



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
המערך לשירותים רוחניים בתפוצות
World Zionist Organization
Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora



A Collection of Articles for Jerusalem Day





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Preface

Rabbi Yehiel Wasserman



This pamphlet contains a number of articles that deal with Jerusalem. They were written by rabbis and public figures in memory of Rabbi Haim Zohar, z"l, who filled several senior positions in the public sector, including at the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency and as Director of the Pincus Fund.

The phrase "the eternity is Jerusalem" comes from the exegetic teachings of our Sages in Tractate Berakhot: "The heavenly Tanna Rabbi Akiva said: Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, this is the parting of the Red Sea; and the valor, this is the plague of the firstborn; and the glory, this is the giving of the Torah; and the eternity is Jerusalem." It is the eternal capital of the Jewish people. Since its founding, Jerusalem has been the national and spiritual center of the Jewish people, the seat of the kings of the House of David, and the seat of the Temple, to which the Jewish people made pilgrimages three times a year.

In the Vision of the End of Days, the prophets of Israel view Jerusalem as a spiritual center not only for the Jewish people, but also for all nations of the world. As the Prophet Micha said: "And many nations shall go and they shall say: Come, let us go up to the Lord's mount and to the house of the G-d of Jacob, and let Him teach us of His ways and we will follow in His paths, for out of Zion shall the Torah come forth and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Jerusalem has managed to take root in the hearts of all of us. After being exiled from their land, the people would on every occasion make Jerusalem the head of their joy. A Jew mentions Jerusalem every day in his prayers and cites Jerusalem at every event. A groom under the chuppah breaks a glass in remembrance of the eternal city. During the many years of their exile, the memory of Jerusalem united the Jewish people, who never stopped alluding to Jerusalem and continued to pray for their return to the city. The

most on-the-mark expression can be found in the words: "By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat, we also wept when we remembered Zion." When the matter of Uganda was raised for discussion at the Zionist Congress, which led to a heated debate, Herzl, the Visionary of the State, declared: "If I forget thee Jerusalem, may my right hand wither." With help from the Rock and Redeemer of Israel, we were able in the Six Day War to liberate parts of the homeland, and the crowning achievement of that war was the liberation of the city and the Western Wall, echoed in the cry of the brigade commander: "The Temple Mount is in our hands." The images of the soldiers praying and crying at the Western Wall reached all the Jewish diasporas, and the picture of the paratrooper standing next to the Wall soon became the symbol of the war.

In the Book of Psalms, King David says: "The built-up Jerusalem is like a city that is joined together." This verse is explained in both the Jerusalem Talmud and the Midrash as meaning "a city that creates fellowship among all Jews." On the other hand, the Babylonian Talmud explains the verse as follows: "I will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I enter the earthly Jerusalem. Is there a heavenly Jerusalem? Yes, for it is written: The built-up Jerusalem is like a city that is joined together." The earthly Jerusalem parallels the heavenly Jerusalem. In other words, it refers to the joining of the city itself and not its residents. We seemingly have two different explanations here, but a closer examination of them reveals that these two interpretations are addressing the same point.

Every capital city in the world connects and unites the citizens of that country. But Jerusalem, the eternal capital of the Jewish people, by virtue of being the Holy City and home to the Temple, creates a unique inner connection. Earthly Jerusalem parallels heavenly Jerusalem. When a Jew goes to Jerusalem, he is not only going to earthly Jerusalem, but also to heavenly Jerusalem. When he goes to Jerusalem, he frees himself of his personal matters, from the here and now, and connects with an eternal life. And when everyone

ascends to Jerusalem, they unite and come together because they are going to heavenly Jerusalem. Therefore, earthly Jerusalem aims for heavenly Jerusalem, but creates a fellowship among all Jews.

Our Sages expanded on the duty of every Jew to aspire to enhance Jerusalem, and said: "Any generation in which the Temple is not rebuilt, it is as if they had destroyed it." The Sefat Emet asked: "Not rebuilding it may be understandable, but why say that it is as if they had destroyed it?" He explained that the rebuilding of Jerusalem and the Temple is not a one-time act, but rather an extended and continuing process. Every generation adds its own layer until the construction is completed and the building is intact. Consequently, any generation that has not added its own layer and contributed its share, it is as if they destroyed it.

The Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora maintains ties with hundreds of rabbis from Jewish communities in the Diaspora. The goals it has set for itself are to reinforce the Jewish identity of Jewish communities in the Diaspora, and especially the younger generation, foster the bond with the Jewish people and its heritage, and strengthen the centrality of the State of Israel in the lives of Jews in the Diaspora. The Center achieves those goals through a variety of programs held among Jews in the Diaspora and this collection is an additional aspect of our activities.

The author is the Head of the Center for Religious Affairs in the Diaspora



"A Fighter's Story"

Avraham Duvdevani (Duvdov),
Chairman of the World Zionist Organization

1

An Egged bus goes up to Jerusalem, flanked by Nachshon, and then the Shimshon Junction. A seemingly regular journey, but in fact it is different this time, both in terms of purpose and atmosphere. The bus is laden with ammunition, soldiers in tactical clothing, everyone wearing a helmet on his head and holding his weapon in his hands.

"*Shuru, habitu uru*" Hanan begins singing, clapping his hands, and the others join in. "*Mah gadol hayom hazeh, esh yokedet bachazeh...*" Happy and kindhearted Kobi is sitting next to me. I knew that just thinking about war depressed him, but now, quite amazingly, he was cheerful. "What happened, Kobi?" "I'm happy" – he replied – "because if there's no choice and we have to fight – then at least it's for Jerusalem." Songs about Jerusalem and all the soldiers are carried away by the tune "for thousands of generations I

have dreamt about you, about seeing the light of your face..." No one exactly knew what we were expected to do or where, but the very ascent to look after Jerusalem, to defend the eternal capital, instills a flame in your heart.

Nighttime, the bus enters Jerusalem. Jerusalem is in a state of complete darkness. All its residents are in bomb shelters. Silence. Only the sound of the enemy's mortar shells creases the silence. Jerusalem is beautiful in the bravery of its suffering, beautiful to such an extent that I never knew before. The air is pure and pristine and the silence is replete with splendor. Just the sound of a blast disrupts it, and only the falling mortar shell is insulting like a slap in the face. And every additional mortar shell makes your heart pound faster, intensifies the indignation of the insult for breaching the exaltedness. They are trying to eradicate my capital and I love you Jerusalem, I love

you to death...if I forget thee, Jerusalem...

Soldiers are drinking hot coffee served – with great devotion and a warm heart – by a woman who lives in one of the houses in Beit HaKerem. Others are spread out on the sidewalk of one of the streets, a few are napping and a few are thinking and doing some soul-searching. The thoughts are about home, the family, the people close to you, because who knows what your fate will be in just a few hours. I abandon my thoughts and get up to pray Aravit. A pre-battle prayer. Each and every word is perhaps even more meaningful than on the High Holidays. "Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to count the Omer" – the thoughts lead there: to the Temple Mount. In the days when the Temple was in existence, people would wave sheaves of gold. Now, in this fateful hour, we are ready – in the spring of our lives – to resolutely wave our youth in Jerusalem of Gold...in the name of all of Israel...

