



Prepared by Rabbi Mordechai Friedfertig

Visit our blog: www.ravaviner.com

Our Rabbi, Ha-Tzvi Yehudah Ha-Cohain Kook: On Jerusalem, the Temple Mount and the Temple

[From Sefer Le-Mikdashech Tuv, pp. 11-14 unless noted otherwise]

A student related: When I asked our Rabbi the well-known question whether the content of the prayer "Nachem," which is recited on Tisha Be-Av [in the Shemoneh Esrei in the prayer for rebuilding Jerusalem,] is speaking falsely in our time because of the passages of the "bitterness of our situation," he responded: "Jerusalem is still scorned and desolate, since the essence of Jerusalem is the Temple. Furthermore, the Old City of Jerusalem is in a state of desolation without inhabitants. It is impossible to approach the Old City and see piles of stones of synagogues and not burst into weeping!" (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, addendum at the end of the talk "U-le-minim al tehi tikvah - And for the slanderers let there be no hope").

When I came to request permission and a blessing from our Rabbi (see Sanhedrin 5b, Eruvin 63a and Rambam, Hilchot Talmud Torah 5:3) in order to establish a yeshiva in the heart of the Jerusalem, he rejoiced with great joy and encouraged me.

In the twilight of his years, when I asked him - in the name of my colleagues - if we should request that the guarding of the gates of the Temple Mount be placed in the hands of Tzahal and not in the hands of non-Jews, he did not see this as a pressing matter; he responded: "Slowly, slowly [Redemption arrives]" (see Jerusalem Talmud Yoma 3:2).

When I continued and asked if should we request the presence of our army on the Temple Mount, he again cooled with his glance what he considered as an impure burning desire and said sternly: "Slowly, slowly [redemption arrives]."

At the same meeting, when I mustered the courage, I asked - in the name of my colleagues who greatly pressed me to do so - if should we request that the flag of the State of Israel be flown on the Temple Mount, he looked at me with a dreadful glance of pain and amazement that I had sunk so low to the point of asking such questions, and he said forcefully: "We will raise a banner in the Name of our G-d!" (Tehillim 20:6). Despite this, "It is Torah and I need to learn it" (Berachot 62a), I therefore asked again, "Certainly, we will raise a banner in the

Name of our G-d, but won't it be by way of the flag of the State of Israel?" Our Rabbi patiently repeated: "I told you: we will raise a banner in the Name of our G-d," with his absolute rejection of all the comparisons between any infringement of the holiness of the Temple Mount and the building of the Land of Israel.

At the end of this meeting, I told our Rabbi how we are continuing with the acts of redeeming the heart of Jerusalem, house after house, and then the stern and dreadful facial expression disappeared, and a full smile of eternal kindness enlightened his face. When I detailed the names of the streets, he said that I need not bother, because all of these places were etched in his memory from his youth.

A student was one scheduled to give our Rabbi a ride but was late because all of the traffic and expressed to distress. Our Rabbi said: On the contrary, I am happy that Jerusalem is filled with people.

When a Torah scholar brought to our Rabbi researchers of the Temple Mount, whose purpose was to identify the boundaries of the Temple, (since in their view it was permissible to enter there without fear of harming the sanctity of the Temple), our Rabbi said to the scholar: "What is all this for?!" He compared this to a rabbi who gathered many proofs for the existence of G-d, and the Aderet ztz"l [Rav Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim, former Chief Rabbi of Jerusalem and father-in-law of Maran Ha-Rav Kook], said about this rabbi's book: "For what do we need proofs? (and he quoted the words of our Sages, "Any matter which is not clear, bring sources from the Talmud for it" - Jerusalem Talmud, Berachot 2:3, Eruvin 10:1). We believe in Hashem above all proofs" (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, sidra 2 Tazria, Parashat Ha-Chodesh 3-4; Emunah, sichah 15, 8). And so too in our matter: Behold, the Temple Mount's boundary is surrounded by a wall. We do not traverse it, and we have no need for researchers.

