

AL HAARETZ — Perspectives on Eretz Yisroel

Living in, Settling, and Building Up the Land
 Issue 2 • 8 Teves (Vayechi—Shemos) 5780

Toras Eretz Yisroel

Excerpts from Contemporary Seforim on Torah & Mitzvos,
 Halachos & Minhagim of Eretz Yisroel

Mourning the Destruction [part 2 of 3] אבילות החורבן

RENDING OF GARMENTS (*KERIAH*)

Who is Obligated?

Both men and women are obligated to rend their garments.

Whether or not children are obligated to perform *keriah* is a matter of debate. Some authorities say that all minors are exempt. Others say that children who have reached the age of *chinuch*, the age at which they comprehend the significance of what they are doing, are obligated. There are those who contend that we should rend the garments of children

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Eretz Chemdah: An Inside View

Various Perspectives and Experiences
 of English Speakers Living in Eretz Yisroel

THIS WEEK'S STORY:

Soul Connection

Pinchas Winston, Telz-Stone

When I came to learn at a yeshivah in Yerushalayim in 1982, it was only for a year. At that time, the Land was still quite foreign to me, as I was used to life back in Canada. I was just more comfortable living on the other side of the ocean.

That quickly changed over the course of the year, and I had come to love being in Eretz Yisroel, becoming more connected to the Land and feeling so much closer to HaShem. It was the place to be Jewish, so I chose to

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Eretz Rechavah:

A Tour Guide's Focus In the Expanse

In Parshas Vayechi, the *pasuk* "*Binyamin ze'ev yitrof*" is explained by Rashi and other *mefarshim* as referring to Shaul Hamelech.



His capital city was Givat Binyamin, which he renamed to **Givat Shaul**. Today it is recognized as a site near Pisgat Ze'ev in northern Yerushalayim. It's a hill in the center of Nachlas Binyomin that offers a view of the entire region. Looking south (as in the picture above), you can see all the way to the hills of Chevron, to the north you can see all the way to the Shomron, and looking east on a clear day, the hills of Moav in Eiver HaYarden can be seen clearly.

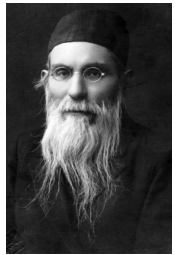
King Hussein of Jordan started building a palace on the site in the 1960's, which was halted when the area was liberated in 1967.

It is very moving to stand at the site where the first Jewish kingdom was founded and where the famous Haftarah "Machar Chodesh" took place. This is the site from where Dovid had to flee from Shaul and run away towards Nov—a site in the area as well.

• by Tour Guide **Shlomo Meir Eisenman**

Eretz Tovah:

Quotes from Our Torah Personalities



While walking, **R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel—the Alter of Slabodka**—bent down several times to remove stones from the [Chevron] road. His escorts thought that it was his intention to remove obstacles from the *reshus harabim*. When they asked him if they understood his intent, he looked at them with questioning eyes and told them, "It's an explicit Gemara: 'Rabbi Chanina would fix its obstacles.' Rashi explains, 'Flattens out and fixes the obstacles of the city for the love of the Land [of Eretz Yisroel], for it was beloved to him so he would make sure that there wouldn't be a bad reputation on the roads.'"

(translated from *Nachlas HaShem* #2)

R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel (1849-1927) sent *talmidim* to establish the Knesses Yisroel yeshiva in Chevron in 1924, and he immigrated to Eretz Yisroel soon after.

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even below the age of *chinuch* as an expression of woe and sorrow.

Which Garment Should Be Torn?

Although the *Shulchan Aruch* states that one should rend all of one's upper garments until one's heart is exposed, the prevalent custom is to tear only one garment.

According to Sephardic tradition, rending one's "upper garment" clearly refers to one's shirt or blouse regardless of whether one normally wears a jacket over it. According to Ashkenazic tradition, if one normally wears a jacket when going outside, then the "upper garment" refers to one's jacket and it must be rent. However, many maintain that one may fulfill the obligation to rend by tearing one's shirt. Therefore, for Ashkenazim who choose to rely on the latter opinion, it is preferable that they remove their jacket before reaching the location where they will be obligated to rend.

One need not remove an overcoat when rending one's shirt or jacket since there is clearly no obligation to rend the coat.

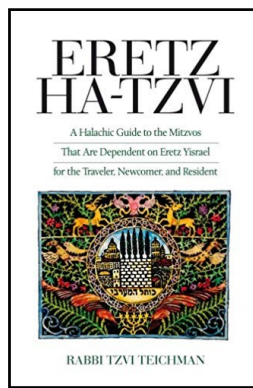
One may don a less expensive shirt or jacket for the fulfillment of the mitzvah of *keriah*. It is preferable to change into it before having seen Jerusalem or the site of the Temple. Additionally, one may use a shirt or jacket that is already rent, provided that the new tear is at least 2.5 to 3 inches (6 to 7.2 centimeters) from the previous ones.

