



Malkitzedek King of Shalem

HKB”H Chose the Name Yerushalayim Combining Names Given by Shem the Son of Noach and Avraham Avinu and Added the Letter “Yud” from the Name Havaya

This week’s parsha is parshas Lech Lecha. We are going to focus on the name “ירושלים”, which HKB”H chose as the name for His royal residence. This name combines the name “שלם” given to it by Shem the son of Noach and the name “יראה” given to it by Avraham Avinu at the Akeidah. HKB”H then added the letter “yud” to this name, since it is the first letter of the sacred name **Havaya**.

We will begin to shed some light on the subject by examining a passuk in this week’s parsha (Bereishis 14, 18): **“ומלכי צדק מלך שלם הוציא לחם ויין והוא כהן לאל עליון”—and Malkitzedek, King of Shaleim, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of G-d, the Most High.** In his commentary, Rashi cites an aggadic Midrash: **“Malkitzedek”—He is Shem the son of Noach. “Bread and wine”—this is what they would do for those who were exhausted from battle. Thus, he showed him (Avram) that he did not resent him for having killed his children (Kedarlaomer King of Eilam was a descendant of Shem). And an aggadic Midrash says that he hinted to him about the (korban) “minchahs” and the libations that would be offered there by his descendants.**

The source for this comment is found in the Midrash (B.R. 43, 6): **Rabbi Shmuel said: He (Malkitzedek) revealed the halachos of the Kohen Gadol to him (Avram). “Bread” alluded to the “lechem hapanim”; “wine” alluded to the wine libations (that accompanied various korbanos). And the Rabbis said: He (Malkitzedek) revealed aspects of the Torah to him (Avram), as it states (Mishlei 9, 5): “Come**

and partake of my bread and drink of the wine that I have mixed.” (In this passuk, bread and wine are metaphors for the Torah.) Shem the son of Noach, who was the King of Shaleim, which is Yerushalayim, the future site of the Beis HaMikdash, revealed these halachos to Avraham Avinu, since the future avodah of the kohanim would be performed there.

Rabeinu Bachayei Explains the Significance of the Name “ירושלים”

Apropos the passuk: **“ומלכי צדק מלך שלם”—Chazal deduced a fascinating fact concerning the name “ירושלים”.** Here is a pertinent passage from the Midrash (ibid. 56, 10):

Avraham called this place “Yireh,” as it is stated (Bereishis 22, 14): “And Avraham called the name of that site ‘Hashem Yireh.’” But Shem called it “Shaleim,” as it is stated, “And Malkitzedek, King of Shaleim.” HKB”H said, “If I call the place “Yireh,” as Avraham called it, Shem, a righteous man, will have grounds to complain. And if I call it “Shaleim,” Avraham, a righteous man, will have grounds to complain. Instead, I will call it “Yerushalayim,” in accordance with what both of them called it—“Yireh” and “Shalem”—“Yerushalayim.” Rashi points out that the gematria of “ירו” is “יראה”.

This Midrash is cited by Tosafos (Ta’anis 15a), and they add the following: **לכך אין אנו נותנין יו”ד בירושלם בין למ”ד למ”ם על שם שלם**. In other words, throughout Tanach, we do not find the name “ירושלים” spelled fully with a “yud” (except in five places); instead, it is spelled “ירושלם”,

without a **“yud.”** So, why throughout Torah she'b'al peh—in the Gemara and in the Midrashim—and in all of the tefilos, does the name **“ירושלים”** always appear in its full form with a **“yud”**?

