

## ROSH HASHANAH DAY 2

ירמיהו ל"א Jeremiah 31

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6GiVFII6B1Y>

(1) Thus says Hashem, "The people who were left of the sword found favor in the wilderness; even Israel, when I went to bring him to rest." (2) "Hashem appeared of old to me, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love; therefore with loving kindness have I drawn you.'" (3) "Again I will build you, and you shall be built, O virgin of Israel; again you shall be adorned with your tambourines, and shall go forth in the dances of those who make merry." (4) Again you shall plant vineyards on the mountains of Samaria; the planters shall plant, and shall enjoy it. (5) For there shall be a day, that the watchmen on the hills of Ephraim shall cry, 'Arise and let us go up to Zion to Hashem our God.'" (6) For thus says Hashem, "Sing with gladness for Jacob, and shout for the chief of the nations. Announce, and praise, and say, 'Hashem, save your people, the remnant of Israel.'" (7) Behold, I will bring them from the north country, and gather them from the uttermost parts of the earth, and with them the blind and the lame, the woman with child and her who travails with child together, a great company shall return here. (8) They shall come with weeping; and with petitions I will lead them. I will cause them to walk by rivers of waters, in a straight way in which they shall not stumble; for I am a father to Israel, and Ephraim is My firstborn.

(א) כה אמר י"י מצא חן במדבר עם שרידי חרב הלוך להרגיעו ישראל. (ב) מרחוק י"י נראה לי ואהבת עולם אהבתיך על כן משכתיך חסד. (ג) עוד אבנך ונבנית בתולת ישראל עוד תעדי תפיך ויצאת במחול משחקים. (ד) עוד תטעי כרמים בהרי שמרון נטעו נטעים וחללו. (ה) כי יש יום קראו נצרים בה אפרים קומו ונעלה ציון אל י"י אלהינו. (ו) כי כה אמר י"י רנו ליעקב שמחה וצהלו בראש הגוים השמיעו הללו ואמרו הושע י"י את עמך את שארית ישראל. (ז) הנני מביא אותם מארץ צפון וקבצתים מירפתי ארץ בם עור ופסח הרה וילדת יחדו קהל גדול ישובו הנה. (ח) בבכי יבאו ובתחנונים אובילים אוליכם אל נחלי מים בדרך ישר לא יפשלו בה כי היתי לישראל לאב ואפרים בלרי הוא.

רש"י שרידי חרב – מצרים והעמלקי והכנעני.

ר' יוסף קרא – שנמלט מחרב פרעה.

רד"ק שהיו המצריים מתנכלים עליהם להמיתם ולכלותם

שד"ל ... אלא המשיל הגלות להליכה במקום מדבר

רש"י נראה לי – אני הנביא ואמר לי לאמר לכנסת ישראל אהבת עולם אהבתיך.

I, the prophet, and [He] told me to say to the congregation of Israel, "With everlasting love have I loved you."

רד"ק הפסוק חלוק במענה ותשובה. אומרת כנסת ישראל בגלות למה שאמר האל "מצא חן במדבר" (ירמיהו ל"א:א) אמרה היא אמת הוא זה. כי מזמן רחוק י"י נראה לי, אך עתה הסתיר פניו ממני בגלות. ענה אותם האל "ואהבת עולם אהבתיך"; לא היתה אהבתי אליך לפי שעה אלא להיות האהבה לעולם.

The verse is divided into a statement and response. Israel, in exile, validates God's statement "You found favor with Me in the wilderness." Whereas He appeared to me in the distant past, now He is hidden from me. God replies: My love for you is not temporary, but eternal.

(9) Hear the word of Hashem, you nations, and declare it in the islands afar off; and say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him and keep him, as shepherd does his flock.' (10) For Hashem has ransomed Jacob, and redeemed him from the hand of him who was stronger than he. (11) They shall come and sing in the height of Zion, and shall flow to the goodness of Hashem, to the grain, and to the new wine, and to the oil, and to the young of the flock and of the herd. And their soul shall be as a watered garden; and they shall not sorrow any more at all. (12) Then shall the virgin rejoice in the dance, and the young men and the old together; for I will turn their mourning into joy, and will comfort them, and make them rejoice from their sorrow. (13) I will satiate the soul of the priests with fatness, and My people shall be satisfied with My goodness," says Hashem.

(ט) שָׁמְעוּ דְבַר יְיָ גוֹיִם וְהִגִּידוּ  
בְּאֵיִם מִמְרֻחָק וְאָמְרוּ מְזֵרָה  
יִשְׂרָאֵל יִקְבְּצֵנוּ וְשִׁמְרוּ כְרֵעָה  
עֲדָרוּ. (י) כִּי פָדָה יְיָ אֶת יַעֲקֹב  
וַגְּאָלוּ מִיַּד חֲזַק מִמֶּנּוּ. (יא) וַבָּאוּ  
וְרִנְנוּ בְּמָרוֹם צִיּוֹן וְנִהְרּוּ אֶל טוֹב  
יְיָ עַל דָּגָן וְעַל תִּירֵשׁ וְעַל יֵצֶהָר  
וְעַל בְּנֵי צֹאן וּבִקָּר וְהִיִּתָּה נֶפֶשׁ  
כְּגֹן רוּחַ וְלֹא יוֹסִיפוּ לְדַאֲבָה עוֹד.  
(יב) אִזְ תִּשְׂמַח בְּתוֹלָה בְּמַחֹל  
וּבַחֲרִים וּזְקֵנִים יַחְדָּו וְהִפְכֵתִי  
אֲבָלָם לְשִׂשׂוֹן וְנַחֲמַתִּים  
וְשִׂמְחַתִּים מִיְגוֹנָם. (יג) וְרוּיִתִּי  
נֶפֶשׁ הַכֹּהֲנִים דָּשֵׁן וְעַמִּי אֶת טוֹבִי  
יִשְׁבְּעוּ נְאֻם יְיָ.

