

AL HAARETZ — Perspectives on Eretz Yisroel

Living in, settling, and building up the Land

Issue 1 • 24 Kislev (Mikeitz—Vayigash) 5780

Toras Eretz Yisroel

Excerpts from Contemporary Seforim on Torah & Mitzvos,
Halachos & Minhagim of Eretz Yisroel

Mourning the Destruction [part 1 of 3] אבילות החורבן

ראוי לכל ירא שמים להיות מיצר ודואג על חורבן בית המקדש (שו"ע או"ח
סי' א' סע' ג)

It is fitting for all those who fear God, to be distressed and anxious over the destruction of the Temple (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 1:3)

Every Jew is familiar with the emotional scene of a son or daughter rending his garment, over the heart, in grief over the loss of a parent. Halachah requires a similar display of sadness when we view the site where the Holy Temple once stood; when we see Yerushalayim in a state of ruin; and when we see the cities of Yehudah in their desolation. We can certainly relate to mourning over the destruction of the Temple — but can we really say that Yerushalayim is still in a state of ruin? To what part of the city does the Halachah refer? With Eretz Yisrael populated by millions of Jews today, is there still significance

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Eretz Rechavah: A Focus In the Expanse

Within the eastern wall surrounding Har HaBayis there is a double gate known as Sha'ar HaRachamim.



There was a widespread custom to *daven* at these gates, and for parts of the Geonic period there was a consistent presence of *rabbonim* learning Torah within the chamber of the gates itself. Rabbi Ashturi HaParchi, author of the *sefer* Kaftor VaFerach, composed a special *tefillah* to be recited here.

Although the current gate structure is dated to seventh century, a careful examination indicates that it stands upon ancient foundations, possibly from the times of the second Beis HaMikdash. After several centuries of use as a grand entrance to Har HaBayis for special occasions, the gates were locked for many centuries until they were finally sealed shut by Sultan Suleiman when he built the current walls around the city in the 16th century. Legend has it that the gate was blocked by the Muslims to delay the coming of the Mashiach, because of the tradition that Mashiach and Eliyahu HaNavi will enter Yerushalayim through this gate.

• by Tour Guide **Pinchus Abramowitz**

Eretz Chemdah: An Inside View

Various Perspectives and Experiences
of English Speakers Living in Eretz Yisroel

THIS WEEK'S STORY:

Great and Simple Environment

Shaul Klein, Yerushalayim

I grew up in L.A., studied in Waterbury after high school, and then came to learn in the Mir in Eretz Yisroel. I returned to America and learnt by Rav Asher Weiss in Monsey, NY. I met my wife that year and we settled there. She was finishing her college degree and I was happy learning in kollel. My wife had told me how she always imagined raising a family in Eretz Yisroel and it was something really important to her. In 2013, after our first son was born, we finally made the move.

I started out learning in kollel and was fortunate to have my parents and in-laws sup-

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Eretz Tovah: Quotes from Our Torah Personalities



Question: Does one fulfill a *mitzvah* according to the Ramban every moment he lives in Eretz Yisroel, or only when he first comes to settle?

Answer: Every moment.

Question: If we say that every moment one lives in Eretz Yisroel he fulfills a *mitzvah*, is this specifically when one comes from *chutz laAretz* to Eretz Yisroel, or also if he was born in Eretz Yisroel?

Answer: Also if he was born here.

- Q&A with Rav Chaim Kanievsky *shlit"a*
(translated from Nachlas HaShem #8)

Since immigrating with his family at the age of six, Rav Chaim (b. 1928) has never left Eretz Yisroel to visit other countries.

Sheets with Divrei Torah require *genizah!*

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to grieving over the cities of Yehudah that are uninhabited?

Just as we commemorate the destruction of the Temple by fasting on Tishah B'Av and breaking a glass under the wedding canopy, in these circumstances, too, the Shulchan Aruch (code of Jewish Law) has guidelines on how and when to mourn. As long as Jews continue to mourn the loss of the days when the Temple was the focal point of Jewish life and when the Sanhedrin was the Supreme court in the land, there is still hope that one day we will return to our earlier glory.

