

Daf Ditty Yoma 12: Benjamin's Anxiety



Map of the territory Google Chrome the area around the cities allotted to the Tribe of Levi, per Numbers □

בנגעים והתניא * אחזותכם אחזותכם מטמאה
בנגעים * ואין ירושלים מטמאה בנגעים אמר
ר' יהודה אני לא שמעתי אלא מקום מקדש
בלבד הא כתיב כנסיות ובתי מדרשות מטמאין
בנגעים ואע"ג דכרכים נינהו אימא אמר רבי
יהודה אני לא שמעתי אלא מקום מקדש
בלבד בטאי קא מיפלגי תנא קמא סבר
ירושלים לא נתחלקה לשבטים ורבי יהודה
סבר ירושלים נתחלקה לשבטים ובפלוגתא
דהני תנאי * דתניא מה היה בחלקו של
יהודה הר הבית הלשכות והעזרות ומה היה
בחלקו של בנימין אולם ודיכל ובית קדש
הקדשים * ורצועה היתה יוצאה מחלקו של
יהודה ונכנסת לחלקו של בנימין ובה היה
מזבח בני ובנימין הצדיק היה מצטער עליה
לבלעה בכל יום שנאמר ° חופף עליו כל היום
* לפיכך זכה בנימין הצדיק ונעשה אושפיזן
לגבורה שנאמר ובין כתפיו שבן והאי תנא



Our Shiur began with the Gemara asking from a Braisa where it seems that Shuls of large cities are מטמאין בנגעים.

והתניא

The Posuk says; בבית ארץ אחוזתכם -

from here the Braisa learns out;

אחוזתכם מטמאה בנגעים ואין ירושלים מטמאה בנגעים -

The houses of ירושלים are not מטמאין בנגעים -

Because, as the Gemara explains,

תנא קמא סבר ירושלים לא נתחלקה לשבטים -

The תנא קמא holds ירושלים was not divided among the שבטים - It belongs to all of ישראל.

As a result, it's not considered אחוזתכם - and therefore, not מטמאין בנגעים.

אמר רבי יהודה אני לא שמעתי אלא מקום מקדש בלבד -

I heard that only the המקדש בית is not מטמאה בנגעים, but all other houses of ירושלים are מטמאין בנגעים - Because

רבי יהודה סבר ירושלים נתחלקה לשבטים -

R' Yehuda holds that ירושלים WAS divided among the שבטים -

Hence, it IS considered אחוזתכם - and therefore, מטמאין בנגעים.

However, the המקדש בית, which - as Rashi explains - דוד המלך bought the site of the המקדש בית with money he collected from all שבטים - is indeed not considered אחוזתכם - and therefore, not מטמאה בנגעים.

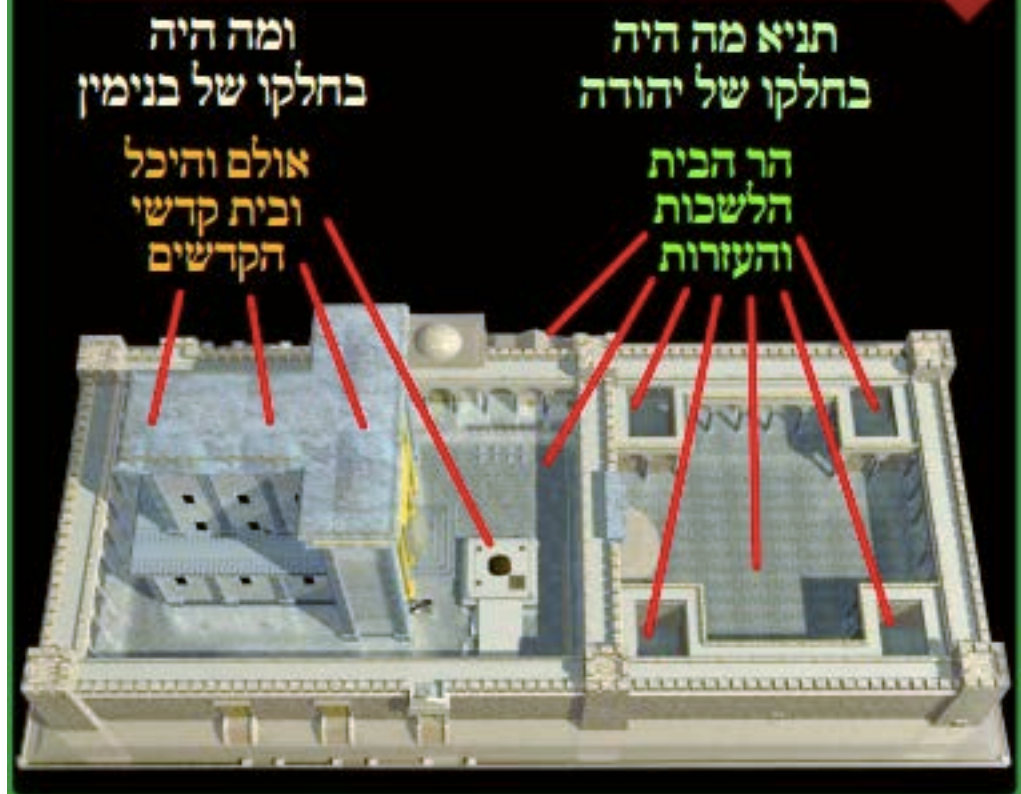
What comes out now - from the words of R' Yehuda, that other than the המקדש בית, all houses, including Shuls are מטמאין בנגעים - And ירושלים was certainly a כרך, where people came from all over? This contradicts our earlier assumption that Shuls of כרכים are not מטמאין בנגעים?

כהן גדול until nightfall, a seven day separation for the גדול כהן would not be enough, since he would immerse on the evening of יום כיפור, which is the end of the seven days, he would still be a כהן גדול the following day on יום כיפור, and would not be able to do the עבודה.

7. [Jerusalem was designated as the Temple city, and all the tribes retained rights therein (see below, note 20).] Therefore, a house in Jerusalem does not satisfy the condition of *a house of the land of your inheritance* (Rashi).

20. *Chazon Ish* (*Orach Chaim* 126:8) explains that initially Jerusalem was apportioned among the tribes, since at that time the eventual site of the Temple was unknown. Later, when Jerusalem was designated as the Temple city, equal access was granted to all the tribes. It is only in this narrow sense that this Tanna holds that “Jerusalem was not apportioned among the tribes.” However, the original owners of property in Jerusalem (i.e. members of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin) retained title to their properties; the rest of Israel merely received the right to use these properties when they traveled to Jerusalem. [See also *Teshuvos She'eilas David*, *Yoreh Deah* §8; *Teshuvos Tzitz Eliezer*, vol. 2 §13; *Meshech Chochmah* to *Genesis* 35:1.]

ירושלים נתחלקה לשבטים



The Gemara next presented two Braisos which disagree whether ירושלים נתחלקה לשבטים:

The first Braisa clearly holds ירושלים נתחלקה לשבטים -

דתניא מה היה בחלקו של יהודה

The Braisa delineates the different areas of the Bais HaMikdash, and says;

- הר הבית הלשכות והעזרות בחלקו של יהודה -

The Temple Mount, Chambers and Courtyards were in the portion of יהודה.

- אולם והיכל ובית קדשי הקדשים בחלקו של בנימין -

The Sanctuary and Holy Place were in the portion of בנימין.

בְּמַאי קָא מִפְּלִגִי? תַּנָּא קָמָא סָבַר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לֹא נִתְחַלְקָה לְשִׁבְטִים, וְרַבִּי יְהוּדָה סָבַר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם נִתְחַלְקָה לְשִׁבְטִים.

§ The Gemara explains the dispute in the *baraita* that was cited: **With regard to what principle do Rabbi Yehuda and the Rabbis disagree? The first *tanna* holds: Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes** but belonged to all of the Jewish people, and as such it does not become ritually impure with the impurity of leprosy.

Rabbi Yehuda holds: Jerusalem was divided between the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Therefore, the same *halakhot* of impurity apply there as apply in all other cities in Eretz Yisrael.



ורצועה היתה יוצאה מחלקו של יהודה
- ונכנסת לחלקו של בנימין ובה היה מזבח בנוי
A strip of land protruded into בנימין של יהודה, upon
which the מזבח and דרום sides would have been
built, had there been a יסוד on those sides.
So we see clearly from this braisa that it holds ירושלים נתחלקה
לשבטים

The gemora then presents a second Braisa that clearly holds
ירושלים לא נתחלקה לשבטים - as it says;
- אין משכירין בתים בירושלים לפי שאינה שלהן
The residents of ירושלים may not rent out houses to the עולי רגלים
- the people who come for Yom Tov - because it is not theirs.

8. Therefore, ordinary buildings in Jerusalem are subject to the laws of *tzaraas tumah*. Synagogues, study halls and the Temple, however, are exempted from the laws of *tzaraas tumah*, since they do not belong to any one person or group of persons, as explained earlier.

וּבְפִלּוּגָתָא דְהַגְי תַנְיָא. דְתַנְיָא: מָה הָיָה בְחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל יְהוּדָה — הַר הַבַּיִת,
הַלְשָׁכוֹת וְהַעֲזָרוֹת. וּמָה הָיָה בְחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל בְּנֵימִין — אוֹלָם וְהֵיכַל וּבֵית קִדְשֵׁי
הַקְּדָשִׁים, וְרֵצוּעָה הָיְתָה יוֹצֵאָה מִחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל יְהוּדָה וְנִכְנְסָתָ לְחֵלְקוֹ שֶׁל
בְּנֵימִין, וּבָהּ הָיָה מִזְבֵּחַ בְּנוֹי, וּבְנֵימִין הַצְּדִיק הָיָה מְצַטְעֵר עָלֶיהָ לְבַלְעָהּ בְּכָל
יוֹם,

The Gemara states: **And** that dispute corresponds to the dispute between these *tanna'im*, as it was taught in a *baraita*: **What** part of the Temple was located **in the portion** of the tribe of **Judah**? It was the part including **the entire Temple Mount**, excluding those areas in the portion of Benjamin, **the chambers**, and **the courtyards**. **And what** part of the Temple was **in the portion** of the tribe of **Benjamin**? It was the part including **the Entrance Hall** of the Sanctuary, **and the Sanctuary**, and **the Holy of Holies**. **And a strip** of land emerges from **the portion** of **Judah** and enters the portion of Benjamin on which the altar is built. **And Benjamin the righteous** would suffer longing to engulf it every day. The tribe of Benjamin was disappointed that the strip belonging to the tribe of Judah intersected its tribal land and wanted Judah to transfer ownership so that the land with the altar would belong to Benjamin.

Rashi

הר הבית והלשכות והעזרות - צד המזרחי רוחב הר הבית עזרת נשים כולה ועזרת ישראל כולה י"א אמה של מקום רגלי דריסת הכהנים להלן מרגלי ישראל ושם המזבח מתחיל משם ולמערב בחלקו של בנימין אלא שבמקום מושב המזבח יוצאה רצועה מחלקו של יהודה ונכנסה לקרן מזרחית דרומית:

שְׁנֵאמַר: "חֹפֶף עָלָיו כָּל הַיּוֹם". לְפִיכֹךְ זָכָה בְּנִימִין הַצַּדִּיק וְנִעְשָׂה אוֹשְׁפִיזָן לְגְבוּרָה, שְׁנֵאמַר: "וּבֵין כַּתְּפָיו שָׁכַן".

An allusion to this is **that** which is **stated** in Moses' blessing to Benjamin:

יב לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר--יְדִיד יְהוָה, יִשְׁכֵּן לְבֶטֶח עָלָיו; חֹפֶף עָלָיו כָּל-הַיּוֹם, וּבֵין כַּתְּפָיו שָׁכַן. {ס}

12 Of Benjamin he said: The beloved of the LORD shall dwell in safety by Him; He covereth him all the day, and He dwelleth between his shoulders.

Deut 33:12

"Ever does he protect him and he rests between his shoulders" like one who is unable to abide something stuck between his shoulders and constantly rubs it to remove it.

Therefore, Benjamin the righteous was privileged to serve as host [*ushpizekhan*] to the Almighty, as it is stated: *"And he rests between his shoulders,"* alluding to the fact that the Holy of Holies was located in the territory of Benjamin. According to this *baraita*, Jerusalem was divided among the tribes.

16. *Deuteronomy* 33:12. [Benjamin foresaw Judah's intrusion into the Altar area, and was greatly distressed. Moses referred to Benjamin's anguish in his prophetic blessing, and consoled the tribe for their loss.]

The plain meaning of *עָלִיו כָּל־הַיּוֹם* is: *He [i.e. God] hovers over him all the time [to protect him]* (see *Rashi* and *Targum* to verse). The Gemara, however, homiletically interprets the word *חָפַף* to mean *rub* or *scratch* (a similar usage may be found in the Mishnah in *Nazir* 42a); hence, it suggests someone who constantly rubs [his head] in anguish (*Rashi*).

RASHI

חופף - כאדם המתחכך מחמת שאינו משיג תאותו
לשון נזיר (לא יחוף ראשו) (נזיר דף מב.):

אושפיזכן - שהיה הארון נתון בחלקו:

Steinzaltz

ורמז לדבר, שנאמר בברכת משה לבנימין: "חפף עליו כל היום ובין כתפיו שכן" (דברים לג, יב), כאדם שאינו יכול לסבול דבר הנמצא בין כתפיו ומתחכך ("חופף") תמיד להסירו. לפיכך מפני דבר זה זכה בנימין הצדיק ונעשה אושפיזכן [מארה] לגבורה (לשכינה), שנאמר: "ובין כתפיו שכן" שקודש הקדשים היה בנחלת בנימין. הרי שלברייתא זו ברור הדבר שירושלים נתחלקה לשבטים.

Jastrow

אֹשְפִיזְכָן m. (Denom. of אושפיז=אושפיז, with locat. ך, emp. הָא, הָא) innkeeper, landlord, host. Meg. 26^a; Yoma 12^a; Sot. 37^a; Zeb. 54^a וכ' ו' Benjamin became the host of the Divine Presence (the Temple being partly situated in his territory).

וְהָאֵי תַנָּא סָבַר יְרוּשָׁלַיִם לֹא נִתְחַלְקָה לְשִׁבְטִים, דְּתַנָּיָא: אֵין מְשַׁכְּרִין בְּתַיִם
 בְּירוּשָׁלַיִם לְפִי שְׂאִינָה שְׁלֵהֵן. רַבִּי אֶלְעָזָר בַּר (צָדוּק) אֹמֵר: אַף לֹא מְטוֹת.
 לְפִיכֹה, עוֹרוֹת קִדְשִׁים — בְּעָלֵי אוֹשְׁפִיזְכָּנִין נוֹטְלִין אוֹתָן בְּזָרוּעַ. אָמַר אַבְיִי:
 שְׁמַע מִינָהּ, אוֹרַח אֶרְעָא לְמִישְׁבַּק אִינִישׁ גּוֹלְפָא וּמְשַׁכָּא לְאוֹשְׁפִיזִיהּ.

