



Mother Yerushalayim

My soul is inextricably bonded with the soul of Yerushalayim. I was born immediately after the great victory in the Six-Day War and my parents started packing their cases, making their way to Eretz Yisrael, and calling their baby “*Yemima*,” in honor of the *Yamim*, the days, the six wondrous days in which Yerushalayim was liberated.

Since that day, I have two mothers: I run excitedly to my mother to tell of my joys and disappointments, to the Kotel I pour out my deepest thoughts and feelings... and I part with a kiss. From these two strong women, I received a blessing when I was dressed in my bridal gown and they were looking at me, fortified walls, bestowing unlimited power upon me. To them, I brought my babies for a blessing, and my grandchildren too – “boys and girls playing in her streets.”

For two months now I haven’t been able to visit them: *Ima* and the Kotel. I cannot kiss them. I’m showing them the children from afar, “from atop the peak of Mount Scopus,” seeing them on Zoom.

And it is only during these two months that I now understand that this towering woman, this liberated one, this Wall, is so desperate for love. Not only for health, for the food we leave her by the door, but for love! After all, it was she who gave love and strength to all of us, she who encouraged us and prayed for us. Who thought she would be waiting for her beloved to return to her?

Like a queen whose king and sons and sons-in-law traveled to a foreign land. People came and told her, “Your sons are coming!” She said, “What do I care?” Let my daughters-in-law rejoice!” When her sons-in-law came, they told her: “Your sons-in-law are here!” She said, “What do I care? Let my daughters rejoice!” Then they told her, “The king, your husband, is coming!” To which she replied, “That is complete joy!”

So it will be when the Prophets will come and say to Yerushalayim: “Your sons are coming from afar!” (Yeshe-yahu 60) and she says to them, “What do I care?” “And your daughters will be raised at their side.” (Ibid.) “What do I care?” But when they told her, “Behold your King is coming to you, righteous and victorious” (Zechariah 9), she said, “That is complete joy!” And at the same time, she says, “... my soul will rejoice in my G-d!” (Shir HaShirim Rabbah, 1:2).

In this amazing Midrash, Yerushalayim is depicted as a very mature woman – with sons and daughters-in-law she has cared for – and all are sure that the thing that will cause her the greatest happiness is when they come back to her and tell her about everything that happened to them during their long absence. But this liberated woman gives them a great surprise. She explains to them that while they are sure the reunion with them is the peak of joy, for her, the joys of motherhood and grandmotherhood cannot in any way

replace the champion who walked with her in her youth.

“I have adjured you, my daughters,” she will say to us, “if you see my beloved, what will you tell him?” That I am strong and happy and I have wonderful sons and daughters, sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and on my walls, they have appointed guards all day and all night so I should not fall sick, but I am sick. “I am love-sick,” until my husband returns to the palace.

Perhaps, when we cared so much for *Ima*, we were caring for ourselves, so that we would have a wall of protection around us... and did we forget *Ima*?

Only once do Chazal describe a *chupa* of someone whose partner had left her. Amram returns to his wife Yocheved and their children, Miriam and Aharon, dance around them at their *chupa*, playing stringed instruments (Shemot Rabbah).

And in these unusual times, Corona days, I find myself praying a different prayer for you, Yerushalayim... “If I forget you,” I promise you that when I see you flooded in true and complete joy, loved like you knew how to love us, I will be a bridesmaid for you... “Yerushalayim of gold and of copper and of light, I am a violin for all of your songs.”

Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi is a popular Israeli teacher, speaker and writer