We find a marvelous explanation in the commentary of Rabeinu Bachayei on parshas Chukas (Bamidbar 19, 13). In reality, the name of the city is **“ירושלם”**—in the singular. In five places in Tanach, however, it is spelled **“ירושלים”**—with a **“yud”**—in the plural. This is similar to the terms for eyes and ears—**“עיניים”** **“אזניים”**—and the like. This plural form of its name alludes to the fact that Yerushalayim down below on earth is aligned with Yerushalayim above in the heavens. This coincides with the teaching in the Gemara (Ta’anis 5a): **“אמר הקב”ה: לא אבוא בירושלים של מעלה עד שאבוא לירושלים של מטה. ומי איכא ירושלים למעלה, אין דכתיב ירושלים הבנויה כעיר שחברה לה יחדיו.”** **HKB”H said, “I will not enter the heavenly Yerushalayim above until I enter the earthly Yerushalayim. Is there a heavenly Yerushalayim? Yes, as it is written (Tehillim 122, 3): “The built-up Yerushalayim will be like the city which is united together (its heavenly and earthly components).”**

This teaches us that there are two parts of Yerushalayim which are aligned and connected with each other. The name **“ירושלים”** spelled fully with a **“yud”**—in the plural—attests to this fact. After all, the source of the kedushah of the earthly Yerushalayim is the heavenly Yerushalayim. Nevertheless, since the connection between the heavenly Yerushalayim and the earthly Yerushalayim is absent in galus, the letter **“yud”** of **“ירושלים”** is omitted throughout Tanach, i.e., it is written in the singular.

We can now combine the explanation of the Midrash with the explanation of Rabeinu Bachayei. The name of the holy city that is the King’s residence is **“ירושלם”**—**Yerushaleim**—in the singular, which is a combination of the two names given by Avraham Avinu and Shem—**“Yireh”** and **“Shaleim.”** However, since the earthly Yerushalayim is aligned with the heavenly Yerushalayim, the letter **“yud”** was added to its name making it **“ירושלים”**, in the plural.

This explains beautifully the formula we recite in Shemoneh Esrei: **“ולירושלים עירך ברחמים תשוב, ותשכון בתוכה”** **“and to Yerushalayim, Your city, may**

You return with compassion and dwell in her as You have promised. We are urging HKB”H to return to the earthly Yerushalayim first, so that He may subsequently enter the heavenly Yerushalayim as promised. Thus, the city will be named appropriately **“ירושלים”**, in the plural, with the **“yud.”**

An Intriguing Insight from the Megaleh Amukos concerning the **“Yud”** of **“ירושלים”**

It is with immense pleasure that we will introduce to our royal audience a fantastic chiddush concerning the name **“ירושלים”** complete with the **“yud”** from the impeccable teachings of the Megaleh Amukos (Nasso). He asserts that the reason the **“yud”** was added to the name **Yerushalayim** is because it is the first letter of the Tetragrammaton—the sacred four-letter name **Havaya**.

As a loyal servant in the presence of his master, I would like to embellish the insight of the Megaleh Amukos. We will attempt to explain the practical significance of the dispute between Avraham—who named the place **“יראה”**—and Shem the son of Noach—who named the place **“Shaleim.”** We also learned from the Midrash that in order not to disappoint and offend either of these two tzaddikim, HKB”H named it **“ירושלים”**—a combination of these two names.

I would like to suggest an explanation based on a passage in the Midrash related to the tefilah of Avraham Avinu at the time of the Akeidah (Bereishis 56, 10): **“ויקרא אברהם שם המקום ההוא ה' יראה אשר יאמר היום בהר ה'”** **“יראה”—Avraham named that place “Havaya will see,” as it is said to this day: On the mountain, Havaya will be seen.** Here is a translation of the passage:

Rabbi Yochanan said: He said before Him: Master of the Universe, when You said to me (ibid. 22, 2): “Please take your son, your only one,” I could have responded to You: Yesterday you said (ibid. 21, 12): “For it is through Yitzchak that offspring will be considered yours,” and now You say: “Please take your son, your only one . . . (and offer him up).” But, chas v’shalom, I did not do so. Rather, I suppressed my compassion to do Your will. May it be Your will, Hashem,

our G-d, when Yitzchak's descendants happen to commit transgressions and wicked deeds, may this Akeidah be remembered for them, and may You become filled with compassion for them.