2

Two in the morning. Just lying about on the sidewalk of Shmuel HaNavi Street, waiting for the order to storm the Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood. Your hands are clutching your "Uzi," your body is leaning against the protective wall, and beads of sweat cover your forehead and drip down onto your cheeks and nose. It's chilly in Jerusalem, but we're perspiring. Perspiration of excitement, perspiration of tension before the first battle in our lives. A bright and blinding light suddenly illuminates the road, followed by a huge noise, and dozens of pieces of shrapnel are floating around in the air. We clung to the wall with all our strength and desperately covered our faces with our hands, waiting for the outcome. "I've been wounded," Kobi said, clutching his knee with a grimace of pain and his clothes soaked in blood. Behind us we can hear Ofer's groans, who had a chest wound, and to the side of us, Michael is barely groaning, seriously injured and his blood flowing on the black asphalt. Wounded comrades,

blood, groans of pain, the first encounter with the cruel reality of war, before a battle. And your heart is still a 'civilian,' very sensitive, and it's hard to look at the open wounds and the flowing blood. A bit of faint-heartedness slowly begins to penetrate. I started helping the medics and the sight of the injuries made me shiver, I began feeling nauseous, and a limpness filled my bones until a cry was suddenly heard from Eran: "After me" – and in an instant your heart turns cold, turns 'military.' We leaped into the pillars of black smoke, jumping over the bodies of our comrades, as if we didn't see anything. With a storm and with courage, while jumping over the bodies of our best friends, we advanced towards the conquest. Meir was running and I was behind him, and Gabi was behind me, and that's how the chain continued. And I'm asking myself why we are staying so close to each other – after all, it's much more dangerous because we're more vulnerable that way to the enemy's bullets. And even though everyone knows that it's dangerous, we continue

running right next to each other. The closeness offered a sense of security: I'm not alone, I share a body with Ilan, and Gabi and Yossi and Eran. We're all together. This sense of unity, the feeling that we're all one unit – from which we drew courage and willingness to keep on going, to fight and to conquer.

Yair is advancing ahead of me. His leg was injured by a large piece of shrapnel in the first shelling. He bandaged himself and kept on fighting. He suddenly stops, bends over and looks at his leg because it's really bothering him. For a moment it appears that Yair has completed his mission and is being taken to the hospital. But a guy like Yair is not going to abandon the campaign. He puts one bandage on top of another and keeps on going, as if nothing happened (only at the end of the battle is he taken to the hospital, with four bandages covering his wounded leg).

We were already used to the noise of the bullets. And as if we are deaf, we advance and continue shooting into the buildings. The first one throws a grenade into the

building, the grenade explodes, and then everyone dashes into the building and clears it out. When done – we move on to the next building, while looking every which way for fear that the enemy will surprise us from an unfamiliar direction. A single shot is heard – and a comrade falls. Again, a surprise sniper. Everyone takes cover and begins looking around to discover his hiding place. He is spotted, and Giora takes the bazooka, goes up to a higher spot, launches a shell at him, and the sniper is silent. We can keep on going, the tension rises, the fire is again concentrated on the enemy opposite us, and that's how we fight and advance. Make more headway. More steps. Then I suddenly see an Israeli casualty on the sidewalk. The sight stuns me and my body starts to shake. The deceased – his helmet is tied to his neck, but his head is gone: no nose, no eyes, no mouth, nothing. In place of a face – there is a big hole, an empty space, red and black. I don't know who the soldier is because he can't be identified. The horrific sight stretches our nerves and

we storm the buildings in front of us with a fury in order to retaliate for the indignation and avenge the blood that has been spilled. It was not that we hated the enemy, but we were furious with them, enraged by their savagery, and wanted to take revenge. Anger and revenge were intertwined.

Yossi is wounded by two enemy bullets and continues fighting; Eran, the commander, pleads with him: "Yossi, please go and get treated. You're losing blood." But Yossi pretends not to hear him and keeps on going until he is wounded again in the head by pieces of shrapnel, after which he loses consciousness.

Thus, for eight hours, while losing scores of our soldiers and thanks to displays of bravery that are too numerous to mention, our flag was waved on the roof the Rockefeller Museum – the starting line for entering the Old City.

3

The Sheikh Jarrah neighborhood has been conquered. All of our soldiers, including me, are lying on our backs. Our eyes are

staring at the blue sky, cigarette after cigarette, and a lack of desire to do anything overcomes me. I yearn to lie down, without moving, without eating. But it was my turn to stand guard and watch Damascus Gate and the snipers on top of it, so I had to get up.

There was quiet all around, disturbed only by the occasional sound of isolated gunfire. Even though I hadn't eaten for about a day, I had no appetite. And not only me. The few that were eating – do so in silence. And after their meal, everyone returns to their corner, spreads out on the curb, alone with their thoughts and is silent. The body has its own demands and I doze off and wake up, doze off and wake up, and doze off again – and I'm plagued by a nightmare and wake up in a fright. I eventually realize – it's a bad dream. I lift my eyes up to the sky and fix my gaze on it.

No one is conversing with anyone else because they are all dealing with pain. It was now that the biting sorrow and dark sadness emerged, which

had been concealed during the battle. Feelings and thoughts were now vented. And our thoughts led to those who had fallen in the battle. Our hearts were with our close friends who were suddenly gone. Sophocles said: "War never takes a wicked man by chance, the good man always." Our thoughts led us to that truth. The war took the best ones, the noble ones, from us. Zevik, Herzl, Yossi and Hanan, and many more. Each one of them was courageous, and each one of them was a pure soul. Every friend who fell was a combination of wisdom, kindness and good-naturedness – a combination that few are blessed with. But a lead bullet, a piece of shrapnel, put an end to their exemplary traits, their desires, their hopes, their loves, and a void has remained in the world, a void that cannot be consoled.

While still engrossed in thought, more names reach you – Yehoshua, Yitzhak, Yisrael – and every added name only intensifies the terrible feeling! The best ones, the outstanding ones, the select few, the

immigrants, they are the costly price of the victory. My dearest brothers, the heroes of deeds and glory, G-d will avenge your blood!

And that's how twenty hours of calm elapsed until we entered the Old City the next day. We were tired of war. The horrific sights we had witnessed the day before were more than we could contain. But each of us had an inner will to keep on going. All of us felt that our victory would be incomplete without the Old City. That feeling required an additional effort.

Narrow alleyways, filthy entranceways, trash next to the closed shops, the stench of bodies of Jordanian Legion soldiers – but none of that concerns us. We are looking at the golden dome, which can be seen from afar. There – just about – is where it should be. We quicken our steps in line with the pace of our pounding hearts. We're almost running. We come across a soldier from the company that went in ahead of us. We ask about the rest of the way and continue hurrying.

We reach the gate, go through it, after which there are stairs that lead down. I shift my gaze to the right and stop: from here you can see the Kotel (Western Wall), in all its grandeur and splendor. I had never seen it before, but it's like an old friend to me, which can't be mistaken. And I think for a moment that my place is actually not here because the Kotel is in the kingdom of legends and dreams, whereas I belong to reality. Indeed, reality and legend, dream and actuality unite. I go down, get closer to the Kotel, my hand reaches out to the hewn stones, but my hand is afraid to touch them and retracts to where it came from. I close my eyes and take a small, slow and hesitant step closer, place my lips on the Kotel. And with the touch of my lips, my feelings are let out and tears fall from my eyes. A Jewish soldier in the State of Israel kissing history with his lips. Past, present and future in a single kiss. No more destruction, the Kotel will not be abandoned because it has been conquered with the blood of Israel's young, and the cost of the blood is: eternity.

My body clings to the columns of stone, my face is inside the crevices between the layers and my hands are pushed inside the cracks: a Jewish soldier in an

Israeli army is clinging to the supreme holiness of the people.

A soldier at my side is mumbling in disbelief: "We are next to the Kotel, next to the Kotel..."

Avraham Duvdevani (Duvdov), was a fighter in the Paratroopers Division that liberated Jerusalem in the Six Day War.

Jerusalem's Roadmap

Rabbi Haim Druckman



The Gemara presents Rabbi Akiva's interpretation of the verse "Yours, O Lord, is the greatness and the valor and the splendor and the glory."

Yours, O Lord, is the greatness, this is the parting of the Red Sea; and the valor, this is the plague of the firstborn; and the glory, this is the giving of the Torah, and the eternity, this is Jerusalem; and the splendor, this is the Temple. Jerusalem lifts us above the temporary and the ephemeral and brings us together with eternity. There are fleeting problems, there are fleeting difficulties, there are fleeting hardships – and counter to them there is eternity.

Jerusalem requires that we view everything from the perspective of eternity, because if not viewed that way, fleeting problems could depress us and even cause us to despair. The truth is inherent in the big picture – through the prism of eternity.