And this *tanna* holds: Jerusalem was not divided among the tribes at all, as it was taught in a *baraita*: Homeowners did **not** let their houses in Jerusalem because the houses were **not** actually **theirs**. Residents of Jerusalem did not own their residences, as the city belonged to the entire Jewish people. **Rabbi Elazar bar Tzadok says: Even beds were not rented. Therefore,** with regard to **hides of consecrated animals** of the Festival peace-offerings, which the pilgrims to Jerusalem would give as gifts to their hosts, the hosts were not really entitled to them. This is why **the hosts would take them by force. Abaye said: Learn from it that it is customary for a guest to leave his empty wine jug and hides** from sacrificial animals and give them to his host.

9. Jerusalem and the Temple complex straddled the border between the territories of Judah and Benjamin (see *Joshua* 15:8 and 18:16). The Baraisa obviously holds that Jerusalem and even the Temple area was apportioned among the tribes, since it demarcates the territorial holdings of those two tribes on the Temple Mount.

10. The Temple Mount is the mountain [Mount Moriah] upon which was constructed the Temple complex. It was 500 *amos* square (see *Middos* 2:1,3,5). This Baraisa presents the different parts of the Temple complex in the order that one encounters them upon entering the eastern gate of the Temple Mount. Not all of the Temple Mount was in the territory of Judah. The term, in this context, refers to the entire open area inside the eastern gate of the Temple to the eastern entrance of the Temple Courtyard (*Rashi, Megillah* 26a).

11. [A low wooden wall, the *soreg*, passed in front of the Temple Courtyards at a distance of ten *amos* from the Courtyard walls. On the east side of the Courtyards the *soreg* was at a distance of ten *amos* from the wall of the Women's Courtyard. The ten-*amah* space between the *soreg* and the Courtyard walls was called the חֵיל, *cheil*.] The Baraisa teaches that the chambers in the part of the *cheil* [east of the Temple] were in Judah's territory (*Rashi to Megillah* 26a).

וְדֹכָפְרִים מִי מִטְמֵא בְּנִגְעִים? וְהִתְנִיא: "לְאַחֲזִיחַ", עַד שְׂיִכְבְּשׁוּ אוֹתָהּ. כְּבָשׁוּ אוֹתָהּ וְלֹא חִלְקוּהָ לְשִׁבְטִים, חִלְקוּ לְשִׁבְטִים וְלֹא חִלְקוּ לְבֵית אָבוֹת, חִלְקוּ לְבֵית אָבוֹת וְאִין כָּל אֶחָד מִכִּיר אֶת שְׁלוֹ, מִנִּיין?

After discussing the status of Jerusalem, the Gemara addresses the matter of synagogues in villages. The Gemara asks: **And do the synagogues in villages become impure with the impurity of leprosy? Wasn't it taught** in a *baraita* as follows? It is written:

לד כי תבאו אל-ארץ כנען, אשר אני נתן לכם לאחזיח; ונמתה נגע צרעת, בבית ארץ אחזתכם. 34 When ye are come into the land of Canaan, which I give to you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession;

Lev 14:34

“When you enter the land of Canaan that I give you for a possession, and I put the plague of leprosy in a house of the land of your possession” The term: *“For a possession,”* means **until you conquer it** and it becomes entirely yours.

However, in a case where **they conquered it but did not divide it among the tribes**, or where **they divided it among the tribes but did not distribute it to the patrilineal families**; or where **they distributed it to the patrilineal families, but every one of them does not recognize his individual portion, from where** is it derived that it does not become impure?

תלמוד לומר: "ובא אשר לו הבית", מי שמיוחד לו, יצא אלו שאין מיוחדין לו. אלא מחוורתא כדשנין מעיקרא.

The verse states:

לה ובא אשר-לו הבית, והגיד לפהו לאמר: כנגע, נראה לי בבית. 35 then he that owneth the house shall come and tell the priest, saying: 'There seemeth to me to be as it were a plague in the house.'

Lev 14:35

“And the one whom the house is his will come”, one **whom** the house is designated for him and who is certain of his ownership, **excluding those** houses **which are not designated for him**.

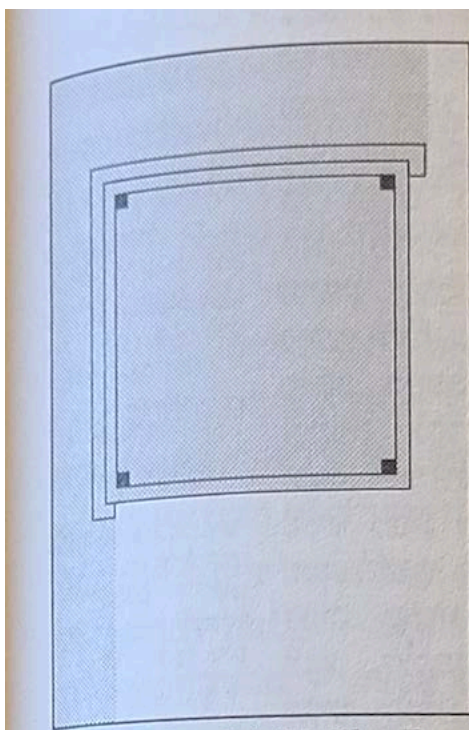
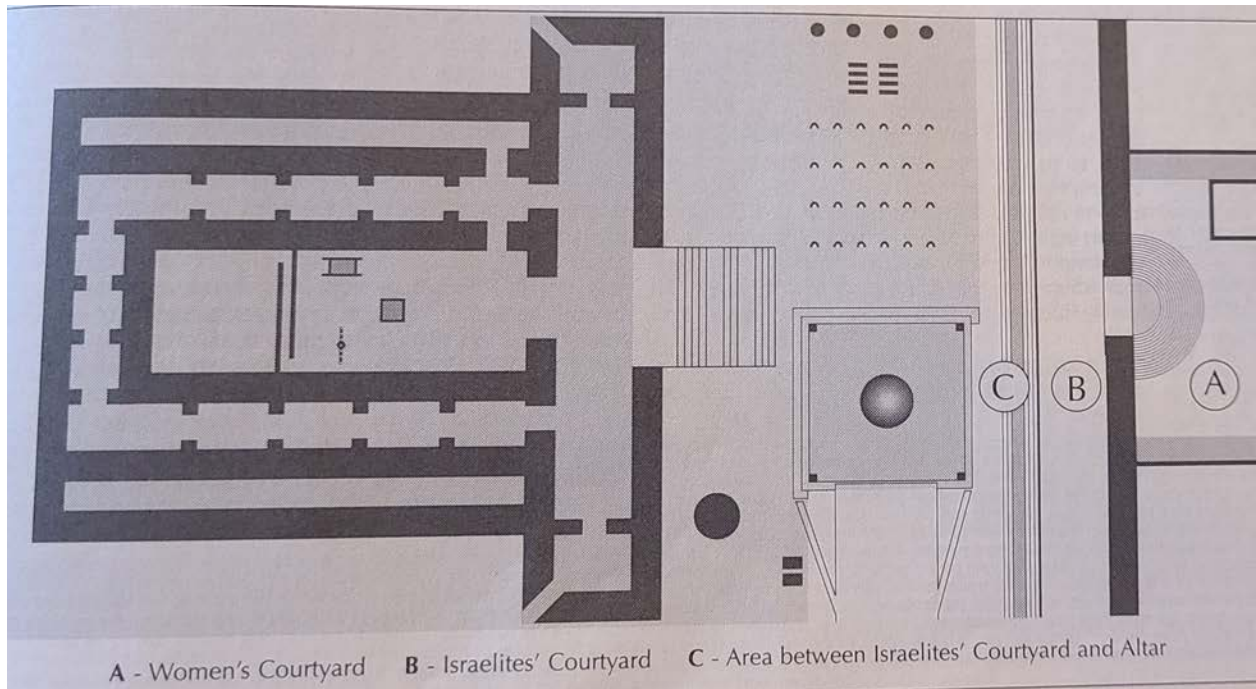
Apparently, the legal status of synagogues in villages is that of communal property, as the portion of each individual is not clearly identifiable, and therefore they cannot become impure.

Rather, there is no distinction in this regard between synagogues in large cities and those in villages. And with regard to the original question, **it is clear as we responded initially** with alternative resolutions to the contradiction between the *baraitot*.

Rabbis Neiman Widroff and Weiner write:¹

12. Three Courtyards were situated on the east side of the Temple complex, contiguously arranged from east to west: (a) The Womens' Courtyard, measuring 135 x 135 *amos*, was completely encompassed by a wall; its west side extended to the east wall of the main Courtyard. (b) The area adjacent to the east wall of the main Courtyard, i.e. the wall that separated the main Courtyard from the Womens' Courtyard, measured 11 *amos* from east to west and extended along the entire 135-*amah* width of the Courtyard, and was known as the Israelites' Courtyard. (c) The area between the Israelites' Courtyard and the Altar, which measured 11 *amos* from east to west and extended along the entire 135-*amah* width of the Courtyard, was known as the Kohanim's Courtyard (see *Middos* 2:5). All three of these Courtyards were in Judah's territory (*Rashi*). See diagram below.

¹ Mesorah Publications, Artscroll Schottenstein Daf Yomi Edition 12a



NO

13. The Temple edifice itself was comprised of three parts: (a) the Antechamber; (b) the Holy or *הֵיכָל*, *Heichal* (literally: hall, here rendered the Sanctuary); and (c) the Holy of Holies [see diagram]. Judah's territory included the eastern part of the Temple complex, extending to the east side of the Altar, while Benjamin's territory embraced the western part of the Temple complex (see diagram). The Baraisa has not yet described how the area between the east wall of the Altar and the Antechamber was apportioned. [The Altar itself was 32 *amos* wide, and between it and the Antechamber there was a space 22 *amos* wide; see *Middos* 3:1,6.] The Baraisa will presently do so (*Rashi*).

17. *Le.* the Holy Ark (upon which the *Shechinah*, the Divine Presence, rested) was located in Benjamin's portion (*Rashi*). God chose to have the *Shechinah* reside in the western [portion of the Temple] so that the Ark should be placed in Benjamin's territory (*Ritva*). [Jacob in his blessing spoke only of the Altar being in Benjamin's territory, but did not state where the Ark would be. Moses stated that the Ark too would be in Benjamin's territory in reward for the righteous anguish shown by Benjamin over the loss of one *amah* of the Altar's area (cf. *Maharsha* to *Zevachim* 54a and *Anaf Yosef* here).]

14. The line marking the border between the territories of Judah and Benjamin ran just east of the Altar, so that beginning with the Altar, everything to the west, including the Altar itself, the Antechamber, the Sanctuary, and the Holy of Holies, belonged to Benjamin. Everything to the east, including the 22 *amos* of the Kohanim's and Israelites' Courtyard, the Womens' Courtyard and the eastern segment of the Temple Mount, belonged to Judah. The line dividing the Courtyard, however, did not cut straight across, but dipped back to the east one *amah* short of the northeast corner of the Altar. In addition, a strip of land extended westward from Judah's territory at the southeast corner of the Altar, stopping one *amah* short of its southwest corner. Thus, the land flanking both the eastern and southern walls of the Altar (excluding the last *amah* of each) belonged to Judah (see diagram below). The Altar's base, had it completely encircled the Altar, would thus have extended into Judean territory for a depth of one *amah* along its eastern and southern walls. Since the Altar was to be entirely in Benjamin's territory, the base did not extend out along the eastern and southern walls – except for one *amah* along the northeast and southwest corners, where the land beneath was part of the territory of Benjamin (*Rashi*, *Zevachim* 53b ד"ה רצועה; *Rashi*'s comments here do not make clear how far the strip extended beyond the Altar's southeast corner; see *Ritva* here; cf. *Rashi*, *Megillah* 26a ד"ה ומה היה, and our note 21 to *Zevachim* 53b).

ES

Thus, the Baraisa's statement that the Altar was erected on Judah's territory means merely that some portion of the Altar would have been on Judah's territory, had the Altar been perfectly square. In fact, however, the base was not completed to form a square and thus did not actually rest upon any of Judah's territory. [Actually, the Gemara elsewhere (*Zevachim* 54a) records a dispute whether the base was completely absent in those places or whether a base was actually built, but it lacked the sanctity of the Altar.]

Tosafos (Megilla 26a)

תוספות ד"ה ורצועה יוצאה מחלק יהודה לחלק בנימין ובה היה מזבח בנוי

קשה דהא בפרק איזהו מקומן (זבחים דף נג:) אמר דבקרן דרומית מזרחית לא היה יסוד לפי שלא היה יסוד אלא בחלקו של טורף בנימין דכתיב בנימין זאב יטרף (בראשית מט)

In *Zevachim* (53b) it says that in the southeast corner there was no Yesod, for the Yesod is only in the portion of Toref, i.e. Binyamin, for it says "Binyamin Ze'ev Toref";

אלמא שכל המזבח בנוי בחלקו של בנימין

Inference: The entire Mizbe'ach was built in the portion of Binyamin!

וי"ל אותו קרן דרומית מזרחית שלא היה בו יסוד שהיה בחלק יהודה

Answer: The southeast corner, which had no Yesod, was in the portion of Yehudah;

על זה היה מצטער בנימין לבולעה כדי שיהא כל המזבח בחלקו

Binyamin was pained [and longed] to swallow it, in order that the entire Mizbe'ach would be in his portion.

Summary

Binyamin the Righteous merited becoming the host of the Divine Presence. A Baraisa states that the Temple Mount, the Chambers, and the Courtyards of the Bais HaMikdash were located in the

portion of the tribe of Yehudah. The Ulam, the Heichal, and the Chamber of the Holy of Holies were located in the portion of the tribe of Binyamin.

A strip of land extended from the portion of Yehudah and entered into the portion of Binyamin, and the mizbeiach was built on that portion. Binyamin the Righteous foresaw the intrusion of Yehudah into his territory and this caused him great distress, and Binyamin desired to absorb that strip into his territory as it is said in the blessing that Moshe conferred on the tribe of Binyamin he agonizes over it all day long.

Since Binyamin was distressed about this, he merited becoming host to the Divine Presence, as it is said and between his (Binyamin's) shoulders does He (HaShem) rest. This description of the Bais HaMikdash complex supports the opinion that Jerusalem was divided up amongst the tribes of Israel.

BINYAMIN'S REWARD

Rav Mordechai Kornfeld writes:²

The Beraisa says that Binyamin was distressed when he learned that his portion of Eretz Yisrael would not contain all parts of the Beis ha'Mikdash and Mizbe'ach. In his portion would be only the Mizbe'ach and the parts of the Beis ha'Mikdash to the west of the Mizbe'ach, while in the portion of Yehudah would be the parts of the Beis ha'Mikdash to the east of the Mizbe'ach and a strip right beneath the eastern (and southern) base of the Mizbe'ach. Binyamin was distressed that he would receive only part of the Mizbe'ach and not the entire Mizbe'ach.