Understood in this light, we can suggest that Shem the son of Noach, the King in Yerushalayim at that time, adopted a position of "din"—divine judgment. Therefore, he named the site **Shaleim**—indicating that in the King's residence one must be complete and perfect. For, it is improper to come before the King if one is unworthy and flawed even to the slightest degree—even if one's sins and misdeeds are minimal. This is evident from the passuk (ibid. 33, 18): "ויבוא יעקב שלם עיר שכם"—**Yaakov arrived intact at the city of Shechem.** Rashi comments: "שלם" **intact in his body . . . intact in his finances . . . intact in his Torah.**

Avraham Avinu, however, the paradigm of "chesed," appealed to HKB"H: "ה' יראה אשר יאמר היום בהר ה' יראה". As the Midrash expounded, Avraham beseeched the Almighty to remember the Akeidah whenever Yitzchak's descendants would sin in the future and to be compassionate. In other words, he wanted HKB"H to treat them with "rachamim"—divine mercy—even in Yerushalayim, until they would eventually perform sincere, complete teshuvah.

It appears that we can substantiate the claim that Shem the son of Noach embraced the policy of "din" based on the teaching in Pesach Eliyahu (Intro. 17b) that "צדק" refers to "midas hadin. Thus, it says of Yerushalayim (Yeshayah 1, 21): "צדק ילין בה"—**"tzedek"** (righteousness) **lodged in her;** and the Zohar hakadosh (Nasso 137b) teaches that "midas hadin" prevails in Yerushalayim more so than in any other place, since it is the residence of the King.

Accordingly, Shem the son of Noach was called **Malkitzedek**, because according to his opinion the governance of Yerushalayim should be based on "midas hadin"—an expression of **"tzedek."** In this manner, we can interpret the words **"and Malkitzedek, King of Shaleim"** as follows: He was called **Malkitzedek**, because the governance in Yerushalayim was based on "midas hadin." Hence, as the king, he named Yerushalayim **Shaleim**, indicating that one must behave with the utmost integrity and propriety there.

The Name Yerushalayim Is a Magnificent Integration of Chesed and Din

This provides us with a better understanding of HKB"H's rationale regarding the name Yerushalayim: **"If I call the place 'Yireh,' as Avraham called it"**—implying that even if the people are lacking or flawed, I will still treat them with the utmost compassion, then—**"Shem, a righteous man, would have grounds to complain"**—because according to his opinion a person must be **"shaleim"** (display exemplary behavior and propriety) in Yerushalayim. On the other hand, **"If I call it 'Shaleim,' Avraham, a righteous man, will have grounds to complain,"** since he, being the paradigm of chesed, prayed that HKB"H would treat even those who were yet flawed with compassion. **"Instead, I will call it 'Yerushalayim,' in accordance with what both of them called it—"Yireh" and "Shalem"—"Yerushalayim."** Thus, even if a person is not completely proper and flawless, HKB"H recalls the Akeidah and becomes filled with "rachamim." Notwithstanding, the desired ideal and goal is for man to ultimately achieve the status of being **"shaleim"**—perfection and propriety.

We can now address the question asked by the Yifeh To'ar on the Midrash. Why did HKB"H place the name attributed to Avraham—"יירי"—ahead of the name attributed to Shem—"שלם"—in the name "ירושלים"? He answers: **It is because Avraham was more righteous than Shem, i.e., he was a bigger tzaddik.** However, we can explain the matter based on Rashi's comment (Bereishis 1, 1): The opening passuk of the Torah employs the name Elokim—"בראשית ברא אלקים"—rather than Havaya—"ברא ה'"; this indicates that the Creator initially intended to create the world based on the midah of "din." He foresaw, however, that the world could not survive based on this strict standard. Therefore, he preferentially partnered the midah of "rachamim" with the midah of "din." This partnership and preference for "midas harachamim" are evident in the passuk (ibid. 2, 4): "ביום עשות ה' אלקים ארץ ושמים". (Note that in this passuk both divine names are employed, but the name of "rachamim" precedes the name of "din.")

