

# THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT R'EH

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



**RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL**  
TAL Founder & Director

## WHY IS THE PLACE HIDDEN?

At the end of this sentence I would like you to close your eyes for a few seconds and ponder – When I say Jerusalem, what do you think of?

That Holy City, the eternal Jewish capital, lined with ancient stones that glow with the sunrise.

Well – Jerusalem has much history as a contested city. It has been attacked 52 times, captured and recaptured 44 times, besieged 23 times, and destroyed twice over the course of 3,000 years. Jerusalem's Mount of Olives is home to over 150,000 Jewish graves, dating back hundreds of years.

The Hebrew word for Jerusalem – Yerushalayim can be found 660 times throughout Nach (the books of the prophets and writings). Yet in the Five Books of the Torah it is only hinted at, albeit 19 times.

Our Parshat Re'eh gives an important message about this holy place.

"Rather, only at the Place that Hashem, your G-d will choose from among all your Tribes to place his Name shall you seek out His Presence and come there" (12:5). "It shall be that the Place where Hashem, your G-d, will choose to rest his name-there shall you bring everything that I command you: your elevation offerings and your feast-offerings, your tithes and what you raise up with your hands and the choicest of your offerings that you will vow to Hashem."(12:11)

Rabenu Bachya asks why G-d is so cryptic when it comes to the Temple Mount and Yerushalayim? Why is Mount Moriah which was known as a special place even to the nations of the world and certainly to the Children of Israel in the Desert who knew from their ancestors that this was the place of the binding of Yitzchak at the Akedah, not specified by the Torah? Why does G-d Almighty only refer to it as "the Place"- Hamakom?

Parshat Re'eh is not the only place where Yerushalayim and specifically the Temple Mount is left as a secret. In Parshat Va'etchanan Moshe alludes to the Temple Mount when he says, "Let me now cross and see the Good Land that is on the other side of the Jordan, this good mountain and the Lebanon."(4:25). Rashi says "the Good Mountain" relates to the Temple Mount and "the Lebanon" relates to the Holy Temple. Again the terminology is cryptic.

I once heard in the name of Rabbi Hillel Medalie (of Antwerp) that Yerushalayim = stands for Yerusha Lahem- their (the Jews) heritage. It is a hint that this contested city is and has always been a designated city to Am Yisrael.

Yerushalayim is also hinted at previously in Bereishit (14:18): "But Malchizedek, King of Salem ("Shalem" in Hebrew) brought out bread and wine: he was a Priest of G-d, the Most High." Our Sages identify Malchizedek as Shem-son of Noah.

The Ramban explains that as the most honoured of Noah's children, Shem was Priesthood was handed over from Shem to Avraham.

The Akedah took place on the Temple Mount where Avraham held the Priesthood.

"And Avraham called the name of that site "Hashem Yireh" as it is said to this day, on the mountain Hashem will be seen."(Bereishit 22:14) According to the Midrash G-d synthesized both names for Yerushalayim-Shalem and Yireh into one-Yerushalayim. According to Historical records under Jebusite rule the city was divided into western part called "Jeru" (Yere) and the eastern part called Shalem (Salem). Around the time of Yehoshua's conquest the Amorite consolidated the two halves of the city and combined the two names (Jerusalem).

The Ramban in Moreh Nevuchim (3:45) gives 3 reasons why the Torah says "HaMakom" "The Place" instead of specifying the word Yerushalayim.

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**KIDS ZONE - QUIZ**

This newsletter contains Divrei Torah and may contain Sheimot - Please dispose of accordingly

1) Although the nations of the world knew of Har Moriah (hence G-d made reference to Moriah 22:2) they did not realize that it was the direct conduit of prayer and sacrifices to G-d where they would be heard and accepted-more so than any other place in the world for if they knew this secret every nation would want to acquire this site. The result would be War and conflict.

2) The Canaanites with their knowledge would have destroyed the mountain so as to prevent Israel from being able to even build a Beit Hamikdash.

3) The Israelite Tribes would have fought amongst themselves for the rights to possess Yerushalayim. Once the Jews had conquered and divided the Land most of these problems ceased to exist. G-d in his infinite wisdom knew well when and when not to precisely identify a location. G-d, Almighty knew well that Yerushalayim was his most precious

Jewel he was bestowing upon the Jewish People.

Like all precious Jewels they are kept in a Vault for safekeeping. G-d kept it in his Vault and did not let out the secret till the Jews had conquered Eretz Yisrael and King David came to power. The Koran which was written nearly a thousand years after the Torah and had total access to the Neviim and Ketuvim where Yerushalayim was mentioned 660 times, did not mention or reference Yerushalayim even once.

Jerusalem was unique in that it bordered the tribe of Binyamin and Yehudah. King David's first step is to go to Jerusalem and to establish it as the capital. He thereby removes the partition between the kingdom of Yehudah and the kingdom of Israel; between the tribe of Binyamin and the tribe of Yehudah; between Rachel and Leah. Jerusalem until that point had expressed many forms and modes of severance; now a new flag flew over the city, speaking of the completion that is

created through partnership, and a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts. That was to be the real story of Jerusalem. "The place which G-d will choose" is an expression that repeats itself over and over again in Sefer Devarim; to a considerable extent it represents the pinnacle of the process that takes place in this Sefer. "Every man whatever is right in his own eyes" (Devarim 12:8) is the point of departure; it embodies inner integrity, but also a narrow perspective that has no room for the "eyes" or perspective of anyone else. Step by step the perspective of the nation in its land broadens, ultimately including rest from its enemies.

