Lost and Found

Have you ever lost something of deep value and felt the panic of it slipping away—only to experience the joy of finding it again because it bore a unique sign that could belong to no one else?

This week's Haftorah describes that very dynamic between Hashem and Israel: "וְקָרְאוּ לָךְ עִיר ה' צִיּוֹן קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל". Zion, once abandoned and humiliated, will be called holy and beloved. The reversal of shame into honor is captured in the very word צִיּוֹן, which comes from the root צ-י-ן, meaning a "mark" or "sign." A צִיּוּן is a marker on the road—something that makes an object identifiable. The Hebrew name Tzion (צִיּוֹן), or "Zion," appears at least 157 times in Tanach, underscoring how central this image of marking an identity is to our story.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that we, the Jewish people bear this צִיּוֹן. Through Torah study and mitzvah observance, we carry a mark that sets us apart as Hashem's own. Even when dispersed to the far corners of the earth, even when history tried to erase us, this inner sign never faded. Like a lost object that can always be reclaimed by its true owner because of its unmistakable mark, the people of Israel remain recognizable to Hashem.

Redemption, then, is not only about rebuilding a city. It is the rediscovery of a people, the moment when Hashem reveals to the world that what seemed lost was never forgotten. The Navi assures us that the day will come when Hashem will reclaim us publicly, calling us and our city: "עִיר ה', צִיּוֹן קְדוֹשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל". ∎

**SHABBAT AFTERNOON
PARSHAT HASHAVUA SHIUR**

Given this week by **Rabbi Chanoch Yeres
Beit Knesset Ohel Yitzchak,
Rechov Washington 12 at 5:15pm**