

# Why Not Uganda? Why Must the State of Israel be in the Land of Israel?



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# Israel Should Be in Germany

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Israel and Palestine are warring again. Civilians are dying again. Families are losing their homes, and chaos persists. Again. This would not be happening if Israel were located somewhere that makes more sense: in Germany.

No matter where you stand in the "Israelis vs. Palestinians" political arguments—in which both sides are hopelessly entrenched and unmoving—it seems fair to acknowledge that there are some fundamental problems with the location of the nation of Israel. For one thing, it was carved out of land already occupied by someone else. Whether or not you think Israel was justified in carving itself a nation out of Palestine, you must admit that the act of doing so was bound to cause some resentment. And, indeed, it did. It caused a lot of resentment, and anger. Emotions that still exist today. And which have fueled a more or less constant state of war against Israel since Israel was created.

It is just not an ideal situation. Yes, of course, the Jewish people had ample reason to want their own homeland, what with the centuries of vicious persecution and discrimination. And yes, of course, in the wake of WWII, it was perfectly natural for the Jewish people to feel that the time was right to establish their own nation. Let's stipulate that both of these positions, at the time of the founding of modern Israel, were reasonable:

**Jewish people:** We have been persecuted too long. We want our own state!

**Palestinians:** Okay, but don't take my stuff to get it, please!

So the establishment of Israel, regarded by many as a towering achievement of historic justice, will forever be tainted by the fact that it was established by taking land from people who had done nothing wrong. That act laid the groundwork for the nonstop conflict that continues to this day.

What if, when it was time to establish Israel, the land had instead been taken from people who did do something wrong? From people who had, in fact, just got finished perpetrating one of history's greatest crimes, against the Jewish people? The Nazis! The Holocaust! At the time Israel was being established, the Nazis had just been defeated. Germany was at the mercy of the Allies. What if—instead of snatching land in the Middle East and setting the stage for perpetual war and hatred—the Jewish people had just been awarded, say, half of Germany? It's not like the Germans would have had a good case against it, after what they just did. Hell, give the Jews the best half of Germany. Give them Berlin. Give them the nice picturesque country villages and the thick forests. It's the least that Germany could do.

An Israel established in Germany would have had several advantages to its current location. It would have been much larger. It would have been richer in natural resources. It would have a strong moral justification for its existence in that place. And, to top it all off, it would not be surrounded by Muslims committed to destroying it. It just makes sense. Half of Germany is certainly worth much more, in an economic sense, than the land of modern Israel. It would have been a better prize. And it would have set the stage not for seven decades of hatred and war, but for a nation of Israel located squarely in the midst of Western Europe, the most stable and economically developed place on earth.

Some will say that Israel had to be located where it is now, because of the "Holy Land" and all that. Well, sorry—a mystical and empirically unjustified belief in the "holiness" of some particular place is not a reason to march in and take it from someone else, by force. Grow up.

It may be a bit late to move Israel to Germany now. But when you consider the prospect of another seven decades of war over that little sliver of land, the idea does not sound so bad. Germany would still acquiesce to it, if the demand was made before the last Nazis die out. It's really the very least that they could do.

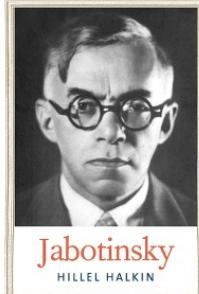


Yet at the sixth Zionist Congress, the melody was changed without warning. Herzl's keynote address, Jabotinsky informed his readers, dropped a bombshell. The El-Arish plan had fallen through. The British government, however, was now offering another territory, in the well-watered, temperate highlands of East Africa, where Jews would be allowed to enjoy home rule as a British protectorate. Given the urgent need to provide Eastern European Jewry with a reliable asylum, he, Herzl, favored accepting the proposal as long as Palestine, "the land of our forefathers," remained the ultimate goal. As a first step, he was asking the delegates to appoint a committee to investigate the prospects and report back.

The British offer—although apparently referring to an area in northwest Kenya near Lake Victoria, it immediately became known as the "Uganda plan"—was a sensational breakthrough for political Zionism: a mere six years after the movement's founding, it was being granted an opportunity to establish a semi-independent Jewish polity under the aegis of a major European power. Yet it was a breakthrough with agonizing implications, for Herzl's "Palestine proviso" could hardly be taken seriously. Unlike El-Arish, from which an expansion of Jewish settlement into nearby Palestine was imaginable, East Africa was thousands of miles away; the enormous investment of time, money, and human resources needed for developing an autonomous Jewish region there clearly precluded a similar effort elsewhere. Was it better, Jabotinsky asked in his dispatch, "to sacrifice an age-old tradition [of Jewish attachment to Palestine] for an immediately attainable success, or to reject a noble offer so as to carry on with the struggle for the Holy Land?"

It was an issue of profound historical and existential dimensions. Just who were the Jewish people that Zionism claimed to represent? What was their relation to their national and religious past? How much did or should this past define them? What role, if any, should a nation's founding myths play in its politics? A few days' debate culminating in a show of hands, if only to appoint a committee, was hardly an appropriate way to deal with such issues. Yet a show of hands, which he expected to win easily, was what Herzl wanted—and a bitter debate was what he got.

A majority of the Western Europeans again supported him. Most of them conceived of a Jewish state more as a place of refuge for their persecuted brethren than as an expression of Jewish national and cultural aspirations, and a well-disposed British protectorate in Africa seemed no worse an option than a hostile Turkish Palestine. The Eastern European vote was more divided—and more paradoxical. The Mizrachi voted with Herzl; under attack by the anti-Zionist Orthodox establishment for supporting a Jewish return to the Land of Israel without divine sanction, it sought to demonstrate that it was motivated solely by a desire to relieve Jewish suffering that was untainted by messianic fantasies. Nearly all of the secular Zionists of the "democratic faction," on the other hand, were fiercely opposed; products of the shtetl and its values even after having revolted against them, they could not imagine a Jewish homeland that was not the land Jews always had longed for. What could be the point of Jewish-owned plantations and haciendas in a country without roots in Jewish collective memory? What



1. *Jabotinsky – A Life*  
by Hillel Halkin

devotion could they inspire? By turning his back on Zion, it was argued, Herzl had betrayed the movement that bore its name.

The vote took place on the fourth day of the congress, in an atmosphere fraught with emotion. Two hundred ninety-five delegates voted in favor, 176 were against, and 143 abstained. For Herzl, it was a Pyrrhic victory. Sometimes grumbled about but always deferred to at Zionist Congresses until now, he was shocked by the size and intensity of the revolt against him. Worse yet, not only had he failed to command an absolute majority of the delegates, the "nay-sayers" spontaneously walked out of the hall as soon as the last vote was counted and adjourned to a nearby room, where they acted as though a disaster had befallen them. Some wept openly. Others sat on the floor and removed their shoes as Jews did on Tisha b'Av, the day of mourning for the destruction of the Temple.

Despite his admiration for Herzl, who seemed to him "without exaggeration, a giant," Jabotinsky voted with the opposition and joined the walkout—why, he later said, he wasn't sure. He had, he declared in his memoirs, "no romantic love for Palestine." The only explanation he could give was the same willful "because" that had made him leave school and Odessa for Rome.

Had he re-read his last dispatch to *Odesskaya Novosti*, he might have remembered things differently. There was, he wrote there, something genuinely tragic about what he had witnessed. "Think of what it is like," he told his readers, "to belong to a tribe that must weep over its first political victory in 1,800 years!" But although he could identify with both sides, it was the losing Easterners, he believed, "the mourners for Zion," who would prevail in the long run, since they were in touch with something in the Jewish psyche that the Westerners had lost contact with. The Russian delegates reflected the "natural and powerful will of the people." Even were Herzl were to get nowhere with the Sultan for the next twenty years, they

still would say: "No matter. Maybe next time around we'll be luckier—and now let's get on with the work!" Although more of a "Westerner" in outlook himself, he felt in his heart that the "Easterners" were right.

– אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמָיִם וְאֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ □

[This phrase is often translated as *God of heaven and God of earth*.<sup>12</sup> Ramban explains that this is not an accurate interpretation:]

– קָדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ אֶחָד – The Holy One, Blessed is He, is called “the God of the Land of Israel,”<sup>13</sup> – קָדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא מֶשֶׁת אֱלֹהֵי הָאָרֶץ – as it is written, *They did not know the law of “the God of the Land”* (II Kings 17:26); וְהַנּוּבָדָר אֶל אֱלֹהִים יוֹשְׁלִים קָעֵל אֱלֹהִי עָמָן – and it is written, *They spoke of “the God of Jerusalem” as of the gods of the peoples of the earth* (II Chronicles 32:19). – וַיְשִׂבְחָה סְדָד עוֹד אֲבָתָנוּ בְּעִזּוֹת הָשָׁם – There is a mystical concept involved in this, which I shall yet write about further, God willing.<sup>14</sup>

## 2. Ramban

## Bereishis 24:7

[Ramban now focuses on what led him to this interpretation:]

אָבֶל בְּסֻקֵּן לְקַחַנִי מִכִּית אָבִי לֹא נָמַר בְּ אַלְפִי דָּאָרָע – However, in the verse (v. 7) which states, *Who took me from the house of my father and from the land of my birth ...*, it does not state, *God of heaven and God of the Land*, but only *God of heaven*,<sup>15</sup> בְּ תָהָר בְּקָרְנוּ אָו – because that verse describes God as Abraham knew Him while he was still in Haran or in Ur-kasdim.<sup>16</sup>

[Ramban now cites a consequence of the fact that God is more directly involved in guiding the affairs of *Eretz Yisrael*:]

“וְאֵין אֱקָרֶב כַּיְדֵי שָׁנָן לוֹ אֲלֹוֹ – And so, [the Sages] said (*Kesubos* 110b), “One who lives outside of *Eretz Yisrael* as if he has no God, *שָׂבֵב אָמָר בַּיִת גָּדוֹלָה בְּגָדוֹלָה לְאַרְצָה בְּפִי שָׁנָן לוֹ אֲלֹוֹ* – as it says, *For they have driven me away this day from having any connection to the heritage-land of HASHEM, saying: Go, and worship alien gods!* (*I Samuel* 26:19).”<sup>17</sup>

### 3. Ramban

Vayikra 18:25

[Ramban explains the unique position of the Land of Israel and of the people of Israel in this scheme:]

– וְשַׁם תִּבְרֹךְ הוּא אֱלֹהִים רָאשֵׁי הָאָרוֹנִים לְכָל עַמּוֹן – And the Glorious Name (God), may He be blessed – “He is the God of the powers and the Lord of the lords”<sup>268</sup> for the whole world.<sup>269</sup> אֱלֹהִים יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲמֻכָּעָתָה הוּא נֶגֶלֶת דֵּין עַל-תְּהָבָת מִן הַמְּלָאכִים קָצֵן שׁוּר – However, regarding the Land of Israel – the center of habitation of the world,<sup>270</sup> it “heritage of Hashem,”<sup>271</sup> which is specially designated for His Name – He did not place over it a “captain, ruler or officer”<sup>272</sup> from among the angels,<sup>273</sup> בְּחַדְיָלוּ אָתָּה לְעֵמֶד תְּקִיעָה שָׁמָּוּן עָזָקְבָּנוּ – as He designated it as an inheritance to His people who affirm the Oneness of His Name, who are the “descendants of the Patriarchs, the ones who loved Him.”<sup>274</sup> וְהַזֶּה שָׁגַנְמָר וְהַיְתָם לִי סָגָלָה – And this is the meaning of what [Scripture] states: *you shall be to Me the most beloved treasure of all peoples, for Mine is the entire world* (*Exodus* 19:5),<sup>275</sup> וְהַזֶּה – וְתַחַבְיָוְתָם לִי לְעַם וְאָגְבֵי אֲתָּה לְכָבֵד לְאַלְיהִים לְאַלְיהִים אֶחָרֶיךָ בְּלִל – and it is written, so that you will be a people for Me and I will be a God for you (*Jeremiah* 11:4), meaning that you will not be under the control of other powers at all, for I (God) will control you directly. וְהַזֶּה – וְלֹכֶב אָמֵר יְשָׁרָם אֶת בֵּל רָקַטְיוֹן וְגַרְגַּרְתָּם וְגַרְגַּרְתָּם תְּאַרְצָן – And so [God] sanctified the people that dwells in His Land, i.e., the nation of Israel, with the sanctity of refraining from sexual immorality and with the multitude of other commandments so that they would be sanctified for His Name.<sup>276</sup> וְלֹכֶב אָמֵר יְשָׁרָם אֶת בֵּל רָקַטְיוֹן וְגַרְגַּרְתָּם תְּאַרְצָן – And this is why [Scripture] states: *You shall observe all My decrees and all My ordinances and perform them; then the Land to which I bring you to dwell will not disgorge you* (below, 20:22). וְתַחַבְיָוְתָם עָזָרְבָּן לְבָם – And it is further written there, *So I said to you: You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to inherit it, a land flowing with milk and honey – I am HASHEM, your God, Who has separated you from the peoples* (*ibid.*, v. 24), אָמֵר בַּי הַבְּרוּלִיל אָוֹתָנוּ מִבֵּל הַעֲמִים אֲשֶׁר בָּם עַל-יְהָמָם שׂוּרִים וְאַלְיהִים – where [Scripture] is saying that [God] separated us from all the other peoples, over whom He placed celestial officers and other powers, by His giving us the Land,<sup>277</sup> וְהַזֶּה הָאָרֶץ שָׁהָא – so that He, may He be blessed, will Himself be our God and we will be specifically designated for His Name.<sup>278</sup> וְהַזֶּה הָאָרֶץ שָׁהָא – And so the Land, which is the heritage of the Glorious Name (God), disgorges anyone who contaminates it, וְלֹא חֲסַבְלָן עַבְדִּי בְּנֹהֶר וְרָה וְמַגְלִים עַזְיָה – and it does not tolerate those who worship idols or those who engage in sexual immorality.<sup>279</sup>

[In the previous paragraph Ramban grouped idolatry together with sexual immorality as onerous sins that defile the Land, although these passages primarily concern sexual immorality and do not explicitly mention idol worship. Ramban explains his inclusion of idolatry:]

וְבָנֶה בְּרִישָׁה הַשׂוֹנֵה יַעֲבֹד לְאַחֲרֵיכֶם מִן – And this passage mentions Molech (above, v. 21) as an example for *all kinds of idolatry* – together with the mention of sexual immorality, וְעַל גָּלָם אֲכֵר "אֶל תִּשְׁמַח אֶל לְקָדְשָׁךְ יְהוָה בְּכָל אֶלְهָה וְגַם נָתָנוּ אֱלֹהִים נָאָרָם" – and it is regarding all [these sins] that [Scripture] here states: *Do not become contaminated through any of these; for through all of these the nations that I expel before you became contaminated ... and the Land disgorged its inhabitants.*

"לֹא תְּגַנֵּב – And similarly in the second passage dealing with sexual immorality, [Scripture] states: *You shall be holy for Me, for I Hashem am holy; and I have separated you from the people to be Mine* (below, 20:26). And therefore [Scripture] states that since there are designated for His Name, because of the prohibition of idolatry.<sup>280</sup> This is the reason why the Land of Israel is not like other lands; it does not sustain sinners (*Sifra, Kedoshim, Porsheh 4, Perek 12:14*).<sup>281</sup> And they expounded further in *Sifra*: *and no other power is with Him* (*Deuteronomy 32:12*) – this means that none of the celestial ministers of the nations will have permission to rule over you, "לֹא תְּגַנֵּב – as in the matter that is stated: *then I will depart; but behold, the minister of Greece approaches* (*Daniel 10:20*). But the minister of the Persian kingdom stood opposed to me (ibid., v. 13) (*Sifrei, Deuteronomy* §315).<sup>282</sup>

[After discussing God's direct authority over the Land of Israel, Ramban now explains the manner of God's control over the rest of the world:]