Mourning the Destruction (*Aveilus Ha-Churban*)

“O that my head were waters, and my eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people” (*Yirmeyahu* 8:23). R. Acha said: After Zion, Jerusalem, and the Holy Temple had been destroyed, and after the Holy of Holies had been burned, the Jews were led off in chains. They began to mourn over the disaster that had befallen them, but their oppressors did not give them any respite (*Yalkut Shimoni* 274).

Over the last century, we have witnessed a tremendous ingathering of Jews to the Land of Israel, and with that ingathering, the land has blossomed, giving forth its fruit abundantly. Still, we long for the reestablishment of the Davidic dynasty, for Jerusalem's renaissance as the city of sanctity and purity, and for the rebuilding of the *Beis Ha-Mikdash*. Until that time, we are still in a state of mourning and should express grief over our loss. Our grief is manifested in various ways, such as the rending of our garments (*keriah*) and prayers and supplications made over the destruction.

THE CITIES OF YEHUDAH

The Talmud states that upon seeing the cities of Yehudah in a state of ruin, one should recite the first half of the verse in *Yeshayahu* (64:9):

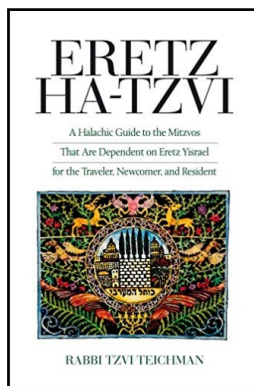
עֲרֵי קְדֻשָּׁהּ הָיוּ מְדֻבָּר

Your holy cities have become a wilderness

and then rend one's garment in mourning.

The “cities of Yehudah” refer to those cities which belonged to the Kingdom of Yehudah. They are distinguished from the other cities in Eretz Yisrael, since only they represent the eternal, Divinely ordained monarchy and because of their close proximity to Jerusalem (e.g., Yericho, Beit Lechem).

“In a state of ruin” means either that they are in a state



of actual destruction or that they are under foreign sovereignty, even if they are inhabited by Jews.

Today, according to most *poskim*, we do not rend our garments upon seeing the cities of Yehudah for two reasons. Firstly, some of these cities are under our sovereignty, and secondly, we cannot always identify where their precise location was during the time of the Temple.

JERUSALEM

The Talmud states that upon seeing the city of Jerusalem in a state of ruin one should recite the second half of the verse (*Yeshayahu* 64:9) mentioned above:

צִיּוֹן מְדֻבָּר הָיְתָה יְרוּשָׁלַם שְׁמָמָה

Zion is a wilderness, Jerusalem a desolation.

One should also add the verse from *Eichah* (4:11):

בָּלָה ה' חֲמָתוֹ שָׂפָרָה חָרוֹן אַפּוֹ וַיִּצַת אֵשׁ בְּצִיּוֹן וַתֹּאכַל יְסוּדוֹתֶיהָ

Hashem has accomplished His fury, He has poured out His fierce anger and has kindled a fire in Zion and it has devoured its foundations.

And then one should rend one's garment (the detailed laws of rending will be presented later).

“Jerusalem” here refers to the portion of the city which was sanctified during the days of the *Mikdash* and not to parts of the city which were added later (modern-day Jerusalem).

There is much speculation as to the precise location of sanctified Jerusalem. It may be assumed that many parts within the Old City walls incorporate areas of sanctified Jerusalem. Upon seeing the walls that surround the Old City, one may rend one's garment. Har Tziyon (Mount Zion) and the Ophel region (the City of David) to the south of the walled city are also considered by many to have been part of sanctified Jerusalem.

It is preferable to rend only after having viewed Jerusalem from within half an hour's walking distance.

“In a state of ruin” here, too, refers either to foreign sovereignty over Jerusalem or to a state of physical destruction. Today, since Jerusalem is settled and under Israeli sovereignty, many Halachic authorities contend that there is no obligation to rend one's garments. Others disagree and express sentiment that as long as Jerusalem has not yet been restored to its full sanctity, we are indeed experiencing Jerusalem “in a state of ruin.”