[zemereshet.co.il](http://zemereshet.co.il) (מזרה ישראל (לחן נאמן)

The numerical value of **מזרה** is 252. The expulsion from Spain took place in the year 5252 (=1492).

(14) Thus says Hashem, "A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children. She refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more." (15) Thus says Hashem, "Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded," says Hashem; "and they shall come again from the land of the enemy. (16) There is hope for your latter end," says Hashem; "and your children shall come again to their own border." (17) "I have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself, 'You have chastised me, and I was chastised, as a calf unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn me, and I shall be turned; for you are Hashem my God. (18) Surely after that I was turned, I repented; and after that I was instructed, I struck on my thigh. I was ashamed, yes, even confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth.' (19) "Is Ephraim My dear son? Is he a darling child? For as often as I speak against him, I earnestly remember him still. Therefore My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him," says Hashem.

(יד) כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ קוֹל בְּרָמָה  
נִשְׁמָע נְהִי בְכֵי תַמְרוּרִים רַחֵל  
מִבְּכָה עַל בְּנֵיהָ מֵאֲנָה לְהִנָּחֵם עַל  
בְּנֵיהָ כִּי אֵינָנּוּ. (טו) כֹּה אָמַר יְיָ  
מִנְעִי קוֹלְךָ מִבְּכִי וְעֵינַיִךָ מִדְּמְעָה  
כִּי יֵשׁ שָׂכָר לְפַעֲלֹתֶיךָ נְאֻם יְיָ  
וְשָׁבוּ מֵאֶרֶץ אוֹיֵב. (טז) וַיֵּשׁ תִּקְוָה  
לְאַחֲרֵיתֶיךָ נְאֻם יְיָ וְשָׁבוּ בָנִים  
לְגִבּוֹלָם. (יז) שְׁמוֹעַ שְׁמַעְתִּי  
אֶפְרַיִם מִתְּנוּדָד יִסְרַתְנִי וְאוֹסֵר  
כַּעֲגֹל לֹא לַמֶּד הַשְׁבִּנִי וְאֶשׁוּבָה כִּי  
אֲתָה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵי. (יח) כִּי אַחֲרַי  
שׁוֹבִי נַחֲמַתִּי וְאַחֲרֵי הוֹדְעִי  
סִפְקַתִּי עַל יָרֵךְ בְּשֵׁתִי וְגַם  
נִכְלַמְתִּי כִּי נִשְׂאֲתִי חֲרַפְתִּי נְעוּרַי.  
(יט) הֲבֵן יִקְרֶה לִּי אֶפְרַיִם אִם יֶלֶד  
שַׁעֲשׁוּעִים כִּי מִדֵּי דְבָרֵי בּוֹ זָכַר  
אֲזַכְרֶנּוּ עוֹד עַל כֵּן הִמוּ מַעִי לוֹ  
רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ נְאֻם יְיָ.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ekg\\_978y7H4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ekg_978y7H4)

## Where is Rachel's Tomb?



Image: Tomb of Rachel, between 1890 and 1900 / Wikimedia commons

At the close of the previous chapter, Samuel took Saul aside and intimated that he had something to tell him. As this chapter opens, we learn that the message he sought to convey to him was that God had chosen him to rule over Israel (1). Samuel continued, however, and delivered to Saul a somewhat enigmatic instruction:

When you leave me today, you will find two men by the **tomb (*kevurat*) of Rachel**, near the **border of Benjamin** at Zelzah. They will say to you: The donkeys that you went to seek have been found, and your father has ceased caring for the donkeys, and is anxious about you, asking: What shall I do about my son? (2)



Implicit in Samuel's instructions (which also mention Bethel and allude to Kiryat Ye`arim) is that Zelzah is north of Jerusalem. Recall, too, a famous verse: "Hark! **A bitter cry can be heard in the Ramah**. Rachel is mourning the loss of her children" (Jeremiah 31:14). An otherwise unspecified Ramah (heights) usually refers to the home of Samuel—likewise north of Jerusalem. In Genesis 35:19-20, however, Rachel's death is set "on the road to Ephrat, which is Bethlehem" south of Jerusalem, and Jacob erected a monument over her tomb (*kevurat*) that is visible "to this very day," as any visitor to Bethlehem can attest.

This very conundrum confounded Ramban (Nahmanides, 1194-1270). In his Torah commentary (to Genesis 35:16), he originally wrote that Rachel's tomb is situated at some (unspecified) distance from Bethlehem. After his arrival in the Land of Israel (c. 1267), however, he added:

This is what I thought previously. Now that I have merited to come to Jerusalem, praise to the beneficent God, I can see with my own two eyes that the distance between Rachel's' tomb (*kevurat*) and Bethlehem is less than a mile, contradicting my original interpretation.

Regardless of where Rachel was buried, Saul was a Benjaminite and, assumedly, held the tomb of his ancestress in singular regard. By directing him there, Samuel may have been inviting him to connect with his tribal roots and, perhaps, to draw from them the strength and support he would need to initiate and sustain his rule.

My personal inclination is to identify *kevurat Rachel* with the Muslim shrine called Nebi Samwil situated on an elevation just north of Jerusalem ("near the border of Benjamin"), regarded as the burial site of the Prophet Samuel. Since Samuel's Ramah was further north, in the Ephraim hill country in which he was born, it is possible that Muslim tradition got the two confused.