The Jewish People – The Eternal People

When viewing things from the perspective of eternity, what we encounter, before all else, is the eternal people – the eternity of Israel. The Jewish people are a people of the world. In the natural reality – there is no concept of eternity, but rather death and extinction. This not only pertains to individuals. Peoples die just like humans do. That is the fate of both big and small peoples. And, there is a small people, a persecuted people, a people whom they have done everything to annihilate - decrees, persecutions, slaughters, and pogroms and rivers flowing with blood. What haven't they done in an attempt to annihilate the Jewish people? The Jewish people have nevertheless, wonder of wonders, continued to live, as our Sages said: "one sheep among 70 wolves." We should remember that these are not 'vegetarian' wolves. They are wolves that have eaten away

at the sheep with a full mouth. That is the power of the eternity of Israel.

This phenomenon is so blatant that even non-Jews have been astounded by it. A non-Jew who lived about 150 years ago wrote the following: "If statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. (We will add that the number is actually much lower). It suggests a nebulous dim puff of stardust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly, the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people. He has made a marvelous fight in this world in all ages and has done it with his hands tied behind him. The Egyptians, the Babylonians and the Persians rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away."

"The Greeks and the Romans followed and made a vast noise, and they were gone; other people have sprung and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out and they sit in twilight now,

and have vanished. The Jew saw them all, survived them all, and is now what he always was: exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert but aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jews; all other forces pass, but he remains." That is how the author, Mark Twain, expressed his admiration for the Jewish people.

And the Russian author, Tolstoy, wrote: "Let's examine what kind of unique creature the Jew is, whom all the rulers of all the nations – all of them together and each separately – abused, oppressed and persecuted, destroyed and trampled on, burned and drowned. Nevertheless, he continues to live. The Jew is the symbol of eternity. He is the one who thousands of years of torture have not managed to exterminate. Neither fire nor sword, nor the Inquisition managed to erase him from the world. The Jew was the first to proclaim the word of the Lord. He is the one who for so long has guarded the prophecy and passed it on to the

rest of humanity. Such a nation cannot be destroyed. The Jew is eternal. He is the embodiment of eternity."

Just like the Jewish people are an eternal people, Jerusalem is the eternal city – and the eternity is Jerusalem.

The Land of Israel - The Land of Eternity

The whole Land of Israel belongs to eternity. Our Sages said that the whole of the Land of Israel is folded under Jerusalem. Jerusalem is holier than all of the Land of Israel. The meaning behind "than all" should not be measured only in terms of the advantage, but also in terms of the proportion. In other words, the pinnacle of the sanctity of all of Israel is revealed in Jerusalem. It is no coincidence that Jerusalem was restored to us together with the Land of Israel.

Jerusalem is ours for eternity as is the whole Land of Israel, which was restored to us together with Jerusalem. From the perspective of eternity, everything is ours. There is no doubt about that – if we look beyond the moment,

at everything that the Jewish people has experienced over the generations, how they were dispersed, how they were exiled from their land twice and came back to it. No similar phenomenon exists in human history, of a people who returned to their land after two thousand years of exile.

The essence of the Jewish people is that they are stiff-necked and believe wholeheartedly that the message of the prophets will definitely come true. The word of G-d will not be lost.

"But Judah shall remain forever, and Jerusalem throughout all generations. And I shall cleanse their blood which I have not cleansed. And the Lord dwells in Zion"

And the Eternity is Jerusalem

Rabbi Kook explains "and the eternity is Jerusalem" as follows: And the eternity is Jerusalem. The quality of the position of Israel is perfect as it abounds with the strength of their kingdom in a manner enabling them to transcend, commensurate with their value as a wise and sagacious people,

for themselves. The kingdom, the national strength, are connected with Jerusalem, from which the kings of the House of David ruled. The Israeli national resilience has encountered many obstacles on its path and still may, but will valiantly overcome all of them and exist for eternity."

The national aspect of the Jewish people, the national wholeness, are connected with Jerusalem and articulated in it. The Rabbi writes that the word 'eternity' has two meanings – eternity and victory – and both of them are intertwined. The eternity emerges from the victory. The initial stages entail overcoming difficulties and wars. Eternity is an expression of victory and eternalness, and for that reason it is necessary, first and foremost, to defeat our enemies, as was the case in all of Israel's wars.

The pride in ourselves that is required of us on Jerusalem Day reminds us that we must view it through the prism of eternity. Of late, we have felt that "He remembered His kindness and His faith to the House of Israel; all the ends of the earth have

seen the salvation of our G-d" unfolding before our very eyes. Our national pride rose in the eyes of the entire world and we were fortunate to witness "and the children shall return to their own border."

That is the true roadmap, the map charted by the Master of the Universe!

It is fitting that we express our gratitude to the Holy One, Blessed be He, and not, heaven forbid, be ungrateful.

The Divine Roadmap

As opposed to all kinds of plans, there is the divine plan, the divine roadmap:

At the end of the Book of Amos, the prophet says:

And I shall gather back the captives of My people Israel and they shall rebuild the ruined cities and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards and drink their wine; they shall also plant gardens and eat their fruit. And I will plant them on their land and they shall never be uprooted again from their land which I have given them, saith the Lord your G-d.

In my humble opinion, since the Six Day War we have been put to the test. To what extent do we identify with the divine plan and are working tirelessly to fulfill the prophecy "and they shall never be uprooted again from their land." Jerusalem Day poses a great challenge to us – to unite the two parts of the city. To unite earthly Jerusalem with heavenly Jerusalem. That is the real answer to all our problems because, as it turns out, without heavenly Jerusalem – earthly Jerusalem is also unstable. For earthly Jerusalem to be stable, it must be nurtured by and connect with heavenly Jerusalem. Nowadays, without faith and Torah, it appears that problems exist with the most basic things, including what concerns Jerusalem.

Believing that our path is the right one – is the key to everything in the long term. Our role is to intensify that faith. "For they shall see eye to eye when the Lord returns to Zion." There is a need for both a short-term and a long-term perspective. There is no other solution apart from returning Israel to itself.

The true solution for helping the Jewish people is to restore them to themselves and to their roots. And Jerusalem is the one that has to give us strength. How do I know that? When the Israelites stood at the Red Sea and were engulfed by fear - and were "very frightened," G-d says to Moses: "Why do you cry out to Me? Speak to the children of Israel and tell them to embark on their journey." In his Midrash, Rabbi Ishmael says the following about that: "Why do you cry out to Me? – Thanks to Jerusalem I will part the sea for them. G-d says to Moses – do not be scared. Stay calm! Thanks to Jerusalem I will part the sea for them!" Before trying to understand this, we will first see the source of those words, as the Midrash continues: "As was said, awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength, O Zion; clothe yourself with the garments of your splendor Jerusalem, the Holy City. For no longer shall the uncircumcised and the unclean enter you again. Awake, awake, clothe yourself with strength, O arm of the Lord, as in the days of old, the generations of yore."

G-d tells Moses that the Israelites did not leave by chance, but rather because they have a great mission. They must carry out an incredible task – connected with Jerusalem.

Thanks to Jerusalem, G-d enabled us to cross many deserts. He sustained us for two thousand years and the State of Israel was established. We witnessed the Ingathering of the Exiles and received the Land of Israel. There is no doubt that thanks to Jerusalem we will progress forward and overcome all the obstacles.

The Song of Moses

Nachmanides – the Ramban – regards the Song of Moses as the essence of the history of the Jewish people, from the beginning to the end of days. At the end of his treatise, Nachmanides writes: "If a person were to come and offer us a script about the future, we would see that half of what he said has transpired word for word– Would we not expect that

everything had transpired? Of course we would. All the more so, because we unconditionally believe in the words of the prophets. Let us examine this: What did the Ramban see? The Ramban only saw the destruction and the calamity, and they were enough to make him believe, with total confidence, that the other prophecies were also fulfilled. We, on the other hand, see the prophecies of consolation – the building of the nation., the land and Jerusalem. After all that – can there still be any doubt about the fulfillment of the words of the prophets, even in the face of difficulties?

We believe with complete faith that we are in the midst of a great process, and with that faith we will certainly overcome everything. We will continue to go forward until Jerusalem, which is the light of the world, illuminates all the corners of the earth, when Torah will come forth from Zion and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.

