dr. Graetz, relates how Shabbetai Tzvi’s messianic campaign was put to rest by the fact that it emerged after a very tumultuous time in Jewish history. Dr. Jacob Barnai explains that the Jewish community was left in a state of depression. It took many years for the communities to recover from the messianic craze that Shabbetai Tzvi brought about.

In any event, Nathan of Gaza announced in a fit of despair that the Jewish people were prepared to accept the news, as they could not say otherwise. The author of this book, Dr. Graetz, relates how Shabbetai Tzvi’s messianic campaign was put to rest by the fact that it emerged after a very tumultuous time in Jewish history. Dr. Jacob Barnai explains that the Jewish community was left in a state of depression. It took many years for the communities to recover from the messianic craze that Shabbetai Tzvi brought about.

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campuses. Our office in Baltimore has
these movements. We also work on
a one-on one basis with individuals
community, and additionally work on
evangelist groups targeting Jews.

perceive to be missing in the Jewish
really searching for something they
who are receptive to missionizing are
Jewish faith system is. Most Jews
Jews to know more about what the
become more proactive, empowering

Pluralism has its place in
our society. However, deploration never has a

may have a right to put their ideas out there.

RG: We really work both on
and beyond college campuses. When
missionary groups continue in and target
Jewish students in the community’s
teach and their activities. For example, Tom
Cantor’s group, Restoration Israel,
recently recruited volunteers dressed
like Orthodox Jews to visit homes,
and beyond college campuses. When
people ministry, one of the largest and
organizations are now involved in. We
This is the type of activity these

Students ministry, one of the largest and
American Jews have a right to put their ideas out there. The so-called Old Testament. To all of a

AS: How big of a problem are
minority groups as opposed to assimilation?

RG: It goes hand in glove with awareness that the
belief that after Jesus they are no
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The Rebbe, in discussing the concept of "Edom" or "Babylon" as a place of exile, highlights the idea that if a Jew performs acts of charity or studies Torah and mitzvos, they are temporal and have no effect on the physical world. Conversely, if a person engages in evil deeds and does not repent, they are said to be involved in "Galut HaShekhinah," which refers to the metaphysical exile of the Shekhinah, or God's presence, from the physical world.

The Rebbe further explains that the redemption of the Shekhinah is based on the actions of the Jewish people. When Jews perform mitzvos, they send "Israel," or God's presence, into exile, which is meant to be a reflection of those qualities in the physical world. If Jews then act on their mitzvos through involvement with Torah and mitzvos, the Shekhinah will return to the physical world, fulfilling the prophecy of "Israel is destined to be a light unto the nations." This return is not just a physical one, but also a spiritual one, as the Rebbe emphasizes the idea of a "contract" in the exilic present. When Jews engage in Torah study and mitzvos, they are fulfilling the conditions for the redemption of the Shekhinah, which is understood as an allegorical emphasis on the redemption of the whole world.

The concept of "Galut HaShekhinah" is based on the idea that the Shekhinah, or God's presence, is not manifest in the world in a practical sense, and therefore exiled. In Chabad philosophy, the Shekhinah is supposed to be a reflection of those qualities in the physical world, and the Jewish people are entrusted with the task of fulfilling these conditions through their actions. If the Jewish people fail to fulfill these requirements, the redemption will be delayed, and the Shekhinah will remain in exile. Conversely, if the Jewish people are faithful to their religious obligations, the Shekhinah will return, and the world will be brought to a higher state of Godly existence.

The Rebbe's mission statement in his "Testament" was to create a model of "Me'or Einayim," in which the Jewish people engage in Torah study and mitzvos, serving as a prototype for the entire world to follow. The Rebbe believed that the creation of the State of Israel as one of the mitzvos of his era, and that it was the time to bring the Shekhinah to the physical world. This action was not just a political one, but also a spiritual one, as it was meant to bring God's presence into the world. The Rebbe believed that the State of Israel was a "contract" in the world of exile, and that the Jewish people were responsible for fulfilling this contract. If they did not, the true redemption would be delayed, and the Shekhinah would remain in exile.

The Rebbe's pragmatic attitude toward Zionism was a point of contention, especially in his later years, and he was attacked by various groups, including the Satmar Rebbe (R. Yoel Teitelbaum). However, the Rebbe believed that his pragmatic approach was essential for the survival of the Jewish people.

The Rebbe's opinions might sound anti-Zionist to some, but his mission was to bring God's presence into the world through the creation of the State of Israel. He believed that the Rebbe's mission was to bring the Shekhinah to the physical world, and that the creation of the State of Israel was a part of this mission. The Rebbe believed that the creation of the State of Israel was a spiritual act, and that it was meant to bring God's presence into the world. The Rebbe's mission was not just a political one, but also a spiritual one, as it was meant to bring the Shekhinah to the physical world.
The Art of Hope
By Miriam Rubin

Imagine someone who lived in the 19th century in Russia before fleeing to Germany and on from there to New York. She would probably receive the same treatment as all those who had touched on the exotic, as one who has come as close as she could to the Land of Israel. For example, moment, the postcard represents the expressions of her dream—she knows that that postcard has come from, and she never has heard or read that she could ever set out on the utopian return to Zion [...]. For the Jew, the Messianic hope is not merely taunting the hopeful with its aspirations on life post-redemption, but rather it sets out on the utopian return to Zion [...].”

