



5783 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Shavuot/ שבועות

Sinai and Yerushalayim: A Journey of Jewish Faith

The story of the Jewish people takes them from Egypt to Sinai and ultimately to Yerushalayim. The Maharal¹ describes that these stations reflect a journey into the essentials of Jewish faith. He traces how each stage in this process deepened and broadened the Jewish people's faith in God.

The Exodus from Egypt instilled within the Jewish people the notion of God's existence and omnipotence. God revealed Himself as the master of the natural world in a crystal-clear manner.

The Giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai furthered and deepened this belief. God revealed Himself to the entire nation who were all able to testify that there was no other power in the heavens above or earth below. In addition to belief God's uniqueness, the Giving of the Torah created an unbreakable bond between God and the Torah. The Jewish people viscerally realized that the Torah that they were hearing emanated from the one true God.

The Maharal continues that this journey into Jewish faith was completed in Yerushalayim. One might think that while God is all powerful and is the source of the Mitzvot, perhaps He is not always intimately present in this world. What evidence do we have that God is present in a constant basis in this world?

The response, explains the Maharal, is Yerushalayim. The Navi teaches us that the fate of the city is specifically in God's hands alone. If the Jewish people act properly, then God says "On your walls, O Yerushalayim, I have placed guardians."² The city will be impenetrable to attack due to God's protection. This was evident, for example, during the time of Chizkiyahu, when Sancheriv's attacking army was miraculously wiped out.

¹ Gevurot Hashem, chapter 47.

² Yeshayahu 62:6.



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However, when the Jewish people are not following God's ways then the divine protection leaves the city. This leads to enemies being able to attack and conquer the city: "If God does not protect a city then its guards are assiduous in vain."³ Unfortunately, we are witnesses that this has occurred at various junctures of our history.

This sort of direct correlation between the Jewish people's behavior and the palpable sense of Divine Presence and Divine protection demonstrates the extent to which God is imminent in our world. He not only created the world, is omnipotent and gave us the Torah. Rather, He is intimately involved in day-to-day affairs and cares about them. Witnessing the ups and downs of Yerushalayim, then, can help solidify the lessons learnt at the Exodus and at the Giving of the Torah.

³ Tehillim 127:1.