

In Search of Mt. Zion - A film in the making

Coming soon...

In Search of Mt. Zion

A Film by Yeshivas Torah Yisrael

Scene 1: The Mystery

[The viewer sees numerous inspiring still shots from around Mt Zion, while some modern Hassidic music plays in the background emphasizing the name "Har Tzion"]

Narrator: Hi my name is Joseph. I will be your host and guide while we explore an ancient mystery. Join me for a journey in place and time, as we search for an important historic link to David Hamelech...that is King David,...warrior, king, singer of psalms, and according to Midrashic traditions, a Torah sage of the highest caliber.

Let's begin with a question, you can think of it as a riddle...

[Joseph is standing next to a taxi stand in down town Jerusalem. There is a taxi parked right beside him, and a smiling cab driver by the name of Kobi]

Let's pretend I'm a tourist, and I say: Kobi,

Kobi: Yes Joseph!

Joseph: I have come from far away to see the places I have learned about in the Torah and the Tehillim. I want to see Hashem's holy mountain!

Kobi: That would be the Temple Mount. That is the place where the Bet Hamikdash, the Holy Temple stood. Would you like to see it from afar or from up close?

Joseph: why don't we see it from afar and from up close?

[Some traffic footage intervenes. Then the viewer finds himself on Har Hazetim looking towards the Har Habayit]

Kobi: There where the golden dome is, that is where the Bet Hamikdash stood. You can imagine how beautiful and high the Bet Hamikdash looked. The flat hilltop where the Temple stood is called the Temple Mount, or in Hebrew the "Har Habayit".

Joseph: Now I want to see it Temple mount from up close

[More Jerusalem traffic, J and K are now at the Kotel]

Joseph: I know where we are! We are at the Kotel!

Kobi: [pointing to the Kotel] Yes. The Temple Mount is on the other side of this wall. Now you have to remember that we don't really see the height of the original temple mount because the valley was filled in with debris by the Romans who wanted to erase the form of the Temple mount...but if you take a walk over here, you can see how far down the original ground level is. [They walk over to one of the pits dug down to the old ground level. They look in.] All the way down there is the original street level at the base of the Temple Mount

Josef: Can we go up to the temple mount?

Kobi: No No! We are forbidden. In ancient times we could purify ourselves properly. But we can't any more. So according to Halacha we may not go into the place where the Temple stood. Not until the Mashiach comes and teaches us how to be "spiritually pure" again.

Joseph: Well it is still amazing to be here right next to Hashem's holy mountain. As it says in Tehillim (74:2) "Har Tzion zeh shachanta bo" "This Mount Zion where you have dwelled!"

Kobi: [Excitedly!] Well if you wanted to go to Mount Zion why didn't you just say so! [Kobi pulls Joseph into the taxi and away they drive. The camera follows the cab out the dung gate and shows the cab rising upwards towards Har Tzion emphasizing the high altitude of Har Tzion.]

The Taxi arrives at Har Tzion, right in front of Kever David.

Joseph: This is Mt Zion?

Kobi: Absolutely! Right here. You're standing of Har Tzion. And here is Kind David's tomb.

Joseph: I'm all confused! If Hashem's mountain is the Temple Mount...the Har Habayit...then that must be Har Tzion. And that means that this place...whatever it is ...cannot be Har Tzion.

Kobi: [As Kobi tells his story the viewer sees stills and action shots of people in prayer around Kever David or lighting candles or studying.] Listen, my friend. My family lived in Yershalayim for 13 generations, and if my grandmother told me this place is Har Tzion she knew what she was talking about. The Kotel is next to the Har Habayit, the Temple Mount, and Kind David is here on Mt Zion. People would come here from all over Israel, to pour out their hearts. And people received miracles in the merit of King David! See, my Grandmother, when she was young, just couldn't find anyone to marry. There just weren't enough suitable men her age. Her parents matched her up to an older widower. They said "better him than no-one!" But my grandmother was heartbroken. She was so desperate. She wanted someone she could actually love. So what did she do? She came every Saturday night to King David. She lit candles and read his Tehillim. After three months a young man came to Jerusalem from Morocco to study. He took one look at my grandmother, and he was hooked! They got married right away! My grandmother told me that when she got pregnant with my father, she saw King David in a dream, and he told her to call the baby David in his name.

Joseph: That's a beautiful story, but that doesn't answer the question. The Har Habayit is Hashem's mountain. It has to be Har Tzion! The Temple Mount is Mount Zion! So what is this place?