As reward for his strong desire to have all of the parts of the Beis ha'Mikdash in his portion, Binyamin merited "to become the host for the Almighty." **RASHI** explains that this means that "the Aron ha'Kodesh was placed in his portion."

The **MAHARSHA** (in Zevachim 53b) asks that if Binyamin saw that his portion of land would contain most of the Mizbe'ach except for one small strip on the eastern side of the Mizbe'ach, then certainly he knew that the Mizbe'ach and the area to the west of it would all be in his portion. Accordingly, he already knew that the Aron ha'Kodesh would be in his portion! What, then, does the Gemara mean when it says that Binyamin was rewarded for his feelings of distress by having the Aron ha'Kodesh in his portion? It was already in his portion!

(a) Hashem revealed to Binyamin that both he and Yehudah would have parts of the Mizbe'ach in their respective portions. Binyamin, however, did not know exactly how this distribution would be executed. All he knew was that he would share the Mizbe'ach with Yehudah. Since he so strongly desired to have all of the Beis ha'Mikdash in his portion, he merited to receive the area to the side of the Mizbe'ach that contained the Aron ha'Kodesh.

² <https://www.dafyomi.co.il/yoma/insites/yo-dt-012.htm>

(b) The **TORAH TEMIMAH** (Devarim 33:12) gives a different explanation for what the Gemara means when it says that Binyamin merited "to become the host for the Almighty."

The Gemara in Zevachim (118b) says that the Shechinah dwelled among the Jewish people in three places: in the Mishkan in Shilo, in Nov and Giv'on, and in the Beis ha'Mikdash in Yerushalayim. All three places were in the portion of Binyamin. Binyamin foresaw that he would have the Aron ha'Kodesh in his portion in the *Beis ha'Mikdash*, while Yehudah would have in his portion only a strip from the Mizbe'ach.

As reward for his distress that the eastern base of the Mizbe'ach would not be in his portion, Binyamin merited that the *other* places in which the Aron ha'Kodesh would reside would be in his portion as well. (This may be the intention of Rashi here as well.)

Steinzaltz (OBM) writes:³

Upon entering the Land of Israel, each tribe received a portion appropriate to its needs. Which *shevet* (tribe) received the city of Jerusalem? A quick review of a map indicates that Jerusalem was split between the tribes of Yehuda (to the south) and Binyamin (to the north). Our Gemara argues that there is a disagreement between the *tanna'im*.

The *Tanna Kamma* believes that Jerusalem was a separate entity, and that it was not divided between the *shevatim*; Rabbi Yehuda argues that Jerusalem was divided, and, in fact the border between Yehuda and Binyamin ran through the Temple itself, with the Temple Mount offices on Yehuda's side and the sanctuary and Holy of Holies on Binyamin's.

A *baraita* that is brought describes how there was also a "panhandle" of sorts that encroached northward and included the area of the altar within the official boundaries of *shevet* Yehuda. The Si'ah Yitzhak explains that all opinions agree that the area where the City of Jerusalem was built had originally been split between Yehuda and Binyamin.

The disagreement in our Gemara is whether when the decision was made to make Jerusalem the spiritual center of the Jewish people the entire city became a separate entity, or perhaps Jerusalem remained within the confines of the two *shevatim*, and only the area of the Temple itself had extraterritorial status.

There are some sources that do not place the altar entirely within the boundaries of *shevet* Yehuda, rather within *shevet* Binyamin, with the exception of the south-eastern corner that was in Yehuda.

Even so, the Gemara relates a tradition that Binyamin himself "saw" (apparently in a prophetic vision) that the altar – or a significant part of it – would not be in his portion, and was so disturbed by this that as a consolation prize he became the host (*ushpizekhan*) to the Almighty in that the Holy of Holies was built in his portion.

³ <https://www.steinzaltz-center.org/home/doc.aspx?mCatID=68446>

‘The Messages of Jerusalem’

Rabbi Johnny Solomon writes:⁴

While conflicting opinions are initially presented on the topic, the conclusion from *our daf* (Yoma 12a) is that ירושלים לא נתחלקה לשבטים - literally ‘Jerusalem was not apportioned among the tribes’ - and meaning that Jerusalem is not owned by any individual tribe, party or person.

Reflecting on this teaching, Rav Aharon Lichtenstein explained in a speech which he delivered on Yom Yerushalayim in 1990* that while ‘*we are used to the everyday reality of Jerusalem as a national capital, a cultural center, a city reflecting our political reality – in short, a city which belongs to us*’, we still need to remember that ‘*no matter how much it may seem to be in our possession, we need to perceive it as God’s city*’. And given this, he makes the following three observations which remain as relevant now as they did then:

‘The fact that Jerusalem belongs to no individual issues to us a call to elevate ourselves above the egotism symbolized by private acquisitiveness. We need to rise above the prevailing idea that “What is mine, is mine; and what is yours, is yours” ... Thus, one aspect of Jerusalem is elevation above considerations of promoting our own personal interests, both material and spiritual.’

We need to rise above tribal differences, sectarianism. Lest any particular group wish to claim exclusive rights to Jerusalem, we need to declare in response: Jerusalem was not given to any of the tribes. We need to rise above spiritual imperialism that comes to impose one model only. Each stone of the breastplate emphasizes a different aspect, a different tribe, and only a breastplate with all twelve stones in place is fit for use. All twelve gates surrounding the city collectively provide a fortified wall, a complete city!’

‘It is true that the government is located in Jerusalem; Jerusalem is the heart of the nation. But at the same time, Jerusalem was not given over completely to mortal rule. We live in the earthly Jerusalem (Yerushalayim shel mata), but we need to remember that this physical city faces the parallel heavenly Jerusalem (Yerushalayim shel ma’ala). We need to rise above the human and national plane and reach for the plane of Divine service; we must attempt to recognize the Divine Presence in the city.’

Sadly, as he then proceeded to note, ‘the feeling of unity and completeness, of elevation above egotism driven by a value system based on kindness and uprightness, is lacking in the public consciousness. [Given] such a reality, we...are obligated to rise above egotism, sectarianism and divisiveness,’ and he then concluded this speech by stating that ‘the Holy One, Blessed be He, will return in mercy to Jerusalem when we return to Jerusalem in our hearts and souls.’

⁴ <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/messages-jerusalem>

Rabbi Jeremy Rosen writes:⁵

The role of the high priest on Yom Kippur was so crucial that, as we learned in the mishnah on the first page of this tractate, there was always a substitute on hand. Disqualifications of the high priest could take the form of sudden sickness, ritual impurity, death — or theological dispute. During the Second Temple period, deep conflicts between the Sadducees and the Pharisees meant that both parties often had to negotiate a settlement for the high priest to continue functioning on behalf of all Jews regardless of their affiliation. Political rivalry within the priesthood itself often led to personal objections to the appointee from competing factions. There were occasions when the high priest would refuse to accede to compromises or to placate his opponents and would have to be replaced for these reasons too.

So today's scenario is not entirely unbelievable: What would happen if a high priest was removed, a substitute was appointed and ready to proceed, but then the original high priest was reinstated to his post because the reasons for his suspension were resolved?

The sages agree that the original high priest was returned to service. But the status of the substitute is a more difficult question.

The sages taught: If a disqualification befalls the high priest and they appointed another in his stead (and then the cause of the disqualification is resolved), the original high priest returns to service. Regarding the second (substitute acting high priest), all *mitzvot* of the high priesthood are incumbent upon him — this is the statement of Rabbi Meir.

Rabbi Yosei says: The original priest returns to his service while the second is fit to serve neither as high priest nor as common priest.

All seem in agreement that the substitute high priest cannot just go back to being a regular priest. Rabbi Meir says that the replacement still has the status of a top official and is held to the standards of a high priest in terms of the laws, dress and appearance. Rabbi Yosei on the other hand says he neither remains at the status of high priest nor can he return to the status and obligations of an ordinary priest. If he remained a high priest, it would cause a jealous rivalry between him and the other high priest. But once elevated, he cannot be reduced in status because of a principle employed throughout the Talmud: **we rise in holiness and we do not decline.**

This principle recurs several times in the Talmud. The most familiar is in reference to Hanukkah (Shabbat 21b) where Beit Hillel and Beit Shammai argue over the way the lights on the menorah are lit. Does one start with eight and reduce each day as Beit Shammai says, following the sacrifices on Sukkot that decline in number each day? Or do you start with one and increase daily as Beit Hillel says, because “**we rise in holiness and we do not decline**”? The latter, of course, is our custom today.

But Rabbi Yosei also mentions the issue of *eyvah*, ill-feeling. In his estimation, one has to demote the second high priest since you cannot have two high priests sharing the top status — it will cause

⁵ Myjewishlearning.com

too much dissention and rivalry. This concept too is widespread in the Talmud. It is used, for instance, in regard to the relationship between God and human beings, between husband and wife, and between Jew and non-Jew. It is one of the most significant moral principles in the Talmud — one which can be used to trump the letter of the law or, more to the point, guide legal decision-making.

לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר יְהוָה יִשְׁכֵּן לְבֵטַח עָלָיו חֲפָף עָלָיו כָּל־הַיּוֹם וּבֵין כַּתְּיָפוּי
שָׁכֵן: (ס)

Of Benjamin he said: Beloved of the LORD, He rests securely beside Him;
Ever does He protect him, As he rests between His shoulders.

Deut 33:12

RASHI

לְבִנְיָמִן אָמַר. לְפִי שְׁבִרְפַת לְוֵי בַעֲבוּדַת הַקֶּרֶבָנוֹת וְשָׁל בְּנִימִין בְּבִנְיָן
בֵּית הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, בְּחֻלְקוֹ, סְמִכּוֹן זֶה לְזֶה, וְסִמְךָ יוֹסֵף אַחֲרָיו, שְׂאֵף הוּא
מִשְׁכַּן שִׁילָה הִיָּה בְנוֹי בְּחֻלְקוֹ, שְׁנֵאמַר (תהלים ע"ח) "וַיִּמָּאֵס בְּאַהֲלֵי
יוֹסֵף וְגו'". וְלִפִּי שְׁבִית עוֹלָמִים חָבִיב מִשִּׁילָה לְכַף הַקִּדִּים בְּנִימִין
לְיוֹסֵף:

OF BENJAMIN HE SAID — Because the blessing given to Levi referred to the Temple service and that of Benjamin to the Temple being built in his territory he mentioned one after the other. He placed Joseph immediately after him (after Benjamin), for he too had a Sanctuary in his territory: the Tabernacle at Shiloh was erected in his territory, as it says, (Psalms 78:67) “And he rejected the Tabernacle of Joseph” (v. 60 speaks of God forsaking the Tabernacle of Shiloh, the two verses being parallel). Because the “Eternal House” (the Temple) was more endeared to God than the Tabernacle of Shiloh, therefore he mentions Benjamin before Joseph (although Joseph was the elder),

רש"י על דברים ל"ג:י"ב:ג"ד'

כל היום. לעולם, משנבחרה ירושלים, לא שרתה שכינה במקום
אחר: ובין כתפיו שכן. בגובה ארצו היה, בית המקדש בנוי אלא
שנמוך עשרים ושלוש אמה מעין עיטם, ושם היה דעתו של דוד
לבנותו, כדאיתא בשחיטת קדשים (זבחים נד, ב) אמרי נחתי ביה
פורתא משום דכתיב ובין כתפיו שכן, אין לך נאה בשור יותר מכתפיו

ALL THE DAY — i.e., forever. From the day that Jerusalem was chosen as the seat of the Temple, the Divine Glory has never dwelt at any other place. AND BETWEEN HIS SHOULDERS SHALL HE DWELL — On the highest spot of his (Benjamin's) land was the Temple built (cf. Siphre), except that it was twenty-three cubits lower than En Etam (Yoma 31a), and originally indeed David's intention was to build it there, as it is stated in the Treatise "on the slaughter of the holy sacrifices" (Zevachim 54b): People said him (David), Let us place it a little lower, because it states, "and between his shoulders (which are lower than the head) shall he dwell" – and you have no finer part of an ox than his shoulders.

Sifre Deut, Beracha 352

ד"א ובין כתיפיו שכן - מה שור זה אין בו נאה מכתפיו - כך בית המקדש
גבוה מכל העולם, שנ' וקמת ועלית אל המקום, ואומר לכו ונעלה אל הר
ה', אינו אומר גד מן המזרח ודן מן המערב, אלא עמים רבים! ר' אומר:
בכל התחומים הוא אומר וירד הגבול, ותאר הגבול, וכאן הוא או' ועלה
הגבול גיא בן הינום כתף היבוסי היא ירושלם!

Variantly: "and between his shoulders does it rest": Just as with an ox, there is nothing higher than its shoulders, so, the Temple is higher than the rest of the world, viz. (Devarim 17:8) "then you shall arise and go *up* to the place," and (Isaiah 2:3) "Come and let us go *up* to the mountain of the L-rd." It is not written "Gad from the east and Dan from the west, but (*Ibid.* 4) "many peoples" (i.e., *all go up*.) Rebbi says: Of all the boundaries it is written "and the border curved," "and the border descended," but here it is written (*Ibid.* 15:8) "And the border *ascended* by the valley of Ben Hinnom to the southern shoulder of the Yevussi, which is Jerusalem."

מלמד שבית הבחירה היה בנוי בחלקו של בנימן, וכראש תור יוצא מחלקו של בנימן לחלקו של יהודה, שנ' ובין כתיפיו שכן. ומה ת"ל לא יסור שבט מיהודה? זו לשכת הגזית, שניתנה בחלקו של יהודה, שנ' וימאס באוהל יוסף ובשבט בנימן לא בחר, ויבחר את שבט יהודה, את הר ציון אשר אהב. אבל בית הגדול היה בנוי בחלקו של יוסף בשילה, שנ' ואתה בית לחם אפרתה צעיר להיות באלפי יהודה, ואין אפרתה אלא בית לחם, שנא' ותמת רחל ותקבר בדרך אפרת היא בית לחם.

We are hereby taught that the Temple is built in the portion of Benjamin and like the head of an ox extends from the portion of Benjamin to that of Judah, as it is written "and between his (Benjamin's) shoulders (in a slight depression on the highest part of Benjamin's land) does it (the Temple) rest." As to its being written (Gen 49:10) "The scepter shall not depart from Judah," that refers to the chamber of hewn stone (in the Temple), which is in the portion of Judah, viz. (Psalms 78:67-68) "And He rejected the tent of Joseph and did not choose the tent of Ephraim. He chose the tribe of Judah, Mount Zion, which He loves." But the Temple was in the portion of Benjamin, viz. (Gen) "*And Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Efrath, which is Bethlehem.*"

מפני מה זכה בנימן שתשרה שכינה בחלקו? משל למלך שבא אצל בנוי לפרקים, כל אחד ואחד אמר: אצלי הוא שורה! קטן שבכולם אמר: אפשר שמניח אבא אחיי הגדולים ושורה עמי? הלך ועמד בפניו כבושות, ונפשו עגומה. ראה אותו אביו, שעמד בפניו כבושות ונפשו עגומה עליו - עכשיו מאכל ומשתה יהיה משלכם, ולינתי אצלו! כך אמר הקב"ה: בית הבחירה יהיה בחלקו של בנימן, וקרבות מכל השבטים.

