



THE TRIBE SCRIBE

YOM HAATZMAUT: OUR CHILDREN WILL RETURN TO THEIR BORDERS!



MUM, I'M LOOKING AT GRANDPA'S STAMP COLLECTION AND THERE'S AN OLD ONE FROM ISRAEL WITH A PICTURE OF A MAN CALLED DR. MAX NORDAU ON IT. I'VE NEVER HEARD OF HIM. WHO WAS HE?

FUNNY YOU SHOULD ASK ME THAT, BUT LAST YEAR WHEN WE WERE IN TEL AVIV, WE WALKED PAST A STREET NAMED NORDAU STREET. I ALSO WANTED TO KNOW WHO NORDAU WAS AND I LOOKED UP HIS STORY..

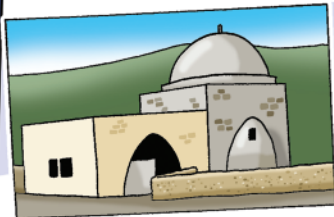


Writer: Sharon Radley Cartoonist: Paul Solomon

Born in 1849 in Hungary, Nordau was a doctor and an assimilated Jew. Together with Theodore Herzl he was the co-founder of the World Zionist Organisation. When he spoke at the First Zionist Congress in Basel, he mentioned several times three words in Hebrew taken from the book of Jeremiah,

"V'Shavu Banim I'Gvulam," - "Our Children will Return to their Borders."

When he was asked how he found these words, Nordau answered that he was taught them by an eight-year-old boy who was responsible for his commitment to Zionism. This is what Nordau said:



" I have a children's clinic in Paris. A Chassidic woman came in with a pale little boy who had been ill for three weeks. She was very poor and couldn't afford to pay so instead I asked the boy to teach me something he had learned in school. The little boy's eyes lit up and he answered me in Yiddish, which I understood because of my German. He told me he had been studying about Yaakov and that Yaakov had buried his wife Rachel on the way to Efrat in Bethlehem. His teacher told him that many sages question why Yaakov didn't travel about twenty miles more to bury Rachel in the family burial cave in Chevron? The little boy told me that Rashi answers this and says that when the Jewish people would be sent into their first exile in Babylon they would pass Rachel's tomb and they would pray for her to plead with God for their sake.

God hears Rachel's prayers and promises Jewish return. " Stop your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, because there is a reward for your actions, and a hope for the future, and the children will return to their borders - V'Shavu Banim I'Gvulam " (Jeremiah 31: 15).

And I didn't know what to do with myself. I turned to the window so that the mother and child wouldn't see the tears rolling down my cheeks, and I said to myself, "Max, aren't you ashamed of yourself? You are an educated man, known as an intellectual, with a doctor's degree, but you don't know anything about the history of your people. And here, this sick and weak child speaks of Jacob, Jeremiah, and Rachel, as if it was yesterday. It all lives in front of his eyes."

I wiped the tears from my cheeks and turned to them and said, in my heart, "a people, with children like this, that actually live their past, they will have a sparkling future."

In that weekend's newspaper I saw an advertisement; "Whoever believes that the fate of the Jewish people is important to them, please call to help find an answer. Dr. Theodor Herzl." I called immediately. "



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