



GUEST DVAR TORAH

RABBI DAVID FINE

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Achdut and Yerushalayim

Throughout the years many historians have suggested that the main cause for Israel's inability to capture Jerusalem in the 1948 war was Jewish disunity. These same historians have argued that unity is what ultimately allowed for the capture of Jerusalem in 1967. Religious and spiritual leaders have claimed the same. The famous "father of the Kippot Srugot", Rabbi Moshe Tzvi Neria said: "In the war of liberation there was no people's army. There were subterfuges and disputes, and if Jerusalem were to be liberated, everyone would pull in their own direction and say it's all mine. In the Six Day War, however, we came as a united army, the people's army, and therefore HaShem granted us the right to return to Jerusalem." Jerusalem is synonymous with Jewish unity, and at no time in our history has the need to recognize this been more critical.

Shockingly, the name Jerusalem is not mentioned in the Torah. The Torah instead refers to "The place which God will choose (Devarim 12:5)". One would think that the location where David would ultimately establish his kingdom and where God's eternal presence would be found in the Beit HaMikdash would certainly be revealed.

Rambam addresses this question in

his Guide to the Perplexed (3:45), writing that "every one of the twelve tribes would desire to have this place in its borders and under its control; this would lead to divisions and discord, such as were caused by the desire for the priesthood. Therefore, it was commanded that the Temple should not be built before the election of a king who would order its construction, and thus remove the cause of discord." In Hilchot Melachim, Rambam rules that Israel was commanded to fulfill three mitzvot upon entering the Promised Land: a) To choose a king...b) To wipe out the descendants of Amalek...and c) To build God's Chosen House. Rambam rules that this order is binding; the Mikdash can only be built after the appointment of the King. Since the purpose of the king is to prevent division and bring about unity, by proclaiming the order to be binding, Rambam is teaching that unity is a prerequisite for achieving Jerusalem. The Torah avoids explicit mention of it to prevent strife.

This is not the only example of how Halacha proves that unity is Jerusalem's most important element. Two (out of many) additional sources demonstrate this as well: The Talmud (Bava Kamma 82b) teaches that a house in Jerusalem cannot be privately sold because Jerusalem was not assigned to the Tribes (the rest of the Land was assigned to specific tribes thus allowing the sale of homes to individuals in places in Israel other than Jerusalem). Furthermore the

Jerusalem Talmud (Chagiga 79b) based on the verse in Tehillim “Jerusalem built like a city - *SheChubra Lah Yachdav*”, teaches that Jerusalem is a city that makes all Israel *chaverim*. The Talmud does not bring this statement simply to teach a nice concept but goes on to show that this idea has very specific implications in several important areas of Halacha.

In our past we have needed to worry about the unity of military and political leaders for Jerusalem to be captured physically. Today, each and every one of us need to make every effort to bring about unity so that Jerusalem can be the city of peace that it was meant to be for the entire world. ■

Rabbi David Fine is the Founder and Dean of the Barkai Center for Practical Rabbinics and Community Development.

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