Why did Benjamin merit the reposing of the Shechinah in his portion? This may be compared to (the situation of) a king, who visited his sons from time to time. Each one said let him stay with me. The youngest said: Is it possible that father will leave my big brothers and stay with me? — whereupon he was completely crestfallen. His father, seeing him in this state, said: I will eat by you and sleep by him. Thus, the Holy One Blessed be He said: The Temple will be in the portion of Benjamin, and sacrifices offered by all of the tribes.

This mashal reveals the deep rabbinic imaginative understanding of the small tribe of Benjamin's psyche as a younger brother of the great Joseph. In the narrative the younger son worries the father will not visit him like his older brothers which triggers the father's compassion who relents by eating (altar/mizbeach consumes) with him although he still does not sleep by him.

THE MIKDASH IN THE DIVISION OF THE TRIBAL TERRITORIES ACCORDING TO CHAZAL

Rav Yitzchak Levy writes:⁶

According to the division of the tribal territories in the book of *Yehoshua* (15 and 18), the site of the *Mikdash* is without a doubt located entirely within the tribal territory of Binyamin.^[2] Regarding the verse (*Devarim* 33:12), "*And to Binyamin he said: The beloved of the Lord; He shall dwell in safety by him; He shall cover him all the day long, and He shall dwell between his shoulders,*" Chazal (*Sifrei, Ve-zot Ha-berakha*) suggest many reasons why Binyamin merited that the *Shekhina* should rest in its territory. Among them, we find:

Because all the tribes were present at the sale of Yosef, but Binyamin was not with them... I shall not rest My *Shekhina* in their portion, for they showed no mercy to their brother.^[3]

The unity brought about by Binyamin is also expressed in Binyamin's arrival in Egypt, which ultimately leads to reconciliation between the tribes of Yosef and Yehuda, and from that to a reunification of all the tribes. The tribal territory of Binyamin, which symbolizes the unity among the tribes, was selected as most appropriate for the site of the *Mikdash*, for a state of jealousy, hatred, and division makes the resting of the *Shekhina* impossible. (For the same reason, the tribal territory of Binyamin is situated between the tribal territories of Efrayim (Yosef) and Yehuda.)

Binyamin, the tribe that can serve as a bridge between the other tribes, was selected as the tribe in whose territory the *Shekhina* would rest. Indeed, most of the stations of the *Mishkan* were erected in its portion, and the *Mikdash* itself was built in the tribal territory of Binyamin.

Chazal expanded upon this point:

As it was taught: What lay in the portion of Yehuda? The Temple mount, the cells, the courts. And what lay in the portion of Binyamin? The *Ulam*, the *Heikhal*, and the Holy of Holies. And a strip of land went forth from Yehuda's portion and went into Binyamin's territory, and on this the altar was built. (*Yoma* 12a)

According to this account, the *Mikdash* was situated in the territory of Binyamin, as well as the essential part of the altar,^[4] whereas the offices, including *Lishkat Ha-gazit*, were located in the territory of Yehuda. Binyamin represents the territory of the *Shekhina*, whereas Yehuda represents the territory of the kingdom. In addition to the message concerning the importance of the earthly kingdom being connected to the *Mikdash*, this juxtaposition expresses the fact that the site of the *Mikdash* belongs to both Binyamin and Yehuda, and that they are connected through it. Binyamin and Yehuda represent the descendants of Rachel and Leah; the two join at the site of the *Mikdash*.

^[2] The entire territory of Binyamin is the territory of the *Shekhina*, a point that was discussed at length in our series of lectures on Biblical Jerusalem.

⁶ <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/lecture-107-mikdash-and-jerusalem-place-unites-all-israel>

[3] This idea is connected to the folktale about two brothers, each of whom would regularly transfer of his own grain to the pile of his brother as an act of kindness toward him. When God saw this, He blessed the place where they met, and it was there that the Temple was later built and from which love and brotherhood issued forth to the entire world.

[4] Except for the south-east corner of the altar, which was situated in the territory of Yehuda and where there was no *yesod* (*Zevachim* 53b).



The deep reds of the setting sun in this painting reflect the tribe of Benjamin's gemstone, a maroon jasper.⁷

⁷ The youngest of the twelve tribes, Benjamin, was named by his mother, Rachel, who died in childbirth. His father, Jacob, changed his name from

“the son of my suffering” to “son of the right hand”: a name that represents the strength that comes from pain, the power of transformation. Benjamin seeks out the Divine energy housed within matter and elevates it, transforming the material into the spiritual. The sun is setting over the hills

The Inheritance of Binyamin – Portion of the *Shekhina*

Rav Yitzchak Levi writes:⁸

We seek to clarify the meaning of Moshe's blessing to Binyamin:

"And to Binyamin he said: God's beloved shall dwell safely by Him; He shall cover him all the day, and between his shoulders He shall rest."

In this blessing, for the first time, the Torah connects the resting of the Divine Presence with a specific place in *Eretz Yisrael* – the portion of Binyamin. We shall now try to understand the location mentioned in the blessing and its significance. Why was the inheritance of Binyamin selected to be the portion of the Divine Presence, how is this expressed, and what are its ramifications?

A. Moshe's Blessing to Binyamin

1. Order of the tribes in Moshe's blessing, and the placement of Binyamin within it

In *Parashat Ve-zot Ha-berakha (Devarim 33)*, the Torah records Moshe's blessing to the tribes prior to his death. In order to understand the blessing to Binyamin, we must first review the order of the tribes in this blessing: Reuven, Yehuda, Levi, Binyamin, Yosef, Zevulun, Yissakhar, Gad, Dan, Naftali, Asher (Shimon is omitted) [1].

The four last tribes are the sons of the handmaids, and geographically, too, they are located on the outskirts of the country (on the eastern side of the Jordan and in the North). Zevulun and Yissakhar are the last of the children of Leah, and geographically their inheritance is in the North. The tribes whose position within the blessing requires explanation are therefore the first five: Reuven, Yehuda, Levi, Binyamin, and Yosef. There is no clear, single criterion for the order of

of Jerusalem, and the illuminated windows of the city send their warm glow out to the rest of the world. The confusion of twilight dissolves in the peaceful vision of a city, held securely and quietly nestled in the hills around it. Jerusalem is the heart of the Land and the heart of the nation. It is strong and at peace, a peace that extends outward towards the viewer and to the outer edges of the painting, where an olive branch tentatively spreads its leaves in a prayerful motion inviting us to “pray for the peace of Jerusalem” (Psalms 122:6).

From: Lesley Friedmann https://www.chabad.org/blogs/blog_cdo/aid/3598407/jewish/12-Tribes-of-Israel-Benjamin-The-Ravenous-Consumer.htm

⁸ <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/inheritance-binyamin-%D6%A0portion-shekhina-part-i>

their appearance; the choice seems to be based on a combination of the order of their birth and the order of their geographical settlement.

Reuven's place at the beginning of the list is obvious, since he is the firstborn of both Yaakov and Leah. Shimon, as mentioned, is omitted – a fact that is undoubtedly related to Yaakov's blessing [2]. What remains to be explained, then, is the order of the blessing of the four other tribes: Yehuda, the leader destined for royalty, who is blessed after Reuven, followed by Levi and Binyamin, and finally Yosef.

The blessing here appears to have a symmetrical structure. At the two ends we find the central forces in *Am Yisrael* – both at that time and for future generations: Yehuda, destined for royalty from among the children of Leah, and Yosef – the firstborn of Rachel, second-in-command to the king of Egypt, who merited a double inheritance in the land of Israel (the portions of Ephraim and Menashe). In the middle, between Yehuda and Yosef, blessings are given to Levi and Binyamin. Indeed, geographically, the portion of Binyamin is located between the portion of Yosef (more precisely, of Ephraim) to the north, and the portion of Yehuda to the south, while Levi has no portion of his own in the land: God is his portion, because he serves in the Mishkan (see *Devarim* 10:9; 18:2).

At the same time, we are still left with a difficulty. Why is Binyamin – the younger son of Rachel – blessed immediately after Levi, thereby preceding Yosef, who is Rachel's firstborn? The commentaries address this question; Rashi comments as follows:

"Because the blessing of Levi concerns the sacrificial service, and of Binyamin – the Temple being built in his portion, therefore [Moshe] uttered them consecutively, with Yosef immediately thereafter – for he, too, had the Mishkan of Shilo built in his portion, as it is written: 'He forsook the Tabernacle of Yosef' (Tehillim 78:67). Since the Temple was more beloved than Shilo was, therefore Binyamin is mentioned before Yosef."

According to Rashi, the juxtaposition of Yosef and Binyamin is a result not of their both being sons of Rachel, but rather of the common denominator between all three tribes here – the resting of the Divine Presence, according to which their order is likewise established. First blessings are given, consecutively, to Levi – who performs the Divine service in the Sanctuary, then Binyamin, in whose portion the Temple is built [3], and only afterwards to Yosef, in whose portion the Mishkan of Shilo rested, since the Mishkan was less beloved to God than the Temple.

The Ibn Ezra (quoted in note 1) explains that Levi and Binyamin are juxtaposed "because the Levites dwell in Jerusalem, which was between Yehuda and Binyamin." According to this view they are mentioned consecutively as a result of their geographical proximity, too, and not only because of their common connection to the Divine Presence.

2. Content of the blessing

The formulation of the blessing raises several questions. Who is "God's beloved (*yedid hashem*)"? Who is the subject of the verse? What is the meaning of the words, "Will dwell safely

by Him" and "Cover him"? What is the meaning of the expression, "He shall dwell between his shoulders"? We shall now, with the aid of the commentators, attempt to answer these questions.

On the simplest level, Binyamin himself is God's beloved. But the Ramban introduces an interpretation based on kabbalistic sources, and explains that "God's beloved (*yedid hashem*) shall dwell upon Binyamin" – referring to God Himself [4].

The subject of the verse and its interpretation depend on who is the "beloved." If the beloved is Binyamin, then the verse means that Binyamin will dwell with God, and that God will cover him eternally and cause His Presence to dwell in his inheritance. According to the second understanding, it is God who dwells with Binyamin.

The expressions "cover" (*chofef*) and "dwell" (*sh-kh-n*) are clearly related to the dwelling of the Divine Presence. The word "*chofef*" hints at the Canopy of Glory – as, for example, in *Yishayahu* 4:5 – "God will create upon every dwelling place on Mount Zion and upon its assemblies, a cloud and smoke by day, and the shining of a flaming fire by night, for upon all the glory there shall be a canopy." The Ramban comments that the expressions "will dwell," "will cover" and "dwell" hint at three Temples:

"Concerning the First Temple [Moshe] says, 'He shall dwell safely by Him'... concerning the Second Temple – '[He shall] cover him all the day' – for the Divine Presence did not rest [in the Second Temple], it merely covered and protected it [Rashi agrees)] or literally "fluttered" [as the soul flutters upon the body]... 'And between his shoulders He shall dwell' – referring to the messianic times...."

Rabbeinu Bechaye concludes that the blessing to Binyamin is "for his glory and his honor, since he hosts the Divine Presence... and we learn from all of this that none among all the tribes is as blessed as Binyamin, with the dwelling of the Divine Presence, and status and merit, and he has an advantage over all his brothers" [5]. What certainly arises from the above is the very clear connection between the dwelling of the Divine Presence and the portion of Binyamin.

Concerning the words, "Cover him all the day," Rashi quotes the *Mekhilta*: "Forever. Since Jerusalem was chosen, the Divine Presence rests nowhere else."

B. "He shall dwell between his shoulders"

Let us now dwell on the meaning of the expression, "He shall dwell between his shoulders." Clearly, the identity of the "dweller" and of the owner of the "shoulders" depends on our understanding of the subject of the verse, as explained above. Let us introduce our discussion with the commentary of Chizkuni:

"'Between His shoulders' – his borders, as in 'the border of the Sea of Galilee' (Bamidbar 34:11); 'he shall dwell' – meaning, Binyamin dwells within the borders of the Holy One; his portion is close to the Temple."

According to this interpretation, the "shoulders" are the borders of the inheritance of Binyamin. Indeed, out of the nine appearances of the word "shoulder" (*katef*) in the topographical sense, eight – all except the one quoted by Chizkuni, in *Bamidbar* 34:11 – occur in a description of the borders of Binyamin and the northern border of the Tribe of Yehuda, in *Sefer Yehoshua*. Rav Yoel Elitzur [6] maintains that this arises, apparently, from the unique topographical character of this region.

The topographical significance of the word "shoulder" is a raised plain with a steep slope. The word in this sense is always accompanied by some indication of direction. From the description of the borders of Binyamin, it arises that there are:

- Three shoulders on the northern border of the inheritance of Yehuda (which is the southern border of Binyamin) (*Yehoshua* 15:8-11): the shoulder of the Yevusi in the south - Jerusalem; the shoulder of Mount Ye'arim to the north, which is Kesalon, and the 'shoulder of Ekron' to the north.
- Two shoulders on the northern border of the inheritance of Binyamin (which is the southern border of the inheritance of Ephraim) (*Yehoshua* 18:12-13): the shoulder of Yericho to the north, and the shoulder of Luz to the south – which is Beit-El.
- Three shoulders on the southern border of the portion of Binyamin (which is the northern border of Yehuda) (*Ibid.* 16-19); the shoulder of the Yevusi to the south; the shoulder facing the Arava to the north, and the shoulder of Beit Chogla, to the north.

We shall not involve ourselves, in the framework of the present study, in the precise topographical identification of each of these shoulders, but it is clear that this tribal unit is surrounded on all sides by "shoulders" that define quite clearly what its borders are. In the south, the shoulder of the Yevusi; to the south-west, the shoulder of Mount Ye'arim and the shoulder of Ekron; to the south-east, the shoulder facing the Arava and the shoulder of Beit Chogla; to the north – the shoulder of Luz; to the north-east, the shoulder of Yericho. This reality is illustrated well in the emphasis of the shoulders in the attached map (map no. 1).

We conclude that, according to the interpretation of Chizkuni, what the verse means is that God chooses to dwell between the defined borders of Binyamin as a whole, which is the portion of the Divine Presence. The very choice of this inheritance, and the resting of the Divine Presence, there singles out the tribe of Binyamin from all the others.

The Ibn Ezra interprets "between his shoulders" to mean – "In the midst of his inheritance" [7].

A third interpretation of these words is offered by Rashi:

"Between his shoulders he shall dwell" – The Temple was built at the height of his portion, but this was twenty-three *amot* lower than Ein-Eitam, where David had intended to build it, as we read concerning the slaughter of sacrifices (*Zevachim* 54b), "They said: Let us make it a little lower and build it in Jerusalem, which is lower down, as it is written, his shoulders, rather than his head [Rashi *ad loc.*], because it is written, "Between his shoulders" – since there is no more choice portion of meat from an ox than the shoulder.