Once having fulfilled the mitzvah of *keriah*, one may replace the garment with an unrented one.

One should not mend the tear in its normal fashion, rather only with wide and uneven stitches. One must wait to do so until the following day.

A woman may close the tear immediately for the sake of modesty.

One wearing borrowed clothes may not rend them un-



less one received permission to do so.

Many authorities consider borrowing a friend's clothes prior to viewing Jerusalem and the site of the Temple with the intention of exempting oneself from the obligation of *keri'ah* as a Halachically unacceptable solution.

Method of Rending

One should rend while standing.

One should preferably rend one's garment by hand, although one may initiate the tear using a sharp implement. Begin the tear from the edge of the garment, ripping inwards. One must tear into the body of the garment since rending the lapel is not sufficient.

It is preferable to rip the left side of the garment over the heart, in a vertical tear of at least a *tefach's* length: 3 to 4 inches (8 to 10 centimeters).

Order of Rending

The following instructions are only relevant to those who rend both over Jerusalem and the *Mikdash*. However, according to the many authorities who say that we do not rend over Jerusalem nowadays, one need rend only once, when viewing the site of the *Mikdash* in ruins.

One who sees Jerusalem and rends must tear again upon seeing the site of the Temple. This second tear must be at least 2.5 to 3 inches (6 to 7.2 centimeters) away from the first one in order to identify it as a separate *keriah*.

One who arrived at a point where the *Mikdash* was viewable before having seen Jerusalem should first perform *keriah* over the *Mikdash* and then merely add a small additional tear within the first one when coming upon Jerusalem.

When viewing the *Mikdash* and Jerusalem simultaneously, such as when one is standing on the Mount of Olives, Mount Scopus, or on a high roof in the Old City, one rends only once over both tragedies.

Because of the uncertainty as to whether one must

rend over Jerusalem nowadays, there are those who suggest that one should preferably view the *Mikdash* and Jerusalem simultaneously, thus fulfilling the *keriah* over both with one tear.

Days When Exempt from Rending

One who first saw the site of the Temple on Shabbos or *Yom Tov* is exempt from rending even on the following night.

The custom is not to rend one's garments during *Chol Ha-Moed* (the intermediate days of *Sukkot* and *Pesach*).

Whether or not one who comes on *erev Shabbos* or *erev Yom Tov* is exempt from rending is a matter of dispute.

Although the common custom is not to rend on *erev Shabbos* and *erev Yom Tov* after midday (*chatzos*), it is related in the name of the Chazon Ish that one should not be lenient regarding this matter. Some *poskim* suggest that a person arriving after midday wearing the only Shabbos clothes with him, or one lacking the time needed to change into other clothes before Shabbos, is exempt from *keriah*.

One may, however, be lenient regarding *erev Pesach* after midday.

One performs *keriah* only if he has not seen the site of the Temple or Jerusalem for more than 30 days. It is the common practice of residents of greater Jerusalem not to perform *keriah* despite the fact that they may not have seen the site of the Temple for more than 30 days. However, those who dwell outside of Jerusalem, albeit in Eretz Yisrael, are obligated to perform *keriah* as outlined above.

Someone seeing Jerusalem and the Temple site in their state of ruin for the first time should refrain from eating meat or drinking wine that entire day.

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Eretz Ha-Tzvi - A Halachic Guide to the Mitzvos That Are Dependent on Eretz Yisrael - For the Traveler, Newcomer, and Resident, by Rabbi Tzvi Teichman, Feldheim 2007

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stay here another year—which led to another year. By the fourth year, it was clear to me that I wanted to live in Eretz Yisroel, and I made that clear as well when I started *shidduchim*.

I was married in 1985, and we first rented an apartment in the Old City to be close to my yeshivah. I started working part time and learning part time while my wife did some secretarial work for a local hotel. To make additional money, I also helped a rabbi transcribe his classes that he had planned to publish in book form.

In our second year of marriage, we moved to the Har Nof neighborhood in Yerushalayim. Unlike our apartment in the Old City, this one was unfurnished, which presented a problem since we did not have the money to furnish it ourselves. Then came the miracle. Another couple who had decided to return to North America asked us to use their furniture while they were gone so that they didn't have to put it in storage. Their furniture was quality made and included a Maytag washer and dryer. Overnight we had a fully furnished apartment at no cost.



