

## Jerusalem in Jewish Thought

### In honor of Yom Yerushalaim 5780

#### Malki Zedek

וּמֶלֶךְ־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ שָׁלֵם הוֹצִיא לֶחֶם וַיֵּין וְהוּא כֹהֵן לֵאלֹהֵי עֶלְיוֹן:

And King Melchizedek of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of God Most High.

וַיְבָרְכֵהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ אֲבִרָם לֵאלֹהֵי עֶלְיוֹן קִנְהַ שָׁמַיִם וָאָרֶץ:

He blessed him, saying, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth.

A strange thing about people from Jerusalem

וַיְהִי כִשְׁמֹעַ אֲדֹנֵי־צֶדֶק מֶלֶךְ יְרוּשָׁלַם, כִּי־לִכְד יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אֶת־הָעִי וַיַּחְרִימָהּ  
The Place that G-d will choose

#### Isaiah 1, 21

אֵיכָה הִיְתָה לְזוֹנָה קִרְיָה נְאֻמָּנָה מְלֹאֲתִי מִשְׁפָּט צֶדֶק יָלִין בָּהּ וְעֵתָה  
מְרַצְחִים:

Alas, she has become a harlot, The faithful city That  
was filled with justice, Where righteousness dwelt—  
But now murderers

## Genesis, the Binding

וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שֵׁם־הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִרְאֵה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם בְּהָרִי  
יְהוָה יִרְאֶה:

And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, “On the mount of the LORD there is vision.”

## Rashi

Its real meaning is as the Targum renders it: The Lord will choose and select for Himself this place to make His Shechinah reside in it and for sacrifices to be offered there.

## Exodus, The Song of the Sea

תָּבֵא מוֹ וְתִטְעֵמוּ בְּהָרִי נַחֲלֶתְךָ מְכוֹן לְשִׁבְתְּךָ פְּעֻלַּת יְהוָה מִקְדָּשׁ אֲדֹנִי  
כּוֹנֵנוּ יְדִיךָ:

You will bring them and plant them in Your own mountain, The place You made to dwell in, O LORD, The sanctuary, O LORD, which Your hands established.

## Devarim, parashat Re'eh

וְהָיָה הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר-יִבְחַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם בּוֹ לְשֹׁכֵן שְׁמוֹ שָׁמָּה תָבִיאוּ  
אֶת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מֻצְוֶה אֲתֶכֶם עוֹלֹתֵיכֶם וְזִבְחֵיכֶם מִמַּעֲשֵׂי יְדֵיכֶם וְתִרְמֹת  
יְדֵיכֶם וְכָל מִבְחָר נְדָרֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר תִּדְּרוּ לַיהוָה:

then you must bring everything that I command you to the site where the LORD your God will choose to establish His name: your burnt offerings and other sacrifices, your tithes and contributions, and all the choice votive offerings that you vow to the LORD.

### **Moshe, Vaetchanan**

אֶעְבְּרָה-נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הַהוּא הַטּוֹב  
הַזֶּה וְהַלְבָּנוֹן:

Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and the Lebanon.”

### **Rashi**

אֶעְבְּרָה-נָא וְאֶרְאֶה אֶת-הָאָרֶץ הַטּוֹבָה אֲשֶׁר בְּעֵבֶר הַיַּרְדֵּן הַהוּא הַטּוֹב  
הַזֶּה וְהַלְבָּנוֹן:

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### **Birkot Moshe, vezot habrachah**

לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר יְדִיד יְהוָה יִשְׁכֵּן לְבֶטֶח עָלָיו חֲפָץ עָלָיו כָּל-הַיּוֹם וּבֵין כְּתִיפָיו  
שָׁכַן: (o)

Of Benjamin he said: Beloved of the LORD, He rests  
securely beside Him; Ever does He protect him, As he rests  
between His shoulders.

## Rashi

ALL THE DAY — i.e., forever. From the day that  
Jerusalem was chosen as the seat of the Temple, the  
Divine Glory has never dwelt at any other place.

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּרוּךְ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר בְּפִיו אֶת דָּוִד אָבִי וּבִידּוֹ  
מָלָא לְאֹמֶר:

He said: “Praised be the LORD, the God of Israel, who has  
fulfilled with deeds the promise He made to my father  
David. For He said,

מִן-הַיּוֹם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶת-עַמִּי אֶת-יִשְׂרָאֵל מִמִּצְרַיִם לֹא-בִחַרְתִּי בְעִיר  
מִכָּל שְׁבִטֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבָנוֹת בַּיִת לְהָיוֹת שְׁמִי שָׁם וְאֶבְחַר בְּדָוִד לְהָיוֹת  
עַל-עַמִּי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

‘Ever since I brought My people Israel out of Egypt, I have  
not chosen a city among all the tribes of Israel for building  
a House where My name might abide; but I have chosen  
David to rule My people Israel.’