Jerusalem is centralised around the self-sacrifice of Avraham and Yitzchak in the service of G-d, but only once there is rest from the enemies and a unique unity amongst the nation can it embody a higher realm of Israel. It is then that G-d can 'CHOOSE' to come to this place, and rest His presence there forever.



## RABBI DAVID BAADANI

Director - TAL Chazanut Program

### PARSHAT R'EH

בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם לא תתגדדו ולא תשימו קרחה בין עיניכם למת:

'You are children of your G-d. You shall not gash yourselves or shave the front of your heads in mourning of the dead.'

Says Rashi: לא תתגדדו You shall not gash yourselves. i.e. you shall not make cuttings and incisions in your flesh when mourning the dead in the way the Amorites do, because as children of the L-rd it is befitting for you to be comely and not cut about, with hairs torn out.

אמר ליה ריש לקיש לרבי יוחנן: איקרי כאן "לא תתגדדו", לא תעשו אגודות אגודות

Reish Lakish says to Rabbi Yohanan: this verse should be interpreted as: "You shall

not cut yourselves לא תתגדדו meaning: Do not become numerous factions [agudot]. In other words, the Jewish people should be united, rather than divided into separate groups that act in different ways.

Asks the Maharal of Prague (Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel, 1512 - 1609). Usually when our Sages give an interpretation to a Pasuk they reveal a deeper meaning of the verse which is in line with the simple literal meaning of the Pasuk. How is it that in this case the Gemara brings a completely different approach and from a prohibition of cutting and incisions on one's flesh in mourning the dead they interpreted the words לא תתגדדו as 'Do not become numerous factions [agudot]'?

The Gemara Yerushalmi (Nedarim 9, 4) says that the Jewish people are as one

body, and this is the reason of the prohibition of taking revenge or nursing hatred because no one would hit their right hand for hurting the left hand. Based on this Gemara says Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745 - 1812), that these two interpretations of the words לא תתגדדו are connected to each other because becoming numerous factions out of jealousy, hatred and bad competition is exactly as tearing the flesh cutting and separating limbs allowing one hand to harm the other.

You are children of your G-d, בנים אתם לה', אלקיכם, one nation, one family, one body. לא תתגדדו, You shall not gash yourselves, do not become 'Agudot' and rather than dividing into separate groups that act in different ways we should find our common ground focus on what brings us together, makes us stronger and united.



## RABBI YEHONATAN SALEM

### HOW TO GIVE

In this parashah (Re'eh 15:7-8) our

Torah instructs us as follows: "If there is a destitute person amongst you, from any of your brethren, in any of your cities, in the land that Hashem

your G-d gives you, you shall not be hard-hearted or close your hand to your needy brother. Rather, you shall surely open your hand to him, and even

lend him whatever requirements he lacks." This is one of the places that the Torah instructs us to give charity. We may ask: If G-d has all the bounty and plenty and is able to supply everyone's needs, why does He not sustain the poor directly? This question was posed by the Roman dignitary, Turnus Rufus, to Rabi Akiva. He answered him that certainly G-d loves the poor, however, to save people from gehinnom – purgatory, G-d puts some people into a situation of need, so that others will have the opportunity to help them, and thus, merit to be saved. Why though, is the fulfilment of other mitzvot not enough to achieve this end?

Man is born naturally egoistical and self-centred, and without opportunities to be concerned for others he would remain so. Hence, G-d created the world in a way that we are all interdependent. Everyone has within their G-d-given set of resources a part that is to be utilised for helping others. Not only are we dependent upon others when it comes to our occupations, e.g. a doctor on his patients, and a baker on the farmer supplying the wheat. We are also

dependent on each other for self-improvement. Any person who is lacking something can enable another person, who has the means, to overcome their self-centredness by helping them out. Thus, the mitzvah of charity is not just to give to another person, but to give it in a way of natural concern for him, even without being commanded.

Normally, the perfection of a mitzvah is achieved when the fear of G-d spurs us on to do it. However, in the case of tzedakah, the fear of Hashem should bring a person to give as if he has forgotten that there is a mitzvah, just out of his feeling of concern towards the other person. We are commanded to look after our health, yet when we eat, we don't do so because of this commandment; we eat because we feel hungry. Similarly, when we give to others it should be because of our concern for them. Our aim when giving charity is to get to the level where we love "our neighbour", literally, as we love ourselves. We give because we would do the same for ourselves. This is G-d's will in the case of this commandment.

