

5778 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein Parashat Chayei Sara / פרשת חיי שרה

## Chevron, Yerushalayim and the Marriage of Land and People

Chevron and Yerushalyim are arguably the two most important cities in the Land of Israel from a spiritual perspective. Both have deep Jewish roots and are known as particularly auspicious places of prayer.

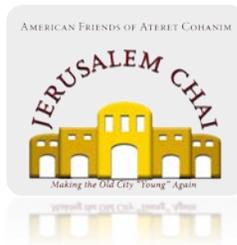
However, despite these similarities, Chevron tends to precede Yerushalayim regarding issues of significance. For example, Chevron becomes as a critical location for Jews with the burial of Sarah in the Me'arat HaMachpeilah, while it is only centuries later that Yerushalayim becomes populated with Jews. Similarly, both Chevron and Yerushalayim serve as capitals of King Dovid's kingdom, but Chevron once again precedes Yerushalayim. What is the meaning of Chevron paving the path for Yerushalayim to follow?

Rav Yair Frank<sup>1</sup> suggests that the relationship between Chevron and Yerushalayim is parallel to the two stages of a Jewish marriage: Kiddushin and Nisu'in. Kiddushin creates the initial bond between the couple and designates them for each other. However, it is mainly expressed in a spiritual, platonic bond between them as physical contact is prohibited until Nisu'in. It is only then that the couple can fully live together as husband and wife.

Even though the full marriage as expressed through Nisu'in is the ultimate goal of a couple, Kiddushin still plays two crucial roles. First, it is important that the relationship be fully spiritually established prior to engaging in the physical sides of life. Even though the latter are a fuller

<sup>1</sup> Available at

<http://www.kipa.co.il/%D7%99%D7%94%D7%93%D7%95%D7%AA/%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%AA-%D7%94%D7%A9%D7%91%D7%95%D7%A2/%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%AA-%D7%97%D7%99%D7%99-%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%94/%D7%A4%D7%A8%D7%A9%D7%AA-%D7%97%D7%99%D7%99-%D7%A9%D7%A8%D7%94-%D7%97%D7%91%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%9F-%D7%95%D7%99%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%A9%D7%9C%D7%99%D7%9D-%D7%9B%D7%90%D7%A8%D7%95%D7%A9%D7%99%D7%9F-%D7%95%D7%A0%D7%99%D7%A9%D7%95%D7%90%D7%99%D7%9F/>



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expression of the marriage relationship, the physical connection must come after the connection of the souls. Second, even after the Nisu'in is executed and marriage is engaged in its fullest sense, it is important that Kiddushin still exists alongside Nisu'in. The physical and the spiritual must be concurrent and work in tandem with one another.

Chevron represents the Kiddushin of the Jewish people and the Land of Israel. It is for this reason that the connection is established via a burial spot and not through a field that is tilled or a house that is lived in. The connection via burial establishes the fact that first and foremost the connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel is of a spiritual nature – a soul connection. This is also demonstrated by the fact that the source of one of the main avenues for executing Kiddushin is from Avraham's acquisition of the Me'arat HaMachpeila.<sup>2</sup>

Yerushalayim, then, represents the Nisu'in of this connection between the Jewish people and their Land. As opposed to a burial spot, it is a city teeming with life, a metropolis that serves as the capital of a thriving country. It is here that people and land finally come together, where the unified kingdom of Dovid becomes fully established. Yerushalayim represents the full expression of the Jewish people's marriage to their land.

However, even as we celebrate Yerushalayim, it is important to not forget Chevron. Nisu'in builds upon the foundations of Kiddushin that itself has enduring resonance. So, too, Chevron and Yerushalayim together, teach us of the true connection – body and soul – that the Jewish people feel for their Land.

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<sup>2</sup> Kiddushin 2a.