

**JERUSALEM AND THE HEART  
OF THE ISRAELI SOLDIER**

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*produced by Rabbi N. Amsel for NCSY*

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## VIDEO

**CAST A GIANT SHADOW** (excerpt): David Marcus, a trained military expert, tries to help the nascent state of Israel on the battlefield, right before and after the creation of the State of Israel. He admires the tremendous heart of the Jewish soldiers and offers advice (some of it unattainable) how to be victorious. When discussing defending the city of Jerusalem in addition to the rest of the country, he says that it is not worth the military effort to save the city and other Israeli officers agree with him. Ben Gurion questions how much is Jerusalem worth to the Jew and can it be evaluated.

## POINTS FOR DISCUSSION

I. Ben Gurion asks can the value of Jerusalem to the Jew be quantified like a stock on Wall Street with a price tag. How important **IS** Jerusalem to the Jewish people and to all Jews, with or without the State of Israel? What makes Jerusalem so indispensable to the Jewish people?

- A. It is the holiest city in the world (as Israel is the holiest country) (**SOURCE #1**)
- B. The verse (**SOURCE #2**) says that Jerusalem is a "compact" city. but the meaning of *Chubrah* is also "joining together". What does Jerusalem join together?
  - 1. It joins together all Jews living today all over the world. Through the prayers facing Jerusalem three times a day, all Jews are united in this. In addition, it joins together all Jews of all time who longed for this holiest of cities
  - 2. It also joins together this world and the world of the spirit, the holy and the profane, the Jerusalem in heaven with the Jerusalem on earth (**SOURCE #6**)
- C. Jerusalem is the place constantly on the "mind" of the Almighty (**SOURCE #3**) and on the minds of Jews
- D. For the Jew, there can be no forgetting Jerusalem — ever (**SOURCE #4**). Forgetting about Jerusalem is tantamount to forgetting about ones' right arm or tongue

## JERUSALEM AND THE HEART OF THE ISRAELI SOLDIER

1. This inability to forget is symbolized in many Jewish laws and customs. At the times of one's greatest joys in life, one may not forget about Jerusalem and the sadness that comes with a Jerusalem without a Temple. Thus, at the height of the marriage ceremony, Jerusalem (and sadness) is remembered through the shattered glass (and the ashes on the forehead, according to some customs). Similarly, when building one's own house, another of life's great joys, it is customary to leave a portion unbuilt or unpainted
2. In moments of greatest sadness, too, Jerusalem is not forgotten. When mourning the death of a close relative, the traditional "greeting" is that the mourner should be comforted with all the mourners for the Temple and Jerusalem.
3. There can be no true joy before God until Jerusalem and the Temple are rebuilt (**SOURCE #8**)

E. Jerusalem is important to the Jew (and all people) because it is the "center of the world" (**SOURCE #5**). From the Stone of Foundation in the Temple, God created the rest of the world

1. Symbolically, then, Jerusalem should also become the center of the Jew's world

F. Jerusalem (the Temple) is the place in which all prayers of the world are heard, even after the destruction of the Temple (**SOURCE #7**). Hence, the custom arose of putting a prayer on a paper in the crevices of the Western Wall. Also, this is another reason why all Jews face Jerusalem while praying

### II. The future of Jerusalem

- A. The name of the city is a combination of two names given by Shem and Abraham (**SOURCE #9**). Abraham called it *Yireh*, "God will show" and Shem called it *Shalem*, "peace" or "completeness." *Yerushalayim*, Jerusalem, thus, means both — God will show the peace. In the future, then, Jerusalem will truly be the city of peace
- B. In the future, in Messianic times, Jerusalem will also provide a spiritual light for all of the non-Jews of the world (**SOURCE #10**)

III. David Marcus (Kirk Douglas) admires the great Jewish heart in fighting, even though the soldiers had little or no training. Although prior of 1947, there was no real concept of the brave, Jewish soldier, this idea of a superior Jewish soldier fighting with "heart" is almost universally accepted today, after the Six Day War, Entebbe and other daring military actions. Where did this "heart" come from?

