



BADERECH

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We Are All from Yerushalayim

When beloved Israeli author, Shmuel Yosef “Shai” Agnon was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature in 1966, his acceptance speech revolved around his Jewish identity, relationship to Torah, love for Yidishkeit and *Kesher* to Yerushalayim.

When asked by Gustav VI, the King of Sweden, where he had been born, Agnon replied, “Your Majesty, like all Jews, I come from Jerusalem.”

In his legendary acceptance speech, Agnon addressed the honored assembly, and again spoke of his connection to our eternal capital: “As a result of the great catastrophe in which Titus of Rome destroyed the Holy City and Israel was exiled from its land, I was born in one of the cities of the Exile, Buczacz. But I always regarded myself as one

who was born in Jerusalem. *In a dream, in a vision of the night*, I saw myself standing with my brother Levites in the Holy Temple, singing with them the songs of David, King of Israel...”



Shmuel Yosef Agnon

In the Torah’s account of Yaakov Avinu fleeing his brother Eisav’s wrath, Yaakov is alone, surrounded by darkness, and sleeping on the cold ground. Suddenly, he experiences a “vision of the night”: he sees a ladder to Heaven with angels “ascending and descending”, and realizes he is in the future *Makom haMikdash*, the place of the Holy Temple.

Yaakov Avinu represents and expresses the *Midah* of *Tiferes*, ‘Splendor’, which is the quality of harmonious uniting of opposites. In his night vision, he sees a place and a time in which he and his brother will be in harmony and peace, in which the Jewish family will be reunited. When he awakens, he is inspired to ‘pray’, *V’shavti b’Shalom el Beis Avi* — “and I shall return to my father’s house *in peace* (28:21)....”

We too, through *Shalom* and brotherhood, are charged to restore the splendor and beauty of Am Yisrael; ‘Yaakov’ will then rise up from the ground, the dawn will break, and we will



return to *Beis Avi*.

Hishlich miShamayim Eretz Tiferes Yisrael; “He has cast down from heaven to earth the glory of Israel (Eicha, 2:1)” Reb Shlomo Halberstam, The Bobover Rebbe zy’a, explains this pasuk in connection to Yaakov Avinu: the glory (Tiferes) of Israel (Yaakov) is our *Achdus*, our togetherness, the oneness of our greater family. This is what was cast to the ground. Indeed as is well known and oft-quoted but tragically not yet internalized, the Temple was destroyed due to *Sinas Chinam*, baseless hatred (Gemara Yoma 9b). The Bobover Rebbe concludes: the rebuilding of the Temple will come through reclaiming our People’s *Tiferes*, our *Achdus* — our efforts toward *Shalom*.

The Halachos of Tisha B’av restrict us from *She’eilas Shalom*, greeting one another. How, really, can we wish each other *Shalom Aleichem* on a day where we deeply feel the lack of *Shalom* and *Shleimus* in the world? However, this year the Ninth of Av falls out on Shabbos, and the fasting and explicit grief are pushed off until Sunday. Therefore, we have the unique opportunity to connect with one another, express brotherhood by greeting each other with a *Shabbat Shalom*, even on the Ninth day of Av.

Consider: is there someone we are estranged from, a former business associate, an old classmate, friend or family member from whom we

have grown distant? Perhaps now is the right time, the opportune time, to extend a *She’eilas Shalom*.

It has been two thousand years since our “brother Levites” have sung those songs in the *Beis haMikdash*. May we extend *Shalom* and *Achdus* to our neighbors, sisters and brothers, and make efforts toward repairing relationships, and may this bring us closer to our birthplace, our father’s home.

~

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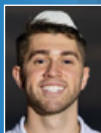
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