Now outside the Land of Israel, לֹא תְּגַנֵּב – even though everything is ultimately under the dominion of the Glorious Name (God), purity there is not complete<sup>283</sup> – because of the heavenly ministers who rule over it, וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – and the peoples of the earth stray after their celestial ministers, worshipping them as well as God.<sup>284</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And that is why Scripture states concerning Messianic times, *He will be called "God of all the world"* (*Isaiah 5:5*), "בָּעֵד הַשְׁמָנִים מִתְּלַמְּדָה אֲלָכָה" – because He is the God of the powers Who rules over all,<sup>285</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – and in the end, in Messianic times, He will "punish the hosts of heaven in heaven,"<sup>286</sup> removing the dominion of the higher powers and destroying the arrangement of the ministers, done in the upper realms. He will punish "the kings of the earth on earth."<sup>286</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And this is the idea that the verse states, *The matter is by decree of the angels* (lit., *and the word of the holy ones, through asking*) (*Daniel 4:14*).<sup>287</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – [Scripture] is saying that that matter, revealed in the dream, which had been decreed regarding Nebuchadnezzar, was a decree of the angels.<sup>288</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – who decreed that the forces emanating from them<sup>289</sup> should do so, i.e., should execute the decree. בְּלֹא תְּגַנֵּב – And [these angels] are called גָּרוּאִים (lit., "awakers") here because it is through their emanations that the forces producing all the actions of the world are awakened, i.e., activated, "בְּלֹא תְּגַנֵּב – וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ" – as [Scripture] states: *and behold, a holy angel* [lit., *came down from heaven. He cried out loudly*, and said thus, "Chop down the tree, etc." (*Ibid.*, vv. 10-11).<sup>290</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – The verse then continues, *and the word of the holy ones, through asking*, meaning to say that [the angels] first asked of the Most High regarding the Divine will about [Nebuchadnezzar], and only afterward they decreed that such a thing should be done. בְּלֹא תְּגַנֵּב – And this is the meaning of what Daniel said to [Nebuchadnezzar], *It is the decree of the Most High* (ibid., v. 21),<sup>291</sup> for every-thing is ultimately from Him.

Ramban cites several other passages alluding to God's special connection with the Land of Israel:  
 וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And so, the Glorious Name (God) is the God of the powers outside the Land, but He is the direct God of the Land of Israel, which is the heritage of Hashem.<sup>292</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And this is the meaning of the verse, *but this people ... will stray after the gods* [lit., *foreign to the Land*] (*Deuteronomy* 31:16); that the other powers (גָּדוֹלִים), i.e., the celestial ministers, stars and constellations, are foreign in the Land of God and in His portion.<sup>293</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And this is the connotation of that which is stated: *[The nations] that you have exiled and settled in the cities of Samaria*<sup>294</sup> *do not know the law of the God of the Land; He has invited lions against them, and they are now killing them* (*II Kings* 17:26).<sup>295</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – Now the Cutheans had not been punished in their own land when they served their heathen gods, having lions invited against them, וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – but when they came to the Land of God and acted there in conformity with their previous actions, [God] then incited against them the lions that were killing them.<sup>296</sup>

[Ramban quotes various statements of the Sages that accord with the ideas he has presented above:]

"לֹא תְּגַנֵּב – And [the Sages] taught similarly in *Sifra: Let not the Land disgorge you for having contaminated it* (below, v. 28) – the Land of Israel is not like other lands; it does not sustain sinners (*Sifra, Kedoshim, Porsheh 4, Perek 12:14*).<sup>297</sup> And they expounded further in *Sifra*: *and no other power is with Him* (*Deuteronomy* 32:12) – this means that none of the celestial ministers of the nations will have permission to rule over you, "לֹא תְּגַנֵּב – as in the matter that is stated: *then I will depart; but behold, the minister of Greece approaches* (*Daniel 10:20*). But the minister of the Persian kingdom stood opposed to me (ibid., v. 13) (*Sifrei, Deuteronomy* §315).<sup>298</sup>

[Ramban explains other teachings of the Sages in light of the principles he has established above:]

וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And this is the meaning of the Sages' statement: וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – Anyone who dwells outside the Land, it is as if he has no God, וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – for it is stated, *I am Hashem, your God, Who took you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, to be God unto you* (below, 25:38).<sup>300</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And [Scripture] states further (*I Samuel* 26:19), *for they have driven me away this day from attaching myself to the heritage of Hashem*,<sup>301</sup> as if to say, "Go worship other gods" (*Kesubos* 110b).<sup>302</sup>

וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And [the Sages] stated further in *Tosefta of Tractate Avodah Zarah*: "בְּלֹא תְּגַנֵּב – Now, [Scripture] states, *and I return in peace to my father's house – then Hashem will be a God to me* (*Genesis* 28:21).<sup>303</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And it states also that God said, *to give you the Land of Canaan, to be God unto you* (below, 25:38) –

וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – by which He implied,<sup>304</sup> "As long as you are in the land of Canaan I am God unto you, but when you are not in the land of Canaan then – as it were – I am not a God unto you."<sup>305</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And similarly it states, *About forty thousand armed men of the legion passed before Hashem*<sup>306</sup> for the battle (*Joshua* 4:13), "בְּלֹא תְּגַנֵּב – surely Hashem your God is with you; ... for He has delivered the inhabitants of the land into my hand, and the land has been conquered before Hashem and before His people (*I Chronicles* 22:18).<sup>307</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – Now, can one think that it is Israel who conquers the Land "before God," i.e., on His behalf?<sup>308</sup> וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – However, the explanation is that as long as [the Israelites] are living on [the Land], it is as if it is conquered by God; but if they are not on it, it is not considered conquered by God (*Tosefta, Avodah Zarah* 5:2).<sup>309</sup>

וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – And based on this concept, [the Sages] stated in *Sifrei*: "בְּלֹא תְּגַנֵּב – And you will be swiftly banished from the goodly Land. You shall place these words of Mine upon your heart and upon your soul; you shall bind them for a sign upon your arm and let them be an ornament between your eyes ... and you shall write them on the doorposts of your house ..." (*Deuteronomy* 11:17-18, 20) – even when I exile you out of the Land of Israel to foreign lands, וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – make yourselves "distinguished" through the commandments so that when you return to the Land they will not be new to you. וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ – Similarly, Jeremiah said to the Israelites going into exile (*Jeremiah* 31:20): *Make road markers [לְמַעַן] for yourself* – these are the commandments with which Israel is distinguished (*וְעַל־כָּל־הָאָרֶץ* 31:20) (*Sifrei, Deuteronomy* 43).<sup>310</sup>

### The Loneliness of Charismatic Man

The closeness of man and God is confined to a specific environment in spite of both divine universality and ubiquity and the effort of man to transcend his limitedness and finitude. The encounter of God and man is conditioned by certain external factors. The first appearance of God to Abraham, as recorded in the Bible, was associated with the command of *lekh lekha*, “go forth from your land” (Gen. 12:1), of emigrating from his father’s home to the Land of Israel. Abraham, acting under God’s orders, arrived in Canaan. God’s promise to and agreement with Abraham were subject to the fulfillment of the above-mentioned command.

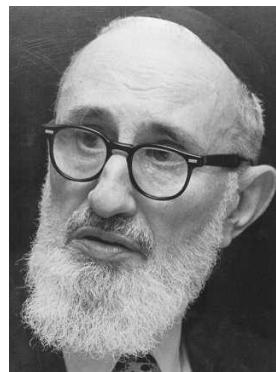
Why God could not enter into an intimate relationship with Abraham in Mesopotamia and had to guide him into a new land is an old problem. Judah Halevi, in his *Kuzari*, explains it with the uniqueness of the Land of Israel as an ideal land for the meeting of God by man.<sup>1</sup> He attributes metaphysical qualities to the land and endows it with a spiritual climate: *hayyei neshamot avir artzeh* (“the air of your land is the breath of life for our souls” – Judah Halevi, *Tziyon, ha-lo tish’ali, Tish’ah Be-Av kinot*). Of course, the old myth of the temperate climate which is ideal for the development of man was exploited by Halevi. Nahmanides, in his commentary to Lev. 18:25, followed in Halevi’s footsteps, as did the mystics. For them, the attribute of *kedushah*, holiness, ascribed to the Land of Israel is an objective metaphysical quality inherent in the land.