Kobi: I don't know what to say Joseph. But all Jerusalem Jews know this is Mt Zion right here! Even the Holy Ari used to pray here! Every body knows this is a holy special place!

Joseph: [now looking directly at the camera] This is the mystery we have to unravel: the mystery of Mt Zion. Is this place really Mt Zion? And if it is, how does it relate to the Temple mount? Listen carefully! This is not some empty theoretical question. We need to understand the holiness of Mt Zion. If we do, then we will be motivated to maintain a Jewish Torah presence here, even to struggle on behalf of Mount Zion. But if we do not understand and recognize the holiness of this place...there are others who value this place a lot and will do just about anything to take it over....

[Camera shows stills of Christian monasteries and churches on Mt Zion. The viewer sees a Rabbi identified as the "Director, Anti Missionary Task Force for Jerusalem"]

Director: The church never lets up. They see this place as incredibly sacred and they want it all. They try to buy whatever they can get their hands on. They are always challenging us in the courts. We fight them, room by little room, trying to keep them from expanding on Har Tzion. They talk to politicians about creating tourist centers for Christian pilgrims on Mt Zion, and sometimes they are actually pretty convincing to these politicians. So far we have managed to block them...but they just don't let up....

Kobi: [looking at camera] So, you see there is a lot at stake here. If we don't love Har Tzion...then Heaven forbid, others will.

Joseph: But to love Har Tzion you first have to know it. You have to solve the mystery of Mt Zion. So join us now as we embark on a journey in place and time. In search of Mt Zion!

Scene 2: Back to the Beginning...

[The viewer sees still shots of ancient Eretz Yisrael]

Joseph: It might be difficult to believe, but even during the early part of King David's reign, there were still Canaanites living in the land of Israel. A small tribe of Yevusi remained in their city Yeru-Shalem, on the border between the territories of Yehudah and Binyamin. Once King David was accepted as king by all Israel, he set his mind to conquering this last Canaanite stronghold.

[Joseph is talking to an archeologist, standing in modern Ir David]

Josef: This is my friend Doctor Robert, an Archeologist. So, Rob, tell me where we are right now?

Rob the Archeologist: Well as we understand it today, the original Yevusi city of Jerusalem was right here. To the north is the temple mount. From here the hill slopes down towards the south.

Josef: You know they could have put their city higher up. There is lots of nice tactical high ground all around...

Rob: But you see, they didn't want to get too far away from their water source, the Gihon spring. The spring is over this way in the valley. [Rob indicates the direction of the spring] We figure that the Yevusi city in the time of David looked like this. [The viewer sees a picture of Ir David] After David took over the city, he built his royal residence over here. [Arrow shows location] That is pretty much the spot where we are standing now.

Josef: What about the temple mount?

Rob: Well the temple mount is right there to the north. You see that onion shaped black dome. [Rob points out that feature] That is the top of the mosque that stands on the southern part of the Temple Mount. If you look here, you can see the temple mount here in the picture. As you can see, it's empty. I'm sure you know that David did not build the temple. His son Shelomo Hamelech, that is King Solomon, did that. As a matter of fact, during most of David's reign the Temple Mount was known as the granary of Arvana the Yevusi. Apparently the locals used the wide flat hilltop to process their grain during harvest time. The book of Samuel tells that towards the end of his life, David bought the land from Arvana, as the location of the future temple.

Josef: And what about Mt Zion.

Rob: well the book of Shmuel does mention that there was a fortress of Tzion, which David captured. He called it Ir David, or city of David. We basically assume that that the fortress of Tzion is part of the city of Jerusalem which is the same thing as the city of David....so it was all right here.

Joseph: And where was this fortress?

Rob: we surmise that it was down at the bottom of the hill. [points to the south] About here in the picture [shows the spot in the picture of ancient Jerusalem]

Joseph: So what is Mt Zion?

Rob: I would tell you that Mt Zion is another name for the Temple Mount.

Joseph: Isn't that strange. The fortress of Zion has nothing to do with the temple mount!

Rob: Well you know, sometimes names just get mixed up over time...

Joseph: I see... Well, I know someone who has some very different ideas about this....

Scene 3: The Fortress and the Mountain

Josef: I'm still down here in the area which was Jerusalem in the days of the Yevusi. I'm here with Rabbi Gerald Goldstein of the Mount Zion Foundation. And we are looking up the slope to what traditionally has been referred to as Mt Zion.

