



## 5786 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Parashat Vayigash / פרשת ויגש

### The “Necks” of Israel and the Heavenly Gate

In their emotional reunion, *Yosef* and *Binyamin* embrace and begin to cry. The Torah puts deliberate emphasis on *Yosef* falling on *Binyamin*’s neck, and *Binyamin* likewise weeping on *Yosef*’s neck (*Bereishis* 45:14). *Chazal* (see *Rashi* *ibid*) explain that tucked deep into the emotional intensity of their reunion, *Yosef* and *Binyamin* sensed the future destruction of the “necks” of *Klal Yisrael* that would eventually exist in their ancestral portions. The *Mishkan* of *Shiloh* would be destroyed in *Yosef*’s portion, and the two *Batei Mikdash* would be destroyed in *Binyamin*’s portion. They were crying over this future tragedy.

*Chazal* compare the *Beit HaMikdash* to a צוואר, a neck. While the neck is certainly important, it is not a central organ. Shouldn’t our holiest structure, the center of our national and spiritual existence, be compared to something more essential?

To understand this deep metaphor, we first must understand *Yaakov Avinu*’s original title for the *Makom HaMikdash*. After awakening from his dream under the supernal ladder, *Yaakov* declares that this place is the “*Sha’ar HaShamayim*”, the gateway to the heavenly realm. *Yaakov* was not simply asserting that this is a special place for prayer and prophecy. He had discovered why it is an essential place for prayer and prophecy.

Creation didn’t begin with the formation of our physical realm. The Kabbalistic masters reveal that our world is simply a physical shadow of many higher spiritual realms. These higher spiritual realms serve as an invigorating soul for our material realm, the pathways through which *Hashem*’s Divine *shefa* can enter and sustain us. But in order for higher spiritual realms to interact with our realm, there must be a point of contact between the two.

This point of contact is *Yerushalayim Ir HaKodesh*. The Temple Mount was the point from which the physical world began, the first interaction between the spiritual and physical realms. This is why *Adam HaRishon*’s soul was blown into his body on *Har HaMoriyah*. *Adam* is a miraculous composite of physical matter and a Godly soul. *Yerushalayim* is the only place in which this mystical combination could take place.

This is why the *Beit HaMikdash* is a *Sha’ar* – a heavenly gateway. It is the place in which the upper and lower realms interact. It is a corridor through which the spiritual can flow into this world. This is also why the neck is a perfect metaphor for the *Beit HaMikdash*. The neck connects the higher intellect of the brain with the lower body below. The neck serves as the conduit through which the brain can interact with – and be influenced by – the various parts of the human body. This is precisely what the *Beit HaMikdash* is. It is the key point of *chibbur* between the more ethereal “intellectual” realms and the more physical material realm below.



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No wonder the nations of the world are so obsessed with *Yerushalayim*. Subconsciously, they all sense that their collective existence depends upon the holy city. And its quite uncomfortable for them knowing that the chief conduit for the sustenance of the cosmos runs through a city that is in the possession of Israel.

Whether they like it or not, the “neck” of the world was bestowed upon *Klal Yisrael*. No matter how many times world powers have destroyed it, they cannot stop the Jewish people’s destiny to restore the *Sha’ar HaShamayim* to her former glory. *Yehi Ratzon* that we should witness this restoration, speedily in our days.