With all my respect for the *Rishonim*, I must disagree with such an opinion. I do not believe that it is halakhically cogent. *Kedushah*, under a halakhic aspect, is man-made; more accurately, it is a historical category. A soil is sanctified by historical deeds performed by a sacred people, never by any primordial superiority. The halakhic term *kedushat ha-aretz*, the sanctity of the land, denotes the consequence of a human act, either conquest (heroic deeds) or the mere presence of the people in that land (intimacy of man and nature). *Kedushah* is identical with man’s association with Mother Earth. Nothing should be attributed a priori to dead matter. Objective *kedushah* smacks of fetishism.

I believe, rather, that the divine commandment to Abraham to leave his parents’ land and go to the Land of Canaan should be understood under a different aspect entirely. The charismatic personality must disassociate himself from his national connections and completely free himself from the environment he was born and reared in. The chosen person severs his affiliation with his clan and friends; he deserts everybody in order to give himself up to his new friend, God. The first prerequisite for prophecy is loneliness. A lonely man finds the Lonely God, and this very loneliness creates the charismatic bond between them. The charismatic person must lose his country and home, he becomes a miserable stranger and straying wanderer: *arami oved avi* – “a

### 4. The Emergence of Ethical Man

Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik  
Edited by Michael Berger



5. *Kaftor V'Ferach* (Chpt 10)  
*R' Ishtori HaParchi*  
(1280-1355)

6. *Tashbetz* (3:200)  
R' Shimon ben Tzemah Duran  
(1361-1444)

עוד אמרו "ול (סנהדרין לה, ב) אמר הרואה ראשון וראשו מאירן ישראל, וכמו שזכרנו<sup>799</sup>. כתוב הרכם" ס' ו"ל הלכות בית הבחירה פרק ב' (להלן ב) ומוסרתו ברה הכל שהמקומות שנבנה דוד ושלמה את המזבח בנזון ארונית הרא ומקום שנבנה בו אבשלום אבינו את המזבח ועקר עליו צדקה, והוא המקומ שנבנה בז מזבח בשילאי מן התבהר, והוא המזבח שהקריב עליי קין ותבל, ובו הקוריב אדם האשכנז כשבנרא קרבן ומשם נברא. אמרו חכמים אדם מקומות בפרטנו נברא. ברוך אל עליון שהחטא רידיו מאירן מולדתו שורת עשרה שם נשות כדי להזכיר אל הארץ שבר בלהבורה בו תעללה ובווען. ובית המקדש שהוא באין ישראל נברא קודם שבנרא עולם (פסחים ג, ז, וכמו שזכרנו<sup>800</sup>). וכן המובל לא ירד לאירן ישראל (ובחטם קג, א). פרק התיאר לו את הכהן (וימא, ב) עלם מצין נברא. והאל יראיונו נפלאות מתרות, וופתח לנו בתוכו ונגיד של שער בינה<sup>801</sup>, ובונתי בה כבוד האל ית' וכתות האבות לברושים ע"ב.

כבר התברר ת"ל ארץ ישראל כאימוטי קריון אותה הארץ קושטה<sup>802</sup>, ומוה לשון קדמתה שהטולה עליה, כמו אגדת הרקוש ופוצוא בהו. אין ספק שיש בה קושחה ותורה גודלה ולזה גם נקבעת הארץ ולזה הארץ טמאת. אבל אמרו ליהושע (יהושע ה, ט) כי המקומ אשר אתה עמוד עליו קדש הוא ממין אחר. וההברר דני חיב תולדות הארץ עצמאית בשתי קדימות, ובאר ב"ה בבול הארץ על פי הוויה כדי השם הטובה עליהם.

מה שאמורו "ול' במקצת סותה פרק אלו נאמרין בכל לשון (*א*), יראה שישם שעבורו את הירדן שבו בים בא רוד גוריים. בא והוא כמה נסTEM ונעשה לשישראל באחו הום, עבורי <sup>803</sup> את הירדן ובאו אל הר נזרעם והר עיבל שבשומרון ושבצד שם ושבאבל אלוי מורה <sup>804</sup> שנאמר (רכיש *א*) הלא הנה עבר הירדן וג', יותר מושם מלך, ואל עמד אש בפניהם וכל שעמד לפניהם מוד נזורת, שנאמר (שמות *ב*, כ) את אמיתך אשלה לבני, ואומר (שם *ט*, ט) חפהל עליהם אימתה ופורה. עד עיבור עמק יי' זו באה רדונה, עם זו קנית זה באה שנית. ותוכה הוא שורי חברון (וירושע *ה*, ט) והעם עליו מן הירדן בעשר לחדר הדשון וחונן בגליל בקצת רודין, ושם מלו ושם עשו את כספה שנאמר (שם *ג*) ויהו בני ישראל בגניל ויעש את הפוך באשון בארכעה עשר ים לחדר בעבותה רודין, וכבשו יירוחם ובכשו עי, ואחר כן בחוב (שם *ח*, ל) או יינה יהושע מובה לי' אלה, ישראל בהר עיבל ומיהו רשי' ז' הביא בפי' ספר יהושע ובאו ולנו בגליל לארון <sup>805</sup>. עד כתוב ז' או יינה יהושע פרשה זו אין מוקדם ומאותר שים שעבורו את הירדן עשו כן.

## 7. Reflections of the Rav v. 1

R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik

Edited by R' Abraham Besdin



The Concept of Singularity

The word "singular" means "being only one," "exceptional," "extraordinary" and "separate." The word *segulah* in Hebrew similarly connotes singularity. In Exodus (19:5), the Torah enunciates the doctrine of the election of Israel as a cardinal tenet of our faith.<sup>9</sup> "And you shall be to Me *segulah* from all other other peoples." The word *segulah* is interpreted by Rashi as referring to "a cherished treasure, comparable to costly vessels and precious stones for which a king has a special regard."

*Segulah* may also describe relationships between people. For example, Jacob loved Rachel but he did not hate Leah, despite the verse, "And the Eternal saw that Leah was unloved" (*senu'ah*) (Gen. 29:31). His bond to her merely suffered by comparison with Rachel, as in the verse, "And he [Jacob] loved Rachel more than Leah" (*ibid.* v. 30). He had no reason to feel any animosity toward her. But his relationship with Rachel was singular. Similarly, Jacob loved Joseph and Benjamin, Rachel's children, differently than he loved his other sons. Judah described this succinctly:



## 8. The Lord is Righteous in All His Ways

Rabbi Sosovitchik

Edited by R' J Schacter

**T**he *kinot* end with a group of *piyutim* or *kinot*, some ten in all, beginning with the word “*Tzifyon*.” They are all concerned with one topic, the fact that Eretz Yisrael was selected as the Chosen Land. The first of them, of course, is by Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, followed by others who imitated his special literary form, some with more success and some with less. It was fashionable to imitate Rabbi Yehudah Halevi’s “*Tzifyon*.” The Maharal of Rothenburg wrote one later on. His “*Sha’ali serufah va-esh*” is also a “*Tzifyon*,” although his specific subject was the burning of the Talmud and the destruction of the Torah, whereas Rabbi Yehudah Halevi spoke about the destruction of the land.

The meaning of the word *tzifyon* is somewhat uncertain; we do not know exactly to what it refers. It may refer to the Land of Israel, it may refer to Jerusalem, it may refer to the *Beit ha-Mikdash* itself, to the Holy of Holies. And these interpretations do not exclude one another. What does *tzifyon* actually mean? It is a sign on the road, as in “Set up signposts (*tzifyunim*)” (Jer. 31:20). If you want to guide strangers to a city, you erect signs on the road.

*Tzifyon* also means something else. Do not forget that David conquered *Tzifyon*, the land of the Yevusi, after the whole of Eretz Yisrael was conquered; he postponed his conquering of the Yevusi for a long time. Yevusi was a difficult city to conquer.

So what does *tzifyon* mean? A very powerful rock, a very tall mountain, very difficult to vanquish. *Tzifyon* means unconquerable. Zion was called *Tzifyon* even before David because no one could conquer it; it was a very well fortified place. When Isaiah spoke about Zion and Jerusalem, or when the author of *Tehillim* spoke about Zion and Jerusalem, or when so many prophets spoke about Zion and Jerusalem, what did they mean? That Zion was remarkable in one respect, namely, that it was

strategically well fortified and therefore very difficult to conquer. The word *tzifyon* was adopted by the prophets for a single purpose, to tell their enemies all over the world that Zion is strange, unique, and difficult to overcome.