It's along way up isn't it?

RG: Mt Zion is the tallest geographical feature in the area. It rises 750 meters above sea level. You simply can't assume that it had no significance in the days of David.

J: You ready to try and climb it?

RG: as the Psalmist says: Who can climb the mountain of Hashem! Who can stand in his holy place! Still with Hashem's help, we can make the attempt.

[The two walk up to Mt Zion along the outer wall of the old city]

J: Tell me about your work with the Mt Zion Foundation.

RG: Really what we are trying to do is make people aware of the holiness of Mt Zion. You know, we Jews exist because of our traditions. Our Torah scrolls are written according to the tradition. We keep Hashem's laws according to the traditions we have inherited. We wouldn't know a single letter of the Hebrew Alphabet if not for our traditions. You couldn't perform a single Mitzvah! So you can't throw away traditions. And if there is a Tradition that this mountain is Mt. Zion...well you deal with it. You at least have to consider it seriously!

J: what do you say to the Archeologist who says that Zion is just a fortress in ancient Yevusi Jerusalem...way down there? [Now pointing down from Har Tzion to Ir David]

RG: I'd say he's entitled to his opinion, but I think that if you read the Scripture carefully you will see that ancient Yevusi Jerusalem and the fortress of Tzion are two different things. Look here in the Book of Samuel chapter 5 "And the king and his men went up to Jerusalem...and David conquered the fortress of Zion which is the City of David...and David dwelled in the fortress and he called it City of David."

Think about this: if the fortress of Tzion is just a location in Jerusalem...then David should be calling Jerusalem "City of David". But the text doesn't say that. It says very clearly that only the fortress is called City of David. The text repeats that point twice to make sure you get it. David called the Fortress of Zion "City of David", not all of Jerusalem!

J: How do you explain that!

RG: let's start with this assumption. The Yevusi built the original part of Jerusalem on a fairly low lying area because they wanted to be close to their water supply. But that created a problem for them. They couldn't really see very far. So they built a large well stocked fortress on the highest point in the area, so they could keep a look out for attackers in all directions. They could launch pre-emptive strikes against anyone coming against them. Also, if things get bad, they might evacuate the city and take refuge in the fortress. The name of the fortress is Zion, and it stands on...

J: Mt Zion!

RG: There you go. You see my point! The Fortress on Zion is on Mt Zion, which is a completely different place than the Yevusi city of Jerusalem.

Scene 4: The Conquest

RG: Now that we've got that worked out, I'd like to take a second look at the biblical passage that tells about the conquest of Jerusalem. It is one of the more difficult passages to understand, but it is worth the effort. There is a really amazing story here. Look at verse 6: first the Yevusi inhabitants tell David: "You cannot come in here unless you remove the blind and the lame." The Yevusi say to themselves: "David will not enter here." Then in verse 7, David takes the fortress of Zion. Then in verse 8 David makes this proclamation "Whoever strikes a Yevusi and reaches the conduit and the lame and blind who are hated by David's soul." Therefore they say: "a blind person or a lame person will not enter the house". Lastly in verse 9 it reiterates that David resided in the fortress of Zion, which he called City of David.

J: I must admit I don't understand a thing about the blind and the lame and the conduit. It's all very confusing.

RG: Well, this is one of the most obscure passages in the bible. There are different ways of explaining it, including a few modern theories put forth by archeologists. But

I will tell you how Rashi understood the story. The Yevusi had a group of blind and lame persons chained up in defensive positions at the gate of the city, so that any attempt to storm the gate directly would result in killing these helpless individuals. David was not willing to attack the blind and the lame. So the Yevusi thought that David would not enter the city. Now why would David hesitate to attack the blind and the lame? Well, Rashi explains that David would consider disgraceful to kill such helpless persons in battle. On the other hand, according to some archeologists it was believed back then that if a warrior killed a lame person or a blind person then he would himself become lame and blind. In any event David could not break through the gates directly.

J: So How did David take the city in the end?