Thus, we see that HKB"H placed "midas harachamim" ahead of "midas hadin." So, we can suggest that this

is the meaning of Avraham Avinu's tefilah: **הו"ה יראה**—"he prayed that the name **Havaya** (the name of "rachamim") that HKB"H placed preferentially ahead of the name **Elokim** (the name of "din") would prevail in Yerushalayim. Therefore, HKB"H granted his request; He placed the name given by Avraham ahead of the name given by Shem in the name **Yerushalayim**.

We should be pleased that this also provides us with a better understanding of the explanation of the Megaleh Amukos. HKB"H added the letter **"yud"**—the first letter of the name **Havaya**, the name of "rachamim" and "chesed"—to the two names given by Avraham and Shem. He did so to explain why the name given by Avraham took precedence over the name given by Shem; this reflects the precedence given the name **Havaya** over the name **Elokim** at the beginning of creation.

Bread and Wine Symbolize the Service of Hashem in Youth and in Old Age

With immense pleasure, we will now interpret the passuk: **"And Malkitzedek, King of Shaleim, brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of G-d, the Most High."** We will begin by introducing the explanation of the Techeiles Mordechai (38) as to why Malkitzedek brought out bread and wine. He refers to the Gemara (Shabbas 152a): **עד ארבעין שנין מיכלא מעלי, מכאן עד ארבעין שנין מיכלא מעלי, ואילך משתי מעלי**—**until forty years old, solid foods are beneficial; from then on, liquids are beneficial.**

Rabbi Shmelke of Nikolsburg, zy"a, explains that the yetzer hara constantly seeks stratagems to impede and dissuade a person from serving Hashem. Hence, when a young person wishes to study Torah, his yetzer persuades him with the following argument (Koheles 11, 9): **"שמח בחור בילדותך"**—**rejoice young man in your childhood**—you are young and will have plenty of time to study Torah when you are older. Conversely, when a person is elderly, the yetzer convinces him with the false argument: You have studied enough Torah in your youth; it is now time to relax and not overexert yourself.

So that we will not be brainwashed by these misleading arguments, Chazal teach us eloquently how to withstand the persuasions of the yetzer hara: **"Until**

forty years old, solid foods are beneficial; from then on, liquids are beneficial." During your younger years, prior to the age of forty, a good way to overcome the yetzer hara is by learning a lesson from food. Bread is best eaten when it is fresh out of the oven; once it ages and cools down, it dries out, hardens, and is not very edible. The same is true of serving Hashem. It is best to do so when a person is still young and healthy; if he procrastinates until he is elderly, it will not be as fresh and easy; it will be like old, stale food.

"From then on, liquids are beneficial." After the age of forty, a person begins to age and deteriorate. Then, a good way to overcome the yetzer is by learning a lesson from liquids. The longer wine ages, the better it gets. Similarly, if a person continues to serve Hashem even as he grows older, it is beneficial and advantageous. To summarize, he teaches us that we learn from bread the benefit and advantage of serving Hashem when we are young, and we learn from wine the benefit and advantage of serving Hashem when we are old. This is his sacred insight.

With this in mind, the Techeiles Mordechai explains why Malkitzedek brought out **"bread and wine."** He was hinting that Avraham Avinu's impressive victory on the battlefield was in the merit of having served Hashem from the time he was young until he grew old—like **"bread and wine."** This accords with the teaching in the Gemara that some pious, accomplished Jews would remark (Succah 53a): **"אשרי ילדותנו שלא ביישה את זקנתנו"**—**happy is our youth, which did not shame our old age.**

The Encounter between the Elderly Lion Shem and the Young Lion Cub His Grandson Avraham

Furthermore, we can explain why Shem brought out bread and wine specifically when he met Avraham at this juncture. Let us refer to the Mishnah (Avos 5, 2): **"עשרה דורות מנח ועד אברהם"**—**there were ten generations from Noach to Avraham.** This means that nine generations separated Shem the son of Noach and Avraham. So, when these two holy men met, it was an encounter between a young lion, Avraham Avinu, and an old lion, Shem the son of Noach.