THE DESTRUCTION OF THE TEMPLE

The Talmud states that upon seeing the *Mikdash* in its state of ruin, one recites the subsequent verse in *Yeshayahu* (64:10):

בֵּית קִדְשֵׁנוּ וְתִפְאָרְתֵנוּ אֲשֶׁר הִלְלוּ אֲבוֹתֵינוּ הָיָה לְשָׂרֶפֶת אֵשׁ וְכָל
מִחְמְדֵינוּ הָיָה לְחָרָבָה

*Our holy and beautiful House, where our fathers praised
You, is burnt with fire, and all our pleasant things are laid
waste.*

One should bow toward the site of the Temple before
rending, then cry and mourn over the destruction of the
Temple and offer a prayer that it will be speedily rebuilt.

While rending, one should recite the blessing of *Dayan Ha-Emes*, omitting Hashem's name. It is also customary to add the verses of *Tzidduk Ha-Din*. There are other verses and prayers commonly recited, the full text of which will appear later.

What is considered seeing the *Mikdash* "in a state of ruin"? This is a matter of debate. Some require seeing the actual floor where the *Mikdash* once stood. This would necessitate viewing the Temple Mount from a high vantage point, such as from the Mount of Olives, Mount Scopus, or from a rooftop that overlooks the Temple Mount. Others contend that seeing the Dome of the Rock is ample evidence of the *Mikdash's* state of ruin. Some maintain that merely seeing the *Kosel* is sufficient to warrant the rending of one's garment.

THE TEMPLE MOUNT WALLS

Upon seeing the walls surrounding the Temple Mount, especially when viewing the *Sha'ar Ha-Rachamim* (Gate of Mercy) and the *Kosel*, one should recite the following verse from *Eichah* (2:9):

טְבַעוּ בְּאֶרֶץ שְׁעָרֶיהָ אֲבָד וְשֹׁבֵר בְּרִיחֶיהָ מַלְכָּה וְשָׂרֶיהָ בְּגוֹיִם אֵין תּוֹרָה
גַּם נְבִיאֶיהָ לֹא מָצְאוּ חִזּוֹן מֵה'

*Her gates are sunk into the ground; He has destroyed and
broken her bars: her king and her princes are among the
nations: there is no Torah; her prophets also find no vision
from the Lord.*

Interestingly enough, the Midrash relates that the gate to the Temple miraculously sunk into the earth, thus preventing the enemy from destroying it. Whether this midrash is the source of our tradition to read the verse from *Eichah* is questionable. The Midrash seems to be referring to a gate leading into the Temple and not to a gate built into the Temple Mount Walls. The recitation of this verse may be referring to the statement made in the Talmud that since King David built the foundations of the Temple Mount's walls, the enemy was unable to destroy them. This is especially evident from the fact that the Western Wall survived the destruction.

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Eretz Ha-Tzvi - A Halachic Guide to the Mitzvos That Are Dependent on Eretz Yisrael - For the Traveler, Newcomer, and Resident, by Rabbi Tzvi Teichman, Feldheim 2007

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porting us. However, after about two years of living here, I needed to start thinking about a job.

As it's generally easier to find a job in America, most people in my neighborhood that reach this stage of life move back to the States, but we wanted to try to make it work here. With a bachelor's degree in accounting from America, I found an amazing job in Tel Aviv that had friendly people and a warm environment. At this job, I really had the opportunity to learn a lot about the international tax arena. The starting salaries here are usually in-between half to a third of what people are getting paid in the U.S., but after sitting down with my wife and going through it, while debating whether that was a reason to go back to America, we found that half of the salary was very much worth it.

First of all, there is nothing we can compare to this environment in which we are able to raise our kids. I love watching my kids start their lives at a higher level. They literally feel Shabbos and the Yomim Tovim here. Already a month before Yom Tov, the stores change over to the seasonal items, and the whole country is getting ready for Yom Tov. Instead of billboards they see pictures of *gedolim*. The streets are flowing with clean Jewish things instead of the things I wouldn't wish my kids to be exposed to.



Their primary language is Hebrew, and they are able to learn with no language barrier. As where I struggled with *limudei kodesh*, they fly. Also, I was amazed at the curriculum. The kids are taught on a higher level. Even if they don't fully grasp everything now, the seeds are planted for the future, though I was very surprised to actually see just how much my six-year-old does pick up and how he explains difficult *parsha* topics with a clear understanding.

