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[Home](#) > Tefillah - 145 Accessing The Future's New Light

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Why Yerushalayim Is Called "Tziyon" (Zion)

ותחזינה עינינו בשובך לציון ברחמים. ברוך אתה ה' המחזיר שכינתו לציון - "And may our eyes see Your return to Zion, with mercy. Blessed are You, Hashem, Who returns His Holy Presence to Zion."

Earlier in Shemoneh Esrei we request of Hashem that He rebuild Yerushalayim, that we should return to Yerushalayim, and that He rest His presence upon it once again. Here in this blessing of Shemoneh Esrei, once again, we ask Hashem to return to us His Presence in Yerushalayim, with regards to the Avodah of the Beis HaMikdash, which was the subject of this blessing.

Thus, we are not just repeating our request to Hashem that He return the Shechinah. We are asking that the rebuilding of Zion\Jerusalem return specifically with the Avodah of the Beis HaMikdash, which adds on a new dimension to our request.

But there is an understanding to this, which gives us more clarity to the matter.

Yerushalayim is also called *Tziyon*\Zion. Why is it called Zion?

When Yerushalayim is in its destruction, it is called Zion: "*Zion is desolate.*" The word Zion, *Tziyon*, is from the word *tziyah*, desolate. It is also written, "*The roads of Zion are in mourning.*" So the name "Zion" refers to a state of Jerusalem when it is in destruction and in mourning.

Even more so, Yerushalayim is called "Zion" as the Sages state^[1] that "*Tziyon*" is from the word *tzayan*, reminder - *Tziyon* is a reminder to us, to remind us of Yerushalayim that we not forget it, and thus by a wedding we make sure to remember it.

It is also called *Tziyon* from the word "*Tziyon Hametzuyenes*"^[2] - from the word *metzuyan*, the "choicest", referring to how Eretz Yisrael is the choicest place in the world. When Yerushalayim stood in its full glory, we would all trek there three times a year, and it would become *Tziyon Hametzuyenes*, the most elevated of all places in the world.

The "New Light" of Zion

But there is yet a deeper implication of *Tziyon*.

Every day in the blessings before *Kerias Shema* we say, אור חדש על ציון תאיר - "*A new light shall shine forth on Zion.*" What is that "new light" that will shine in Zion?

Tziyon is from the word *netz*, or *nitztotz*, which means “spark”. Today, we have a “spark” of the light of Zion that will come in the future. Although we don’t have the full revelation of the future light, we have a spark of it – a *nitzotz* of it. Thus, we daven every day for the “new light of Zion” – we don’t just daven for the return of Zion; we daven for the “light” of Zion to be restored.

Let us try to understand, according to this, what we ask for when we say the words **ותחזינה עינינו**; that we are not just asking for the return of Zion, for we are asking for the return of the “new light” of Zion. We ask Hashem here that we should merit that our eyes see it – **ותחזינה עינינו**.

What, indeed, is the difference between the current level of Zion, which is but a spark of the future light, with the complete level of the “light of Zion” that will be in the future?

First we will speak about a practical concept that relates to our soul, and then we will explain.

Two Kinds of Connection: Mind and Heart

When a person is an infant, he is separate and apart from others; he does not merge with others. He is only connected to his mother, and even then, he is not really connected to her. He cries to her, but he does not have an actual relationship with her. He is his own existence. He is very dependent on his mother, he is deeply attached to her, but he does not know of a connection to another human being. He won’t smile at others or wish to connect with others. The one connection he has, with his mother, is not a real connection, but purely for the sake of getting his needs from her.

When a person gets older, he slowly expands beyond himself and he connects with others, through seeing others and laughing with others, etc.

We must be aware, though, that there are two kinds of connections we have with others: through our intellect, and through our emotions\recognition\heart.

At first, we intellectually connect to others. We break things down with our intellect, we are taught how to learn, we connect letters to form words, and we learn how to take apart thoughts. As a person gets older and he merits to go to *yeshivah*, he uses his intellect to learn Torah, and he develops his intellect further; each person on his own respective level. This is all using the ability of his **intellect**.

Besides for this kind of connection, we also have the power to connect with our **heart**: when we connect to others with our souls. The older and more mature we get, the more we socialize and form friendships.

But most of the time, these friendships are superficial, not a genuine soul connection. Of course, there’s always a bit of soul involved, but most of the time we are only superficially connected to others, and there is very little of our soul involved in our relationships.

As we get older, we grow in both our intellect and heart. That’s how we are designed, for this is the way Hashem made the world.

Superficial Relationship With Spouses and Children

A person gets married at some point, and then he learns that he must not only connect with his spouse on an intellectual level, but through his entire being: body and soul. The Sages said that one must “love his wife like his own body” – one must have a soul connection with his spouse. But if a person grew up ignorant of knowing how to use his soul, he has no understanding of how to use his soul’s strengths, and he will connect to his spouse on a very superficial level.