RG: Well here is where the Archeologists might be helpful. A system of tunnels and channels has been uncovered. It appears that these tunnels permitted the Yevusi to access their water supply without leaving the city. The Gihon spring which supplied the cities water was outside the walls, but these tunnels and special fortifications let the Yevusi get to the water without exposing themselves to enemy attack. It is usually surmised that David or his soldiers had found some way to slip into one of the water channels and sneak into the city. From there, the commandos would work their way to the city gate, and un-chain the lame and the blind. Then David could storm the gate. It also seems that the spot where David's men could get into the water channel was guarded. Because when David is looking for volunteers he says: "Whoever strikes a Yevusi and reaches the conduit, and then continues on to the lame and the blind..."

J: You know that sentence seems to break off in the middle. What happens to the one who gets in and accomplishes the mission?

RG: Well obviously, he gets a promotion. It is really so obvious that it doesn't need stating. Incidentally this same story is told in the first book of Chronicles in a simplified form, and there it tells you the name of the soldier who penetrated the defenses. It was Yoav ben Tzeruya, and he did get a promotion. We will see that in a moment. OK?

J: OK, but tell me why did David hate the lame and the blind?

RG: I think that it just means that David was totally disgusted by the use of these unfortunate people in such a callous way. From then on he didn't want to have contact with the lame or the blind because he didn't want people to think he was recruiting them into his army to perform this kind of disgraceful tactics.

J: Therefore David's recruiters will say "a blind person or a lame person will not enter the house." That's like saying "Our army will never recruit the lame and the blind!"

RG: Now let's just read the biblical passage again and you will see very clearly that the fortress of Zion and the Yevusi city of Jerusalem are different things.

J: OK [He reads and translates the text Samuel 2 5:6-10] And the King and his people went to Jerusalem to the Yevusi, inhabitants of the land, and they said to David "You will not enter here until you remove the blind and the lame" saying [to themselves] "David will not enter here". And David conquered the fortress of Tzion, which is the City of David. And David said on that day: "whoever strikes a Yevusi and reaches the conduit and the lame and the blind who are the hated of David's soul..." [adding the missing words] will get promoted...right?

RG: Right!

J: [continues reading and translating] therefore they will say "A blind person or a lame person will not enter the house". And David resided in the fortress and He called it City of David. And David built around from the land fill and inward. And David went forth increasing in greatness, and Hashem, the lord of Hosts was with him.

RG: It is obvious that the fortress of Zion and Jerusalem are completely different places. When David can't get in to Jerusalem because of the lame and the blind, he circles around and captures Mt Zion first. Maybe from the vantage point of Mt Zion he is able to look into the city and understand how the inhabitants are getting water. Or maybe he learns the secret from some of the defenders of the fortress he takes as captives. In any event, David maintains his personal residence on Mt Zion, even after he completes the capture of Jerusalem. The similar passage in the book of chronicles (1 11:4-9) is also very clear if you'd like to read it:

J: OK, here goes [He reads and translates...] And David and all Israel went to Jerusalem which is Yevus, and there were the Yevusi, inhabitants of the land. And the inhabitants of Yevus said to David "you will not enter here" and David captured the fortress of Tzion that is the City of David. And David said whoever strikes a Yevusi first will be a leader and commander, and Yoav ben Tzeruya went up first and became a leader. And David resided in the fortress; therefore they called it City of David. And they built the City from the land fill to the encircling wall, and Yoav sustained the rest of the city. And David continued to go forth increasingly great and Hashem of Hosts was with him.

RG: Doesn't that sum it up very clearly? First David captures the fortress of Zion, and then he sends his volunteer commando take down the city of Jerusalem. David maintains his residence in the fortress, while he turns over the day to day ruling of Jerusalem over to Yoav ben Tzeruya who originally penetrated its defences.

J: I must admit it seems very clear to me now!

Scene 5: Mt Zion and Jerusalem

[J and RG are now standing on the roof of King David's tomb.]

RG: We are standing on the roof of King David's Tomb. Look around you at the view. You can understand why David wanted to take out this fortress before attacking Jerusalem itself. And he did it! At first David settled in the Fortress, which he called "City of David". Later on he had his royal residence built in Jerusalem itself, mostly it seems for his wives and children...look here in verse Samuel 2 chapter 14 "And David took more concubines and wives from Jerusalem...And these are the names of those children born to him in Jerusalem." His children were born in Jerusalem because that is where his wives were, in the royal residence. On the other hand, this place, Mount Zion...the city of David...was David's personal center of activities... where his heart was.

J: What kind of things do you think David was involved with here?

