

Rabbi Weinreb's Weekly Column:
Yom Yerushalayim
Zion and Jerusalem

Historians have long distinguished between two types of great leaders. On the one hand, there are those who are gifted with mighty talents and unusually powerful personalities. But they are essentially inward people who are not particularly gregarious and whose greatness often sets them at a distance from their followers. On the other hand, there are those who are typically interactive with others, who relate comfortably to crowds, and who use their talents to reach out to other people.

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak HaKohein Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of the Land of Israel, used this distinction to describe the essential difference between Moshe and his brother, Aharon. Moshe exemplified the leader who had great personal qualities but was not particularly adept at maintaining many close personal relationships. He had his opponents, and even those who admired him kept their distance from him. Aharon, on the other hand, was the one who "loved peace and pursued peace". While he had great spiritual assets, he is best known for being a man of the people.

Rav Kook uses this distinction to help explain an otherwise puzzling comment in the Talmud as it attempts to come to terms with an equally puzzling verse in Psalms. The verse reads, "Moshe and Aharon were among His kohanim; Shmuel was among those who call upon His name" (T'hilim 99:6). The verse treats Shmuel as if somehow he is equal to Moshe and Aharon combined. The Talmud goes further and explicitly insists that the prophet Shmuel alone was as lofty as Moshe and Aharon taken together.

Do we not usually conceive of Moshe as being the incomparable teacher of us all, and Aharon as the model of all future Kohanim G'dolim? How can Shmuel, as great a Jewish leader and judge as he was, be compared to even one of those brothers, let alone both of them?

Rav Kook resolves this perplexity quite simply. He maintains that the Talmud does not understand the verse in T'hilim to be making a statement about the greatness of Shmuel in comparison to Moshe and Aharon. Rather, the Talmud wants us to understand that Shmuel's greatness was that he combined in his personality both the inner strength of Moshe and the outreach skills that Aharon possessed. In that sense, he had some of Moshe and some of Aaron within him.

Elsewhere in his writings, Rav Kook

makes further use of the dual concepts of inner strength and the capacity for outreach to others. He does so not only in relationship to persons, but also in relationship to places. He points out that numerous biblical verses speak of Zion and Jerusalem. Ordinary students who encounter these verses understand the two to be synonymous terms for the same holy city.

Rav Kook has a different take on these two terms. For him, "Zion" and "Jerusalem" are terms for the two different aspects of the eternal city, two different qualities of the same sacred spot. The term "Zion" is reserved for the inner quality of the city, for its imposing majesty, for its fortress-like qualities. The term "Jerusalem" refers to the city's capacity to radiate outward as a beacon of light to all humanity; indeed, to attract all of humanity to visit her and to worship in her Holy Temple.

In a word, "Zion" represents our nation's autonomy and special strength, while "Jerusalem" symbolizes the dissemination of the D'var HaShem, the Almighty's word, to the rest of the world.

One example of a verse used by Rav Kook to explicate this distinction is found in Yeshayahu 40:9: "Herald of Zion, ascend a lofty mountain! Herald of Jerusalem, lift up your voice with strength, be not afraid!"

The metaphor applied to Zion is that of a mountain: grand, mighty, but immovable. Jerusalem, on the other hand, is not confined to its geographical location. It is not a mountain, but a voice, a voice to be lifted up with strength so that all the world might hear its message.

This week, I have chosen to do something quite different. Instead of examining the portions of the week, I wish to lift my voice on behalf of Jerusalem.

This week, we look forward to Yom Yerushalayim, commemorating that dramatic, nay miraculous, day fifty years ago, when Jerusalem was heroically re-unified. It is on this day that we particularly celebrate the voice of Jerusalem and its uncanny ability to reach all of us wherever we are, geographically and ideologically.

Not once, but at least three times on every weekday, the observant Jew remembers Jerusalem in his or her prayers. After every meal, weekday or holiday or Shabbat, Jerusalem is similarly remembered. Jerusalem reaches out to us all.

The Shulchan Aruch, the Code of Jewish Law, teaches us that of the 19 blessings that comprise the Amida prayer there are only two during which we bow: the very first blessing, Avot, and the thanksgiving blessing, Modim. Choosing to bow

during any of the other 17 blessings is considered unseemly, perhaps even shameful. But the commentaries point out that there is one opinion that allows bowing during another blessing.

That is the opinion of the Maharil, the saintly authority who recorded old practices of the Jewish Ashkenazic communities in the Rhineland of Germany. He encouraged Jews to continue that ancient practice and to bow additionally during the prayer for the welfare of Jerusalem. Other rabbinical authorities discourage this practice, but some defend at least a modest attempt at bowing for Jerusalem. This is but one small example of Jerusalem's ability to reach into the heart of every Jew.

The great early 20th century sage, known as the Chofetz Chayim, Rabbi Yisrael Meir HaKohen, counseled Jewish soldiers who were in the army of the Czar of Russia as to how they could maintain their Jewish identity under the difficult circumstances of their military service. They reported to him that they could not possibly take the time to pray, or even to utter privately the several words of the Sh'ma. Doing so would mean severe punishment, perhaps even death. He instructed them to pronounce no prayers, to say no words, but to simply find one moment each day when they could

face the direction of Jerusalem. That seemingly insignificant gesture, he assured them, would suffice to keep them connected to the Almighty and to the Jewish people. The power of Jerusalem!

Many of us take for granted the fact that every shul has windows. Ideally, those windows face Jerusalem. As the Talmud in B'rachot 34b states, "One should only pray in a house which has windows, as it says, 'And Daniel would enter his house, where there were open windows in his upper chamber facing Jerusalem; three times a day he would kneel and pray'" (Daniel 6:11).

Windows allow us to look out, to "see" Jerusalem even from afar. But personally, as I look out of the windows of the shuls I frequent, I feel Jerusalem peering at me through those windows, far away as she may be.

This year, on Wednesday, May 24th, the 28th day of the month of Iyar, I encourage you to gaze out of the windows of your own shul. Visualize Jerusalem in all its present glory and potential wonder. Allow Jerusalem to reciprocate your gaze. Permit her to regale you with stories of her ancient glory. Ask her to help you envision that moment when "The Torah shall come forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Yeshayahu 2:3) 📍