



**5785 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Tazria-Metzora / פרשת תזריע-מצרע
יום העצמאות / Yom HaAtzma'ut**

The Purity Beyond Possession

When introducing the concept of נגע'י בתים, the *tzara'at* affliction that appears on the walls of a house, the Torah puts much emphasis on *Eretz Yisrael* and its ancestral portions. "When you come to the land of *Canaan*, which I am giving you as a possession, and I place a lesion of *tzara'at* upon a house in the land of your possession" (*Vayikra* 14:34). Ever attuned to the nuances of the *pesukim*, *Chazal* note that *tzara'at* can only cause impurity to the contents of a home when it is located in *Eretz Yisrael*, and only within a parcel of land allocated to a particular *shevet*.

This leads to a major Tannaitic debate as to whether *Nig'ei Batim* can apply to homes found within Jerusalem (see *Neg'aim* 12:4, *Yoma* 12a, *Megillah* 26a). *Rebbe Yehuda* maintains that Jerusalem was indeed divided between *Binyamin* and *Yehudah*, with *Shevet Yehudah* receiving the lion's share of the actual city and *Binyamin* receiving a large portion of the *Mikdash*. Accordingly, any home in Jerusalem is subject to the contaminating effect of *tzara'at*.

However, the other *Chachamim* disagree, asserting that ירושלים לא נתחלקה לשבטים - Jerusalem was never divided among the Tribes of Israel. As such, no home within the holy city is considered a "house in the land of your possession," and is not subject to the *tumah* of *tzara'at*.

The opinion of the *Chachamim* is quite perplexing, given that it seems to contradict dozens of other *ma'amrei Chazal*. The *Gemara* and *Midrash* are packed with numerous references to the *Beit HaMikdash* residing in the ancestral portion of *Binyamin*. In fact, many *pesukim* in *Neviim* (*Yehoshua* 15:63, *Shoftim* 1:21) and *Ketuvim* (*Tehillim* 78:68) explicitly reference Jerusalem being apportioned to *Yehudah*! The odds seem stacked against the position of the *Chachamim*. And yet, the *Rambam* (*Tuma'at Tzara'at* 14:11), and many other authorities, render the *halacha* in favor of the *Chachamim*! How can we so blatantly ignore the vast evidence suggesting otherwise?

The *Mishna* in *Avot D'Rebbe Natan* (*perek* 35) provides us with a simple yet profound answer. In truth, the *Chachamim* acknowledge that Jerusalem was *initially* apportioned to the two tribes of *Yehudah* and *Binyamin*. But after Jerusalem was chosen as the eternal resting place of the Divine Presence, these tribes relinquished their exclusive rights to the holy city in order to share it with all of *Klal Yisrael* (see *Chazon Ish* to *Orach Chayim* 126:8 for a beautiful presentation of this *sugya*). Given that *Binyamin* willingly ceded the *Makom HaMikdash* to the other tribes, *Hashem* eternally rewards him with *zechuyot* as if he is still hosting the holy Temple. Similarly, members of *Yehudah* must open up their homes to all Jews who seek to ascend to Jerusalem, even though it technically was apportioned to his tribe alone.

In this technical halachik discussion lies very deep insight into the nature of Jerusalem and *Klal Yisrael*. But for our current purposes, I would like to, *b'derech derush*, note the power of opening up Jerusalem to all of *Klal Yisrael*.



**5785 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Tazria-Metzora / פרשת תזריע-מצורע
Yom HaAtzma'ut / יום העצמאות**

When a *tzara'at* affliction appears on a house in *Eretz Yisrael*, the consequences can be severe. Any object or person remaining inside the house becomes *tameh*. If the sin causing the *tzara'at* is not rectified and the affliction persists, the entire house must be demolished, and its building materials permanently exiled beyond the borders of civilization. A once vibrant Jewish home is now rendered a desolate lot, its memory lost to time.

But Jerusalem is spared from this tragedy. Because she is shared by the entire Jewish people, because her homes are always open to any Jew who seeks the refuge of the holy city, she is inoculated against the devastating impurity of *tzara'at*. She does not belong to any particular Jew; she belongs to *Knesset Yisrael*. And the home of *Knesset Yisrael* can never be defiled.

May we speedily witness the day that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* completes our redemption with the return of all Jews to the "City that binds us together," speedily in our days.