He mistakenly thinks that his wife is like all other friendships he had, and he is unaware of the fact that marriage isn't just about intellectually connecting to another, and it is a much deeper emotional connection than what he is used to. One must love and honor his wife, which requires him to connect with his heart to her, and he is often unaware of how to do this.

And at a later stage in life, when one has children, it is a nature of a father to love his children and have compassion on them; but this is not yet a deep kind of love. It is simply a nature of a parent to love and care for his child, just like an animal has mercy on its child. So if a person loves his child in the same way that an animal connects to its child - for man has a *nefesh habehaimis* (base, animalistic part of the soul) which can also love - how sad is it if this is where his relationship with his child ends at. It's a very immature level of connection.

In fact, it's very possible - and this is mostly the case - that the entire relationship between spouses, and parents with their children, is superficial, coming entirely on the level of *nefesh habehaimis*. People are "loyal" to their spouses just as much as a dove is loyal to its spouse (as Chazal learn from the story of Noach, that the dove is loyal to its spouse, whereas a raven is not), and people take pity on their children just as Chazal that an eagle pities its children, but it's all on the level of *nefesh habehaimis*! True, it is still a level of connection, but it is entirely superficial.

Thus, we need to reveal a much deeper dimension in our relationships than the basic kind of love and compassion which even animals are capable of. Our basic love\loyalty for our spouse, and our basic compassion for our children, are but sparks (*nitzotzos*) of the true level of connection.

"Ohr Chadash" - The "New Light" Which Will Bring Unity

The true level of connection is called *ohr*\light. "Light" connects people together, for when the sun comes out, the day begins and now people can see each other; whereas night causes separation between people. Similarly, a lit-up house is conducive to *Shalom Bayis*, as we see from *Ner Shabbos*, whereas a dark house causes friction between one another; for this reason, Chazal enacted that we light Shabbos candles in the house on Friday night, so that the home won't be dark and thereby cause marital discord.

Although many people are friendly with each other and even feel connected with each other, often, it is only a superficial kind of connection. A person often feels connected with his family, but it isn't always a deep connection. There is nothing bad about this, of course. But it's just superficial - it's a connection that only our *nefesh habehaimis* is capable of. It's not the level of "A new light shall shine forth on Zion", the *ohr chadash*\new light that we await, which will unify the entire world.

The Yerushalayim of the future - through the Beis HaMikdash - will be "a house of prayer to all the nations", meaning, it will connect all of Creation together and bring unity to all people. We hope that it should come speedily. That will be the future redemption, and we hope for it and we believe it will come.

We believe in the resurrection of the dead, and in the redemption, as we declare every day in *Ani Maamin*. But it is not enough to believe - we must know what it is that we hope for. The revelation of the "new light" in the future, which will be the *ohr chadash* that will shine on Zion -will be a light that comes and truly connects everyone on the world together.

Live A Futuristic Kind Of Life!

But if someone does not live a lifestyle of connections with others, and all of his connections that he does have are just superficial, even within his family life (and he only acts kind to those who are his type, similar to the *chassidah*^[3] bird, which only does kindness to its type and not to other birds^[4]) -

such a lifestyle is the opposite of the ideal kind of life.

Although the future redemption isn't here yet, we still have to yearn for it in the depths of the soul, and thus live a life that somewhat reflects the future state. We should not live a life that totally opposes the kind of life we will have in the future, just because the future isn't here yet. Therefore, we need to strive to live a life that somewhat resembles the level of the future, in which there will be unity in the entire world.

Unity Through The Intellect

The inner way to live life is to keep connecting to people, more and more. How, indeed, do we connect? Through our **intellect** and through our **heart**, as we said.

When we learn Torah, the way we utilize our intellect for connection is by always seeking to unify the information of the Torah in what we learn. When you learn another *sugya* and another *sugya*, you are supposed to see how it all connects together.

It's possible that a person is not aware of this, but this is still the way which our Rabbis lived. That's one part of life: using our intellect to connect and unify all of the pieces of the Torah together that we come across, as we exert ourselves in Torah.

Unity Through The Heart

But in addition, we need to use our **heart** in order to form connections. We connect with our heart when we use it to connect to other people; in order to do this, our heart must be alive with feelings for others. This is the meaning of having a "heart of flesh" (*lev basar*), as opposed to one who has a "heart of stone" (*lev even*).

We have a *mitzvah* to love other Jews, and one must love another "like himself" (*kamoicha*), but that doesn't mean the love that comes from our *nefesh habehaimis*. In order to love other Jews in a true way, one needs to use the "*Ruach*" level of his soul, which resides in the heart. It is mainly our *Ruach* of our heart which we need to make use in order to truly love other Jews and really connect.

