



Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein 5778  
 Parashat Behar-Bechukotai / פרשת בהר-בחוקתי Yom Yerushalayim / יום ירושלים

## The True Owner of Yerushalayim

Yom Yerushalayim reminds us that after two thousand years our holy city is once again under Jewish sovereignty. While Jews have lived in Yerushalayim throughout the long exile, they did so at the whim of the local authorities, unable to express or experience their true rights to the city. Today, however, due to the kindness of Hashem, we are able to walk freely in our city as its natural owners and inhabitants.

From one perspective, this sense of naturalness in Yerushalayim is an amazing blessing. However, there is a danger that this feeling of ease and casualness might mitigate against the otherworldliness that we are supposed to experience in the city. Entering Yerushalayim is supposed to thrust us into a portal that takes us to another world.

An example of this sort of mindset is the narrative of Dovid's bringing of the *Aron HaKodesh* to the city. The Navi describes that Dovid "danced with all of his might"<sup>1</sup> the whole journey from the house of Oved-Edom to the city. Then, when the entourage entered the city, Dovid intensified his dancing, adding "leaping" to his repertoire. Upon witnessing this scene, Dovid's wife, Michal, challenged him that such behavior was unbecoming of royalty.

Dovid's response expresses a fundamental theme about our relationship with sanctity in general and Yerushalayim in particular:<sup>2</sup>

Before the Lord, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appoint me prince over the people of the Lord, over Israel; therefore I have made merry before the Lord. And if I be demeaned more than this, and be abashed in mine own eyes, [yet] of the maidservants of which you have spoken, with them will I get me honor."

<sup>1</sup> Shmuel 2, 6:14.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 6:21-22.



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The Lubavitcher Rebbe highlighted a key element of Dovid's response: subservience to God and not feeling that he was in charge.<sup>3</sup> Michal felt that Dovid, king of Israel, should retain his royal demeanor and dignity. After all, Dovid had chosen Yerushalayim to be his capital, he should walk there with a sense of propriety and ownership.

Dovid, however, understood that as much as he was king over Yerushalayim, the sanctity of the city truly ruled over him. One cannot be complacent in the presence of Hashem, nor can one care about their personal honor and sense of ownership. Rather, Dovid strove to always be conscious of the Divine presence that permeates the city.

This, then, is a challenge for our generation. On the one hand, we rightfully feel a sense of homeyness in our capital city and proudly walk its streets as if it's the most natural thing in the world. However, we must never forget the true sanctity of the city and the fact that ultimately, we are guests in Hashem's capital.

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<sup>3</sup> See *Likkutei Sihot* 1, *Shemini*, *se'if* 11-15