RG: I think of it like this...Jerusalem was about ruling the tribes of Israel, about maintaining the army and about being King....Mt. Zion or the City of David...well that was about worshiping Hashem, about prayer, about composing psalms, about Torah study and about the Mysteries of Creation and Divine revelation. I think David had the parts of his life distinct. When he was in Jerusalem he was King. But when he climbed up Mt. Zion he became a beloved servant of Hashem, the sweet singer of psalms and the master of Hashem's Torah. Scripture is also very clear about where King David brought the Holy Ark of the Covenant. It says here in chapter 6 that he brought the Ark of the Covenant up to the City of David, that is the fortress of Zion...here to this very place... MOUNT ZION, dancing all in a very ecstatic and wonderful way.

J: Do you mean to say that Mt Zion was once the site of the Temple?

RG: Not at all. The Temple Mount is actually down there slightly north of the ancient site of Jerusalem. Where we all know where that is. However, during the lifetime of David, and until his son Solomon completed the Temple, the holy Ark of the Covenant and the Divine presence resided in a tent, just like during the years that Israel wandered in the desert. That tent was pitched here. And most certainly there was a complex of buildings for training priests, sacred musicians, composers, scribes, teachers and prophets! High above the bustle and noise of the city Jerusalem...a different atmosphere! An atmosphere of holiness and wonder!

J: So this place really is Mt Zion!

RG: Well there is a real established tradition, first recorded in writing by a student of the Ramban over 800 years ago, which says exactly this. Prior to the building of the Temple, Mt Zion... this very Mt Zion where we are standing...is where the Ark of the Covenant and the Divine presence resided.

J: Then tell me Rabbi Goldstein, how is it that the Temple was not built here!

RG: That is a different question. Unfortunately I have to be moving along to my next meeting. But there are many fine scholars and sages here on Har Tzion who can help you!

Scene 6: The temple and the Tomb.

J: So our next question is...If Mt. Zion is really this sacred, why wasn't the Temple built here? To help us with this question, I've asked Rabbi Avraham to spare a few moments of his time. Rabbi Avraham is the Rabbi of the Jewish quarter and is responsible for answering many Halachic Questions every day.

Rabbi Avraham: The Holy Temple had to be built on the site where Avraham offered up his son Isaac, at the same place where Yaakov had his vision of the ladder reaching up to heaven. That is the Har Habayit, the Temple Mount. It could be that at one time David thought to build the temple here. But whatever David thought in the beginning, Hashem revealed to him the truth in the end...

J: Tell me the story.

A: the story is told in the book of Samuel. Once there was a terrible plague which afflicted the Children of Israel. David had a vision of the angel who was driving the

plague. David saw the angel standing on the granary of Arvena the Yevusi. David threw himself down on the ground and prayed. He took responsibility for the plague. He said "Behold I have sinned and I have behaved improperly, but these sheep, the children of Israel...what did they do?" The prophet Gad told David to build an Altar on the granary of Arvana. David paid full price for the property, and built the altar. When he sacrificed on the altar the plague stopped. Then David knew the Granary of Arvana was meant to be the place of the Holy Temple.

J: Still until the ark was moved into the Temple by King Solomon, it was in a tent, right here on Mt Zion.

A: That is what the tradition says.

J: So I have a question. Mt Zion is actually higher up than the Temple Mount, so why is it that when King Solomon moved the ark to the Temple mount, it says that he "brought up" the ark from the city of David. Wouldn't it have been more accurate to say "being down" the ark?

A: I get that question sometimes, and I think it's not a hard question at all. First, it is not polite to say that the ark is going down. And since the ark was moving to a place of greater holiness, then it was certainly moving up in honor and sanctity! You don't need to take the idea of going up so literally.

J: I see.

A: I'm pretty sure that when the Ark was moved from Mt. Zion to the Temple Mount, the name Mt. Zion moved as well. So eventually the name Mt Zion also gets attached to the Temple Mount. But of course, that doesn't mean that the original Mt. Zion lost its holiness!

J: That is a good explanation. You know, one of the things that didn't add up, was that according to the archeologist, Zion was the name of a fortress in old Yevusi Jerusalem, and I couldn't understand how the name of one fort in Jerusalem got attached to the Temple mount.

A: Well if you rely on the tradition its works out very well. The fortress of Zion stood here, on the top of the mountain. So this place is called Mt Zion. Then name moved to the Temple Mount when the Ark moved there. It's like saying the Temple Mount is "New Mt Zion"

J: Like, lehavdil, New England, or New Mexico

A: Right!