Now, tzaddikim recognize that nothing happens coincidentally. Hence, Shem understood that HKB"H

Yisrael camped there” (in the plural) **is not written here, but rather: “Yisrael camped** (in the singular) **there.”** Rashi (ibid.) describes this phenomenon with the metaphor: **“As one man with one heart.”**

The United Yerushalayim

This explains why HKB”H chose the name **Yerushalayim** to appease both Avraham Avinu and Shem the son of Noach. He wanted to emphasize the teaching in the Midrash—**that all of the Berachos, consolations, and benefits that HKB”H bestows upon Yisrael are all from Tziyon.** This is true in particular of the Torah, as it is written: **“For Torah will come forth from Tziyon and the word of Hashem from Yerushalayim.”** But there is a precondition—that there is shalom, the vessel that preserves berachah, among those studying Torah. Hence, the name **Yerushalayim** itself symbolizes the shalom between Avraham and Shem. This then is the message of the passuk (Tehillim 128, 5): **“יברכך ה' מציון וראה בטוב ירושלים כל ימי: “חייד—may Hashem bless you from Tziyon, and may you gaze upon the goodness of Yerushalayim, all the days of your life.** Nevertheless, as we have explained, there is a condition (ibid. 6): **“וראה בנים לבניך שלום: “על ישראל—and may you see children born to your children, shalom upon Yisrael.**

Based on what we have learned, we can shed some light on the meaning of Yisrael’s sweet psalmist (ibid. 122, 1): **“שיר המעלות לדוד שמחתי באומרים לי בית ה' גלך, עומדות היו: “רגלינו בשעריך ירושלים. A song of ascents by David. I rejoiced when they said to me, “Let us go to the House of Hashem.” Our feet stood within your gates, O Yerushalayim.** Indeed, all the Berachos and consolations emanate from Yerushalayim; however,

there is a prerequisite, which is alluded to by the name Yerushalayim: **“The built-up city of Yerushalayim is like a city that is united together.** In other words, to form the name **“ירושלים,”** the names given by Avraham and Shem were joined together, to emphasize the importance of shalom among those who study Torah.

The psalm goes on to explain why shalom is required in Yerushalayim (ibid. 4): **“ששם עלו שבטים שבטי י”ה עדות לישראל: “להודות לשם ה”“—for there, the shevatim ascended, the shevatim of G-d, a testimony for Yisrael to give thanks to the name of Hashem.** As we know, every tribe has its own unique way to serve hashem. Therefore, it is imperative that shalom prevails among those who study Torah and serve Hashem, since it is the vessel that preserves berachah. Additionally (ibid. 5): **“כי: “שמה ישבו כסאות למשפט כסאות לבית דוד: “—for there, sat thrones of judgment, thrones of the House of David.** After all, it is impossible to attain and retain Torah in the absence of shalom. Therefore (ibid. 6): **“שאלו שלום: “ירושלים—pray for the shalom of Yerushalayim—the shalom symbolized by the name Yerushalayim must be sought and prayed for; “ישליו אוהביך: “—those who love you will be serene—those who love her will strive to serve Hashem by abiding by His precepts to achieve shalom; “יהי שלום בחילך שלוח בארמנותיך, למען אחי ורעי אדברה נא שלום: “—may there be shalom within your wall, serenity within your palaces. For the sake of my brothers and my companions, I shall speak of shalom in your midst. For the sake of the House of Hashem, our G-d, I will request good for you.** For, shalom is the vessel that preserves berachah to bestow abundant bounty and good upon the entire House of Yisrael.

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