A job opportunity opened up for me in Canada around 1988, which I took in order to make money quickly so I could at least make a deposit on an apartment in Eretz Yisroel. We did not return until 1993, by which time we had purchased a home in a place called Telz-Stone (about 12 minutes outside of Yerushalayim, off the Tel Aviv-Yerushalayim highway). Originally, I had wanted to live in Yerushalayim, but we were able to get more value for our money in this new area. We have loved it here ever since.

I had part-time teaching jobs while I wrote books on Torah philosophy full time. This would not have been so promising had the Internet not become so available, changing the way people do business. Once upon a time, you had to bring your product to the market. Now you could do that from your home, even thousands of miles away from other people. The market could come to you even if you weren't there. I run

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an American non-profit organization from my home in Eretz Yisroel, managing everything through the Internet. Thanks to Skype, I can even make low-cost long-distance phone calls.

I have Skyped my parents on a daily basis for many years already, and we can talk to each other face-to-face through our computers. It doesn't replace being together in person, but it is a great second to this. I have remained close to them, learning with them and others over Skype or similar video conferencing platforms, making the distance between us seem quite insignificant. When used properly, technology is a tremendous asset and provides us with so many opportunities. It is far easier to live in Eretz Yisroel today, now that one can still maintain connections that are thousands of miles away.

That's especially important to me, because now when I leave the Land, I am like a fish out of water. I have a soul connection with this Land, and I derive

so much life from it. I have a sense of inner peace that I never had living abroad. You don't need the same material things here that you felt you needed while living outside the Land. The sense of personal fulfillment I feel while living here more than compensates for them.

Now, when I see all the construction and improvements being made in the country, it is even more exciting. We may look at this as the way of any expanding country, but historically it represents more than that. HaShem runs the world and He is behind everything. He seems to be preparing for something great, and I am grateful to be living here as it happens. Though it's not about avoiding struggle, as *yisurim* are part-and-parcel of life everywhere in this world. It's about working hard for the things you value most and

keeping the things that matter most to you. For me personally, Eretz Yisroel has been worth every challenge that I have had to deal with while being there, because I am where I believe I need to be and WANT to be.

The Bottom Line

Eventually, I wrote a book about the importance of settling in Eretz Yisroel today. It was really about the centrality of Eretz Yisroel in Torah growth, which points to the importance of at least doing what one can to move here. It was based upon another important sefer called "Tuv HaAretz," writings from the Arizal about the Land. The bottom line is that HaShem is everywhere, but as the gemora says, this is the place where we connect to Him the best. Learning Torah and performing mitzvos comes alive in Eretz Yisroel, as does the history of the Jewish people. There's nothing like it anywhere else in the Jewish world.

Eternal Covenant: History Tidbits

- 5668 (1808) – A group of *talmidim* of the Vilna Gaon—led by R' Yisroel of Shklov—immigrate to Eretz Yisroel, establishing themselves in Tzefas.
- 5739 (1878) – Petach Tikva is founded as an agricultural settlement by religious Jewish pioneers associated with the Yishuv haYashan.
- 5704 (1944) – Yeshivas Ponevezh of Bnei Brak is established by the Ponevezher Rav, R' Yosef Shlomo Kahaneman *ztz"l*, with seven *talmidim*.
- 5770 (2010) – The Churva Shul (Churvas Rabbi Yehuda HaChasid) is reconstructed and resumes to function as a *shul* and *beis medrash* after laying in ruins since being destroyed by the Jordanians in 5708 (1948).

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Editing team — **Yoel Berman** - yberman613@gmail.com/053-319-1618/072-298-6213; **Shlomo Wrubel** - translating, editing and layout s_wrubel@live.com; **Tzvia Ehrlich-Klein** - editor of TO DWELL IN THE PALACE, an anthology on life in Israel; and author of ON BUS DRIVERS, DREIDELS AND ORANGE JUICE and additional titles, available at Jewish bookstores and online.

Contributors for this issue — **Rabbi Tzvi Teichman**; **Pinchas Winston**; Tour guide **Shlomo Meir Eisenman** - Israelbymeir@gmail.com/052-696-0860/www.Israelbymeir.com.

All issues, a list of organizations and other resources for *frum* English speakers living in (or interested in coming to live in) Eretz Yisroel, at **AviraDEretzYisroel.org**

Sponsored in recognition of the efforts of our uncle Aviv on behalf of our Holy Land, wishing him and all of his family a *yeshuah*, *brachah* and *hatzlachah*.

Sponsored in memory of Sarah bat Yitzchak ob"m, Kitty Elizabeth bat Sarah ob"m

In honor of my mother—Sima Rochel (Susan) Appelbaum - S.W.

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