If a land can have a soul, then Jerusalem is the soul of the Land of Israel
(David Ben-Gurion)

The Matter of Jerusalem Day

Rabbi Yaakov Medan



Chronicles provides an account of the battle between Asa and Zerah the Cushite:

"(8) And Zerah the Cushite came out against them with an army of thousands of thousands and thee hundred chariots, and came as far as Mareshah...(10) And Asa called out to the Lord his G-d, and said: 'O Lord, it is nothing to You to help the powerless against the mighty. Help us, O Lord our G-d, for we rely on You, and it is in Your name that we have come against this multitude. O Lord, You are our G-d; do not let mere mortals prevail against You; (11) So the Lord struck the Cushites before Asa and Judah, and the Cushites fled." (II Chronicles 14)

A desperate plea can be heard from Asa, which emerges from very meager spiritual and religious foundations. The Biblical text describes the spiritual backdrop against which Asa makes his appeal to G-d:

(3)"For many days Israel had been without a true G-d and without a

priest to teach them, and without the Torah" (II Chronicles 15).

Asa appears on the scene following a long period of profound spiritual poverty. Having said that, when Asa appeals to the Lord his G-d, the Holy One, Blessed be He, listens to him and brings him a very important victory. This seems to contradict the moral message of the prophets, who maintain that in order to deserve salvation from G-d, it is necessary to do what is right in the eyes of G-d and repent. But this did not happen in Asa's case: the nation had no true G-d, no priest and no Torah. Nevertheless, G-d sends Asa deliverance. The same phenomenon repeats itself in the days of Hezekiah, even though it appears that the situation was better during that period. But then as well, many sins are described by the prophets. For example, sharp criticism is leveled against Jerusalem in the Shabbat Chazon haftarah:

"How has the faithful city become

a harlot. She was once full of justice, where righteousness used to dwell, but now murderers" (Isaiah 1:21).

In the days of Hezekiah, Sennacherib declared war on Jerusalem and it looked as if the fate of the city was hanging by a thread. Hezekiah prayed and G-d heard his prayer. G-d answered his prayer despite the fact that the people were not worthy - even the prophet had given up on them.

The same feeling prevailed on the eve of and during the Six Day War. I speak here from own experience. Then, as a seventeen-year-old boy, I saw no justification for the privilege we had been granted, when we emerged from the darkness into a great light. In the days prior to the war, many prayers were said, but definitely there was no feeling of great privilege. The overall feeling in the country was that we were not worthy of the great miracle performed for us.

The transition from imminent destruction to rebirth was so powerful in my mind that I was unable to doubt its nature. There was a sense that G-d's

hand was leading His people to redemption. However, the price of that redemption was a question that had no clear answer. In the Knesset, they spoke about 100,000 casualties, assuming that we would win. The salvation that followed the huge victory could not have been assessed in advance. There was a feeling generated by the war, which could be called messianism. In his book, Rabbi Kook wrote: "When there is a great war in the world, the power of the Messiah awakens." (Orot HaMilchama, 1). Nowadays, that militarism seems deterring because war is typically associated with mourning and sorrow, even when it ends with a victory. For that reason, I was always inclined to interpret Rabbi Kook's words as referring to "in the same place and at the same time" namely, as a statement that relates to a specific war, World War I. His words proved to be nearly prophetic: in the early days of that war, the size of the Jewish population in the country decreased by approximately one-third, from 81,000 to 57,000. But, by the end of the war, like in

Daniel's vision, the four empires that ruled the world collapsed: the Russian Empire, the Prussian Empire, the Ottoman Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. One nation arose – owing to the Balfour Declaration and everything that came in its wake.

However, it appears that Rabbi Kook's words also offer a general observation on war. War, with all the hardship and mourning that it entails, also contains something uplifting in the form of total dedication to sanctifying the name of G-d. In an age of individual rights – "every man to his tent, O Israel" – under the guise of human dignity and liberty, there is something uplifting in seeing forces of self-sacrifice that arise, of individuals taking action for the common good. Rabbi Kook may have been referring to that as well in his article: "We look at the early generations, the ones described in the Pentateuch, the Prophets and the Writings, those generations that were engaged in war – and they are the great ones that we look upon favorably and with sacred esteem" (Orot HaMilchama, 2). The connection with the Bible, while underlining the connection

between the individual and the nation as a whole, coupled with the overt and unanticipated salvation, greatly reinforced the sense of G-d's revelation and the sense of redemption.

But there are no free lunches in the prophets' moral teachings. There are a few situations, like at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, when the Holy One, Blessed be He, is not particularly concerned about the spiritual merit of His people and saves them anyway. But this is not a gift, but rather a loan – that has to be repaid. This concept is strongly expressed in the case of Asa:

(1) And the spirit of G-d was upon Azariah, the son of Oded. (2) And he went before Asa and said to him: Hear me, Asa, and all of Judah and Benjamin/ The Lord is with you while you are with Him, and if you seek Him, He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you." (II Chronicles 15)

Asa is encouraged by this message:

(8) And when Asa heard these words and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he gained strength and removed the abominations

from all the land of Judah and Benjamin and from the cities that he had seized from Mount Ephraim, and he renewed the altar of the Lord, which stood in front of the vestibule of the Lord. (9) And he gathered all of Judah and Benjamin and those from Ephraim and Manasseh who were dwelling with them, for many of Israel had defected to them when they saw that the Lord their G-d was with them. (10) And they gathered in Jerusalem in the third month of the fifteenth year of Asa's reign. (11) And on that day, they sacrificed to G-d the spoils they had brought: seven hundred oxen and seven thousand sheep. (12) And they entered into a covenant to seek the Lord, the G-d of their forefathers, with all their hearts and with all their souls. (13) And whoever did not seek the Lord, the G-d of Israel, would be put to death, whether young or old, man or woman. (14) And they took an oath to G-d with a loud voice and with cries, and with trumpets and shofarot. (15) And all of Judah rejoiced over the oath, for they had sworn with all their hearts, and they sought Him with all their will, and He was found by

them, and G-d gave them the rest all around." (II Chronicles 15)

The scene almost seems to parallel what happened at Mount Sinai. The revelation at Mount Sinai consists of two parts. When describing it, we usually emphasize G-d's descent to the mountain. But, as I see it, the other miracle is no less astonishing – namely that all the Israelites said in unison: "We shall do and we shall obey." In the case of Asa, the entire nation takes an oath after the war to serve the Lord, the G-d of their forefathers, "with all their hearts and with all their souls." It appears that even the miraculous military victory cannot diminish the power of what happens after it, which appears to be a much greater miracle.

In the days of Hezekiah, on the other hand, there was no repentance nor any oath. The messengers of Merodach-Baladan came to Hezekiah, who showed them all his treasure house and everything in his coffers. Apparently, following the victory, the spoils of war first went to his own coffers, and only after that did some of them reach the Temple treasury.

He attributed part of the victory to himself and the great and immense spiritual change that could have transpired following the miracle did not occur. The miracle that occurred in the days of Hezekiah was an imperfect miracle. What did we gain from it? A strategic victory in the battlefield? That's all?!

Similarly, the day of Jerusalem's liberation expresses the spiritual facet of the Six Day War. The date was chosen because it was the date on which the Western Wall was liberated, which conveyed the deep bond that exists between the individual and his people and between the people and their G-d. But everything came to a halt in the absence of national spiritual leaders who could translate this initial experience into an ongoing change, like Asa did. Instead of a spiritual transformation, right after the war the country began worshipping mortal leaders, especially army officers and even politicians. "My strength and the might of my hand." Some rabbis claimed that this salvation stemmed from impurity. But can the entire act of the Holy One, Blessed be He, be denied

just because we were unable to translate it into a spiritual undertaking? Who are we to criticize if we did not take the lead in achieving the needed direction?

We found it hard to lead in that direction, one of an ongoing spiritual change, for two reasons. The first reason was that we lacked the time to prepare for the new reality, which we had not even dreamt about. The question of survival preceded everything else and no one planned a long-term spiritual undertaking aimed at repairing the Jewish people. The second reason, if truth be told, was that we were not part of the collective. The religious population, both the ultra-Orthodox and the national-religious sectors, shared a very similar mindset and were a separate group. Our role in the war and our share in the bereavement were relatively small. Consequently, it was not possible to lead an ongoing spiritual change because we were not a genuine part of the people.

