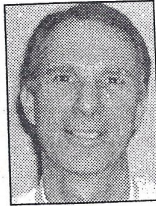


# May Hebron's scene of terror someday be a place of peace



**Rabbi Nahum  
Lev Ward**

Commentary

I am shocked and deeply saddened by the horrific loss of human life in the Mosque in Hebron.

The members of our Temple community join me in sending our heartfelt condolences to the friends and families of those slain or injured.

This abhorrent act is a heartbreaking violation of all the basic values and teachings of the Jewish tradition. Judaism teaches the sanctity and inestimable value of all life, and especially human life. To take one human life is a tragedy. The killings in Hebron are all the more monstrous for the fact that so many died, and that these people died while at prayer in a sacred place.

We must vigorously condemn not only the act itself, but also the religious fanaticism and political extremism which contributed to it. We must not allow these detestable killings to sidetrack the current Mid-East Peace Process. Rather, Jews and Arabs, Israelis and Palestinians, must now increase their efforts to bring a lasting peace to the region. In that light, I commend President Clinton for acting swiftly to bring the Peace Talks to Washington and to speed up the process.

In the meantime, the Israeli Govern-

ment must act to protect the lives of both Arabs and Jews living in the West Bank. I was pleased to learn that the Israeli Government has now put in place additional security measures to protect Arabs and Muslims living in the area. All the residents of the region must feel that their lives and welfare will be protected.

The Mosque where the Muslims were killed is a spot venerated by both Muslims and Jews as the burial place of the Patriarch Abraham, the common ancestor of the Arab and the Jewish people. Here, according to Jewish tradition, Isaac and Ishmael came together and embraced when they buried their father. The cave of Abraham, which was last Friday the site of incalculable hatred and horror, can become a site which symbolizes the common ancestry of Arabs and Jews.

I pray that the day will soon come when Arabs and Jews will come together to Hebron in peace and mutual understanding. In response to this most recent tragedy in a region which has known too much suffering, Jews and Israelis, Arabs and Muslims, both in this country and in the Middle East, must work with diligence and courage to build bridges of understanding. Working for peace is the most appropriate healing action in response to the tragedy of violence.

I pray that such a peace will come, speedily and in our day.

*Rabbi Nahum Lev Ward is Rabbi of Temple Beth Shalom in Santa Fe.*

*Santa Fe New Mexican  
May 4, 1994*