וַיְהִי עִם-לִבָּב דָּוִד אָבִי לְבָנוֹת בַּיִת לַיהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

“Now my father David had intended to build a House for the name of the LORD, the God of Israel.

וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-דָּוִד אָבִי יְיָ עַן אֲשֶׁר הָיָה עִם-לִבְּךָ לְבָנוֹת בַּיִת לִשְׁמִי  
הֵטִיבְתָּ כִּי הָיָה עִם-לִבְּךָ:

But the LORD said to my father David, ‘As regards your intention to build a House for My name, you did right to have that intention.

כִּי אַתָּה לֹא תִבְנֶה הַבַּיִת כִּי אִם-בֶּןְךָ הַיָּצֵא מִחֻלְצֶיךָ הוּא יִבְנֶה הַבַּיִת  
לִשְׁמִי:

However, you shall not build the House yourself; instead, your son, the issue of your loins, shall build the House for My name.’

## **Abarbanel**

שמיום צאת ישראל ממצרים לא בחר בעיר מכל שבטי ישראל לצוות שיבנו בה בית הקדש, אבל בחר בדוד למלך על ישראל שהוא היה המתחיל והמעורר בבנין הבית, באופן שעל ידו נבחר העיר והמקום אשר בו יבנה בית האלקים.

## **Chronicles ii, 6, 6**

ואבחר בירושלם להיות שמי שם ואבחר בדוד להיות על עמי

***Why was the place not named in the Torah?***

## **Rambam, Moreh Nevuchim 3, 45**

For three practical reasons the name of the place is not distinctly stated in the Law, but indicated in the phrase "To the place which the Lord will choose" (Deut. 12:11, etc.). First, if the nations had learnt that this place was to be the centre of the highest religious truths, they would occupy it, or fight about it most perseveringly. Secondly, those who were then in possession of it might destroy and ruin the place with all their might. Thirdly, and chiefly, every one of the twelve tribes would desire to have this place in its borders and under its control; this would lead to divisions and discord, such as were caused by the desire for the priesthood. Therefore it was commanded that the Temple should not be built before the election of a king who would order its erection, and thus remove the cause of discord. We have explained this in the Section on Judges (ch. xli.).

## **What is Jerusalem?**

### **Megillah**

**מתני'** אין בין שילה לירושלים אלא שבשילה אוכלין קדשים קלים  
ומעשר שני בכל הרואה ובירושלים לפניו מן החומה

**MISHNA: The difference between the Tabernacle in Shilo and the Temple in Jerusalem is only that in**

**Shiloh one eats offerings of lesser sanctity**, e.g., individual peace-offerings, thanks-offerings, and the Paschal lamb, **and also the second tithe, in any place that overlooks** Shiloh, as Shiloh was not a walled city and any place within its Shabbat boundary was regarded as part of the city. **And in Jerusalem** one eats those consecrated items only **within the walls**.

וכאן וכאן קדשי קדשים נאכלין לפניו מן הקלעים קדושת שילה

**And here**, in Shiloh, **and there**, in Jerusalem, **offerings of the most sacred order are eaten** only **within the hangings**. The Tabernacle courtyard in Shiloh was surrounded by hangings and the Temple courtyard in Jerusalem was surrounded by a wall.

### **Shir shel Yom Sheni, Tehilim 48**

גָּדוֹל יְהוָה וּמְהִלָּל מְאֹד בְּעִיר אֱלֹהֵינוּ הֶרֶם קְדֻשָּׁוּ:

The LORD is great and much acclaimed in the city of our God, His holy mountain—

יִפֶּה נוֹף מְשׁוֹשׁ כָּל־הָאָרֶץ הֶרֶם־צִיּוֹן יִרְפָּתִי צִפּוֹן קְרִי־ת מֶלֶךְ רָב:

fair-crested, joy of all the earth, Mount Zion, summit of Zaphon, city of the great king.

אֱלֹהִים בְּאַרְמְנוֹתַיָּה נֹדַע לְמִשְׁגָּב:

Through its citadels, God has made Himself known as a haven.

כִּי־הִנֵּה הַמְּלָכִים נִוְעְדוּ עִבְרוּ יַחְדָּו:

See, the kings joined forces; they advanced together.