In addition, in the prophetic books, Zion also began to refer to some spiritual, transcendental beauty or to something unusual. Isaiah and other prophets speak about Zion not only in terms of a very strong city, but in terms of uniqueness, of being unusual, of not being average.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi led a very comfortable life; he was a minister of finance, an excellent executive for the caliphate in Spain, which then was Arab. He was *karov le-malkhut*, close to the ruling authority, honored and respected by everyone. But he had an urge to go to Eretz Yisrael. In this “*Tzifyon*” that he composed while still in Spain he wrote, “Who will fashion wings for me (*mi ya’aseh li khenaftayim*)? How am I going to get there? Who will give me wings that will enable me to soar very far and cover the distance by flight? And, in fact, he left for Eretz Yisrael. Traveling to Eretz Yisrael then was not like going there now. It was quite a dangerous undertaking; it was an adventure. *Tosafot* (*Ketubot* 110b, s.v. *hu omer*) writes about how difficult it was to go to Eretz Yisrael because of the dangers of the journey. But Rabbi Yehudah Halevi left everything and went. While we know that he left for Eretz Yisrael, we know nothing about him from the date of his departure from Egypt. But a story is told—I do not know if it is true—that when he arrived in Eretz Yisrael, he fell on the soil and prostrated himself. And, at that very moment, an Arab, a Bedouin, on a horse rode over him and killed him. Now they say there is documentary evidence that he died in Egypt on his way to Eretz Yisrael. I do not know about it.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi’s complaint in “*Tzifyon*” pertains to distance. He is driven by the desire to visit the Holy Land because *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* revealed Himself there to His

prophets, but he wonders how he can overcome the problem of distance. Today we do not have this problem. Distance is perhaps the only problem that modern society has solved. It is amazing how the distance problem can now be solved in just a few hours. But for Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, distance was a very difficult problem. The problem, in all the romantic literature of antiquity, was how to overcome distance. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi was driven by this desire, but he wondered how he would be able to fulfill it. He was, apparently, quite pessimistic and skeptical about whether he would ever reach Eretz Yisrael because it was so far away.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi adored everything about Eretz Yisrael; he was madly in love with Eretz Yisrael. I have never known of anyone so in love with Eretz Yisrael as Rabbi Yehudah Halevi. There were many others who went to Eretz Yisrael, but they did not confess their love for the land in such terms as he did. The Ramban also loved Eretz Yisrael. He was more sophisticated and explained his love in halakhic terms, and this approach is more familiar to us, because we know the language of Halakhah. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi expresses his love for Eretz Yisrael somewhat differently than the Ramban.

Yehudah Halevi was born and raised in the so-called Arab caliphate in Spain. For many years, Spain consisted of little kingdoms. He was born in one of those kingdoms and probably studied under the supervision and guidance of the rabbinic scholars in North Africa, where there was great scholarship. Rav Alfasi, for example, was there. Rabbi Yehudah Halevi wrote poetry beautifully. *Er iz geven a yid vos hot lib gehat Yahadus.* He was a Jew who loved Judaism.

Legend has it that Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra was the son-in-law of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi. When I was a little boy, I was told that Rabbi Yehudah Halevi was writing a poem, a *piyut*, and did not have time to finish it, so he left it on his table. In the meantime, he left the house, and Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra came in,

looked at it, took a pencil out of his pocket, and added something to it. When Rabbi Yehudah Halevi came back and saw the addition, he became determined to find out who had written it. He finally concluded that Abraham ibn Ezra was only person in the world who could have done it. So Abraham ibn Ezra married Yehudah Halevi's daughter. In one place in his commentary on *Humash* (Ex. 20:1), Rabbi Abraham ibn Ezra says, "Yehudah Halevi, may he rest in peace, asked me . . ." so he obviously knew him very well.

Why were the *piyutim* beginning with "Tziyyon" introduced here, at the end of the *Kinot*? Because on the day of Tish'ah be-

Av we have two duties, two obligations. We remember *Tziyyon be-hurbanah*, Zion in its destruction, and we remember *Tziyyon be-vinyanah*, while it was still fully intact. Until now, the *Kinot* have portrayed the terrible scenes of destruction during the *hurban Beit ha-Mikdash*. Rabbi El'azar ha-Kalir's *kinot*, with which we began, describe the persecution, the horrors, the cruelty of the *hurban*. They describe how the beautiful cities of yesterday were devastated and destroyed. We mourn for the *hurban Beit ha-Mikdash* and *hurban ha-ir*, for the *hillul Hashem* and for the desecration of the Divine Name. We remember what happened to Jerusalem on the day of the *hurban*—the bloodshed and destruction, the ridicule and homelessness, the exile and persecution. The Book of *Eikhah* is devoted to that purpose, to the suffering of Jerusalem on the day it was destroyed. This duty we have already fulfilled.

And now we are going to fulfill a second duty, to describe and portray the beauty of the Land of Israel, Zion, and Jerusalem before the *hurban*, what it was like when it was at peace. The *piyutim* of "Tziyyon" do not speak about suffering or murder. They do not proclaim the martyrdom of the Ten Martyrs. There is nothing there about the *hurban*. On the contrary, it is *sheva-ho shel Yerushalayim*, a description of how beautiful Zion and Jerusalem were before the *hurban*. The verse in *Eikhah* (1:7)

says, "Jerusalem remembered in the days of her affliction and her miseries all her treasures that she had in the days of old." In times of *hurban*, Jerusalem should remember the beauty and glory of her olden days, before she was destroyed. In the *piyutim* beginning with "Tzeyyon," Rabbi Yehudah Halevi and the *paganim* who followed him changed the motif from destruction to the beauty *before* the destruction. It changes from *pahad ha-avar*, fear of the past, to *yofi shel ha-avar*, beauty of the past. Their *piyutim* tell us in glorious colors how beautiful Jerusalem was, the magnificence of Jerusalem, the wisdom of her people, the inner qualities of Zion and the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, and the spiritual holiness that prevailed there *before* the *hurban*, *before* it was destroyed. I would say that these are no longer to be considered *kinot* but are to be seen as odes to Zion, as hymns to Zion.

This is necessary because, in order to appreciate the extent of the catastrophe and the disaster, we have to emphasize and have some knowledge of the great beauty of Jerusalem, of the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, *before* the disaster occurred. By remembering what Jerusalem was like in normal times, before the *hurban*, one is in a better position to appreciate the magnitude of the *hurban*, the magnitude of what was lost, and to cry for it. If one has no standard of comparison, if one does not describe Jerusalem *before the hurban* as "the joy of the whole earth" (Ps. 48:3), then the question of "How lonely sits the city that was full of people" (Lam. 1:1) poses no problem. Perhaps it has always been isolated, lonely, bleak, and dreary?

Yes, people know that it was very bad, but they cannot appreciate *how* bad, the full magnitude of the *hurban* and the extent of the destruction, disaster, and catastrophe, because they never saw the cities while they were standing. So, these poets say, let us tell them how beautiful, how wonderful, and how precious the cities were, particularly Jerusalem, so they will understand much better why they should mourn for and share in the great terrible loss that was suffered when they and the *Beit ha-Mikdash* were destroyed.

If Jerusalem had been merely a village, we would not have mourned over its destruction for so long. A village is not impressive. But Jerusalem was beautiful. The Gemara (*Bava Kamma* 82b) says, "Ten things were said about Jerusalem." It describes how beautiful Jerusalem was, how different Jerusalem was. Jerusalem is described as "perfect in beauty" (Lam. 2:15). And so, if Jerusalem was the most beautiful of all cities, if it was the incarnation of sanctity, then it is appropriate to mourn and create an atmosphere of *avelut* for *hurban Yerushalayim*.

This concept has its foundations in halakhic practice. When Rabbi Yohanan ben Zakkai said, after the *Beit ha-Mikdash* was destroyed, that the *lulav* should now be "taken" for the full seven days of the Sukkot holiday "*zekher le-Mikdash*," in remembrance of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* (*Sukkah* 41a), the emotion he wanted to arouse or cultivate was *simhah*, joy, to remember the beauty of the *Beit ha-Mikdash*. He wanted it to be *zekher le-Mikdash*, not *zekher le-hurban*. Certain types of commemoration of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* arouse not *avelut*, but *simhah*. And that is the purpose of this set of *kinot*, to arouse the joy so as thereafter to be in a better position to experience the sadness.