J: But here is another problem. If you think that Mt. Zion was the place of holy Ark of the Covenant...what sense would it make for King David to put his grave here? A grave is a source of Tum'ah, ritual impurity. And you are not allowed to bring impurity into a holy place!

A: That is not accurate! There are different grades of holiness even on the Temple Mount, and while you could not put a grave in the temple building or near the Altar, you *are allowed* to place a deceased human body on the outer portions of the Temple Mount. The Talmud in tractate Pesachim learns this from the fact that Moshe Rabbenu took with him the bones of Yosef from Egypt. The level of holiness of Moshe's tent was equivalent to the holiness of the Temple mount. And right there was Yosef's ark...his coffin. In fact there is a really amazing passage in the Talmud tractate Sotah where it says that for years people would see Yosef's ark so close to the Ark of the Covenant, and they would wonder "Is it possible for a corpse to go along with the Divine presence?" And Moshe would reply "Yes! For this one fulfilled what is written in this one. Yosef fulfilled the Torah that was in the Ark of the Covenant."

J: So it makes sense King David's grave would be placed, close to the Ark of the Covenant. It would be a way of saying that King David's life was an embodiment of the Torah.

A: That's right. One of the traditions that the Talmud relates in tractate Berachot is that King David was more than a warrior, king and songwriter. He was a Torah scholar, one of the great sages of Halacha and Jewish Law. People don't usually think of the personality of King David in this way. The idea of putting his grave on Mt. Zion is a way of saying that King David and the Torah are really one and the same thing.

J: Tell me more about the tradition of King David's Tomb.

A: First you know that it says in the book of Kings that King David was buried in Ir David that is the "City of David", which as you now understand, is the same as Mt Zion. In addition we have a very good written text that affirms the tradition of the location of King David's tomb. Rabbi Benjamin of Toledo visited the land of Israel about 800 years ago, where he visited many places including the Royal Tomb on Mt Zion. He tells the story that the Tomb had been discovered about twenty years before his visit. Some workers were repairing a wall in a Christian monastery when they uncovered a cave. Some workers entered the cave and found a stone table with a

golden scepter and crown placed upon them. When they tried to go farther, a great wind blew both workers out of the cave with a warning not to enter again...

J: You know what I don't like about that story?

A: Tell me,

J: First it means that there is no real tradition about the tomb. Somebody finds a cave and tells a miracle story! What if I am a skeptical kind of guy?

A: Well, I think that when the cave was found, the Jews understood that this was King David's Tomb, simply because the Jews knew more or less where it was, even if the precise location had been obscured by the Christian building projects. I suspect that the miracle story was used to keep nosy Christians out of the cave. By the way, do you know what a holy relic is?

J: No I don't.

A: Well back then in the olden days Christians used to go around breaking into tombs and collecting the bones of people that they thought were holy. They called these poor desecrated bones "Holy Relics." They would keep them in the hope of receiving miracles. They would pray to them, and use them in all sorts of ways. They would even put bones or pieces of bones into the altars of their churches. So the Christians needed to be convinced not to try and break into the Kind David's tomb to steal bones.

J: So the Jews spread the story to keep the Christians out!

A: Exactly! But I don't think the Jews needed any proof that this was King David's tomb. They just knew that this was it, because of the traditions that were handed down from ancient times.

J: Thank you Rabbi Avraham!

Scene 7: The Meaning of Mt Zion

J: So, we have solved the mystery of Mt Zion, and we have found support for the tradition that says that the Ark of the Covenant used to be here, and that King David's tomb is really here. But I'd still like to find out more about what all this means to us

today. I can't think of anyone better able to help us than The Rosh Yeshivah of Yeshivas Toras Yisroel of Mt Zion, Rabbi Mordechai Goldstein, Shlita.

Rosh Yeshiva: Hello Joseph, have you found the answers you seek?

J: Certainly Rabbi. Still I was wondering if you could explain to me the spiritual significance of Mt Zion on a deeper level.

RH: I always think of the verse in Hoshea (3:5) "Then the children of Israel will repent and they will search for Hashem and for David their King and they will tremble for Hashem and for his goodness at the end of days." Now the sages explained this verse by saying that redemption is coming in three stages. First we need to seek out Hashem...that means accepting upon ourselves Malchus Shomaim, the Kingdom of Heaven. Next we also need to seek out King David, and accept upon ourselves the Malchus Beis Dovid, the Kingdom of David. After that The Holy Temple will be rebuilt and we will be able to tremble with joy in the presence of Hashem and His goodness! So according to the sages we need to search...to search for Hashem, and for King David and then we can bring back the Holy Temple.