However, not all is lost. A significant spiritual change did occur on two fronts. One front

was among Jews from the former Soviet Union, where the war led to a national revival that echoed the Vision of the Valley of Dry Bones found in the Book of Ezekiel. Another transformation, which began as a permanent transformation, was the one that occurred within our own sector. The aura of salvation turned us, as a collective, into totally different people. The atmosphere of deliverance, in the wake of which we viewed ourselves as a direct extension of the past, like a dwarf standing on the shoulders of a giant, transformed our entire spiritual world. From a conceptual perspective, the State of Israel became the Kingdom of Israel. A link was created between Judah the Maccabee and Bar Kokhba and the IDF and our entire conceptual world was turned upside down. The transformation that we experienced was certainly not of the same magnitude as the one that occurred in the days of Asa. Nonetheless, it was an irreversible development that has continued to gain momentum for forty years and counting.

In our day and age, we also have to be prepared so that events

of this nature do not catch us off guard. Should there be deliverance one day, on the very next day the hearts will open up to a spiritual change like the one that occurred in the days of King Asa, and we cannot afford to miss the opportunity. In Asa's case, when for a long time Israel had been "without a true G-d and without a priest to teach them, and without the Torah," the situation was no better. There was, however, a moment when the hearts opened up and we must prepare for that. We have no prophet like Azariah, the son of Oded, who as a prophet prepared on his own. It is our role to be ready for the day after. How can we lead such an undertaking? One day the grand shofar will be sounded and you will hear the call. Do not start rummaging for the chametz, for your shoes or for other things – you should already be holding everything in your hands. The ability to embark on this great spiritual undertaking will be assigned to you.

Excerpts from a discussion that took place at the Har Etzion yeshiva in Alon Shevut on the eve of Jerusalem Day 5768

"And the Eternity is Jerusalem"

Rabbanit Esti Rosenberg



The month of Iyar is replete with love between the Holy One, Blessed be He, and Knesset Yisrael. The Jewish people are in the midst of counting the Omer and their ongoing preparations for the giving of the Torah and entering into a covenant with G-d. And the Holy One, Blessed be He repays us and knocks on our door in our redemption. This process of eternity continues to this very day in the redemption of Jerusalem and in the consolation of Zion and Jerusalem.

Our Sages interpreted the verse "console, console My people" in an engaging Midrash: "Console, console My people, said G-d: Who needs to be consoled? The one whose wife has died, and not her Master? – So, the analogy must be Zion: Make me dwell in darkness like those long dead. Is it not Me who needs to be consoled? Console, console Me My people."

Similarly, to whom can this be compared? To one whose two children were taken captive during his life. Who should

we offer comfort to, not to the father? So, my children have left me and there are not here. In terms of strict justice, to what can this matter be compared? To one whose house has burned down. Who should we offer comfort to, the house or the owner of the house? - So, this must be G-d, whose house burned down, as is said: He set fire to the House of the Lord [...] Nevertheless, go and appease Knesset Yisrael. Immediately, all the prophets enter and approach her. And she says to them: How will you console me? [...] Until this moment my ears have been filled with the chastisements that you have rebuked me with, and now you come to console me? Hosea goes to comfort her and says: G-d sent me to you to console you. She says to him: What do you have in your hand? He says to her: I will be like dew to Israel. She says: Yesterday, you told me that Ephraim has been smitten, that their stock has withered and can produce no fruit. And now you say this

to me – which should I believe, the first or the second? Joel went to comfort her. Joel goes to comfort Knesset Yisrael and says: G-d sent me to console you. She says to him: What do you have in your hands? [...] (Yalkut Shimoni, Isaiah 443:20).

And the Midrash goes on to describe how all the prophets of Israel, to the very last one of them, come there – Hagai, Zecharia and Malachi, and try and coax Knesset Yisrael through consolation – but she refuses to be consoled. And the Midrash continues:

G-d said to Abraham: Go and comfort Jerusalem. Perhaps she will receive comfort from you. Abraham goes there and says to her: Receive comfort from me. She says to him: How can I accept comfort from you when you made me like a mountain, as is said: on the mountain the Lord will be seen? Isaac goes there and says to her: Receive comfort from me. She says to him: How can I accept comfort from you, from whom Esau the wicked emerged, who made me into a field that his sons set fire to? Jacob goes there and says:

Receive comfort from me. She says to him: How can I accept comfort from you, who made me as I did not exist – is this none other than the House of G-d? Moses goes there and says to her: Receive comfort from me. She says to him: How can I accept comfort from you, who wrote curses and harsh decrees about me, as is said: wasting famine, ravaging plague? And they immediately all go G-d and say: Master of the Universe! She does not accept Your consolation from us, as is said: O poor tempestuous one, who was not consoled. G-d says to them: You and I will go and comfort her, as in console, console My people, console her, console her My people. Is it not fitting that anyone other than Me go there [...] G-d goes to her immediately and says: My daughter, why all this anger? She says to Him: Master of the Universe, is it not legitimate that I be angry? You dispersed me among the nations and cursed me with evil curses and whipped me until my face looked like the rim of the cauldron, and despite all this I sanctified Your great name. G-d

says to her: Commensurate with the meritorious deeds you did – there are obligations because you transgressed what is written in the Torah [...] She says to Him: Master of the Universe, because you dispersed me among the nations, is it not legitimate that I not keep the Shabbat and fulfill Your commandments? He says to her: My daughter, the time has come to be redeemed. She immediately says to G-d: Master of the Universe, I will not be consoled until You show me those same wicked people who made me suffer and disgraced Your name. Immediately, G-d says to her: My daughter, I will surely bring them and exact revenge from them in front of you [...] She immediately says: Who shall give You to me like a brother [...].

The Midrash can be divided into subsections:

1. A discussion regarding the question: 'Who needs to be consoled?'
2. The attempt made by the prophets to console Knesset Yisrael
3. The attempt of the forefathers to console Knesset Yisrael

4. The dialog between G-d and Knesset Yisrael
5. The conclusion

I would like to focus on the dialog that takes place between the Holy One, Blessed be He, and Knesset Yisrael – a dialog about which one could say: if it were not written in the Bible, it could never have been uttered.' The entire Midrash is designed in a way that leads up to this dialog and the first sections provide a backdrop against which the dialog between G-d and Knesset Yisrael seems even more improbable.

The Midrash begins with an attempt by G-d to claim mourner status for Himself – he offers assorted proof that He is in mourning and that Knesset Yisrael needs to console Him rather than wait for G-d to come and comfort her. As is said: "Console, console Me people." G-d is portrayed here not only as someone who created the problem, but also as someone who is sad Himself, as someone who has been harmed by the results of the destruction and wants Knesset Yisrael to share

His sorrow: 'Who should we offer comfort to...the owner of the house?' What we have here is a kind of hidden struggle over 'who has to console who, Knesset Yisrael the Holy One, Blessed be He, or the Holy One, Blessed be He Knesset Yisrael?'

The answer provided at the beginning of the Midrash is clear-according to the law, Knesset Yisrael is the one who is supposed to go and console G-d. However, a reverse situation exists here: "Nevertheless, go and appease Knesset Yisrael." Ex gratia, G-d sends emissaries on His behalf to console Knesset Yisrael. Knesset Yisrael refuses to be consoled and displays a total lack of trust in the prophets, and perhaps in the One that sent them as well. "Which should I believe, the first or the second?" The repetition of that question - "Which should I believe, the first or the second?" – intensifies the sense of spiritual confusion that Knesset Yisrael finds herself in and, indeed, refuses to be consoled.