After the liberation of the Old City during the Six-Day War, there were extensive excavations of the Kotel Tunnels, which extend under the Temple Mount. Ha-Rav Meir Yehudah Getz, Rav of the Kotel, asked our Rabbi, is it permissible to excavate under the Temple Mount to find the Temple implements? Our Rabbi answered, "No, do not dig." Our generation is still not ready to merit discovering the treasures of the Temple. (The book "Rav Ha-Kotel" p. 306)

When a Torah scholar mentioned to our Rabbi the custom of placing notes in the Kotel, our Rabbi said that one should not do this, and one should even refrain from putting one's fingers into the Kotel [since it is forbidden for an impure person to enter the air of the Temple Mount in even the slightest way]. The Torah scholar said to him, but this is the custom of Israel [minhag Yisrael]. Our Rabbi responded, the word "minhag" [custom] contains the same letters as "gehinom" [purgatory].

When it became known to our Rabbi that archeological excavations were being performed under the Temple Mount, he responded with great distress: "What is all this for?! For what purpose should one fuss there?"

When they asked our Rabbi if there is a need to organize tours which encircle the Temple Mount in order to strengthen the fact that it belongs to us, he responded: "The Temple Mount is in our hands - there is no need for tours." They said to him that not everyone knows that the

Temple Mount is ours. To this, he responded that if this is so, there is positive value in the tours in order to strengthen the proof of our ownership.

After the Six-Day War, when a Torah scholar and professor came to our Rabbi and asked him why he did not then begin to build the Temple, he responded, "The mitzvah of building the Kingdom of Israel takes precedence, according to the ruling of the Rambam at the beginning of the Laws of Kings" (Sichot Ha-Rav Tzvi Yehudah, chapters of Messiah 4, Talmud Torah 1 addendum 2). Later, this was extensively explained by our Rabbi in the article "From Behind the Wall" (Mei-Achar Kotleinu) in which he said that only after great improvement in the building of the Nation, both physically and spiritually, can we enter into the holiness of rebuilding the Temple (see Le-Netivot Yisrael vol. 1, #23).

When a delegation of public figures came to our Rabbi with the request to work as forcefully as possible against the threatened agreement which the Government of Israel was prepared to sign with the Country of Jordan, which included surrendering the Temple Mount to their control, our Rabbi reacted: "What about the entire Land of Israel?" They repeated their words many times, as did he.

After the Six-Day War, students approached our Rabbi and quoted the words of Rav Tzvi Hirsch Kalisher in the introduction to his book "Derishat Tzion" which repeats a tradition recorded in the name of the Vilna Gaon that if we will only leap and sacrifice one lamb, then everything will be ready for Redemption. They asked: perhaps it is proper to sacrifice one Pesach sacrifice? When our Rabbi heard this he became enraged: "We need to strengthen the Kingdom of Israel and return the Torah to those who learn it in Israel; to bring great repentance, and we will then ascend to the Temple Mount from the midst of this prophecy." He said these words emphatically and forcefully. (Le-Mikdashech Tuv, p. 180)

Blowing up the Dome of the Rock

After the Six-Day War, the Minister of Defense, Moshe Dayan, evacuated the non-Jews from the Jewish Quarter of the Old City. A few young men, who fought in the Jerusalem Brigade, felt that it was not enough, and they prepared explosives to blow up the mosques on the Temple Mount. They nonetheless went to take counsel with our Rabbi, who rejected the idea: This must come from the entire Nation, and not a part of it. They went to Reb Aryeh Levin, thinking that since he supported Etzel and Lechi before the establishment of the State, he would respond positively; but he also rejected it for the same reason that there is a need for National agreement. He related a story, which our Rabbi would also relate, that a certain preacher would travel to different cities and encourage belief in false messianism, and he had a major influence. When Rav Chaim of Volozhin was informed that he was scheduled to speak on Shabbat in a particular community, he sent two messengers, who were to violate Shabbat to stop him, since it was a matter of life and death. They were successful. A rich non-Jew asked Rav Chaim if he had heard about the preacher and if, in his opinion, he was the Messiah. Rav Chaim responded: And what do you say? He answered: This has nothing to do with me. Rav Chaim said: You are wrong. When the Messiah comes even you will feel it.

The young men asked Reb Aryeh Levin, half in jest: If so, the building of the Temple also depends of the decision of the Knesset? He answered: It may be. (Iturei Cohanin #57 from Ha-Rav Avraham Remer)



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim P.O.B. 1076 Jerusalem 91009 Tel.02-6284101 Fax.02-6261528

www.ateret.org.il To subscribe, send e-mail to: mororly@bezeqint.net