But even more so, to truly connect with another Jew, it means to utilize the power of *Ahavas Yisrael*.

The Depth of Ahavas Yisrael

Ahavas Yisrael is essentially the nature of a Jew's soul to always connect to more and more Jews, until eventually a person reaches the ultimate level of loving every single Jew.

To summarize, we need our intellect to connect together the information of the Torah, and in addition, we need our heart in order to connect to all Jews.

Again, this doesn't mean to simply use the power to love others that comes from our *nefesh habehaimis*, but to use the *Ruach* of the soul that is in our heart; and on a deeper level, to use our power of *Ahavas Yisrael*.

True *Ahavas Yisrael* means to realize that we are all one at our root. How do we come to that perspective? It is by always seeking more and more connections with other Jews. The more we connect to other Jews, the more it awakens our *Ahavas Yisrael*. And the more we train ourselves to loving other Jews, the more we uncover a truer level of *Ahavas Yisrael* within ourselves.

Beyond Ahavas Yisrael: Loving All Creations

However, even *Ahavas Yisrael* is not the most perfect level we can reach. We must ultimately love everyone in Creation (*ahavas kol heberiah*). This is because, as Chazal teach, “*Chaviv adam shenivra b’tzelem*” - “Beloved is man, for he is created in the image of G-d.” All of Creations are created *b’tzelem elokim* (“in the image of G-d”) and therefore there is a concept of loving all the creations.

Of course, *Ahavas Yisrael* is a *mitzvah*, while the concept of loving all of Creation is not a *mitzvah*, but rather a *madreigah*, a high spiritual level. Yet, although loving all of Creation is not an obligatory *mitzvah* upon us, it is still the true and inner way for a Jew to live by.

Understandably, we must hate evil, as is written, “*Those who fight You, I will fight, and those who hate You, I will hate.*” There are always exceptions to the rule, and therefore there are some people whom we are required to hate. Generally speaking, though, we must expand our love more and more towards people, first with other Jews and then with the rest of the world. This leads a person to the even more ultimate goal: to love Hashem.

In the future, all people will recognize Hashem as G-d, thus, there is reason to love the whole world. Currently, we refer to Hashem as “*Elokeinu*”, “Our G-d”, because only the Jewish people currently recognize Hashem as G-d of the world, whereas the rest of the world remains oblivious to recognizing G-d. But in the future, when Hashem’s Name will be One and all will declare Him as one, He will be called by His Name of *Havayah*, and not *Elokeinu*; our recognition of Hashem will not be *Elokeinu*, rather, “*Hashem Echad*”.

This is what will be the “new light” that will shine forth on Zion: all will be united, in their recognition of Hashem as G-d of the world.

Of course, we cannot reach this understanding completely until the future, because the future and its perceptions haven’t been revealed yet. But we can still take a cue from the future perspective and let it direct our life.

In Conclusion

To summarize: Our **intellect** must be devoted to Torah and therefore we must strive to connect all of the knowledge together that we learn.

(A little bit of our time should also be devoted to doing chessed to others; to emphasize, only a little of our time should be spent on *chessed*, and not most of our time. Most of our time needs to be spent on Torah learning and using our intellect to unify all of our Torah knowledge together.)

And, in addition, we need to use our **hearts** to connect to all people. We need to love our spouse and children not just with our *nefesh habehaimis* alone, but with our *Ruach* (a Divine kind of love for another),[\[5\]](#) and even more so, to love all Jews; and beyond that, to strive to love all of Creation.

Thus, the “new light of Zion” will be the great spiritual light that connects all people together. It is also known as the *ohr haganuz* (the “hidden light”) that was created on the first day, which could see from one end of the world to another; the deeper meaning of this is that it unified the whole world together as one, under the oneness of Hashem.

So when we daven in Shemoneh Esrei that our eyes merit to see the return of the *Shechinah* to Zion, besides for davening for this, we have a personal *avodah* to do (and as we have explained in the past, “prayer accomplishes half”, and the other half is to make our own effort[\[6\]](#)): to build a life of connections, using both our mind and heart.

We must connect all of Torah together, and with our hearts, we must love all of Creation. The more a

person has love for all of Creation, the closer he draws himself to the “new light” of the future.

May it be revealed, speedily, the “new light of Zion” – the deep unity that will unite all of Creation together in recognition of the oneness of Hashem.

[1] Eruvin 54a

[2] Recited in the *Hakafos* of Sukkos.

[3] Identified as a stork

[4] See Rashi to Vayikra 11:19

[5] See ***Getting To Know Your Feelings: Part II: Chapter Seven***

[6] See ***Tefillah #0136 (“Silent Prayer and Emunah”)*** and ***#0137 (“How To Daven”)***

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