

Israel, Part 6: Underground

By Amy Krakovitz

We have a short walk from outside the Old City's walls to the City of David and the entrance to Hezekiah's Tunnel.

The tunnel is an aqueduct built around 700 BCE by King Hezekiah. Not only is it mentioned in the bible twice (both in II Kings and in II Chronicles), but it has been dated by archaeologists to the 8th century BCE. The tunnel was dug from both ends, north to south, and the workers met inside. Apparently they went off course a time or two because the tunnel itself follows a winding path that would have been nearly 700 feet shorter if it had been dug in perfectly straight line.

Before we go in, Doron hands out small flashlights and blinky lights (just like you've gotten at Bar/Bat Mitzvah parties) because the tunnel is not strung with lights. It will be dark and tight.

Fortunately we are dressed appropriately; the water depth is about a foot and a half, reaching, at least on me, to just above my knee. And the water is cold! Its icy touch is an odd contrast to the warm and stuffy air above in the tunnel. The walls are quite close, the rough markings on the walls where they were hewn by the workers visible in the small lights each of us is carrying.

I am right behind DJ Wilson, a college student from UNC-Chapel Hill. He is at least 10 inches taller than I am, so I know if he doesn't hit his head, I will be fine. In some places the ceiling is quite low, DJ and others need to crouch to get

through.

Normally, 1,750 feet would not be far to walk. I would guess that it might take an average of 6-7 minutes if you were to walk it in a straight line. But we are down there much longer than that. I am not keeping track of time, in fact I am losing track of time. Someone is up ahead of me is saying that the tunnel would be great for smuggling but no one could confirm that they were in fact used by the IDF for smuggling at any time.

I had to wonder what it must have been like for the workers. Not just the back breaking job of cutting through solid stone, but the isolation under the ground might have been maddening. At last we come to the point where the two crews meet. The inscription on the wall (it's a replica now) has some words missing, lost to antiquity by time and neglect over more than a millennium. What we can see says in translation: "... this tunnel ... and this is the story of the tunnel while ... the axes were against each other and while three cubits ... to cut ... the

voice of a man ... called to his fellow, for there was a through-passage in the rock, from the right ... and on the day of the tunnel the stone hewers struck each man towards his fellow, ax against ax, and the water went from the source to the pool for 2,100 cubits. And 100 cubits was the height over the head of the stone hewers."

This spot is not in the middle of the tunnel, but quite near the far southern end. At the exit is the pool mentioned in the inscription, the Siloam Pool. We gather around the pool as we wait for word that our bus has arrived. The

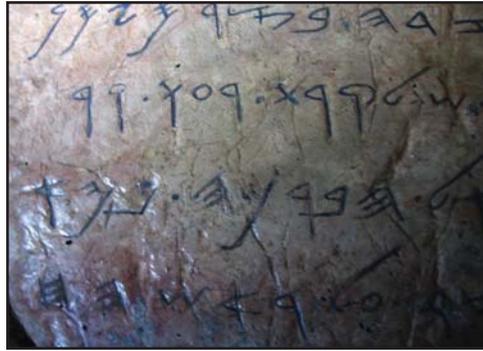
point where we egress at the Siloam Pool is adjacent to a Muslim section of Jerusalem. Within our view are three or four minarets, and while we wait, the call for prayer begins. We can hear voices from each minaret singing in unison, yet in harmony. It's a beautiful, melodic sound on the still hot air.

The bus has arrived and we continue on our journey to our next stop, Yad VaShem.

Before we enter the building though, we walk slowly through the Garden of the Righteous Among the Nations. Trees are planted along the Avenue of the

Righteous in honor of those who saved lives, because trees are a symbol of renewal of life. We spend but a few moments there before we go into the museum. We learn that there are no photos allowed and there is a strict closing time of 4 PM, leaving us just about two hours to tour the whole museum. So where is the first place we go? The cafeteria, for we have not had our lunch yet today! ✡

Next month: Yad VaShem, shopping at the Supersol, dinner in Emek Rafaim.



The replica of the original plaque that is now in the tunnel.



The tunnel exits here at the SiloamPool.



Temple Beth El's Rededication Weekend - Please Join Us!

The weekend of February 11-13, 2011, we will rededicate and celebrate our new 32,000 square foot building. Please join us for a special Shabbat Worship Service, a Welcome Home Celebration and a Family Scavenger Hunt. We are also creating a commemorative journal in which individuals and businesses will extend their congratulations to Temple Beth El as it begins another exciting chapter in its 70-year history. You, too, can be included by purchasing an advertisement or listing. Please see below for details.

Weekend Events

- **Friday, February 11th at 7:00 pm**
Rededication Shabbat Worship Service. Torah procession begins at 6:50 pm on the second floor of the Bernstein Education Building and will end with placing our Torahs in the new ark in the Blumenthal Sanctuary.
- **Saturday, February 12th at 11:00 am**
Congregational Shabbat Service.
- **Saturday, February 12th at 7:00 pm**
Welcome Home Celebration with food, drink and dancing to the music of Liquid Pleasure and the Robyn Springer Quartet. (RSVPs required, www.beth-el.com/RSVP, \$150 per person, \$1,000 for Underwriter level.)
- **Sunday, February 13th, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm**
Family Scavenger Hunt for children and families to learn how to navigate our new home.

Rededication Journal

- Inside back cover, color (\$1,800)
- Full page full color (\$1,200)
- Full page black & white (\$1,000)
- Half page full color (\$900)
- Half page black & white (\$750)
- Quarter page full color (\$600)
- Quarter page black & white (\$500)
- Eighth page black & white (\$250)
- Name listing (\$50)

Please make checks payable to *Temple Beth El*. Memo: Recognition Journal. Call 704-366-1948 to pay by credit card. For submission guidelines, see www.beth-el.com/rededicationweekend. Questions? Contact Lew Kirschner: lewis171@ix.netcom.com.

All ads must be received by January 6, 2010.

JCC Tributes

Butterfly Garden Project Fund

Wishing Jill and Ed Newman a Happy Hanukkah from Jennifer, Michael, Sydney, Tori, and Reece Newman

In honor of Barbara and Jerry Levin from Judy and Leonard Marco

In honor of Gwen Orland from Keith, Laura and Emily Orland, Marilyn and Jerry Bergman

In honor of Judy August from: The Osserman Family

In memory of Margaret Schwartz, mother of Larry Schwartz from Stacey and Ira Slomka, David Cohen

In memory of Marcia Gottlieb and Martin Blumberg from Lisa Richman

Oasis Senior Adult Program Fund

In honor and appreciation of Jodie Iagnocco and Ilana Levin from Evelyn Raflo

A donation to the Oasis Program Fund from Sharon Pearson, Edie Lebet, Ellen and Sam Waldman ✡

