

Sanctuaries and Sanctity # 3

Jerusalem, City of Synagogues

Themes of Today

How are the many diverse Diaspora communities represented in Jerusalem?

Why are there differences in prayers, tunes and customs?

How was the prayer for the government recited in different periods and places?

An in-depth look at the Italians and at a few of the Nahlaot synagogues

Synagogue as the anchor of the community

The Jewish Quarter before and after 1967 – how to preserve and rebuild the synagogues of the past?

Synagogues in the Diaspora

Rabbi Shimon ben Yoḥai says: Come and see how beloved the Jewish people are before the Holy One, Blessed be He. As every place they were exiled, the Divine Presence went with them. . . The Gemara asks: Where in Babylonia does the Divine Presence reside? Abaye said: In the ancient synagogue of Huzal and in the synagogue that was destroyed and rebuilt in Neharde'a. . .

The verse states: "Yet I have been to them as a little sanctuary in the countries where they have come" (Ezekiel 11:16). Rabbi Yitzḥak said: This is referring to the synagogues and study halls in Babylonia. And Rabbi Elazar said: This is referring to the house of our master, i.e., Rav, in Babylonia, from which Torah issues forth to the entire world.

It is taught in a *baraita*: Rabbi Elazar HaKappar says: In the future, the synagogues and the study halls in Babylonia will be transported and reestablished in Eretz Yisrael, as it is stated: "Surely, like Tabor among the mountains, and like Carmel by the sea, so shall he come" (Jeremiah 46:18). (Megillah 29)

הוּו יודעים דמעיקרא כד גלו ישראל בגלות יכניה והחרש והמסגר וכמה נביאים עמהם אייתינהו לנהרדעא, ובנו יכניה מלך יהודה וסיעתו בי כנישתא ויסדוה באבנים ובעפר שהביאו עמהם מבית המקדש, לקיים עליהם מה שנאמר "כי רצו עבדיך את אבניה ואת עפרה יחוננו," וקריוה להווא **בי כנישתא בי כנישתא דשף ויתיב בנהרדעא. כלומר שנסע בית המקדש וישב כאן.** (איגרת רב שרירא גאון מאה ה' 10 לספירה)

The Aliya of the Italian Synagogues

To the captain:

Your ship will soon be carrying the holy ark of the great synagogue of Padua. . .we are sadly parting from these holy objects because for many generations they were witness to everything in our community, both happy and sad events. But we are comforted by the fact that these objects are intended for synagogues in the land of Israel. . .

Transferring these objects, more than it is a symbol of the dismantling of our congregation, is a symbol of the renewal of our national life, it is this aliya that each one of us is commanded to do to strengthen the coming generations. . .

Michelangelo Romanin Yakur, head of the community

29 Nisan 1956

וְדַרְשׁוּ אֶת־שְׁלוֹם הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר הִגַּלְתִּי אֶתְכֶם שָׁמָּה וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ בְעַדָּהּ אֱלֹהֵיהָ כִּי בְשָׁלוֹמָה
יְהִיֶה לָכֶם שְׁלוֹם :

and seek the welfare of the city to which I have exiled you and pray to the Lord in its behalf; for in its prosperity you shall prosper. (Jeremiah 29:7)