Secondly, as the expenses and standards of living are astronomically higher in the U.S., even with a higher salary it would still be difficult to make ends meet there. Tuition, health insurance, and expected gifts and vacations add up to much more than anything else here. I love that my kids love life and the simplicity of it—without all the latest gadgets and without comparing with their friends about which one of them got a more expensive gift for Chanuka or birthdays. We don't have iPads for all the kids like we know some families in America do (and no

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we're not blaming or shaming anyone here). I just find it so nice that the mentality of life here isn't to be hooked on these things. It is just to be responsible, help out, play outside, ride bikes, and be creative. It's nice to see how many games the boys can create with a pile of sticks that they find behind the buildings.

So, we decided that we need to get adjusted to living a somewhat simpler life and we are determined to make it a happier one. It's not just the kids that live more simply; we don't want to be hypocrites! Though—yes—it was an adjustment!

We sometimes joke that very wealthy people are willing to spend tens of thousands of dollars to come here just for one holiday when we are able to do it for every holiday. We get to live in the center of the world where HaShem Himself is the One Who watches over us, which I think is another reason why I love living here.

We recently had a miracle where we were expecting a child. The doctors told us there was no hope and that an abortion was our best option. We went to

Rav Chaim who told us that everything was going to be fine. We grabbed onto his words and davened and cried out to HaShem, and we really saw one miracle after another. B"H we have a beautiful healthy boy. (The details and struggle about it are in the Mishpacha magazine, Shavuot edition.) There is a connection that I feel towards HaShem here—He is the One watching over *Klal Yisroel* here and He feels so close to us. I know that there are many *gedolim* in America, but there's just something so special about being able to talk to Rav Chaim, go to the Kosel and pour my heart out, go to Kever Rochel, or walk the streets that I know our Avos walked on.

We try to go visit the United States every summer so our children can spend time with their cousins and so that we can reconnect with our siblings. We love going and enjoying a little bit of the American things that we reminisce

about, even though the truth is that slowly but surely, increasingly, American products are showing up over here. But after a few weeks in America we're always so grateful that we get to leave that all behind us and come back to our real home—here in Eretz Yisroel.

Grounded to Yiddishkeit

As someone who works, I sometimes feel myself slipping into the working life. I love my job. I love the conferences, fancy work environment, and the expensive lunch or dinner meetings—the executive world. But instead of drowning in it, I get to walk outside after work and see Yerushalayim's streets with Jews all over and my own beautiful apartment. I feel so much more connected and grounded to my Yiddishkeit and my life because of it. I recently joined a Friday kollel where we learn all the halachos one should know about in the working field, and again I find that it's not two separate worlds as one of working and one of Torah. Here I find that it's easier for me to stay connected to my growth in Yiddishkeit through my job, while I believe I would have a harder time staying as connected had we been living in America.

Eternal Covenant: History Tidbits

- 5537 (1777) – R' Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk leads a large group of *chassidim* to Eretz Yisroel, establishing themselves in Tzefas and then later in Teveriah.
- 5680 (1920) – San Remo conference – Britain receives mandate for establishing a national home for the Jewish people in Palestine, leading the Ohr Somayach to state that there is no fear of [transgressing] the *shalosh shevuos* [three oaths] anymore.

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All issues, a list of organizations and other resources for *frum* English speakers living in (or interested in coming to live in) Eretz Yisroel, at **AviraDEretzYisroel.org**

In memory of Shlomo ben Yaakov Naftali z"l and his father Yaakov Naftali ben Yechiel z"l hy"d, who taught his son Shlomo the basics of *Hilchos Terumos* and *Ma'aseros* while they were incarcerated in the Nazi concentration camps, foreseeing the time when he would be *zoche* to fulfill these *mitzvos* and would need to know these *halachos* as *halachah lema'aseh*.

Sponsored in recognition of the efforts of our uncle Aviv on behalf of our Holy Land, wishing him and all of his family a *yeshuah*, *brachah* and *hatzlachah*.

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