

Training priests for a rebuilt Temple of Solomon

by Allen Douglas

The core of the plot to rebuild Solomon's Temple, at least on the ground level, revolves around the activities of the Yeshiva Aretet Cohanim in Jerusalem. Comprised of over 150 students, this yeshiva's reason for existence is to constitute the priesthood for a rebuilt Temple.

In his initiating address for the founding of Aretet Coanhim, Rabbi A. I. Kook, Chief Rabbi of the Holy Land, declared: "Though the divine spirit certainly dominates all our secular activities, yet, behold, instead of hearing a blast of a trumpet announcing the great revival, we do perceive only quite a faint, mute voice due [to] the temporality and materialism that surround us. The aspect, however, changes as soon as we approach and listen attentively to the beats of Israel's soul. Now we hear already the great trumpets blowing, proclaiming the best tidings of redemption.

"The main pillar of our present revivalism is based on a deep-rooted hope of old to see once more the Priest, and Levites performing their sacerdotal rites while all the Israelites [are] beholding from their position. . . . God's message concerning the rebuilding of the Temple and the renovation of the sacerdotal rites will certainly be fulfilled very shortly. That great and glorious day is drawing nigh."

Expulsion of the Arabs

The Aretet Cohanim is one of the two main yeshivas in the Arab quarter of Jerusalem. The other is Birkat Avraham, which is substantially comprised of ex-convicts who specialize in beating up Arabs as well as Jews who are targeted for expulsion from coveted apartments.

The Aretet Cohanim (Cohanim means "priest" in Hebrew) allegedly leads a more placid existence. However, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* magazine let the cat out of the bag in its April 23 story: "The Arabs in the neighborhood get along with the Aretet Cohanim members, but if the Arabs understood why they were there, they would fear them more than they fear the wild-eyed men of Birkat Avraham. For the real purpose behind Aretet Cohanim is not just to establish a Jewish presence there; it is to prepare for the rebuilding of the Temple."

This means driving the Arabs from the city. The Aretet yeshiva is currently buying up buildings in the Arab quarter with the fairly massive funds pumped to it by the Jerusalem Temple Mount Foundation's chairman, Stanley Goldfoot. Reportedly Aretet and perhaps also Birkat Avraham are funded by the Israeli government, as part of its general support of yeshivas at an annual level of close to \$100 million per year.

"As a Jew who believes in God I have a deep-down desire to see the temple rebuilt. In general, the way to achieve this as far as the Temple Mount is concerned is to *repopulate Jerusalem*," says Aretet member Gershon Portnoy. "It is not in the hands of individuals. It all depends on the state of the Jewish people, the state of the nation, in a religious and moral sense." His fellow kook Josef Eldbaum, a Hasidic who has been working full time weaving robes for the new priesthood over the last two years, is a bit more active in his plans: "If the Arabs don't want to leave the Temple Mount we will ask, nicely at first, then perhaps use force. To this country we were not allowed for many centuries. Until '67 we could not go to the wall. Little by little we will get there. If people can go to space, we can go to the Temple."

Chief spokesman and fundraiser for Aretet, Menachem Bar-Shalom, adds the possibility that it will not be Jews who destroy the Dome of the Rock at all, but Arabs. "Perhaps there will be an earthquake, or another war; there will be another war, and a Syrian or Jordanian missile will hit it." This option is not to be taken lightly, given British Arab Bureau and Nazi International control of Islamic terrorism.

Back to animal sacrifice

In preparation for the priesthood at Aretet Cohanim, its students are "being taught the ancient rituals of animal sacrifice, in preparation for becoming priests of the temple," the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reports. There have not been animal sacrifices in Judaism since shortly after the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 A.D. According to Jewish theology, such sacrifices are morally prohibited until the Third Temple, which itself is an issue for God to determine, not for man.

It is noteworthy that the most zealous promoters of animal sacrifice are the Christian fundamentalists in the Jerusalem Temple Mount Foundation. Foundation "scientist" Lambert Dolphin, in a letter to Jews in the United States, declared that "renewed Jewish comment on the sacrifices and the priesthood cannot help but be of inestimable value to both communities. . . . I continue to be puzzled by the priorities of some of my religious Jewish friends. . . . For instance, *since the destruction of the Second Temple there appears to be virtually no discussion among the Jews of the theme of sacrifice, nor of the priesthood*. As a Christian I have come to believe that men may enjoy a relationship with the Holy One of Israel apart from the Law of Moses, but that no man can come into the personal presence of his Creator apart from suitable sacrifice."