But why was Rabbi Yehudah Halevi so committed to Zion? After all, it has the same stones, the same sand, the same water, as any other place. What is so different about it? What is so unique about it?

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi presents here the idea that he developed and elaborated upon more fully in his *Kuzari*. For him, prophecy is a natural phenomenon or condition in Eretz Yisrael. Prophecies descend in Eretz Yisrael the way rain and dew descend. In Eretz Yisrael, when you breathe, you breathe not only oxygen and air, but also something spiritually important, something with spiritual potency and vigor. The air in Eretz Yisrael, the plain physical air, the atmosphere, is different. The condition or quality of the atmosphere—or of the air—in Eretz

Yisrael is saturated with prophecy, with *ruah ha-kodesh*, with divine inspiration. For Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, the uniqueness of Zion is not only in its transcendental or metaphysical significance, but in its natural, climatic, and geographic significance. The rain is different, the dew is different, the soil is different, the stones are different, physically different. The light in Eretz Yisrael is different; it is brighter. In Eretz Yisrael there is not only the light that flows from the sun, from natural sources, but a divine light intermingled with the natural light. The air is clearer and thinner; it is charged with *ruah ha-kodesh*. Nature is by far more magnificent, more beautiful, in Zion than outside of Zion. When the Torah says, "A land that flows with milk and honey" (Deut. 26:9), it means that there is something unique in the nature of the land, in the soil, the climate, the wind, the air.

It is not important whether Eretz Yisrael is a physically beautiful or attractive country, economically sound. What is important is that you need not go far in order to see *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* there. Just open the window and take a look. He refers to Eretz Yisrael as "*Makom asher ruah Elokim shefukhat al behirayikh*." "*Shefukhah*" means that it pours out, as rain pours into a dell, even if you do not want to receive it or even if there is no one to receive it. Prophecy is like a downpour of rain. This is Rabbi Yehudah Halevi's philosophy.

Here he emphasizes the principle that the designated dwelling place of the *Shekhinah* is Eretz Yisrael (*Kuzari* 2:14), that there is no prophecy outside of Israel (see *Tanhuma Bo* 5). It is always "*she'arayikh, Your gate*" No other country has such a gate.

*Hashra'at ha-Shekhinah*, the reality of the Divine Presence, is a continuous process in Eretz Yisrael; it is part of the climate. Just as there are different kinds of climates, cold climates and warm climates, similarly there are climates completely devoid of the Divine Presence and climates very conducive to it. Just as it is natural to get up in the morning and see the sun shining or

hear the rain falling, so it is natural in Eretz Yisrael to get up in the morning and find the *Shekhinah*. Just as one who walks out in the rain must get wet, and one who walks out in the sun-shine must feel warm, so too one who lives in Eretz Yisrael must feel and absorb the *ruah ha-kodesh*, must simply be saturated with *kevod Elokim*. Certain places where the prophets thousands of years ago had conversations with *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* are still endowed with the potential of *hashra'at ha-Shekhinah* for everyone.

Those who want to can receive it, even today. Anyone who is in Eretz Yisrael and kisses the stones the prophets walked on merits to share in the Divine Presence regardless of whether he is a great rabbinic scholar or not. The gates of Heaven are open to Zion. Anything that emerges or comes down from the gates of Heaven comes down to Zion. There are special windows in Heaven that are open only to Zion. "The eyes of the Lord, your God, are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year" (Deut. 11:12). Elijah the prophet walked on the pathways of Eretz Yisrael, and anyone who is in the same place physically or geographically as he was, or Elisha, or Joshua, is worthy of the Divine Presence resting upon him. For Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, the fact that *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* spoke with Elisha or Elijah in a certain spot means that the spot absorbed holiness, or achieved a certain metaphysical quality. No other land in the world can imitate this quality. All one need do is open oneself up to the divine flow, which is like dew or a stream coming down upon the land from Heaven.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi describes the following picture: Wherever you are, if you look out the window on a bright day, you will see a beautiful sun. But you do not become excited about it because it is a natural phenomenon. But in Eretz Yisrael, whenever you open the astronomical gates, the moon or the sun, you are opening up the metaphysical, perfected gates of Heaven. One who opens up the astronomical gates, who opens

his eyes and sees the sun, simultaneously opens the gates of the *Shekhinah*. In the morning, when one gets up and blesses God Who “forms light and creates darkness, makes peace and creates all,” there are two sets of gates—the astronomical, or natural, gates and the metaphysical, or prophetic, gates—through which *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu* speaks to the Jew if he is willing to have a conversation with Him.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi’s appraisal of Eretz Yisrael emphasizes the natural meeting between man and God rather than a supernatural vision. There is no need to perform miracles in order to meet with the *Ribono shel Olam* and have contact with Him. A simple dialogue with the *Ribono shel Olam* is enough. For Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, it is very easy to achieve continued contact between the Jew and God in Eretz Yisrael. This is, of course, assuming that one wants to open the window and look out. Obviously, if one does not want to look, it is nothing.

In the view of Rabbi Yehudah Halevi, there are no prophets nowadays only because there are no appropriate recipients of the Divine Presence. We are thirsty, we want the rain, but we do not have the vessel with which to collect the water. As a result, we remain thirsty. But a person who comes with the appropriate vessels will immediately fill them with *ruah hakodesh*.

Rabbi Yehudah Halevi introduces another idea here that is mentioned in Nehemiah: that the sanctity of the Land of Israel is also due to the fact that the graves of our ancestors are there. The Land of Israel and Jerusalem were desolate and in shambles, and Nehemiah came before the king and asked permission to go there. He said, “How can I not look bad if the town where the graves of all my ancestors are is desolate?” (Neh. 2:3). “The graves of my ancestors” played a role for Nehemiah. They added to the sanctity of Eretz Yisrael. Halevi writes that he will be completely confused by Hebron (“*ve-ashtomem be-Hevron*”). But why would this be so? After all, he knew what Hebron con-

tained. It means that he will be confused by the magnetic attraction he feels for Hebron.

There is not a spot in Eretz Yisrael where the Jewish people are not rooted, where we have no memories. When he arrives, says Halevi, he will scout out every place. For the Jew, history is more than history. It is a living experience. And, finally, this has not only happened in the past; it will happen in the future too, as Isaiah says (60:19), “The sun shall be no more your light by day . . . but the Lord shall be to you an everlasting light.”

The Rambam had a different approach. For the Rambam, someone who wants to achieve the stage of *hashra’at ha-Shekhinah* has to do more than just open a window. For the Rambam, it is very difficult to be worthy of achieving that level. Not everyone can say, “I am close to *Ha-Kadosh Barukh Hu*.” One has to rise to great heights in order to merit to deserve *hashra’at ha-Shekhinah*. It is a question of intellectual achievement or intellectual greatness (*Guide* 2:36). The Rambam was very aristocratic.

It is certain that for Rabbi Yehudah Halevi the *kedushah* of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* was not cancelled or terminated by the *hurban*. According to the worldview that Rabbi Yehudah Halevi presents in his “*Tziyon*,” there is no doubt that in his opinion “*kiddeshah le-sha’atah ve-kiddeshah le-atid la-vo*”—the sanctity of the *Mikdash* remains for all time. As a matter of fact, with regard to the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, most Rishonim agree with this position, although with regard to Eretz Yisrael it is a different story. We have already had occasion to point out that the Rambam (*Hilkhot Beit ha-Behirah* 6:16–17) says that the original sanctity established in the days of Joshua was nullified, rescinded, terminated, and annulled when Nebuchadnezzar conquered the land. The reason is that the sanctity of the land was based upon conquest and was terminated by Nebuchadnezzar’s superior forces. But the sanctity bestowed upon the *Mikdash* by King Solomon is still in effect, says the

Rambam, because the sanctity of the *Beit ha-Mikdash* was completely independent of conquest. It stems from the *Shekhinah*, and “*Shekhinah einah betelah*, the *Shekhinah* is never nullified.” Even when the land was under the control of Nebuchadnezzar, it did not matter. Nebuchadnezzar can drive out any human being, but not the *Shekhinah*.

