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of G-d was incurred. But what caused this state of affairs? The Meraglim must have undergone some special experience which contributed to this campaign of fear and hysteria which they engendered. The Rabbis supply the "missing link" in the Biblical narrative. One giant, they relate, ate a pomegranate and then threw away the shell. And then the Meraglim climbed into that shell to seek shelter in it.

notorious self-debasement! And the Bible itself does not fail to predict the results of an attitude of this sort. By their own testimony, the Meraglim indict themselves when they say: עַד כִּי יִהְיֶה עַיְנֵינוּ כְּעַד עֵינֵיהֶם. "And we were in our own eyes as grasshoppers, and so we were in their eyes". Certainly! For if a man thinks of himself as no more than an insignificant insect, it is the inviolable law of nature that his fellows think of him as being no more than a mere grasshopper. If a man is willing to cringe in the pomegranate shells thrown to him, then thrown to him they will indeed be.

That lesson of self-respect, of not accepting the shells of strange ideologies, of not dancing to someone else's tune, is something which must be impressed upon us with all firmness. A glaring example of that lack of self-respect we Jews display on occasion happened some short while ago when a Jewish mayor of a Jewish city in the Jewish State visited this city. The bus drivers of that mayor's city demanded of him, legitimately, that they be granted their one day off on Shabbos. The mayor of Haifa agreed that they deserve a one-day-a-week respite - but not on Shabbos! Any day, but not Shabbos! Here is a man who has done his utmost to keep the streets of his city clean and the avenues of his soul muddy. And let alone that the voices raised in protest were few and far imbetween, but the committee selected to lay out the welcoming mat saw fit to do him honor with a non-kosher reception. Again the protests were feeble when a storm should have been raised and when every pulpit in the country should have thundered against this unmitigatedchutzpah and brazen effrontery and presumptuousness.

Why was there no open and clear repudiation of this sort of arrogant audacity? Because, my friends, we had buried our heads in the empty shell of nationalism thrown to us by others. Nationalism can be Jewish too. But only when it is vested with the holiness and sanctity and spirit which is typical of our people. Nationalism without these elements, secular nationalism, is only a hollow shell of an idea which was already out of vogue and being discarded by others when we picked it up. The real lovers of Zion were those who did protest this travesty. The others were and are not. How can we expect the respect of others for our people and our religion, if we do not manifest any respect for them.

One can cite example after example of Jews, especially American Jews, indulging in sycophantic mimicry and imitation of everything which tastes of non-Jewish sophistication. This month of June is particularly appropriate for mention of some of the more flagrant examples of Jews adopting christological ceremonies and features and integrating them in the marriage ceremony. The notorious "double-ring" ceremony, for one, is a gentile ritual which seems to have some fascination for some Jews. Or take some modern authors -- and here I have in mind one of the finest books on Judaism expounded in modern terms ever to appear -- who mar otherwise excellent remarks by constant and consistent reference to a "Judaean-Christian" tradition. Here too one detects an attempt, however unconscious, to cringe and beg acceptance from the non-Jew by hiding in the discarded shells of their pomegranates.

One wonders what has happened to our Jewish pride and self-respect. We appeal not for vanity, but for self-respect; for the free expression of our desire to pick our own fruit and not grovel in the waste baskets of others for mere shells long discarded. When that day comes, Israel will be ours indeed in the fuller, more meaningful sense. Then we will have gained more than a land -- we will have won back ourselves.

\* not for the negation of others, but for the affirmation  
of ourselves;

criticism - old theme, esp. verse of Shir Hama'alah - but  
worked out nicely (JHL); also, midrash about shell (found  
in Shir Hama'alah) is novel (JHL).  
Sermon is short - sermonette style - for last days  
smaller summer audiences.