



5778 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Vayera / פרשת וירא

However, the exception to this rule is the fear of God. Fearing Hashem is paradoxically the greatest catalyst for personal growth and flourishing. Even while one is overwhelmed and overawed by God, this feeling does not crush a person but rather motivates them to even greater expressions of the divine service.

Now we can return to the imagery of the midrash. It is powerful that the mountain of Hashem – the closest place on earth to God – rises to these heights specifically due to the fear of Hashem. As opposed to fear of humans or the elements that shrinks a person, the fear of Hashem is the key to elevating oneself on the mountain of Hashem.

This paradoxical feeling is supposed to be replicated every time we enter Yerushalayim. The simultaneous rush of awe that creates an initial recoil but eventual attraction and motivator for growth and closeness is the hallmark of our holy city, a city built on a mountain that was raised through the fear of Hashem.