It would appear from the Rambam that the sanctity of the Land of Israel is not the sanctity of the *Shekhinah*. In his view, *giluy Shekhinah* is the *kedushat ha-Mikdash*, not the *kedushat ha-aretz*; the *Shekhinah* sanctified the *Beit ha-Mikdash*, not the entire land. When Rabbi Yehudah Halevi says in his *piyut* that “*Sham ha-Shekhinah shekhunah lakh*,” he may be referring only to the *Beit ha-Mikdash* or he may mean that Eretz Yisrael itself is endowed with *kedushat Shekhinah*. I do not know. If he means that Eretz Yisrael itself is endowed with *kedushat Shekhinah*, then there is a slight contradiction or conflict between him and the Rambam.

#### 9. Yirmiyahu 30:17

שׁ לֹא־כִּי־בְּלֵד־אֲכָלֶךָ וְכַל־צְנֻחוֹ בְּלֹמֶד בְּשִׁבְיִלְבָּד וְהַזֶּה שָׁאַסְרֵךְ  
דְּלִשְׁפָּה וּבְלִבְזָוֵן אָפָּנוּ לְכָבֵד כִּי אֲעַלְתָּה אַרְבָּה לְךָ וּמִמְּבוֹתֵךְ אַרְפָּאֵךְ  
הַנְּאָמֵן יְהוָה בָּי נִפְתַּח קָلָאוּ לְךָ צִוְּנָה לְתָא וְרַשְׁתָּא אַיִן לְתָהּ כְּהֵן

*these upon you!*<sup>16</sup> Nevertheless, all who devoured you shall themselves be devoured; all who oppressed you will all go into captivity; who trampled you will be trampled; and all who despoiled you, I shall deliver to become spoils.

*17 For I will make a cure for you, and I will heal you from your wounds — the word of HASHEM; for they called you 'Discarded!' [saying,] 'She is Zion — no one cares about her!'*

#### 10. Radak R' Dovid Kimchi

המשך במלת בצתתו וגבאו כי שרשו בצת: (ו') אירופת רפואה: קראו לך. אומות העולם ואמרו כי ציון היא עיר שאין לה דורש להשבה לישראל:

— מִנָּא לְזַעֲבָדִין זַבְּרַל לְמַקְרֵשׁ — From where in Scripture is it known to us that we are bidden to make a remembrance of the Temple? — **R' Yochanan said:** *דָּאַמֵּר קָרָא* — *כִּי אֲעַלְתָּה אַרְבָּה לְךָ* — *אַפְרֵר רַבִּי יוחנן* — *For the verse states:*<sup>[23]</sup> *For I will make a cure for you — and from your wounds will I heal you — the word of Hashem;* *בַּיְנַתְּהָ קָרָא* — *לְךָ — for they [i.e. the nations of the world] called you "Discarded One," — צִוְּנָה הִיא דָרְשָׁ אַיִן לְתָהּ* — *[saying], "She is Zion, there is none who seeks her."* — From the words *there is none who seeks her,* — *מִפְלָל דְבָשָׂעָא דְרִישָׁה* — it is implied that she requires seeking.<sup>[24]</sup> And R' Yochanan ben Zakkai determined that a way to commemorate Zion is by performing the mitzvah of *lulav* in the Temple manner.

#### 11. Sukkah 41a

**12. Mi'Peninei Ha'Rav**  
**R' Yosef Dov Soloveitchik**  
**Edited by R' Herschel Schachter**

**ב. זכר לחורבן ואבלות דימי הספרה**

אמימר מני יומי ולא מני שבועי אמר זכר למקדש. ובפשטו הוא תמה, וכי כל כך טרחה גדולה היא למנות גם את השבועות, ומה בכאן שבזמן הזה חותבת הספרה היא אך מדרבנן, מדוע לא נצריך מדרבן לעשות זכר שלם למצות הספרה כמו שהיא נוהגת בזמן הבית - במנין הימים עם השבועות גם יתק.

והיה נראה לפרש על פי דברי הרוז"ה (סוף פסחים) שכטב, ובספרית העומר יש ששוואלים מה טעם אין אנו אומרים בו זמן. וככתוב ליישב, שבספרית העומר אין בו זכר לשום הנאה אלא לעגמת נשנו ולחרבן בית מאויינו. והנראה לומר בכונתו, דלפעמים תקנו ר' זיל מצוות בתורת זכר למقدس, ולפעמים - זכר לחרבן. ובגמי' למדיו עניינים אלו משני פסוקים נפרדים, דולבב ניטל כל שבעה זכר למقدس, ומבוואר בגמי' סוכה (מא) אחד מתניתין מילן דובידיין זכר למقدس, א"ר יוחנן אמר קרא ... ציוו היא דורש אין לה (ירמיה ל), דורש אין לה - מכלל דביעה דרישת. וזהו המקור לעשייתן. תקנות בתורת זכר למقدس. [וכן הוא עיין הכהן, זכר למقدس בחיל]. ואילו בא"ג סוף פרק חזקת החתמים (ס:) והובא הפסוק (תהלים קל"ז) אם אשכח ירושלים תשכח ימיini וכו' מכור לו כל התקנות של זכר לחרבן, וכדייאתא התאם, ס"ד אדם את ביתו בסיד ומשיר בו דבר מועט ... עושה אדם כל צרכיו טעודה ומשיר דבר מועט ... עושהasha כל תשכיתיה ומשירות דבר מועט, וכן עיין אף מקלה, וכן מי שהניעו את זכר למقدس. ואילו לחתיקן תקנה זו, אלא שזה אף עצמה וגופה של התקינה לעשות זכר למقدس. - ואולי ליה נתכוונו התוס' במש"כ שלאחר ספרית העומר בזמן הזה אוורומים יהיו רצון שיבנה וכו', שכל עניינה וקיומה של הספרה היא לעשות זכר למقدس, בגין ללובב, שקיומו הוא קיום של מצות נטילת לב.

אין יש לפרש, דודוקא בספרית העומר, שהיא זכר לחרבן הבית, וכדמשמע מדברי הרוז"ה שהזכירנו, הנהנו למור תחינות הרחמן הניל', והראשת החרבן והאבלות עליו מחייבת בתפילה מצדו על בנין הבית. אך בנטיות לטוב כל שבעה, שאיננה זכר לחרבן, אלא אדרבה - זכר למقدس בבנינו, בוזה לא הניגנו לומר תפילה הרחמן.

הטורבן בפי' קdagtin, בשיר דלא ישתו יין וכו', וכן אישור עטרות חתנים נזכר הדפס הרוב זאב גוטהולד עניין זה בשם רבנו זיל במאמרו "לשנה הבאה בירושלים" שננדפס בספר מנחת אהרן (מאסף תורני לזכרו של הרב אהרן שוויקה), ירושלים, תש"ם, בעמ' רנ'יא).

ועיין ابن עזרא לאיכה על הפסוק (אי, ז) זכרה ירושלים ימי עניה מרודיה כל מחמדיה, שביאר כוונת הפסוק אליו היה כתוב - "ביבמי" [כמו כי ששת ימים עשה ד', שכונתו בששת ימים] שבזמן הגלות לאחר החורבן זכרה כמה טובים ויפים היו העניינים בזמן הבית. ובאמת על פי הדברים שאמרו היה טפי נראה לפרש אחרית, וכפשהו, שתמיד יש עלינו לזכור גם את עניין החורבן ולהתאבל עליו תמיד, [לזכור ימי עניה מרודיה], וגם לעשות זכר למقدس בבנינו ולהיות תמיד במצב של שמחה, [ולזכור גם את כל מחמדיה]. ואף על פיו פשוטו לכאורה יש בה משום גורגי-דסטרי, דמצד אחד יש עליינו לזכור תמיד אבלות החרבן, ומצד שני, לזכור תמיד את שמחות בית המקדש, מכל מקום, לא איכפתן לנו בזאת.

ומעתה היה נראה לפרש דה"ט דאמימר, דס"ל כדברי הרוז"ה, ותנקנת ספרית העומר בזמן הזה הייתה היתה בתורת זכר לחרבן, ועל כן יש לזכדק בזוקא שלא לספר גם את השבועות, ב כדי להראות שיש חסרון במצויה זו בזמן הזה, ולא שאמימר ר' לדaggi במנין הימים.