Instead of G-d reminding Knesset Yisrael that in accordance with the law, she is the one that needs

to console Him – G-d continues His efforts and steps up His attempts to console Knesset Yisrael. After the prophets are unsuccessful, the forefathers of the world are sent, followed by the lead prophet – but Knesset Yisrael continues to display an uncompromising position. The image then becomes even more powerful: G-d, who believed that He was in need of consolation, tries to console Knesset Yisrael Himself, but His attempts reach a stalemate. This leads to the evident conclusion:

And they immediately all go to G-d and say: Master of the Universe! She does not accept Your consolation." G-d answers: You and I will go and comfort her," but immediately changes his mind: "Is it not fitting that anyone other than Me go there." Ostensibly, this is where the Midrash comes to a climax, reaching a place which the People of Israel dreamt about. The Midrash opens with the need to console the Holy One, Blessed be He, and ends with G-d's decision to console Israel Himself. What else do the Jewish people need? But based on the

Midrash, this development is not enough and we are given an opportunity to enter G-d' Beit Midrash: "Is it not fitting that anyone other than Me go there because I transgressed what is written in the Torah."

On the face of it, G-d is explaining to the readers of the Midrash His obligation to go and console Israel. However, after G-d goes, ex gratia, to appease Knesset Yisrael – she refuses to be consoled. She is also insolent and replies: "Is it not legitimate that I be angry? You dispersed me among the nations and cursed me with evil curses... and despite all this I sanctified Your great name."

The underlying assumption of Knesset Yisrael is that the 'deal' fell apart as a result of the exile – after G-d seemingly abandoned His people, Knesset Yisrael was released of her religious obligations and therefore it was legitimate: "that she not keep the Shabbat and not fulfill Your commandments?" And even though G-d tries to put her in her place and suggests that: "Commensurate with the meritorious deeds you did – there

are obligations" – Knesset Yisrael is not convinced: "Because You dispersed me among the nations, is it not legitimate that I not keep the Shabbat and fulfill Your commandments?"

The use of the word 'legitimate' is of importance here. In other words: "I am entitled to this, not ex gratia, but in accordance with the law." It is one thing that Knesset Yisrael does not want to fulfill G-d's commandments; it is one thing that Knesset Yisrael is not willing to keep the Shabbat – but to argue that it is legitimate – that is astonishing. This is apparently telling us that what we have here is a theological-spiritual argument.

The dialog between G-d and Knesset Yisrael brings to the surface, and with considerable force, a question that has been of great concern to Knesset Yisrael: "Because You dispersed me among the nations, it is not legitimate that I not keep the Shabbat and fulfill Your commandments." What is the nature of the relationship between the Holy One, Blessed be He, and Knesset Yisrael

following the destruction, following the exile?

It is no secret that Knesset Yisrael was repeatedly warned about the impending danger, about the risks of the exile and the severed connection between Knesset Yisrael and her Creator...Ranging from the verses "And if you obey My commandments" and "Any you will quickly perish from the good land" to harsh verses in the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah, Knesset Yisrael repeatedly hears about the possibility of the exile and refuses to believe it...and the exile arrived. The Jewish people were exiled from their land and G-d destroyed the Temple that they built for Him. And the compelling spiritual questions kept on coming up: How can the relationship between G-d and Knesset Yisrael be sustained after the exile from the House of the Lord? The Jewish people feel deserted and abandoned.

What is the relationship between the post-destruction Knesset Yisrael and their Father in heaven? It appears that the answer was not clear to those who lived in that period.

"Which should we believe, the first or the second?" And for the first time in her history, Knesset Yisrael is trying to understand her religious obligations to G-d following the destruction.

The correlation between crime and punishment and G-d's close watch over His people – are broken.

They no longer see eye to eye about G-d's watch over His people and the Jewish people want to know if G-d is still there. Is He still our father – or has He expelled us?

In a sermon delivered after the Yom Kippur War by my father, my teacher, Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein Shalita, which was later published under the title "Trust in G-d," he makes a distinction between two types of connection that the Jewish people have with G-d: the trust in faith and the trust in love.

When explaining the trust in faith, he quotes Rabbeinu Bahya Ibn Pakuda, who in Duties of the Heart writes: "The essence of trust is the peace of mind enjoyed by the person who has trust. That the one his heart relies on will do what is good and appropriate for him in the

matter he has entrusted him with, to the best of his ability and his understanding of what produces his good" - simple and popular trust that relies on the kindness of G-d – an optimistic approach abounding in hope and anticipation for the future. The Jewish people experienced the trust in faith, in all its simplicity, until the First Temple exile, until the first big crisis associated with the destruction of the Temple.

The second trust is the trust in love – as Rabbeinu Bahya ben Asher wrote in Kad Ha-Kemah: "And included in the matter of trust is that a person must surrender his soul to G-d and his thoughts must be constantly occupied by this matter. If people come to kill him or force him to disobey the Torah, he should sacrifice his life rather than disobey the Torah, about which King David said: 'To you, O Lord, I shall lift up my soul. My G-d, in You I have placed my trust; let me not be shamed.' Because he who sacrifices his life under these circumstances has displayed trust."

It is clear that this trust does not guarantee us anything from G-d. It is articulated in an unwavering

decision that even if things are bad, we will remain dependent on and cling to the Holy One, Blessed be He. Regardless of what happens – we will remain faithful until the end.

As regards the trust in faith, it is man who has an expectation from G-d. As regards the trust in love, it is G-d who has an expectation from man.

My father, my teacher then compares the two types of trust with the condition of Knesset Yisrael, based on the Midrashim mentioned above. Prior to the destruction of the First Temple, Knesset Yisrael had no need for the trust in love – and the Jewish people primarily made use of the trust in faith, as we saw above. Following the destruction of the Temple, the confusion grew and Knesset Yisrael asks the questions in the strongest way possible: "Is it not legitimate that I not keep the Shabbat and fulfill Your commandments?" The Jewish people have two options – to renege on their end of the deal and stop keeping the Shabbat, or to learn how to use the trust in love, to shape a new relationship between

the Holy One, Blessed be He, and Knesset Yisrael – a relationship founded on unconditional love.

My father, my teacher explains that following the destruction of the First Temple, the Jewish people transition to the trust in love and learn that even if it is difficult, they have to have learn how to believe: "To proclaim Your kindness in the morning and Your faithfulness at night." The demands made on the Jewish people become tougher and more profound.

The demand the Midrash makes on Knesset Yisrael to internalize the trust in love is not the only thing that makes it innovative. Rather, most of the innovativeness derives from the great promise that the Midrash offers on behalf of G-d regarding His role in reshaping the relationship.

After the Midrash has been inclined the entire time to favor the position of Knesset Yisrael - by giving her a stage where she can disrespect G-d and make repeated demands on Him – He accedes to her once again and says: "My daughter, the time has come to be redeemed."

It appears that G-d is redeeming Knesset Yisrael not because He thinks her arguments are valid, but rather out of concern that the thread can at any moment be torn altogether and Knesset Yisrael will be convinced that not keeping the Shabbat is legitimate. And G-d offers comfort: "My daughter, the time has come to be redeemed." But Knesset Yisrael continues to make her argument: "I will not be consoled until You show me those same wicked people" – and the Holy One, Blessed be He, complies.

Two things occur simultaneously in the Midrash:

Knesset Yisrael indulges herself, makes demands and speaks harshly.

G-d repeatedly acquiesces - and appeases Knesset Yisrael over and over again.

The climax of the Midrash occurs at the end, when the relationship between G-d and Knesset Yisrael is shaped and defined: "If only You were like my brother. Like which brother? Like Joseph to his brothers. After all the troubles they put him through, he comforted them and spoke

kindly to them." And G-d agrees to this demand as well. To be a brother to us like Joseph was to his brothers. Despite everything He has been put through, He remains our brother.

Knesset Yisrael will have to learn the trust in love within the darkness, but not on her own – there will be someone there to fulfill and accept her demands – G-d is at her side. Knesset Yisrael learned the trust in love after the destruction of the First Temple, and G-d also shapes a renewed relationship and makes a huge promise to us – to be like a brother to us, like Joseph was to his brothers.

Just as our relationship with G-d will have to be one that is not dependent on His acts and on any reward He gives us – the fundamental and primary relationship of G-d with His people cannot be dependent on their acts, even when they behave like Joseph's brothers. "After everything they put him through, he spoke kindly to them."