In the same vein, Rabbeinu Behaye elaborates (ad loc.):

"The reason for [the words] 'between his shoulders,' rather than saying 'upon his head,' is because the Temple was not at the height of the actual mountain, but rather slightly lower...."

As Rashi and Rabbeinu Bechaye understand it, the words "between his shoulders" do not refer to the portion of Binyamin in its entirety, with all of its borders, but rather to the location of the Temple, which is not built at the highest point on the mountain, but rather somewhat lower, between "the shoulders" – or, at most, to the city of Jerusalem (see Rashi, and the Abarbanel *ad loc.*: "Therefore God's supervision and blessing would always be upon Jerusalem, as it is written: 'My eyes and My heart shall be there for all times' (II *Melakhim* 9).")

We may, therefore, summarize and say that, from the topographical perspective, the words "He shall dwell between his shoulders" may refer to three different circles: the portion of the Tribe of Binyamin as a whole, the city of Jerusalem, or the Temple. We must clarify, in relation to each of these, what is being referred to by the expression, "His shoulders."

With regard to the tribal portion as a whole, we have already shown, according to the view of Chizkuni, that the shoulders are the borders of the inheritance, and we commented that from the topographical aspect, the shoulder is a particularly well-defined area: it is a raised plain, with a steep slope. To this we should add a more general point – that the surroundings of the inheritance of Binyamin (both to the north and to the south) lie higher than the inheritance itself. In other words, the inheritance of Binyamin as a whole lies lower than that of Ephraim to its north, and that of Yehuda to its south. To the north-east it is bounded by the Ephraim-Binyamin arch, and to the south-west, by the Chevron arch (see map no. 2) [8].

As regards Jerusalem and the Temple, the shoulders are the hills surrounding Jerusalem: to the east and to the north – the Mount of Olives and Mount Scopus; to the west – the western hills (the region of Mount Zion and the Jewish and Armenian Quarters of today); further to the west – the region of Mishkenot Sha'ananim, etc.

Since the hills that surround the city and the Temple are higher, the actual Temple building protrudes from between the shoulders that surround it, like a head that stands prominently upon a pair of shoulders. Rashi (quoted above) and other Rishonim quote the Gemara (*Zevachim* 54b) that explains the slightly low-lying location of the Temple in the verse discussed above:

"Rabba taught: What is the meaning of the verse, 'He [David] and Shemuel went and dwelled in Nayot... in Rama' (I Shemuel 19:18)? What has Nayot to do with Rama? The answer is that they sat in Rama but discussed the beauty (noyo) of the world [the Temple]. They said: 'It is written, 'You shall arise and go up to the place...' (Devarim 17:8); this teaches that the Temple is higher than anywhere else in Eretz Yisrael, and that Eretz Yisrael is higher than any other country.' They did not know where its location was. They brought a Book of Yehoshua. Concerning [the borders of] all [of the tribes] the text says 'descends,' 'the border rises,' 'the border surrounds.' When it comes to the Tribe of

Binyamin, we read "'ascends,' but we do not read 'descends.' They said, 'Apparently, this is its place.' They wanted to build it in Ein Eitam, which lies high up. They said, 'Let us make it a little lower, as it is written: 'Between his shoulders he shall dwell' (Devarim 33:12)."

The Gemara here matches the *Sifri* (Devarim 354): "Just as, in an ox, there is no finer portion than the shoulder, so the Temple is higher and more beautiful than anywhere else in the world." In other words, the shoulders of the ox are the highest point on the animal, and its head rests between them; likewise the Temple rests among the surrounding "shoulders."

C. Significance of the Divine Presence resting in a low place

Having established that God chose to make His Presence dwell in the portion of Binyamin, and having discussed its topographical uniqueness, let us now explore the spiritual significance of the low-lying location of the city of Jerusalem and the Temple in relation to the surrounding hills.

1. Jerusalem

Various verses in the Books of the Prophets and Hagiographia relate to the low-lying location of Jerusalem.

In *Tehillim* 125:2 we read:

"Jerusalem – hills surround it, and God surrounds His people from now and forever."

Spiritual significance is awarded to the topographical fact that the ancient city lay lower than the surrounding hills. The Radak explains:

"Although hills surround it, it has no physical strength, and various nations will rule over it and conquer it from one another. It will have no strength until God's nation dwells in its midst, when He will surround His people and His Name will be a greater strength for them than the hills, and no enemy will rule over them from then and forever."

The Radak's basic assumption seems to be that the mountains surrounding the city protect it, and that despite this, the verse tells us that in fact the city is truly protected only by God's Name. However, we seek to argue (see our previous *shiurim*, on the topographical structure of the city) that the mountains surrounding the ancient city not only fail to protect it, but actually represent its point of weakness, since they overlook it. Hence, it is not the mountains that protect the city at all, but rather God Himself. According to this understanding, the topographical conditions of the city – its relatively low altitude – do not provide the necessary protection; they create a situation of inescapable dependence upon Divine protection – "God surrounds His people."

A similar description arises from the prophet's reference to the city as the "Valley of Vision (*chizayon*)" (*Yishayahhu* 22:1). The Radak explains (*ad loc.*):

"This prophecy is uttered in relation to Jerusalem, and it is called the Valley of Vision because it is the place of prophecy. Why is it called a valley even though it is a mountain? This is meant as an expression of denigration, because its inhabitants brought the city down with their evil, and turned it from a mountain into a valley, such that it is no longer worthy of being called a mountain, but rather a valley."

According to the Radak, the term "valley" arises from the evil behavior of the inhabitants of the city. According to what we have said above, the title refers to the city's relatively low-lying position, among the mountains that surround it.

Yirmiyahu, too, refers to Jerusalem as "Dweller of the valley, rock of the plain" (21:13-14). The title, "Rock of the plain" means "rock that protrudes from the valley"; this conjures up the image of Jerusalem as a hill protruding from among the surrounding valleys. However, because of its generally low position, the city is also referred to in the verse as "dweller of the valleys" – a description that matches the appearance of the city as it would be revealed to the prophet coming from Anatot, in the region in between Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives [9].

2. Significance [10]

We shall propose three different meanings attached to the relative lowliness of Jerusalem:

- a. The first significance has already been noted above: the low-lying position of the city expresses its vulnerability, the fact that it is not naturally protected, and is therefore fundamentally reliant on God [11].
- b. We learn in *Midrash Tehillim* (68:9):

"The mountain which God desired to make His dwelling there' – I desire only Sinai, which is lower than all of you, as it is written: 'I dwell in a high and holy place, but also with those who are humble and of contrite spirit' (Yishayahu 57:15)... Where did Sinai come from? Rabbi Yossi taught: it was separated from Mount Moriah, as challa is separated from the dough – from the place where Yitzchak was bound as a sacrifice. The Holy One said: Since Yitzchak, their forefather, was bound upon it (this mountain), it is fitting that his descendants should receive the Torah upon it. And from where do we know that [this piece of Mount Moriah] is destined to return to its place? As it is written, 'The mountain of God's House shall be established at the head of the mountains': these are Tabor and Carmel and Sinai and Zion. 'The mountains' (he-harim) – meaning, five mountains (the letter heh in Hebrew signifying the number 5): i.e., as the number of Books of the Torah [12]."

In other words, the Holy One chooses to make His Presence dwell specifically in the lowest place because of its humility.

- a. In *Tehillim* (113:4-6) we read:

- ד רם על-כל-גוים יהוה; על השמים
כבודו. 4 The LORD is high above all nations, His glory is above
the heavens.
- ה מי, פיהנה אלהינו-- המגביה
לשבת. 5 Who is like unto the LORD our God, that is enthroned on
high,
- ו המשפילי לראות-- בשמים ובארץ. 6 That looketh down low upon heaven and upon the earth?

Ps 113: 4-6

"God is high over all the nations; His glory is over the heavens. Who is like the Lord our God, ENTHRONED ON HIGH, BUT LOOKING DOWN TO OBSERVE THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH."

The greatness of God is that He is not limited to any specific place; He is revealed both in the heavens and on earth. The same idea is reflected in many other sources, such as a similar verse from Tehillim: "Although God is high, He sees the lowly; but the arrogant [lit. "high"] He knows from afar" (Tehillim 138:6), or the Midrash concerning the revelation at Sinai: "Why was God revealed to Moshe at the bush? To teach us that there is no place in the world that is devoid of the Divine Presence, even a [lowly] thorn bush" (Shemot Rabba 2,9).

This view is diametrically opposed to the faith of the pagan nations, who worshipped their gods "upon the high mountains and upon the hills, and under every leafy tree" (*Devarim* 12:2). As Rabbi Akiva commented: "In every place where you find a tall mountain, an elevated hill, and a leafy tree – know that there is idolatry there" (*Avoda Zara* Chapter 3, Mishhna 5). This principle arises from several places in the Torah and in the Prophets: for example, "They shall call people there to the mountain; there they shall offer sacrifices of righteousness" (*Devarim* 33:19); "They shall sacrifice upon the tops of the mountains, and offer incense upon the hills" (*Hoshea* 4:13). The form of pagan worship is based upon materialistic faith in which height plays a significant role. The pagans expressed their closeness to their gods on the physical level: they perceived the gods as sitting upon the mountains and other high places and ruling over all those who were beneath them. Therefore, they established their places of worship on the high places, thereby expressing – to their view – similarity and closeness to their gods. Moreover, it is quite reasonable to assume that this physical superiority attributed to the gods also reflected a spiritual sense of superiority and pride – perhaps out of a desire to compete with the God who dwelled even higher. Hence we understand the criticism of the prophets (see, for example, *Yishayahu* 2) towards pride and arrogance, which represent a desecration of God's Name.

In contrast to this view, the Holy One is manifest everywhere – both in terms of His humility and in terms of His greatness. He is not limited in any way by physical reality, therefore He is able to watch and guide even from a low place, and is revealed even there [13].

Notes:

[1] We shall quote here briefly the commentary of the Ibn Ezra (*Devarim* 33:6) (which is worthy of more extensive treatment) on the order of the tribes: "[The blessing] starts with the elders, for so it is proper. Shimon is not mentioned because of Ba'al Pe'or.... Following Reuven, [Moshe] mentions Yehuda, the flag-bearer... and then Levi and thereafter Binyamin, because the Levites live in Jerusalem, which was in between Yehuda and Binyamin... And thereafter the Tribe of Yosef, so as not to leave him for the end, since his younger brother had already been mentioned. And then Zevulun... and then Yissakhar... and when the sons of the wives were finished, he began from Gad, who was the standard-bearer of the children of the handmaids...."

Rabbeinu Behaye (*ibid.*) likewise addresses the matter of the order: "Reuven... because he was the eldest, therefore [Moshe] treats him with the birthright in his blessing. Then Yehuda is brought forward after him, for he was the first tribe to inherit in the land... and after Yehuda he blessed Levi, for they dwell in Jerusalem, together with the children of Yehuda. After the children of Levi he blessed Binyamin, whose portion was with the children of Yehuda, and the city of Jerusalem and the Temple were between Yehuda and Binyamin, and the Levites dwelled with both of them, and after Binyamin – Yosef, so as not to leave him to the end...."

Shadal offers a different explanation as to the order; we shall not elaborate here.

[2] "Shimon and Levi are brothers; instruments of cruelty are their swords. Let my soul not enter their counsel; let my honor not be united with their assembly. For in their anger they killed a man, and willfully lamed an ox. Cursed is their anger, for it is fierce, and their fury, for it is cruel; I shall divide them amongst Yaakov and scatter them amongst Israel" (*Bereishit* 49:5-7). The Tribe of Levi corrected its behavior through its actions following the Sin of the Golden Calf, therefore this tribe was scattered for the purposes of sanctity, in the cities of the Levites – as opposed to Shimon, who was swallowed up within the Tribe of Yehuda. We shall not elaborate further here.

[3] Rabbi Y. Bekhor-Shor comments as follows (*ad loc.*): "Because the children of Levi served in the Temple, which stood in the portion of Binyamin, therefore [Moshe] gave Binyamin's blessing immediately after that of Levi." Chizkuni (*ad loc.*) similarly explains, "Because the occupation of Levi is in the Temple, which is in the portion of Binyamin."

[4] In *Yishayahu* 5:1, "yedig" is an adjective for God, as interpreted by *Sifri ad loc.*

[5] The *Sifri* (*Devarim* 252; see also *Menachot* 53a) interprets the word beloved (*yedig*) as follows: "Six are called beloved (*yedig*): The Holy One is called beloved, as it is written (*Yishayahu* 5), I shall sing to my Beloved; Binyamin is called beloved, as it is written (*Devarim* 33:12), 'The beloved of God shall dwell safely with Him'; Shelomo is called beloved, as it is written, 'He called his name Yedig-Yah- and God loved him' (II *Shemuel* 12); Israel are called beloved, as it is written, 'I have given the beloved of My soul into the hands of their enemies' (*Yirmiyahu* 12); the Temple is called beloved, as it is written, 'How beloved are Your dwelling places' (*Tehillim* 84); and Avraham is called beloved, as it is written, 'What is My beloved doing in My House?' (*Yirmiyahu* 11). Let the beloved [Shelomo] come and build the beloved [Temple], in the portion of the beloved [Binyamin], for the Beloved [God], that the beloved [Israel], sons of the beloved [Avraham] may come there."

[6] Rav Y. Elitzur, "What Is "Katef," and Where Is the "Eastern Border of the Sea of Galilee"?" *Al Atar* 4-5, p. 41 onwards. The essence of his contention is conveyed above.

[7] I am not certain as to his meaning: if he refers to the location of the Temple, it is= in the very southernmost part of the inheritance. If he is speaking of the mid-point of the inheritance in which God dwells, what is this point?

[8] Obviously, the inheritance of Binyamin gradually falls to the east (in the direction of the Dead Sea) and to the west (in the direction of the Mediterranean).

[9] See the beautiful explanation by Noga Ha-Reuveni, "Or Chadash al Sefer Yirmiyahu," Kiryat Sefer 1968, pp. 19-26.

[10] We could, of course, suffice with a statement of fact that this is the city's topographical location. However, in keeping with the general aim of this series, we wish to argue that topography also has spiritual significance, and in this context we shall relate also to the matter of altitude.

[11] This reality reflects the city's overall location, as described in the previous *shiurim*: its proximity to the desert, its distance from the main highway, and the lack of open expanses for agriculture.

[12] There are many aspects of this wonderful Midrash that are worthy of elaboration: the connection between Mount Sinai and Mount Moriah as the place connected to Torah; the connection between the binding of Yitzhak and the giving of the Torah, etc. For our purposes here, we shall suffice with the matter of the height.

[13] It should be noted, in this context, that alongside the sources that appeal to God from the nethermost recesses of the soul (for example, *Tehillim* 130:1 – "From the depths I call to You, God"), there are rabbinical sources that speak about building synagogues at the highest point of the city (for example, *Tanchuma Bechukotai* 3). There is room to discuss whether the height of a synagogue has independent significance, or whether the idea of building it higher than the other buildings in the city is meant solely for God's glory; we shall not elaborate here.

