

Speak to the Heart of Jerusalem

After *Yaakov* settles outside the city of *Shechem*, his daughter *Dinah* is kidnapped and violated by *Shechem*. The *pesukim* provide a detailed description of *Shechem's* infatuation with *Dinah*. The *Midrash Rabba* (80:7) identifies four distinct words used by the Torah to describe his obsession with the daughter of *Yaakov*. ותדבק נפשו בדינה, his soul cleaved to *Dinah*. ויאהב את הנערה, and he loved the girl. שכם בני חשקה נפשו בבתכם, *Shechem* my son, his soul longs for your daughter. כי חפץ בבת יעקב, for he desired the daughter of Jacob.

Fascinatingly, the *Midrash* explains that *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* intensely desires *Klal Yisrael* in the same manner that *Shechem* obsessed over *Dinah*. In fact, *Reish Lakish* asserts that we derive these different forms of God's love for His people from the Torah's description of *Shechem* and *Dinah*!

The *Midrash* adds what it considers to be a fifth phrase that also captures the obsession of *Shechem*. וידבר על לב הנערה, and he spoke to the girl's heart. The *Midrash* explains that this phrase captures *Shechem's* desperate courting of *Dinah*. Similarly, *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* speaks to the heart of *Klal Yisrael*, as the *navi Yeshayahu* describes (40:2), דברו על לב ירושלם, וקראו אליה, speak to the heart of Jerusalem and call out to her.

The quotation of this verse initially seems puzzling. God is calling out to Jerusalem, not to the Jewish people. How does this verse capture the love that God possesses for His people? This issue is compounded by other verses in the *neviim* where the prophet seems to personify all of the Jewish people as Jerusalem. For example, *Yirmiyahu* is told to call out in the ears of Jerusalem concerning the "kindness of your youth, the love of your marriage, when you followed after me in the desert" (*Yirmiyahu* 2:2). As is obvious, Jerusalem was far from the picture when *Klal Yisrael* followed *Moshe Rabbeinu* into the desert of Sinai.

As *Rav Chaim Volozhiner* explains (*Nefesh HaChayim* 2:17), *Yerushalayim* represents the essence of *Bnei Yisrael*. It is the city in which all Jews gathered as one, connecting to the common root of their souls. In a certain sense, the true expression of the Jewish people is only when they stand united in Jerusalem in the presence of the *Ribbono Shel Olam*, the *Chatan* who rejoices over Jerusalem.

This insight reveals another simple but profound point. The other four expressions of *chavivut* described by the Torah are inward experiences of love; they have no outer expression towards the beloved. It is only the fifth expression, דברו על לב ירושלם, where the Lover outwardly conveys His longing for His bride. Whenever God desires to make his "inner" love for the Jewish people known, he refers to them as *Yerushalayim* and calls out to them. The palpable feeling of divine love can only be experienced when in Jerusalem. This is why the fifth expression of *dibbur* is always addressed to *Yerushalayim*.

These soothing words directed at Jerusalem comfort the heart of *Klal Yisrael*; while we may intellectually understand that God loves His people, it is difficult to feel and believe in that love when our relationship has become estranged. A rendezvous with our Beloved in *Yerushalayim* reminds us that God deeply desires us and longs for our return to Him. He is still "courting" us and pursuing us. What better feeling could there be to know that *Hashem* still so desperately desires us?

May we merit to be showered with the *Ribono Shel Olam's* divine love in the rebuilt city of *Yerushalayim*, speedily in our days.