Without a doubt, this Midrash embodies a great message. Knesset Yisrael and the Holy One, Blessed be He, redefine their

love. The Midrash starts with a description of the relationship between G-d and Knesset Yisrael: "Who needs to be consoled? The one whose wife has died, and not her Master?" G-d and Knesset Yisrael are compared to a man and wife. After that, the Midrash switches to terminology that is used to describe a father and daughter: "My daughter, why all this anger?" And at the end of the Midrash – brotherhood: "If only You were like my brother."

On one hand – a wife and husband convey a very high level – a relationship of love and closeness.

On the other hand – if a husband divorces his wife, can one make a claim on the other? The deep connection can be taken apart.

Brother and sister – a relationship which at times is very deep and at times is very shallow. But it cannot be taken apart in any form or in any case. It may not be voluntary, but there is still no way to finish it.

The promise given by G-d to be like a brother to us is encouraging and fortifying because that relationship cannot be dismantled, and the Jewish people are in dire

need of knowing that right after the Temple is destroyed. But, on the other hand, we must not make do with this. It is imperative to strive for a deeper relationship with G-d – a relationship between a husband and wife that is expressed in Knesset Yisrael's trust in love in G-d and a relationship of love expressed in G-d's love towards us. We must not make do with the fact that G-d protects His people, but must strive for a relationship of love.

These things were undoubtedly learned and experienced for the first time after the destruction of the First Temple and are presented in the Midrash within that historical context – but they are also true in each and every period. The demand made on

the Jewish people is to have trust in love and expect that G-d will be like a brother to us, coupled with a great prayer that He also be a husband to us.

The process of consoling Zion and Jerusalem began right after the destruction of the First Temple when G-d Himself went to comfort Jerusalem with the words of Isaiah: "Console, console my people." And it continues to this very day.

"And Jerusalem is the eternity."

The content of this article was adapted from remarks made by Rabbanit Rosenberg for the ascent of the soul of HaGrid Soloveitchik z"l, delivered at a seminar held on Jerusalem Day.

I am writing this letter to you from the Holy City of Jerusalem, for it praised and graced the Rock of my salvation that I was deserving of coming here in peace and remaining here in peace...And what shall I tell you about the Land? That great is the neglect and vast is the destruction, and the rule seems to be that the more sacred the place, the greater the devastation. Jerusalem is the most desolate place of all...But with all its destruction, it is very good and its inhabitants are around two thousand...Because many frequently come to Jerusalem to see the Temple and mourn for it. And He who has let us see Jerusalem in its destruction, may He let us see Jerusalem rebuilt and restored, when the Divine Presence will return to it. (From a letter written by the Ramban [Nachmanides] to his son after arriving in Jerusalem, 1267)

Jerusalem in the Teachings of Rabbi Kook

Rabbi Yehouda Leon Askenazi-Manitou, z"l



In an article published in 1915, Rabbi Kook writes about Jerusalem's suitable significance in reference to the unity of the nation. When writing the article, the concrete sociological problems associated with the Ingathering of the Exiles had not yet emerged – or as they should be called based on their Biblical meaning – "the Ingathering of the Tribes of Israel." In effect, there is no more lineage by tribe and this apparently has been the situation since the days of the exile after the destruction of the First Temple, which was the second exile (the exile from Egypt being the first exile). Nevertheless, there is something similar in the modern period: the communities or the "ethnic subgroups" which, after two thousand years, have created a human and cultural mosaic comprised of hundreds of totally different hues and are attempting to rebuild the unity of the Hebrew nation within the melting pot of Israeli society. This is the challenge that Rabbi

Kook posed to himself in his teachings, in general, and in those dealing with Jerusalem, in particular.

A great principle has been conveyed to us: a person should never, as an ideal, designate a value to himself that he is lacking: in other words, the value most important to him from a consciousness perspective but which has not yet become part of his overall being, and for that reason is defined as an ideal. When that value becomes a reality, when it is actually realized, it no longer remains an ideal and continues to exist as part of the reality. As far as Israel is concerned, it is clear that unity is the ideal, and for that reason they are still expecting to realize it. G-d designated to each and every nation – in the form of humaneness – a specific value regarding which it seems to be the most competent: to realize the value of unity, G-d chose the only people who could realize it. There is a great paradox here

because, ostensibly, Israel is one of the most divided societies there is. We must, therefore, identify what the dividing points are. Rabbi Kook talks about them in his article that deals with Jerusalem, the city that symbolizes evolving unity, unity that comes into the world only in a very defined and delineated place. When the consciousness highlights a particular value, at the early stage when it senses its lack, it is clear that it will eventually reach it and achieve it fully. Not every consciousness is sensitive to the lack of this value, and therefore it is not by chance that the nation whose ideal is unity appears to be an endlessly divided society. We must examine this with a clear mind, mixed with hope for the future.

In his article entitled "Jerusalem," Rabbi Kook underscores a fundamental principle that refers to the three dimensions of Israel's identity: the Torah, the Land of Israel, and the people of Israel. Only the absolute unity of the people, the Land and the Torah can validate the authenticity of the unity of Israel.

According to Rabbi Kook, it is Jerusalem that contains the quality that can produce the unity of these three dimensions. As long as they are not unified, then what we have here are three separate conduits to Jewish existence. And if they are in fact different and separate from one another, there is a great danger of them fighting against each other. Because in the attempt to define an autonomous identity for themselves, artificially distinct from the others, each of them draws a caricature of the other, while at the root they are the same substance. When separate from one another, not only do they fight against each other, but also discover the lack of their own authenticity.

The Rabbi stresses that it is Jerusalem which enables these three dimensions to unite. First of all, relying on Psalms, Chapter 122 (which Sephardi Jews consider the psalm of the three pilgrimages): "The built Jerusalem is like a city that was joined within itself – a city that makes all Israel friends." The reference is to the unity of the Tribes of Israel: "there ascended

the tribes, the tribes of G-d." In practical terms, the unity of the tribes was concretely achieved on the occasion of the mitzvah of Reiyah, which is associated with the three pilgrimages.

Even a shallow sociological analysis of the phenomenon of unity in contemporary societies clearly indicates that unity is articulated in the level of the society, namely in the national sphere, whereas the factors that lead to the material disputes and changes that produce divisions are at the community level, namely in the spiritual sphere. Human beings come together in societies around different interests, whereas they come together in communities in order to fulfill ideals. It is possible that in ancient times the phenomena in human societies were all exactly the opposite. And, in fact, it seems that Israel's society has preserved an ancient pattern of society – namely that unity is at the community level, around ideals, therefore making it spiritual, whereas the rifts exist at the national level. This is the problem of tribalism: ostensibly, each tribe of Israel can constitute

"its own people of Israel." The people of Israel actually acquired this unique trait from the diaspora of humanity. As early as the Biblical period, the differences in the way the tribes conducted themselves derived from the diasporas from which Israel went out to form a nation. A close examination of the story of Jacob's exile when living with Laban, which is actually the first prototype of all exiles, clearly shows that the sons of Jacob, the founders of the tribes, were born in exile, with the exception of Benjamin, who was conceived in exile but was born upon return to the Land of Israel.