Having examined various aspects of the inheritance of Binyamin as the portion of the Divine Presence, and having reviewed various proofs of this connection, let us now attempt to define the uniqueness of Binyamin. How did this tribe merit the honor of God choosing to rest His Presence there, and what is the significance of this choice?

A. Why does the Divine Presence rest in the portion of Binyamin?

Reasons given by Chazal

The reason for the Divine choice of the portion of Binyamin is not stated explicitly in the Torah. Hence, our point of departure will be various rabbinical sources that try to explain it.

1. *Sifri Devarim (Ve-Zot ha-Berakha, piska 352):*

For what reason did Binyamin merit to have the Divine Presence rest in his portion? The situation may be compared to a king who visits each of his sons for a period of time. Each of them says, "He is staying with me!" The youngest son says, "Surely my father will not leave my older brothers and stay with me." He goes about with a gloomy countenance and a heavy heart. His father sees him standing, sad and dejected. He says [to the older brothers], "You will all have a portion at the banquets, but I shall sleep over with him." So the Holy One said: The Temple will stand in the portion of Binyamin, while sacrifices will be brought from all of the tribes.

Another explanation: For what reason did Binyamin merit to have the Divine Presence rest in his portion? Because all the other brothers were born outside of the land, while Binyamin was born in Eretz Yisrael.

Another explanation: For what reason did Binyamin merit to have the Divine Presence rest in his portion? Because all of the other brothers participated in the sale of Yosef, while Binyamin was not party to the sale. The Holy One said: If I tell these [other tribes] to build the Temple, when they pray before Me I will not be filled with mercy towards them. I shall not rest My Presence in their portion, for they were not merciful towards their brother.

Another explanation: For what reason did Binyamin merit to have the Divine Presence rest in his portion? The situation may be compared to a king who had many sons. When they grew up, each went his own way. The youngest of all of them was beloved by his father; he would eat with him and drink with him; he would lean upon him when he went out and lean upon him when he came in. Thus, the righteous Binyamin was the youngest among the brothers, and Yaakov would eat with him and drink with him, lean upon him when he went out and lean upon him when he came in. The Holy One said: The place where that righteous one [Yaakov] rested his hands – there I shall cause My Presence to rest. Therefore it is written, "He dwells between his shoulders" (Devarim 33:12).

Let us now analyze the four explanations that the Midrash provides, and try to deduce the necessary conditions for the resting of the Divine Presence.

The first explanation points to Binyamin's humility. There are two ways of understanding the metaphor. Either Binyamin is uncomfortable with the idea that God will rest with him rather than with his older brothers, or he believes that it is impossible that the Divine Presence would rest specifically in his portion, rather than in the portion of one of his older brothers.

The connection between humility and the Divine Presence is not difficult to find (see, for example, *Sota* 5a). Furthermore, the principle of humility is also connected – as we noted in *shiur* no. 16 – with the Divine choice of Mount Moriah, which is the lowest of the mountains in the Jerusalem area. This choice reflects God's own trait of modesty, and the same message is conveyed by the choice of Mount Sinai, which – according to the Midrash that was quoted in the same *shiur* - "broke off" from Mount Moriah:

"The mountain which God has desired as His abode" (Tehillim 68:17) – I desire only Sinai, which is lower than all of you. As it is written, "I dwell in a high, holy place, but also with those of a contrite, humble spirit" (Yishayahu 57:15)... And where did Sinai come from? Rabbi Yossi taught: It was broken off from Mount Moriah, just as challa is separated from the dough" (Midrash Tehillim ad loc.)

According to the *Sifri* there is an internal connection between the humility of Binyamin the man, and his entire tribal inheritance – which is a particularly low-lying area between the mountain of Ephraim and the mountains of Chevron, and especially Mount Moriah – which is the lowest of the mountains in the area.

The second explanation: Binyamin is the only one of the brothers who was born in *Eretz Yisrael*. On the simplest level, *Eretz Yisrael* as a whole is God's inheritance, as it were – the place where God chooses as the abode for His nation. Therefore, whoever is born in *Eretz Yisrael* enjoys, in a certain sense, a more authentic and significant connection with the dwelling of the Divine Presence.

The Mishna in Kelim (1:6-9) lists ten levels of sanctity – ten concentric circles that converge towards the place where the Divine Presence rests, with increasing degrees of sanctity. First there is Eretz Yisrael, which is the holiest of lands; then the cities surrounded by walls, then the area inside the wall of Jerusalem with the Temple Mount, and then the various parts of the Temple, culminating in the Holy of Holies [1]. For our purposes, what arises from the assertion that "Eretz Yisrael is holier than all other lands" is that whoever is born in Eretz Yisrael has a stronger connection to the portion of the Divine Presence than those who are born outside of the land [2].

The third explanation is that Binyamin was not involved in the sale of Yosef. Since all of the other brothers did participate, there was no possibility of the Divine Presence resting within their borders because of the cruelty that they had demonstrated. From this we may deduce the corollary: that the trait of kindness and mercy is related to the dwelling of the Divine Presence. Indeed, we find many contexts in which this connection appears explicitly [3].

The fourth explanation attributes Binyamin's special merit to the commandment of honoring one's parents. Perhaps honor for one's parents – two of the three partners in bringing a person into the world – facilitates and leads naturally to honoring God, the third partner, as a result of the person's very recognition of those who have given him life, who watch over him and sustain him. The recognition and acknowledgment make Binyamin deserving of hosting the Divine Presence.

2. A Beraita in *Massekhet Sota* (36b-37a) quotes different opinions as to who was first to cast himself into the Red Sea:

Rabbi Meir said: When Israel stood at the sea, the tribes argued amongst themselves. One said, "I shall go into the sea first"; another said, "I shall go first into the sea." The tribe of Binyamin took the initiative and entered the sea first, as it is written, "There Binyamin, the youngest, rules over them ("rodem")" (Tehillim 68:28). Do not read "rodem," but rather, "reid yam" (enters the sea). The princes of Yehuda stoned them, as it is written, "The princes of Yehuda stoning them ("rigmatam")" (Ibid.). Therefore the righteous Binyamin merited to become the host of the Almighty, as it is written, "He rests between his shoulders" (Bereishit 49:27).

Rabbi Yehuda replied: That is not what happened. Rather, one tribe said, "I shall not go first into the sea," and another said, "I shall not go into the sea first." Nachshon ben Aminadav took the initiative and entered the sea first, as it is written, "Ephraim surrounds Me with deception, and the house of Israel with lies; Yehuda still rules (rad) with God" (Hoshea 12:1). Concerning this it is explained in our tradition: "Deliver me, God, for water has come up to my soul; I am sinking in deep mire where there is nowhere to stand..."; "Let the flood of water not overwhelm me, nor the deep swallow me up" (Tehillim 69:2-3,16)."

According to the opinion of Rabbi Meir, the tribe of Binyamin jumped in first, and in the wake of this act merited to host the Divine Presence. In other words, the way to meriting the Divine Presence is through selflessness.

The connection between selflessness and the Divine Presence is to be found, first and foremost, in the Torah's demand, "You shall seek out His abode and come there" (Devarim 12:5). The very discovery and revelation of the site of the Temple is dependent on the selflessness of Am Yisrael in seeking it [4].

David, too, merited to find the site by virtue of his devotion to it. His searching and longing for it, the discovery and the building of the altar, and – later on – the appointment of the artisans, preparation of the materials, the plans, the shifts and posts – and all this knowing that he himself would not be able to build the Temple. So great was David's selflessness on behalf of the Temple that it was called in his name even though he did not build it (*Bamidbar Rabba* 12,11).

3. *Midrash Ha-gadol* on *Parashat Miktetz* (*Bereishit* 44:12) addresses the finding of Yosef's silver goblet in Binyamin's sack:

"And the goblet was found in the sack of Binyamin' (Bereishit 44:12). Since the goblet was found in Binaymin's sack, [the brothers] were immediately angry at him and said: "You are a thief, son of a thieving mother. Your mother brought shame to our father, and you have brought shame upon us." He said to them: "Is there a goat here? Are you brothers ready to sell your brother again?" Immediately, "They tore their garments" (Ibid. 13). Rabbi Yossi said: "Let my portion be with he who is suspected, while in fact he is innocent. Know that Binyamin, whom the brothers suspected [of stealing the goblet] while

he was innocent, and whom they struck between his shoulders – what did he merit? That the Divine Presence would rest in his portion, and he was called God's beloved, as it is written: "To Binyamin he said: The beloved of God – he shall dwell in safety with Him... and He shall dwell between his shoulders" (Devarim 33:12).

Rabbi Yossi offers an interesting opinion that what gave Binyamin the merit of hosting the Divine Presence was that "they suspected him while he was innocent" in the matter of the goblet [5].

4. *Yalkut Shimoni* (I Shemuel, siman 126) addresses Yehuda's guarantee for Binyamin's safety, in the context of the battle between David and Goliath:

"... And take their token" (I Shemuel 17:18) – their surety. Rabbi Yuda son of R. Simon said: Let that tribe learn to be responsible for another, as it is written, "I shall be his surety" (Bereishit 43:9). Yishai said to David, his son: Now is the time for you to go and fulfill the surety of Yehuda, your ancestor, who was the surety for Binyamin at the hand of his father, as it is written, "I shall be his surety." Go and free him of his surety. What did David do? He went and fulfilled the surety by killing Goliath. The Holy One said to him: By your life, just as you were ready to give your life for Shaul, who is from the tribe of Binyamin – just as Yehuda, your ancestor, did, as it is written, "Let your servant be imprisoned instead of the boy" (Ibid. 44:33), so I shall place the Temple in the portion of Yehuda and Binyamin. Not only that, but when all the other tribes are exiled, Yehuda and Binyamin will not be exiled together with them. Why? Because these two tribes believed in Me and sanctified My Name at the sea, as it is written: "There Binyamin, the youngest, rules over them; the princes of Yehuda – their council" (Tehillim 68:28).

According to this Midrash, the guarantee that Yehuda gives for Binyamin gives both of these tribes the merit of having the Divine Presence dwell in their portions, in the Temple. Likewise, the guarantee, along with their selflessness in entering the sea first, gave them the merit of not being exiled along with the other tribes. The connection between the guarantee for Binyamin and the Temple is clear: it pertains to the unity [6] and mutual concern that should prevail among the tribes. It should be emphasized that the opinion of the Midrash that the Temple is built in the portion of Yehuda and Binyamin matches the opinion of *Chazal* elsewhere, that in the region of Mount Moriah there is a strip that protrudes from the portion of Yehuda into the portion of Binyamin, such that the area of the mountain is divided between these two tribes [7].

Summary:

We have discussed here the main reasons arising from the Midrash for the Divine Presence dwelling in the portion of Binyamin [8]. We may divide these reasons into two groups. One group focuses on Binyamin's traits and the actions that are dependent upon him: humility, honoring parents, mutual responsibility and selflessness. The reasons in the other group are not functions of Binyamin's own efforts: the fact that he is born in *Eretz Yisrael*, his absence from the sale of Yosef, the fact that he is suspected falsely, and the fact that he did not bow down to Esav (because he was not yet born!). Binyamin did nothing to achieve these latter merits, but nevertheless they made him deserving. Perhaps we may say that the Holy One brought about the circumstances in which he gathered these merits, and that this reality itself represents some aspect of the revelation

of the Divine Presence. For this reason, Binyamin was granted the privilege of having the Divine Presence rest in his portion: both because of those elements that were dependent on his efforts, and because of those merits that had nothing to do with his efforts, but rather resulted from his absence from certain situations.

Binyamin – Unifying and Connecting

Having examined the above rabbinical sources, let us now propose an additional aspect of the subject, based upon a review of some important points relating to Binyamin and his essence.

Binyamin is the youngest of the brothers. With his birth, the twelve-tribe unit is completed, creating the nation of Israel – *Am Yisrael*.

One of the events of great significance for our understanding of Binyamin's role is when the brothers come to Yosef in Egypt [9]. After his goblet is "found" in Binyamin's sack, Yosef declares his intention to keep Binyamin as a slave, but Yehuda – in the wake of his guarantee to Yaakov concerning Binyamin's safety (*Bereishit* 43:9 – "I shall be his surety; from my hand you can seek him") asks: "Let your servant remain in place of the boy as a servant to my master, and let the boy go up with his brothers" (*Ibid.* 44:33). This original guarantee that Yehuda gives for Binyamin is the one referred to in the Midrash that we quoted above (*Yalkut Shimoni*, I *Shemuel siman* 126), and by virtue of which the Temple was built in the portion of Yehuda and Binyamin [10]. In any event, the arrival of Binyamin and the discussion between Yosef and Yehuda ultimately do bring about the reunification of the family.

In this story, too, Binyamin is not active at all; the discussion is conducted between Yosef and Yehuda. There is a fascinating correspondence between this reality and the location of Binyamin's portion in *Eretz Yisrael*, bridging the two central focuses of power in the nation: Yosef (Ephraim) in the north and Yehuda in the south.

In light of this, let us now return to the issue of the relatively low-lying position of the tribe, between two higher portions: those of Ephraim and Yehuda. We posit that this topographical reality also hints at a spiritual reality. As we remember, the Midrash we quoted from the *Sifri* (*Devarim piska* 352) characterizes Binyamin as being humble. This trait is expressed, according to our hypothesis, in the relatively lowliness of the portion of Binyamin in relation to its neighboring tribes (and, for the same reason – the low position of Jerusalem in relation to the rest of the portion of Binyamin). In order to unify and connect the two neighboring tribes – the two central powers of the nation – humility and contriteness are required; only one who is humble, who does not make an issue of his own honor, can join together different and opposing forces.

An understanding of Binyamin's role as unifier and connector is emphasized in several different sources. The *Zohar* (*Bereishit*, 158b) teaches: "When Binyamin was born, the Divine Presence joined itself to all of the tribes."

Rabbeinu Bechaye, in his commentary on Yaakov's blessing to Binyamin (*Bereishit* 49:27), provides the following kabbalistic insight:

"Binyamin is a ravenous wolf" – Binyamin was comprised of two qualities, which included the entire edifice and connected the upper and nether realms; likewise, the Divine Presence, which rested in his portion, includes everything. He was therefore compared to a ravenous wolf, consuming the daily sacrifice offered in the morning and the daily sacrifice offered towards evening. And because he is composed of the ten of them, he bore sons according to their number, corresponding to them, and this is the meaning of the expression, "He shall divide the spoils..." – this is the Divine Presence. Onkelos translates this, "In his land the Shekhina will rest."; understand this... And Binyamin, composed of all the qualities, is represented by the jasper stone, which has many hues.

In other words, the uniqueness of Binyamin lies in his embodiment of all the positive traits.