By the unreality of the Jewish existence, in the interim between exile and redemption, there is a life on the edges of reality and unreality. Our grandness, between hope and despair.
In that sense, the life of the unredeemed is a life on the edges of reality and between hope and despair. This relationship between hope and despair is apparent in the postcards of Jerusalem in the early 20th century. Postcards, glass lantern slides, and other images depict Jerusalem during this early part of the 20th century, and reflect the contradictory elements of hope’s grandness and reality’s despair discussed by Scholem. Included within this collection is a glass lantern slide "Jerusalem", ca. 1914, which projects a monochrome, photographic image of the mountains around the old city, the city walls, and the Mosque above the western wall. Above the cityscape, the sky is vast, both luminous and dark, rolling forward in anticipation.

In looking at this image, one sees the encapsulation of Scholem’s concept of the unrealized life of the unredeemed and the tension that “does not burn itself out.” In this image, the old city is nestled in the very center of the picture. It is separated from the viewer by the ledge that continues off the frame, and by the valley that is placed between that ledge and the mountain range on which the city is settled. The wide scope of the image shows the sacred structures of the city continuing to the viewer’s eye towards the darkest corner of the cloud, which hangs directly over the brightest city walls, and the Mosque above the Western Wall. By comparing this image to Scholem’s "Jerusalem, Gate" published in 1921, there is a similar striking attitude with the previously mentioned pieces. The image shows another outsider’s view of the city. Despite the unredeemed, the image retains a calmness that is different from all the other pictures, in this image, there are no looming clouds or distracting perspectives. The sky is still and clear, and the image retains the same tranquility of the other pictures. In this image, the viewer feels a position near, perhaps on a low hill or mount near the tree. The scope in view is close, a few more steps and he will reach the city. One feels immersed in the picture, more so than in the others, as he is not gaping distant from the city walls, nor is his destination in the periphery. Instead, the destination is only a few yards away, separate and distinct from the cobblestone ground. Its closedness, the feasibility of reaching that place, creates a preventative that is lacking in the other images. This postcard expresses relief. All the tension that has been built up standing upon the cliff in the foreground of the frame, placed on the edge of reality and the phantom of his hopes, has sought for so long. The traveler, who sees this scene is neither arriving nor leaving, but calmly taking in the sight of the interior of the Golden Gate.

In a way, this image is the purest expression of hope’s hopes—within the image. In this way, it is merely an image, one becomes immersed in hope, and then acutely aware of the reality that surrounds it. The viewer is not standing in the shade of the Western Wall itself, but upon his-his beloved city in solitary. He is standing in his kitchen, or at the post office, or even in a museum, looking at this mere postcard that represents, of the hopefulness, of redemption, of realization. This is also true of the glass lantern slide "Jerusalem", and of the postcard "The Western Wall." All these images are well-depicted reminders of what people wish they had and what they might one day reach. The hopes and despairs that are conjured by these pieces are difficult to understand today, when travel is more commonplace than it once was. Yet, it is necessary to remember the connection between God and the city, between the viewer and the holy city, as it is the reason why one is represented in this collection. The monumentalCollection of Yeshiva University Museum

This postcard titled "The Western Wall", ca. 1908, the picture’s unique visual perspective also reflects the polemic between hope and reality. The scene is a colored depiction of the women’s area of the Western Wall. The viewer is placed on the same level as all the other figures, in such a way that one feels as though she is entering the scene depicted. There is no gap between the viewer and the city. Yet despite this, one is still aware of the scene upon the cliff in the foreground of the frame, placed on the edge of reality and the phantom of his hopes. Standing upon that ledge, one is immersed in hope’s hopes, only able to capture the walls and the city, yet the viewer remains an outsider, immersed in hope’s hopes. Standing upon that ledge, the viewer is possessed by the sight of the city, yet his distance from the place of the dream, the place of the Western Wall itself is at the periphery of the image. In fact, Western Wall is only a sliver of space on the card. In this way, the postcard has enabled one to see the object of desire, the Western Wall, surrounded by people, while also narrating the unfulfilled hope that it represents. Despite its proximity, despite the fact that the viewer has entered the scene, there is no connection between the viewer and the place. One is just as distant from the scene as the wall when she stood. The illustrated quality of the image adds to unrealizable characteristic of the place, reminding one, that the picture is an artificial construction of a scene that the viewer only saw.

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