הֵמָּה רָאוּ כֵן תִּמָּהוּ נִבְהָלוּ נִחְפְּזוּ:

At the mere sight of it they were stunned, they were terrified, they panicked;

רָעְדָה אֶחְזָזְתָם שָׁם חַיִּל כִּי־לָדָה:

they were seized there with a trembling, like a woman in the throes of labor,

## Midrash Shochar tov

יפה נוף משוש כל הארץ, מהו יפה נוף, שהכל מיפין לה היופי שלא היתה כמותה... ובמה היתה משוש, שהיתה משמחת כל הארץ, היה אדם עובר עבירה היה דואג בלבו ולבו שח עליו... היה הולך לירושלים מקריב קרבן ומתכפר לו ולבו שמח עליו, ויוצא משם שמח... (תהלים מח)

Tehilim 76

נוֹדַע בִּיהוּדָה אֱלֹהִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל גָּדוֹל שְׁמוֹ:



God has made Himself known in Judah, His name is great in Israel;

וַיְהִי בְשָׁלֹם סֵכּוֹ וּמִעֲוֹנָתוֹ בְּצִיּוֹן:

Salem became His abode; Zion, His den.

### **Ibn Ezra**

ויהי בשלם - היא ירושלם אולי נקראה כן, כי היא שלימה כנגד שער השמים, או שהיא ראויה להיות בשלום, או קראוה כן על דרך תפלה, כדרך: שאלו שלום ירושלם.

His tabernacle was in Shalem – This is referring to Jerusalem. Perhaps she is called Shalem because she is perfectly positioned opposite the gate of heaven, or that she is fit to be in peace. Or perhaps they called her thus in a prayerful fashion, like “ask for the peace of Jerusalem...” (Tehillim 122:6)

### **Yehezkel 45**

פֶּאֶת־יָמָה חֲמִשָּׁ מֵאוֹת וְאַרְבַּעַת אֲלָפִים שְׁעָרֵיהֶם שְׁלֹשָׁה שְׁעָרִים גָּד אֶחָד שְׁעָרֵי אֲשֵׁר אֶחָד שְׁעָרֵי נַפְתָּלִי אֶחָד:

And on the western side, [measuring] 4,500 cubits—there shall be three gates: the Gad Gate: one; the Asher Gate: one; the Naphtali Gate: one.

סָבִיב שְׁמֹנֶה עָשָׂר אֲלָף וְשֵׁם־הָעִיר מִיּוֹם יְהוָה | שְׁמָה:

Its circumference [shall be] 18,000 [cubits]; and the name of the city from that day on shall be “The LORD Is There.”

### **Talmud Yoma 12a**

והאי תנא סבר ירושלים לא נתחלקה לשבטים דתניא אין משכירין בתים בירושלים לפי שאינה שלהן ר' אלעזר בר (צדוק) אומר אף לא מטות לפיכך עורות קדשים בעלי אושפזיכנין נוטלין אותן בזרוע אמר אביי שמע מינה אורח ארעא למישבק איניש גולפא ומשכא לאושפיזיה

**And this *tanna* holds: Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes at all, as it was taught in a *baraita*: Homeowners did **not** let their houses in Jerusalem **because** the houses **were not** actually **theirs**. Residents of Jerusalem did not own their residences, as the city belonged to the entire Jewish people. **Rabbi Elazar bar Tzadok says: Even beds were not rented. Therefore,** with regard to **hides of consecrated animals** of the Festival peace-offerings, which the pilgrims to Jerusalem would give as gifts to their hosts, the hosts were not really entitled to them. This is why **the hosts** would **take them by force**. **Abaye said: Learn from it that it is customary for a guest to leave** his empty wine **jug and hides** from sacrificial animals and give them **to his host**.**

ודכפרים מי מטמא בנגעים והתניא לאחזזה עד שיכבשו אותה כבשו אותה ולא חלקוה לשבטים חלקו לשבטים ולא חלקו לבית אבות חלקו לבית אבות ואין כל אחד מכיר את שלו מניין

After discussing the status of Jerusalem, the Gemara addresses the matter of synagogues in villages. The

Gemara asks: **And do** the synagogues **in villages** **become impure** with the impurity **of leprosy? Wasn't it taught** in a *baraita* as follows? It is written: "When you enter the land of Canaan that I give you **for a possession**, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession" (Leviticus 14:34). The term: "For a possession," means **until you conquer it** and it becomes entirely yours. However, in a case where **they conquered it but did not divide it among the tribes**, or where **they divided it among the tribes but did not distribute it to the patrilineal families**; or where **they distributed it to the patrilineal families, but every one of them does not recognize his individual portion, from where** is it derived that it does not become impure?

### **Jerusalem: How is it special?**

Zedek: righteousness

It makes its residents righteous, Jerusalem syndrome

Shechina, divine presence, G-d is there, miracles

Extension of the Temple

People were created from its dust

Makes you happy (because of the above, because of sacrifices)

Beauty, majesty, awe

Unity, peace, Shalem, completeness

Aligned with the gates of heaven, Temple above

G-d Chose it, as part of choosing the king

A place of kings, Above and below