In his letter to his teacher, Rabbi Yishaya Bassan, in which he clarifies the special role of Yosef and Yehuda in building the Kingdom of Israel, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzzato talks about the additional strength necessary for their unification into a single tree:

Now I shall say who it is that joins them, FOR IT IS BINYAMIN WHO JOINS THEM. And therefore, he assumed the first kingship, in order that the two would join together. But because Shaul himself did not repair the situation as he should have, the matter was postponed for the end of days. The repair will therefore be at the time of the redemption, as hinted to in the words, "They shall become one in your hand" (Yechezkel 37:17) [11].

In summary, from all of the different aspects that we have examined it arises that Binyamin's power lies in his ability to connect and unite; for this reason, he merits to have the Divine Presence in his portion.

B. What is the significance of the "portion of the Divine Presence"?

The final point that remains to be clarified in our discussion is the significance of the assertion that the portion of Binyamin is the portion of the Divine Presence. Rav Yoel bin-Nun [12] summarizes our discussion in this shiur and the previous one with the following points:

- The portion of Binyamin is a central, inner portion, surrounded and protected by the tribes that bore the four flags in the desert; it shares no external border with an enemy nation. The building of the Temple in this portion therefore stands in contrast to the pagan conception, according to which national border temples were established to demarcate the territory of the ruling god – the master of that portion.

- The area of the Temple is an inner, priestly area, separated from the kingship and its wars. The borders of the Temple are peaceful borders – in contrast to the borders of the land, which are the result of war. This is one of many expressions of the connection between the Temple and peace. We may mention here the prohibition against raising a sword over the stones of the altar; the timing of the building of the Temple – after the nation has achieved rest from its enemies and annihilated Amalek (see *Sanhedrin* 20b); the service of the tribe of Levi, which does not participate in war, receives no inheritance, and is not party to the division of spoils.

- The nature of the Temple, as a Temple of peace, and its internal location with no connection to national borders, mean that the influence of the Temple is not restricted by any borders; its sanctity may spread and influence the entire world. The borders concern only additional levels of sanctity – and the additional commandments that they entail (such as the agricultural commandments that apply on in *Eretz Yisrael*) as one approaches the site of the Temple.

*

With this *shiur* we complete our discussion of Jerusalem in the Torah. As we have demonstrated, an examination of the hints to the city in the Torah gives rise to a sketch of the path of the forefathers, and shows in which ways this path represents a sign and precedent for their descendants – a clearing of the way for future generations. Within this framework we focused on five main subjects:

- a. The spiritual significance of the path to Jerusalem (passing through Shechem, Beit-El, Ai and Chevron on the way).
- b. The encounter between Avram, Malki-Tzedek – King of Shalem, and the King of Sodom, and the significance of the city as a city of justice and righteousness and as the city of kingship.
- c. The *Akeida* and the establishment of the permanent sanctuary on Mount Moriah.
- d. An understanding of the expression "The place that God will choose" and its essential meaning.
- e. The portion of Binyamin as the portion of the Divine Presence.

Notes:

[1] The portion of Binyamin is not listed as a separate level of sanctity in its own right because the Mishna lists only those levels of sanctity that have halakhic significance.

[2] *Chazal* also describe a special quality inherent to living in the land: "Anyone who lives in *Eretz Yisrael* is compared to one who has a God, and anyone who lives outside of the land is compared to one who has no God" (*Ketubot* 110b). "Happy are those who dwell in *Eretz Yisrael*, for they have no sin and no iniquity, neither in life nor in death..." (*Midrash Tehillim, mizmor* 85). But our basic understanding, as stated, follows the literal meaning of the text.

[3] In *Bereishit Rabba* (99,1) Rabbi Akiva gives a similar explanation for the Temple being built in the portion of Binyamin, commenting on the verse, "Why do you look askance, peaked mountains?" (*Tehillim* 68:17): "At the time when Shelomo was ready to build the Temple, the tribes ran about and argued among themselves. One said, "It shall be built in my borders," another said, "In my borders it shall be built." The Holy One said to them: "Tribes! Why do you look askance at each other? All of you are tribes, all are righteous, but 'peaked' (*gavnunim*)." What is the meaning of the word "peaked"? [It hints to the word] Thieves ["*ganavim*" - kidnappers]; all of you were party to the sale of Yosef. But Binyamin, who did not participate in the sale of Yosef, is "the mountain that God desired for His abode" (*Tehillim ad loc.*). Similarly, we find that 470 years earlier, Korach's children prophesized that [the Divine Presence] was destined to rest in the portion of Binyamin. As it is written, "My soul longs and faints..." (*Tehillim* 84:3), and it is also written, "Behold, it is heard in Efrata..." (*Ibid.* 132:12).

Rabbi Yehuda taught: the Temple was built in the portion of Yehuda, as it is written, "This Efrati of Beit Lechem in Yehuda" (*I Shemuel* 17:12). Rabbi Shimon taught: "[This means,] in [the portion of] the one who died in Efrata. Who died in Efrata? Rachel. Perhaps, then, it refers to the portion of Yosef, who was also her son? This is not so, as the verse [from *Tehillim*] continues; "... we found it in Sedei-Ya'ar" (*Ibid.*) – i.e., in the portion of the one who is compared to an animal of the forest ("*ya'ar*"). Who is compared to an animal of the forest? Binyamin, as it is written, "Binyamin is a ravenous wolf" (*Bereishit* 49:27)."

[4] In this context we may refer to the *Sifri* on the above verse, "You shall seek His abode and come there": "Perhaps it is permissible for you to wait until a prophet tells you [where it is]? [This is not the case, for] it is written, 'You shall seek His abode and come there' – you shall seek and you shall find it, and afterwards the prophet will confirm it" (*Sifri Devarim, Parashat Re'eh, piska* 62).

[5] This assertion requires further exploration: why does the very fact of a false accusation give Binyamin this great merit? No doubt the reward represents further proof of the suspect's innocence, but the formulation requires explanation.

[6] We addressed unity as a significant factor in the building of the Temple in *shiur* no. 4, and the above follows on from our discussion there.

[7] We shall discuss the details of this division and its significance in a *shiur* about the border between Yehuda and Binyamin.

[8] There is a Midrash that brings an additional reason for Binyamin's special merit in this regard: because he did not bow down to Eisav. The *Midrash Ha-gadol* (on *Bereishit* 33:3) comments on Yaakov's seven prostrations before his brother, Eisav, that "Correspondingly, seven [things] were taken from him. These were: The Tent of Meeting, Gilgal, Shilo, Nov, Giv'on, the First Temple, and the Second Temple." In other words, for each prostration, one of the holy places was destroyed. The essential message here is that prostration before another person represents a certain dimension of idolatry – or, at the very least, acknowledgment of the mastery of the other person; a subservience that directly contradicts the recognition of the Kingship of God – and hence the existence of the Sanctuary. In light of this we may also understand why the fact that Binyamin did not prostrate himself before Eisav grants him the merit of the Divine Presence resting in his portion – for he is subservient to God alone.

[9] Yosef's intention is clear: he wants to clarify whether the brothers have mended their ways with regard to Rachel's second son; it is for this purpose, *inter alia*, that the goblet is hidden in Binyamin's sack.

[10] The continuation of the guarantee between Yehuda and Binyamin is expressed in the fact that Binyamin goes along with Yehuda in the split of the kingdom – contrary to the seemingly more natural option of going along with the children of Rachel – Ephraim and Menashe. We shall not elaborate further here.

[11] My thanks to Rav Chanan Porat for pointing out this source to me.

[12] Rav Yoel bin-Nun, "*Nachalat Binyamin – Nachalat Shekhina*," in *Lifnei Ephraim, Binyamin u-Menasheh*," *Midreshet Binyamin*, Ofra Field School, pp. 25-46.

Benjamin's Reward

Rabbi Yitzchak Scher writes:⁹

That the connection is not that Binyamin did not bow or that Binyamin was not involved with the sale of Yoseph, but that these and other events (such as being born in Eretz Yisrael) meant that

“Binyamin represents to us this immutable point of purity within every Jew. Binyamin represents the part of Klal Yisroel that remains pure, pristine and innocent, no matter what. In his entire lifetime, evil does not touch him and he does not touch evil. He is the paradigm of purity.

In the Beis Hamikdash, there is one room which always remains holy, pure and pristine. The Kodesh Hakodoshim (Holy of Holies), which was only entered once a year, by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, is a room that represents the deep, eternal, and intimate relationship between Hashem and the Jewish people. This room is that point in the world that remains holy, untainted, and uncorrupted by evil. It was a small beacon of spirituality, a slice of another world, within the confines of this world.

This room was appropriately situated in Binyamin's portion of Eretz Yisroel. This is the meaning of Moshe's blessing to the tribe of Binyamin: “To Binyamin he said: ‘The dear one of Hashem. He will dwell securely with [Hashem]. Hashem protects [Binyamin] and rests His Presence upon him’ (Devarim 33:12, see translation of Onkelos and other commentaries).”

⁹ /Kollel Zichron Amram/Yeshiva of Greater Washington in *The Spark Within*

The **Netziv** gives another reason. He explains that the Medrash says that the reason why the Beis HaMikdash was built in the portion of Binyamin was because he was the only one who did not bow down to the wicked Eisav.

Since at the time of the bowing, Rochel was already pregnant with Binyamin (cf. Targum Yonason Ben Uziel), Yosef blocked Rochel from Eisav so that even in the fetus stage Binyamin should be spared from bowing down to Eisav.

The Sifrei says another reason why the Beis HaMikdash was built in the portion of Binyomin: Because Binyamin was the only one who was not involved in the terrible sale of Yosef and an absolute prerequisite for the residence of the Shechina is that it should be a place of brotherly love and harmony.

פירוש בעלי התוספות על דברים פרק לג פסוק ח

ידיד ה' ישכון לבטח עליו מה טעם שכינה בחלק בנימין לפי שהוא לבדו נולד בארץ ישראל. ויש מפרשים שעדיין לא נולד כשהשתחוו השבטים לעשו.

Chizkuni

ולפי שכל השבטים היו שותפים במכירתו של יוסף, ובנימין לא היה שותף עמהם וכל השבטים נולדו חוצה לארץ ובנימין נולד בארץ ישראל זכה הוא להיות השכינה שורה בחלקו.

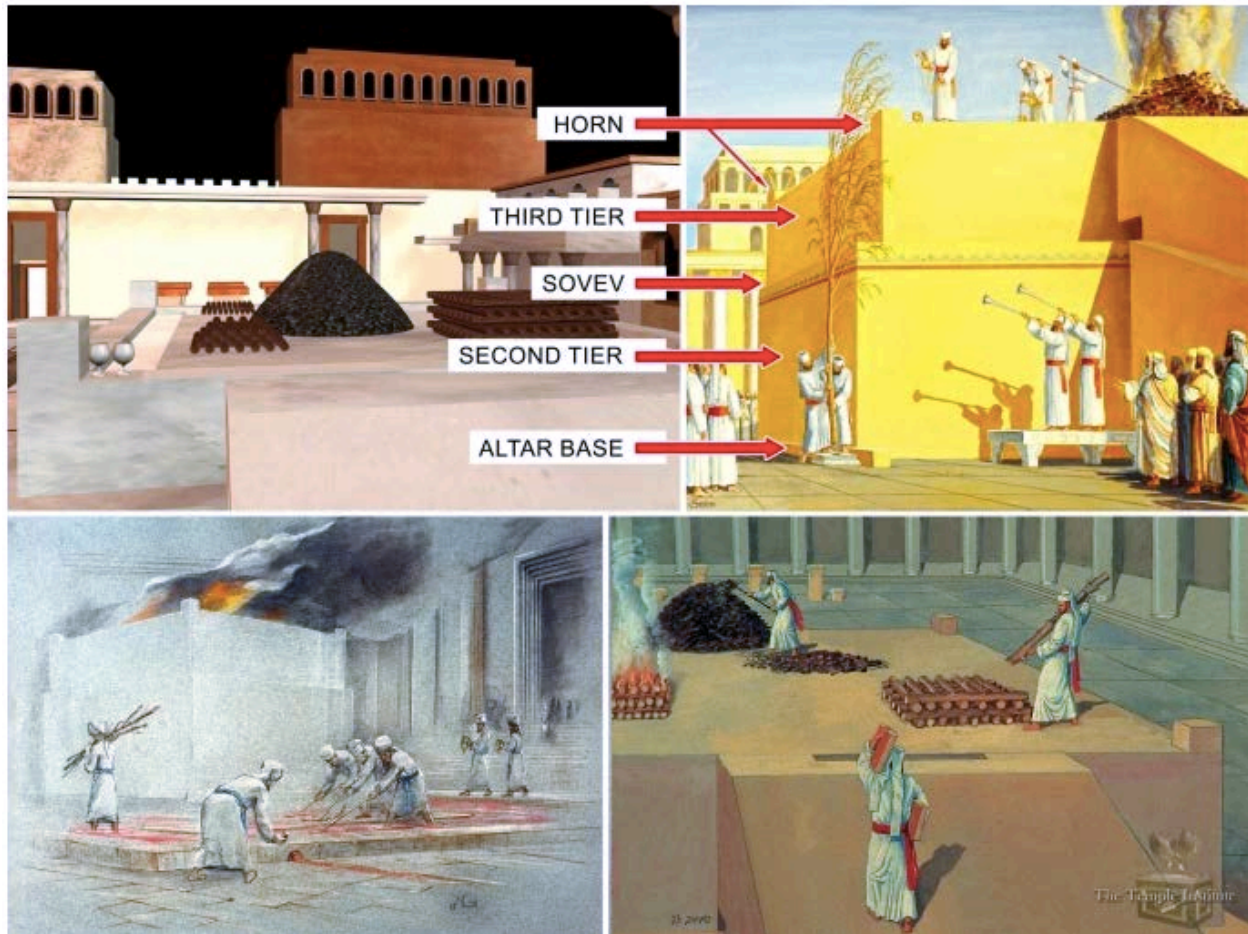
Aderes Eliyahu Parshas Beshalach (GRA)

**לד) ברש"י ואת אחד עשר ילדיו. ודינה
 היכן היתה וכר מקשים
 העולם מניל ודינה נחסרה דילמא דינה
 היתה מהאחד עשר ילדיו ואחד מהשבטים
 היה נחסר, וי"ל דהנה איתא בגמרא
 הטעם שנבנה בית המקדש בחלקו של
 בנימין מפני שהוא לא השתחוה לעשו
 דהא עדיין לא היה נולד באותו הזמן.
 איכ לפי זה אם איתא דהיה נחסר אחד
 מן השבטים הרי הוא ג"כ לא השתחוה
 לעשו איכ קשה למה לא נבנה הבית
 המקדש בחלקו של אותו השבט שנחסר
 או. ומדוע נבנה דוקא בחלקו של בנימין.
 אלא ע"כ צריך לומר דכל השבטים היו
 שם עם יעקב וכולם השתחוו לעשו וזאת
 בנימין שלא היה נולד עדיין. ורק דינה
 נחסרה ודינה בלא"ה לא נטלה חלק
 בארץ ושפיר מקשה ודינה היכן היתה:**

**Vilna Gaon –
 Dina Had to Be the Missing One**

And Yaakov took his 2 wives, 2 maidservants and 11 children and crossed the River Yabok". Rashi notes that the pasuk only mentions Yaakov's 11 children. Where was Dina? He answers; Yaakov placed her in a box so Esav should not lay his eyes on her. The Vilna Gaon is bothered how Rashi knew that it was Dina who was missing. Maybe Dina was 1 of the 11, and one of the other Shivatim was missing?