- A. The simplest answer seems to be that the Jewish soldier has more to fight for more than his enemy. The possibility of having a home and a homeland after 2000 years is much more meaningful than fighting the Jewish enemy so that they should be destroyed or leave the land
- B. There is another, related military concept. Maimonides states (**SOURCE #11**) that a Jewish army must always leave a fourth side open for the enemy to run away, and, thus, to never totally surround an enemy. Military experts seem to agree for psychological reasons. If a person has nowhere to run and is trapped, he fights much harder and to the death. It might be said that the entire Jewish people felt totally trapped from all sides after the Holocaust. Having experienced the sad reality that no nation was willing to take them in or help them, the Jewish people realized that they had nowhere to run if they did not secure their homeland, Israel. Perhaps this psychological factor gave and gives the Israeli soldier that extra incentive, the "heart" to be a bit superior

# JERUSALEM & JEWISH HEART OF ISRAELI SOLDIERS

(#1)

MISHNE  
KELIM 1:6-9

There are ten degrees of holiness. the Land of Israel is holier than (other) lands... Within the wall (of Jerusalem) is still more holy than they (all other cities)

עשר קדושות הן. ארץ ישראל מקודשת מכל הארצות... לפניו מן החומה ( של עיר ירושלים) מקודש מהם (מכל עיירות אחרות)

(#2)

PSALMS 122:3

O Jerusalem, built as a city that is compact together ירושלם הבנויה כעיר שחברה לה יחדו:

(#3)

ISAIAH 49:16

Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.

הן על כפים חקתיך חומתיך נגדי תמיד:

(#4)

PSALMS  
137:5-6

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth; if I do not set Jerusalem above my highest joy.

אם אשכחך ירושלם תשכח ימיני. תדבק לשוני לחכי אם לא אזכרכי אם לא אעלה את ירושלם על ראש שמחתי:

(#5)

MIDRASH  
TANCHUMA  
VAYIKRA  
10

Why is the *Even Shtiya* (Stone of Foundation) called thus? Because from this (point) the world was created ... the land of Israel is the center of the world as it says (Ezekiel 38:12) "*that dwell at the center (navel) of the earth*" and it forms the foundation of the world, as it is said (Psalms 50:1) "*A psalm of Assaf. The mighty God, even the Lord hath spoken and called the earth from the rising unto the going down there*" From where? (verse 2) "*Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God hath shined*" The land of Israel is the center of the world and Jerusalem is the center of the Land of Israel.

למה נקראת שמה אבן שתייה שממנה הושחת העולם ... א"י נתונה באמצע העולם שנאמר (יחזקאל לח) יושבי על טבור הארץ וממנה משתיתו של עולם יוצא שנאמר (תהלים נ) מזמור לאסף אל אלהים ה' דבר ויקרא ארץ ממזרח שמש ועד מבואו מנין מציון מכלל יופי אלהים הופיע ארץ ישראל יושבת באמצעיתו של עולם וירושלים באמצעיתה של א"י

# JERUSALEM & JEWISH HEART OF ISRAELI SOLDIERS

(#6)

## MIDRASH TANCHUMA PIKUDEI 1

And so do you find that Jerusalem on high is directed to face the Jerusalem below. And out of His great love for the one below, He made another one on high, as it is written (Isaiah 49:6) "*Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of my hands, thy walls are continually before me.*" And so said David (Psalms 122:3) "*O Jerusalem, built as a city that is compact together,*" that is to say, as a city that the Lord built, and (Yonatan) translated this verse: Jerusalem was built as a city in the heavens to be joined with the one that is one earth.