Our Sages teach us that just as our

earnings for the coming year are decided on Rosh Hashanah, so are our losses. Fortunate is the one who "loses" his money to good causes. We may ask: if we are anyway going to lose money, would it not be better for G-d to let us know how much we stand to lose, and then, we could willingly give it to charity instead of losing it to unwanted sources? As explained though, since the essence of this mitzvah is to do it from the goodness of our hearts, out of our concern for our fellow man, this would not work if we gave because we have foreknowledge of our losses. In such a case, the essence of the mitzvah would be lacking.

Once, when I was soliciting funds for a needy person, some people told me: "See what you manage to get and get back to me if you are lacking anything." This approach is wrong, as the essence of tzedakah is to feel the need of the poor person involved and to take part in helping him. It is not just to ensure that his needs are provided for. Let us endeavour to "naturally" tend to our neighbour's needs as we would tend to our own.



## HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

### The Obligation to Visit One's Parents

Parents receive immense joy and satisfaction from seeing their children – particularly if they had not seen them for an extended period – and therefore the Misva of honoring parents requires children to occasionally visit their parents. Even if a child cannot be of any assistance to the parents, and they have no interest in hearing words of Torah, he nevertheless fulfills a Misva simply by visiting them. Halacha establishes no specific guidelines regarding the frequency of such visits, but one fulfills the Misva of honoring parents each time he visits them – whether he visits on a weekday, Shabbat or holiday. It is told that the Hazon Ish (Rabbi Avraham Yeshaya Karelitz, Lithuania-Israel, 1879-1954) visited his mother every day, even when she was perfectly healthy. Even a person who lives far from his parents must make a point of paying occasion-

al visits.

A Yeshiva student who studies in the same city as his parents must periodically visit them. If, however, he is preoccupied with his Torah studies, there is room to be lenient regarding the frequency of his visits, given the unique importance of Torah learning.

Some have the admirable practice to visit their parents on Shabbat and Yom Tob, though there is no strict obligation to do so. A person who is preoccupied on Shabbat and Yom Tob with learning or teaching Torah need not visit his parents on these occasions. Even so, if they express their desire to see him, he should make every effort to visit them. If parents request that their child occasionally call them on the telephone, he should ensure to comply with their wishes.

If a person told his parent that he will come for a visit, he should add "Beli Neder," meaning, that he does not intend to make a binding commitment

to this effect. According to some views, committing oneself to visiting parents falls under the category of "Nidreh Misva" – making a commitment to perform a Misva – and would thus require "Hatarat Nedarim" (annulment of vows) if it cannot be fulfilled.

Therefore, it is proper for a person to add "Beli Neder" after stating his plans to visit a parent. If, however, the parent tells the child, "You don't have to," then the commitment is no longer binding, and "Hatarat Nedarim" is not necessary if the child changes his mind.

*(These Halachot are taken from Yalkut Yosef – Laws of Honoring Parents, p. 415)*

**Summary:** It is a Mitsva to visit one's parents from time to time, even if one lives far away from the parents. There is no set time when one must visit his parents, but he fulfills the Misva every time he visits.



# WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

## Parshat R'eh

Moshe presents to the nation the blessing of a spiritually oriented life, and the curse of becoming disconnected from Hashem. When the nation enters Eretz Yisrael, they must burn down any trees that had been used for idol-worship and destroy all idolatrous statues. Hashem will choose only one place where the Divine Presence will dwell. Offerings may be brought only there, but not to a private altar.

Moshe repeatedly warns against eating animal blood. In the desert, all meat was slaughtered in the Mishkan, but in Eretz Yisrael meat may be shechted anywhere.

Moshe lists the categories of foods that may be eaten only in Jerusalem. He warns the nation against copying the ways of the other nations. Since the Torah is complete and perfect, nothing may be added to or subtracted from it. If a so-called prophet tells the people to permanently abandon a Torah law or indulge in idol worship, he is to be put to death. One who entices others to worship idols is to be put to death. A city of idolatry must be razed. It is prohibited to show excessive signs of mourning, such as marking the skin or making a bald spot.

Moshe reiterates the classifications of

kosher and non-kosher food and the prohibition of cooking meat and milk. Produce of the second tithe must be eaten in Jerusalem, and if the amount is too large to carry, it may be exchanged for money with which food is bought in Jerusalem and eaten there. In certain years this tithe is given to the poor. Bnei Yisrael are instructed to always be open-hearted, and in the seventh year any loans must be discounted, and then Hashem will bless the person in all ways. A Jewish bondsman is released after six years and must be sent away with generous provisions. If he refuses to leave, his ear is pierced with an awl at the door.



1. What were the sites designated for the "blessings and the curses" to be pronounced by the people?
2. On what condition will Bnei Yisrael receive the blessings from Hashem?
3. Why does the Torah use idolatry as an example when describing one who strays from the path that Hashem commanded?
4. What was to be the sign for the Jewish People that they would inherit the Land?
5. During the 14 years of the conquest and division of the Land, what types of offerings were permitted on private altars?



1. 11:26 - Mt. Gerizim and Mt. Eval, respectively.
2. 11:27 - On condition that they listen to Hashem's commandments.
3. 11:28 - Because those who worship idols are considered as if they have strayed from the entire Torah.
4. 11:31 - The miracles that would occur while crossing the Jordan River.
5. 12:8 - Vow offerings or free-will offerings.



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