ועל דברי הרוז"ה אנו מבינים את עניין נהוג האבלות שנגנו בימי הספרה, שנוהגים עכשו אבלות על החרבן, וכמו בט"ב. וזה שלא כדברי הוזהר, שענן נהוג האבלות בימי הספרה היה שיק אפיקו בזמן המקדש, דאיינו עניין לחרבן הבית, אלא גדרו - שכמו שלפעמים לאדם טמא בעין שבעה ימים נקיים; לאומה טמאה בעין שבעה שבועות נקיים, ובתוםאה יש מקצת ענייני אבלות - כמו במעשה. (ועיין מש"כ בספר נש הרוב עמי רציה). ועיין בספר שער הכלול פוך מ"ט). ולפי טעמיים אלו נהוג האבלות הוא לפחות כל ימי הספרה, ואינו מצומצם רק לילג ימים, דאיינו קשור כלל עם מיתות תלמידי ר' עקיבא.

وعיין Tos' מגילה (כ): ד"ה כל הלילה, שלאחר שבירך על הספרה אומר היי רצון שיבנה וכו', מה שאינו כן... בלובב, (כלומר, אף דשתי תקנות אלו הן זכר למقدس), והיינו טעונה, לפי שאין אלא הזקרה עתה לבני בית המקדש, אבל ... ללב יש עשייה. ואולי יש לפריש בכונתם, דעתם התקנה של ללובב ניטל כל שבעה, ומה שהניעו לר' יוחנן בן זכאי לחדרה, היה הצורך לעשות זכר למقدس, אבל עצם גוף התקנה היה - להניגג מצות נטילת לובב כל שבעה ואפיו מחוץ למقدس. משא"כ



## 13. Eim Ha'Banim Semeicha R' Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal

1885-1945

ՀԱՅԱՍՏԱՆԻ ՀԱՆՐԱՊԵՏՈՒԹՅՈՒՆ

*By David, as a remembrance:* This is an expression of prayer... *Midrash Tehillim* (*ibid.*) compares this to a king who became angry with his flock. He, [therefore], destroyed its pen and banished the sheep and the shepherd. After a while, he retrieved the sheep and rebuilt the pen, but did not remember the shepherd. The shepherd said, "The sheep have returned; the pen is rebuilt; but I have been forgotten!" So too here. Above, it states, *For God will save Zion..., and those who love His name will dwell in it.* The pen is built, the sheep are gathered in, but the shepherd has been forgotten. Therefore, it says, *By David, as a remembrance.*

That is to say, David prayed that he, too, would return with Israel to his place. It is clear from this Rashi that Israel will return to *Eretz Yisrael* and build the Land before the Son of David arrives. Then, David will ask HaShem to allow him to return to the people of Israel, since they have already returned. This is a wondrous proof for the words of the Rambam cited above.

It seems to me that the reason for this [order of events] is based on a comment of the Chatam Sofer himself.<sup>32</sup> He writes that the height of our evil lot is dispersion and exile. For even though the *Bet HaMikdash* was destroyed, had we remained in *Eretz Yisrael* matters would not have been so bad. Similarly, the Rambam writes, "The murder of Gedalyah ben Achikam caused the flame of Israel to be extinguished and the Jews to be dispersed among the exiles, due to our numerous sins."<sup>33</sup>

Now, I already mentioned that our Sages in the *Zohar*, *Midrash*, and *Yerushalmi* assert that the redemption will progress gradually, not all at once. Therefore, the ingathering of the Jews to *Eretz Yisrael* must precede the true redemption. First, they must leave the state of absolute evil, which is dispersion and exile, and proceed to the middle level of evil, which is when the people of Israel are in their Land but the Temple is in ruins. After this, peace will prevail among the Jews and there will be hope for the future, as the Chatam Sofer writes (*ibid.*). By virtue of this peace, the sons will return to their borders,<sup>34</sup> the *Bet HaMikdash* will be rebuilt, and there will be no

| After I have explained, with God's help, that the redemption, for which we so fervently yearn, will occur gradually, step by step, we can understand a comment found in the *Derashot of the Chatam Sofer*. He infers from the Rambam<sup>35</sup> that Israel will gather together in *Eretz Yisrael* before the advent of *Mashiach*, even though the *Bet HaMikdash* is not yet rebuilt.<sup>36</sup>

I discovered something similar in *Sh'vilei Emunah*, by the grandson of our mentor, the Rosh. He cites a *Midrash*<sup>37</sup> which says that many Jews from the four corners of the earth will volunteer to live and settle in *Eretz Yisrael* before the final redemption. When many people dwell there and pray frequently on the Holy Mountain, the Creator will listen [to their prayers] and hasten the final redemption.<sup>38</sup> The righteous *gaon*, R. Hillel of Kalamoya, cites this in his responsa, *Bet Hillel*.<sup>39</sup> Consequently, he wrote a very enthusiastic letter to the brilliant R. Zalman Spitzer of Vienna urging him to convince Baron Rothschild to become involved in this matter and finance it with his own capital. He reasoned that matters like this require the assistance of the wealthy Jews. \* R. Hillel writes there, "Who among Israel, HaShem's nation, would not desire to take part in this *mitzvah*?" A certain great rabbi enlightened me to Rashi's comments on the verses: *For God will save Zion and build the cities of Judah, and they will dwell there and possess it. And the offspring of His servants will inherit it, and those who love His name will dwell in it.* For the conductor, by *David, as a remembrance* (*Tehillim* 69:36 – 70:1). Rashi writes:

\* The *Midrash* relates that in the days of R. Yehoshua ben Chananyah, the king gave the Jews permission to ascend to *Eretz Yisrael* and build the *Bet HaMikdash*. R. Yehoshua ben Chananyah delegated two extremely wealthy Jews to finance the endeavor (*BeReishit Rabbah* 64:10).

hatred among the Jews, like there was at the time of the destruction of the Second Temple.

I would like to add to the Chatam Sofer's holy words and explain how the ingathering to *Eretz Yisrael* will diminish the dispersion of the exiles even though it will occur before the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash*. At the very beginning, it will be impossible for the entire nation to assemble in *Eretz Yisrael*, for the Land will have to first expand her "skin" to make room for all of her sons.<sup>35</sup> Therefore, some Jews will remain in the Diaspora until HaShem fulfills His promise to gather all of Israel into the Land. This coincides with the Ramban's comments on the verse *The Lord, God, Who gathers the dispersed of Israel says, "I will gather others to him, besides those already gathered to him"* (*Yeshayah* 56:8). He explains that God will gather many, but not all, of the dispersed Jews at the outset [of redemption]. Then, after the wars of Gog and Magog, there will be a second ingathering, as it says, *I will gather others to him, besides those already gathered to him*.<sup>36</sup>

Now, [even though all of Israel will not return right away], it seems to me that the Land will become a universal center for the entire Jewish nation, by the very fact that there will be an assembly of Jews in Jerusalem and *Eretz Yisrael*. Even those who remain in the Diaspora will keep their eyes and hearts on the Land. They will be bound and connected with all their souls to the universal center which will be established in *Eretz Yisrael*. It will unite them even in the Diaspora, and they will not be considered dispersed at all...

Today, on the other hand, the people of Israel are like lost and scattered sheep<sup>37</sup> among the nations. No Jew associates with his fellow Jew. Wherever they live, they are like dangling limbs without any connection to the individual, and certainly not to the community as a whole. This is true and utter dispersion (may the Merciful One save us). We have all been abandoned like fish of the sea. In these recent, difficult years, despots subjugate us and do with us as they please. They degrade and murder us without limit and without any liability for their actions. These scoundrels have no one to answer to for their deeds.

However, if we establish a universal center in *Eretz Yisrael* (with God's help), our pride and glory will rise among the nations and we will be considered a dignified and important nation.<sup>38</sup> Then, even the individual who remains in exile will not be forsaken, because anyone who wants to cause him harm will know that there is someone who will demand a reckoning of his actions. He will know that he is liable for his deeds and will, therefore, refrain from doing anything improper.

Thus, the ingathering to the Land will free us from the state of absolute evil even in the Diaspora. It will also cause all of Israel, even the Diaspora Jews, to unite and live in peace. Then, we will reach the bright and hopeful future leading to the complete redemption, speedily in our days. Amen.