The same holds true in our times. The differences between the ethnic subgroups, comparable to those between the tribes in the Biblical period, which facilitate the existence of a society comprised of diverse hues and multiple orientations, are inherent in the differences between nations to which Israel was exiled and lived in a dispersed state: to be more precise, and in the strict Biblical sense, they derive from the diaspora of the nations. It would

be wrong to claim that diaspora is Israel's natural state and that its unification in its land is the exception to the rule. Based on what the Bible tell us, the truth is exactly the opposite. When the Torah describes the renewed beginning of humanity following the flood, it first recounts the story about the split between the nations, at a time, of course, before the nation of Israel was formed. Universal human unity shatters into pieces and nations are created. That is why the notion of diaspora refers to the natural state of the 'goyim' – but not of Israel. Since the days of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, the diaspora of the people of Israel, who over time became the Jewish people, is a secondary diaspora that was grafted onto the diaspora of the nations. The nation of Israel emerges only in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob after the formation of the seventy nations, which can be called the "basic nations." Circumstances lead to grafting the diaspora of the nation of Israel onto the diaspora of all humanity ("the nations) in order to fulfill the

Messianic hope of the prophets - the rebuilding of human existence that had shattered into pieces between the different manifestations of humanity, namely the nations, the "goyim." That is why when the tribes come together, they bring differences and diversity with them, whose origins are the shattered universal humanity. Without fulfilling the mitzvah of Reiyah during the three pilgrimages, as an expression of a spiritual principle of everlasting renewed unity, the differences would have deepened and there was concern that in place of the twelve tribes that constitute a single nation of Israel, that we would have "twelve different peoples of Israel." Therefore, Rabbi Kook notes in his article that when we talk about Jerusalem, we are talking about the identity of Israel that extends beyond all the changes and the differences which come to us from foreign cultures. Talking about Jerusalem suggests a consensus that the dividing element is bypassed by striving for the unique essence of the unity of the people of Israel: beyond the differences of

opinion, whether ideological or spiritual, or intellectual, political, cultural or even folkloristic. And that is because all the dividing elements, which themselves are supposed to be elements of fertilization and enrichment if they are connected by a unifying element, are not originally the identity of Israel: rather, they are a reflection of the identity of the various nations whose messianic mission of engendering the unifying element was entrusted to the people of Israel. Only when talking about Jerusalem do we touch the special holiness of the identity of Israel. That is the source of the consensus among all Jews and, through the Jews, of humanity as a whole. That is because the special holiness of Jerusalem transcends the divisive tribalism. The division between the tribes is actually a reflection of the division between the nations, based on the ways in which Jewish identity was influenced by them during its journeys when in exile. This reflection of the division of humanity within Jewish identity has a positive aspect: it embodies the hopes

of messianic unification. But as long as it is not realized, it also has a fundamental negative aspect: it is the dividing factor which, like a photograph negative, reinforces the reality of unity symbolized by Jerusalem.

Rabbi Kook notes that, according to the Bible, three main forces are at work in Jerusalem that seek to achieve its unity: the holiness, the valor, and when they act in unison, the prophecy as well.

According to the Torah, the holiness is the unification of the forces and the values. The aim of every nation, every tradition, every method and, to a certain extent, even every religion, is to specifically underscore a particular quality, a particular value. The Torah is not like that: its objective is the unity of qualities. Jacob Gordin z"l established his theory based on what Elijah Benamozegh wrote in his book *Israel and Humanity*: "Every nation has a pearl of its own. Israel is the thread that runs through the entire string." Indeed, every culture has its own pearl, a special mission that underscores a particular and

defined value and takes steps to fulfill it. Israel is the exception to the rule. It underscores the unity.

In his article, Rabbi Kook mentions that the exile began about two thousand years ago and since then a division has existed between the holiness and the valor. The two forces were born in Jerusalem and later split, causing both of them to lose their greatness. This is a period of exile of holiness in hiding and valor in absentia. Therefore, according to the Rabbi, the building of Jerusalem means renewing the covenant between the holiness and valor. Skimming through the headings of the contemporary events is enough to cause us to reread the current historical events in Israel, even if a confrontation still exists between these two qualities, whose source is Jerusalem: holiness, on the one hand, and valor, on the other.

In his work *Orot*, Rabbi Kook explains that there are two types of holiness: "holiness opposed to nature" whose manifestations are contrary to natural phenomena,

and "natural holiness" which means a unification of the forces of Creation. What has made the Jewish people unique for generations is its radical demand for monotheism, when surrounded by worldviews that are a product of dualism. Dualism is a worldview that is unable to accept, ponder and certainly not live with the absolute unity between truth and reality. Accepting the unity of G-d in the world means declaring that He who brought truth to the world is also He who created the natural reality. From a pure human perspective, truth and reality are two different things, separate from one another. And according to ancient Greek philosophy, they will never meet. That is the essence of underlying the Torah: the original holiness unites with nature and does not oppose it. In the initial stage, which has value in its own right, holiness comes into the world when separating itself from it and when opposing the natural inclination. The Rabbi teaches us that there is another dimension of holiness, deeper and more exalted, holiness that does not acknowledge the

controversy between the natural inclination and the inclination of truth. According to the Rabbi, the natural holiness was lost when we lost the dimension of our original Hebrew nature and became Jews in exile. Since then, we have been on a two-thousand-year learning journey of holiness that can come into the world only when opposed to the reality of the world: in other words, unlike the original Hebrew identity, Jewish identity acknowledges the world of holiness only when rejecting and not accepting the reality of the world that surrounds it. Everything connected with the form of the landscape belongs to the 'goyim.' That being the case, the Rabbi maintains that holiness is "holiness of mourning" and it is no coincidence that its manifestations are manifestations of mourning. Only in the Land of Israel is it possible to reunite the form of the world's landscape with the holy values, abandon the landscapes of mourning, the places that separate the holy and nature, and reunite holiness with valor.

And that leads us to the prophecy, and the Rabbi places emphasis on the "divine prophecy." Indeed, during the two thousand years of exile, the phenomenon of prophecy, described to us in the Bible as G-d's word to man, was lost to us. A review of the extensive, and even impressive, literary works of contemporary Jewish philosophy (and especially those written in France) reveals a dilution of the special nature of what the Rabbi calls the "divine prophecy" – the unique Hebrew prophecy which contains G-d's word to man and not man's word to G-d. These literary works are inclined to take the words of rabbinical wisdom and, in particular, the Hebrew prophecy, and annex them to philosophical dilemmas. There is an essential difference here: when the prophet speaks, he is bringing the word of G-d to man; when the philosopher speaks, he is expressing man's thoughts about G-d. Therefore, what we have here is a kind of spiritual expropriation (it may be necessary to use an even stronger term – fraud): human expropriation of the content

of the divine prophecy, which is known and recognized as being such by all of humanity (and even when Jews stopped believing in it, the non-Jews clung to that belief). This fraud cannot exist forever and it will be exposed in the end.

These three dimensions evolve together in Jerusalem, and from Jerusalem: the holy power, which testifies to the unity of the Creator and reveals the ethical values to the world, the spirit and the religion. As long as the implications of the significance of Hebrew monotheism have not yet been exhausted, we will not know what the Hebrew holiness is, holiness that has nothing to do with the concepts of holiness that imagines it has to wear mourning clothes so they will know it is holy. And what is this mourning? It is the exile! When in exile, the soul mourns because when in exile the soul is also in exile. And only Jerusalem can extract us from this mourning.

This article is a condensed version of a lecture delivered in Paris in May 1985 on the occasion of Independence Day 5745.

The article was posted in French on the website of the Manitou Institute:

<http://www.manitou.org.il>.

The intention is to the article entitled Jerusalem, which was published in 5674 in the magazine "HaOlam" and appears in "Ma'amarei HaRaya 2". Here, Rabbi Askenazi reviews the article and uses familiar examples from French society.

Manitou's teacher. He met him in France after the Holocaust. He had a great effect on him.

Jerusalem of Gold

(Naomi Shemer)



The mountain air is clear as wine
And the scent of pines
Is carried by the twilight breeze
To the sound of bells.

And in the slumber of tree and
stone
Imprisoned in her dream
The city sits all alone
And a wall within her heart.

Chorus:
Jerusalem of Gold,
And of copper and of light,
I am a violin for all your songs.

The water cisterns have gone
dry
The marketplace is empty
And no one comes to the Temple
Mount
In the Old City.

And in the caves in the mountain
The winds are howling
And no one descends to the
Dead Sea
Via Jericho.

Chorus...

But when I come to sing to you
today
And sing your praises
I am smaller than the youngest
of your children
And one of the last of the poets.

Because your name scorches the
lips
Like the kiss of resin
If I forget you, Jerusalem
Which is made purely of gold.

Chorus...

We have returned to the water
cisterns
To the market and the square
A shofar calls out on the Temple
Mount
In the Old City.

And in the caves in the mountain
Thousands of suns shine
We will descend once again to
the Dead Sea
Via Jericho.

Chorus...



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