The Gaon answers, the Gemara says that the Bais HaMikdash was built in the portion of Binyamin because he was the only Shevet who did not bow down to Esav. The pasuk tells us how all the Shivatim and their mothers passed before Esav and bowed. Binyamin, who was not born yet, did not bow down to him. If one of the Shivatim was in the box, then he too did not bow to Esav. There would then be 2 Shivatim who did not bow to Esav, and the Gemorrah would have to explain why the Bais HaMikdash was built in the portion of Binyamen and not in the portion of the Shevet who was in the box.



The lack of a base in the SE corner of the Altar

Rav Yitzchak Levi adds:¹⁰

This way of looking at it from a historical point of view gains weight and meaning from the fact that the *gemara* in *Zevachim* 53b gives as the reason for this lack of base on the south-eastern corner – the ground on which this un-built south-eastern base must have rested was not situated in the province of Binyamin. For, according to the view that the territory of Jerusalem was also apportioned to the tribes like the rest of the land and was not kept as common national domain, the dividing line of the borders of the provinces of Yehuda and Binyamin passed just across from the Mount of the Temple. The whole of the approach on the east side as well as the side-halls, to which the seat of the Sanhedrin also belonged, and the three antechambers; the women's courtyard, the Israelites' courtyard and the priests' courtyard up to the altar, were all in the province of Yehuda. But the site of the

¹⁰ <https://www.etzion.org.il/en/lecture-110-significance-east-west-orientation-mishkan>

altar itself and all the Temple to the west of it, the whole of the Sanctuary, including the Holy of Holies, lay in the province of Binyamin.

The Maharsha in *Zevachim* points out that from *Shoftim* 1:8 and 21 it is also apparent that both Yehuda and Binyamin must have had part in Jerusalem, and this also appears in the description of the apportioning of the Land in *Yehoshua* 15:8 and 18:28. In the "blessing of Moshe," too, Binyamin follows immediately after Yehuda, with Levi between the two as partaking of the character on either side. To Yehuda is allocated the power of the State (*Devarim* 33:7), to Binyamin (ibid. v. 12) the protective proximity of God – the *Shekhina*. Levi (v. 10) takes part in both – "They shall teach Yaakov Your judgments," in the Sanhedrin belonging to the province of Yehuda, and "they shall put incense before You," in the position of the altar in that of Binyamin.

According to this tradition, it was not in the province of the lion-hearted ruling tribe, but in that of the smallest one that the National Sanctuary stood, and as far as the base stretched over into the province of the royal Yehuda, it was left unfinished. Hereby was expressed the deeply significant fact, confirmed by the whole of Jewish history and disclosing its final goal: in Israel, the highest power of the State should of course be permeated with the spirit of the Torah and consider that it is based solely and solidly on the Torah and that its sole function is to direct the nation to keeping the Divine Torah.

On this power of the State, the south and east base of the altar should rest firmly. But this combination of power and spirituality is a thing of the future. It is only the future "sprout from the stem of Yishai" of the tribe of Yehuda, who will combine the highest degree of power with the highest degree of intellect and spirituality.

Moreover, it is just his very spirituality which will give him his power (*Yeshayahu* 11:1). He will be the one who at last will be "a priest on the kingly throne" (*Zekharya* 6:13). Throughout the course of the whole Jewish History it has been seldom that the royal power looked on itself as priestly and behaved accordingly. Only seldom did the spirit of the Torah, and the nation as the nation of the Torah, find its foundation on the base of royalty – the foundation of the southern and eastern base of the altar which stretched over into Yehuda's domain remained unfinished, incomplete.

Accordingly, as there was no foundation on the south-eastern corner of the altar, the depositing of the blood of the burnt-offering which had to be done on two diagonally opposite corners could only be done on the east-north and west-south corners.

The Connection Between Yehudah and Binyamin

Rabbi Ozer Alport writes:¹¹

Ki avdecha arev es ha'naar (Bereishis 44:32)

¹¹ <https://hamodia.com/columns/connection-yehudah-binyamin/>

The *Gemara* in *Sanhedrin* (111b) quotes a disagreement between Rabi Yochanan and Reish Lakish regarding the rules of dividing Eretz Yisrael among the tribes. Rabi Yochanan maintains that a city can be split between two different tribes, while Reish Lakish argues that it must belong in its entirety to one tribe.

Harav Yisroel Reisman points out that their dispute is difficult to understand, for we find in *Sefer Yehoshua* (15:8, 18:16) that the city of Yerushalayim was divided between the tribes of Yehudah and Binyamin. How can Reish Lakish claim that a city cannot be cut in half when we find that Yerushalayim belonged to two different tribes. And why doesn't the *Gemara* raise this difficulty?

Lest one answer that Yerushalayim was unique due to its enhanced holiness, Rav Reisman notes that its status as the home of the Beis Hamikdash was not established until more than 400 years later. When Yehoshua was apportioning the Land of Israel, the Mishkan was still located in Shiloh, yet he split the city of Yerushalayim between the tribes of Yehudah and Binyamin.

Hagaon Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky, *zt"l*, writes that Yehudah and Binyamin are often viewed as one tribe. For example, when the prophet Achiya HaShiloni informs Yeravam that the nation will be divided into two kingdoms, he tells him (*Melachim I*, 11:31-32) "I will give 10 tribes to you, and one tribe will go to Rechavam." This only accounts for 11 tribes; what happened to the missing tribe? The Radak explains that Yeravam became king over 10 tribes, while Rechavam ruled over two tribes, for the "one tribe" that was promised to him consisted of his own tribe of Yehudah as well as the tribe of Binyamin.

Although Rav Yaakov's insight is fascinating, it begs the question: Why are the tribes of Yehudah and Binyamin, who came from two different mothers, considered to be one? Rav Reisman posits that this anomaly has its origins in *sefer Bereishis*. In *Parashas Mikeitz*, Yehudah begged Yaakov to allow him to return to Egypt with Binyamin, saying (43:9) "*anochi e'ervenu*" — I will personally guarantee his safety. In *Parashas Vayigash*, Yehudah acts on his promise, asking the viceroy (Yosef) to permit him to become his slave in place of Binyamin, explaining that he had guaranteed his father that Binyamin would be safely returned to him.

Rav Reisman explains that the term *arev* — guarantor — is connected to the word *eiruv* — mixture, for a person who guarantees someone else's loan becomes legally joined with him. Thus, when Yehudah pledged himself as Binyamin's guarantor, he created an eternal connection between them. As a result, although they remained two distinct tribes, they are sometimes counted as one due to the bond that Yehudah formed between them.

Rav Reisman adds that this insight can help shed light on a well-known mystery. There is a popular legend regarding two brothers who shared a field in Yerushalayim. One brother had a large family, while the other was not married. Since they owned and worked the field as partners, they divided the harvest equally. As the brother with many children observed his bountiful crop, it occurred to him that he had many children to support him in his old age, while his brother lived all alone with nobody to help him and would need more savings to sustain him in the future. Therefore, he decided to go in the middle of the night and secretly donate some of his wheat to his brother.

Meanwhile, the single brother recognized that his married brother's needs were far greater than his, so he took part of his share of the harvest and discreetly gave it to his brother. In the morning, each brother was puzzled to observe that there was no discernible decrease in his pile of grain and the sheaves he had donated appeared to be replenished, so they both repeated the transfer on the following night. These nocturnal activities continued until one night, as they were each carrying their grain, the two brothers encountered one another. As they reflected and understood what had been taking place, they fell into each other's arms in a loving embrace. When Hashem saw this noble display of brotherly compassion, He declared that this meeting spot would be the ideal location upon which to build the Beis Hamikdash.

Although this story is well known, Hagaon Harav Chaim Kanievsky, *shlita*, has stated that it has no authentic Jewish source and may have been adapted from a non-Jewish legend. Nevertheless, Rav Reisman suggests that it may be at least partially rooted in the eternal bond that Yehudah created between himself and his brother Binyamin. When Hashem saw Yehudah's selfless dedication and love for his brother, He decided to memorialize this connection by building the Beis Hamikdash precisely on the border between their lands.



Map of the Holy Land, Pietro Vesconte, 1321, showing the allotments of the tribes of Israel.

Mapping the Temple: The SE Corner of the Altar

Adam Kirsch writes:¹²

¹² <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/belief/articles/mapping-the-temple-daf-yomi-242>

Sacrifices were carried out on an altar, and involved two stages. First the blood of the animal would be sprinkled on the corners of the altar, each of which had a short post; then the remainder of the blood would be poured out against the base of the altar. However, the rabbis believe that the base did not extend all the way around the square altar; there was no base on the southeastern corner. This doesn't seem to make much architectural sense, and it is not explicitly mentioned in the Torah. Why would the altar have been built this way?

The reason, the Gemara (Zevachim Ch 5) explains, is that the land on which the Temple sat was taken from the territory of two different tribes, Judah and Benjamin. According to Jacob's deathbed blessing, Benjamin would have the privilege of seeing the altar built on his land. That is how the rabbis interpret the verse "*Benjamin is a wolf that tears apart; in the morning he devours the prey, and in the evening he divides the spoil.*" In context, this might seem to be a prophecy of Benjamin's prowess in hunting and war-making. But the rabbis, who generally dislike such rough patriarchal activities, read the passage as referring to the altar, which is where the "prey" of sacrifices is "devoured" by the sacred fire.

It follows that the Temple altar has to stand on land belonging to the tribe of Benjamin. And since the southern and eastern borders of the altar stood on the land of the tribe of Judah, the altar did not extend into that territory even to the extent of the altar's base. (According to Rabbi Hama, the Benjaminites were permanently jealous of the Judahites for even this tiny encroachment on the sacred space: "*The tribe of Benjamin the righteous would agonize over it every day.*") Of course, the idea that a tribe's territory could be accurately demarcated down to the level of inches—or, as the rabbis say, cubits—is highly unlikely. But the rabbis adopt the notion because it allows them to harmonize the Genesis tradition about Judah and Benjamin with the Leviticus tradition about the measurement of the altar.

Still, the idea that the altar lacked a southeastern base is inherently improbable, as the Gemara suggests when it cites a mishna: "The altar was 32 cubits by 32 cubits." This suggests that it was a perfect square, with a base running along all four sides. Indeed, the Gemara in Zevachim 54a specifies that the altar was built by pouring a mixture of stone, plaster, lead, and tar into a wooden frame. How could this result in a base that was missing its southeastern corner? Perhaps, the Gemara proposes, the builder first makes a square and then cuts out the southern and eastern sides. But this would involve cutting the stone, and the Temple has to be built from uncut stones. Rav counters that the southeastern portion of the frame is not filled with the molten mixture at all; instead, the builder "places something under the frame," such as wooden sticks, and then removes it when the altar has hardened, leaving an empty place.

But this creates a new problem. Several types of sacrifices require the priest to sprinkle the blood of the animal on all four sides of the altar. How can this be done if there is no base on the southern and eastern sides? The rabbis' answer is that the base must actually extend one cubit onto the southern and eastern sides. The priest pours the blood on the northeastern corner and the southwestern corner, and the blood dripping down will flow a little onto each of the four sides of the square. (Shmuel asks us to visualize the Greek letter gamma, which looks like a right angle, with the southeastern corner empty.) In this way, only two sprinklings are required to place blood on all four sides of the altar.

Finally, the Gemara considers a seemingly fatal objection raised by another baraita, which specifically says that bird sacrifices were performed at the southeastern corner of the altar. (The procedure for killing a bird was up close and personal: The priest would pinch the nape of its neck with his fingernail.) If this corner had no base, how could the bird's blood drip onto it, as the sacrifice required? "Is he merely performing the rite in the air?" asks the Gemara incredulously. But Rav Nachman ben Yitzchak has the answer: The airspace of the southeastern corner belongs to the territory of Benjamin, so a sacrifice performed in that airspace is valid. It is only the land that belongs to Judah, which is why the altar needs no base in that corner.

If the rabbis could have traveled back in time and visited the Temple, would they have found the altar just as they imagined it? Or would they have seen a regular square, complete with southeastern corner? I have a suspicion that it would be the latter, and that much of the rabbis' ingenious theorizing is a result of a problem they themselves created. But of course, there's no way to be sure—not until the Third Temple comes into being, as the rabbis were certain would happen someday.



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¹³ Michnik Artist, Michael Muchnik: <http://www.muchnikarts.com/>

Rift Extending Across History¹⁴

For seven years David reigns in the Judean city of Hebron, while a son of Saul is the recognized king in the north. But then the sovereignty of David is accepted by the entire people of Israel. David makes his capital in another Judean city, Jerusalem. His son Solomon builds the Holy Temple on a part of the city which straddles the boundary between Judah and Benjamin. The schism seems to be healed, the people united, with the leadership firmly in the hands of Judah.

But once more the conflict resurfaces. Following Solomon's death, Jeroboam, a descendant of Joseph, leads a revolt against the royal house of David. He even gets other tribes descended from Leah to join him in the renunciation of the Judean leadership. For the next 240 years, the Holy Land is split into two kingdoms: the northern kingdom of Israel, encompassing ten breakaway tribes under Josephian leadership, and the southern kingdom of Judah. **Interestingly, the tribe of Benjamin remains loyal to the Judean throne.** The sons of Joseph are simply not prepared to accept the sovereignty of Judah.

(This is most emphatically illustrated by the following Talmudic account (Sanhedrin 102a): "G-d Himself grabbed Jeroboam by his robe and said to him: 'Repent, and I, you and the son of Jesse [King David] will stroll together in the Garden of Eden.' Asked Jeroboam, 'Who will walk first?' 'The son of Jesse,' [answered G-d. Said Jeroboam,] 'If so, I'm not interested.'")

The breach persists to this day. A century before the destruction of the first Temple, Shalmaneser, king of Assyria, overran the northern kingdom of Israel and exiled the ten tribes to an unknown place. They were never heard from again. The rest of Jewish history, as we know it, is the story of the surviving tribes of Judah and Benjamin, a significant part of Levi (whose priests and Levites

¹⁴ https://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/1122/jewish/A-Rift-Extending-Across-History.htm, Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson; adapted by Yanki Tauber.

lived in cities throughout the Holy Land), and a small number of Jews from the other tribes who lived in the kingdom of Judah.

Joseph, whose name means “to add,” represents growth and achievement, while Judah, whose name means “to acknowledge” and “to submit,” is the paradigm of commitment and self-abnegation.

These two forces vie for ascendancy in our every thought and feeling, in every choice we make and every action we take in the course of our lives. At times the one gains the upper hand; at times the other rules our lives. On the macro-historical level, these are the two contrasting forces at play in the history of our people, as Judah and Joseph vie for the leadership of Israel.