וכן אתה מוצא שירושלים מכוונת למעלה כמו ירושלים של מטה מרוב אהבתה של מטה עשה אחרת למעלה שנאמר (ישעיה מט) הן על כפים חקותיך חומתיך נגדי תמיד ועל מה חרבה אלא כי מהרו בניך מהרסיך ומחריביך ממך יצאו (שם) על זה חרבה וכן אמר דוד ירושלים הבנויה כעיר שחברה לה יחדו (תהלים קכב) כלומר כעיר שבנה קה ותרגם (יונתן) ירושלים דמתבניא ברקיעא כקרתא דאתחברת כתדא בארעא

(#7)

## JERUSALEM TALMUD BERACHOT 35A

Said Rabbi Joshua ben Levi (I Kings 6:17): "*that is the Temple before it (Lifnai)*" — Read for faces (*Lifnim*), a Temple which all faces turn to. That was so while it was standing. Now that it is destroyed, whence do we know this? Said Rabbi Avin: (Canticles 4:4) "*built for an armory (talpiyot)*" a hill (*tel*) which all the mouths (*piyot*) are praying: in the grace after meals, in the reading of the Shema, and in the Silent Prayer.

אמר רבי'ל הוא ההיכל לפני לפני היכל שכל הפנים פונים לו עד כדון בבינינו בחורבנו מניין איר אבון בנוי לתלפיות תל שכל הפיות מתפללין עליו בברכה בקריאת שמע ובתפלה

(#8)

## MIDRASH EICHA ZUTA 1:7

Said Rabbi Joshua ben Hananiah: From the day the Temple was destroyed and Jerusalem made desolate, there is no joy before the Holy One blessed be He, until He builds Jerusalem anew and return Israel into its midst, as it is said (Isaiah 65:19) "*and I will rejoice in Jerusalem, and joy in My people: and voice weeping shall no more be heard in her, nor the voice of crying.*" Amen, and may it be Thy will.

אמר רבי יהושע בר חנניא מיום שחרב בית המקדש וחרבה ירושלים אין שמחה לפני הקב"ה עד שיבנה את ירושלים ויחזור את ישראל לתוכה שנאמר וגלתי בירושלים וששתי בעמי ולא ישמע בה עוד קול בכי וקול זעקה (ישעיה ס"ה י"ט) אמן וכן יהי רצון:

(#9)

## MIDRASH BERASHIT RABAH 56:10

"And Abraham called the place Hashem Yireh (God will show)" ... Abraham called it *Yireh* (will show). Shem called it *Shalem* as it is said (Genesis 14:18) "*And Melitzedek King of Shalem.*" Sid the Holy One blessed be He: If I call it *Yireh* as did Abraham, Shem, a righteous man, will complain. I shall therefore call it as both of them called it, *Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem), *Yireh-Shalem*.

אברהם קרא אותו יראה שנאמר ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא ה' יראה שם קרא אותו שלם שנאמר (בראשית יז) ומלכי צדק מלך שלם אמר הקב"ה אם קורא אני אותו יראה כשם שקרא אותו אברהם שם אדם צדיק מתרעם ואם קורא אני אותו שלם אברהם אדם צדיק מתרעם אלא הריני קורא אותו ירושלים כמו שקראו שניהם יראה שלם ירושלים

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(#10)

**MIDRASH  
BERASHIT RABAH  
59:5**

Jerusalem is the light of the World, as it is said (Isaiah 60:3) "And the nations shall walk in thy light." And who is the light of Jerusalem? It is the Holy One blessed be He, as it is said (verse 19) "but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light."

ירושלים אורו של עולם שנאמר (ישעיה ס) והלכו גוים לאורך ומי הוא אורה של ירושלים הקביה דכתיב והיה לך ה' לאור עולם.

(#11)

**MAIMONIDES  
HILCHOT  
MELACHIM 6:7**

When a city is besieged to capture it, it must not be surrounded on all four sides, so as to leave room for a refugee and anyone who wishes to escape.

כשצריך על עיר לתפשה אין מקיפין אותה מארבע רוחותיה אלא משלש רוחותיה ומניחין מקום לבורח ולכל מי שירצה להמלט על נפשו