J: But tell me Rabbi, How can we search for Hashem?

RH: I believe that searching for Hashem and the Kingdom of Heaven, means trying to see Hashem's Glory revealed in everything. It also means learning the Torah and finding out his Hashem's will so we can take part in the Kingdom of Heaven by doing his commandments.

J: Sounds good to me! How do we search for David and his Kingdom?

RH: By searching out Mt Zion! By pouring our heart out at King David's tomb! By strengthening our Jewish presence right here... and by learning Torah here on Mt Zion. That's how we become part of Malchus Beis Dovid! The Kingdom of David!

J: What makes the Torah learned on Mt Zion so special?

RH: I believe that when you learn Torah on Mt Zion, it has a musical quality. That is why the Psalms are so important here. Don't get me wrong! I'm not saying we turn Torah into Music. You know that David was punished because he thought that Torah could really be turned into music. Song is Song and Torah is Torah. Still you can have Torah with a song-like quality. This means that the Torah you study, you feel it coming out of your heart at the same time you absorb it with your mind. I believe that when you study Torah this way, you receive special insights that Hashem puts in each

person's heart. Every time to learn Torah you will see it in a new way. That is studying Torah with King David! Just like when a great musician plays music, he brings out something new each time he plays it! The Torah is always the same, but each person who learns it brings out something special and new. The Kingdom of David is special because it helps each person discover their own unique Torah ideas, and mission in life.

J: But don't you have to be a great scholar in order to learn like that!?

RH: You don't have to be the world's greatest scholar. But you have to be willing to learn with self sacrifice! To push yourself more than you would ordinarily. To struggle with the Torah text until it gives you its secret! Here in our yeshiva we teach you to revere and obey the gedolim, the great Sages of the generation...but we also say that in our yeshiva the goal is for you to become a Gadol. And you can be a Gadol, a Great one....In this Mishna! In this passage of Gemara! In this Halacha of the Rambam! You can be a Gadol because you see something there that only you can see! We have a special Method of investigative learning which I inherited from my teachers, and which we have developed even farther. This is how we teach and study on Mt Zion. Members of our Yeshiva have brought back the study of Talmudic logic, which has been almost completely forgotten. Members of the Yeshiva have re-published classic texts on this subject with new translations and commentary!

J: I understand!

RH: Another part of the King David's Path of Torah is that you really have to perfect and complete your character. This is called studying Mussar. Here on Mt. Zion we still do that. Part of being that unique person means to take have to take your character and to make it shine. You must clean out the imperfections of your personality. It is such hard work. But each person has only one personality, and if you don't perfect it, no one else can do it for you. And I can tell you that the graduates of our Yeshiva have been sent out all over the Jewish world. Each one is an original. Each one sanctifies Hashem's name. Each one has made a contribution to the Torah world. This is one yeshiva where every part of Torah is studied seriously, Halacha, Aggada, Mussar, Tanach, and Hashkafah. Our Yeshiva pioneered new musical forms to bring the light of Torah to contemporary ears. We were the only Yeshiva with an in house band. The band, of course is the Diaspora Yeshiva Band! And that kind of creative activity is still going on. A Saturday Night Melava Malka still happens here on Mt Zion, where creative people come together to make music and share feelings of holiness and joy.

J: Well the original band is famous! But I didn't know that music is still pouring out from Mt Zion!

RH: There is a tremendous spiritual energy here, which makes so many things happen. So much Torah and Prayer and Psalms and songs! I hope I have helped you understand about the significance of Mt. Zion.

J: Thank you Rabbi Goldstein.

Scene 8: Conclusion

J: Dear friends, in this presentation we have tried to champion the tradition that identifies this place as being Mt Zion, the site of King David's tomb. We believe that this place isn't just another historic site in Jerusalem; it's a unique holy site that we must not abandon. Rather, Mt. Zion must be developed as a center of spirituality, Torah, Prayer and Song. Mt Zion is the last remaining piece of biblical Jerusalem that remains to be developed. There is so much to be discovered here! And there are many opportunities to dedicate buildings and projects in a location visited by thousands every year. Right here, on Mt Zion, the heart of Jerusalem. Now it is up to you! Will you stand up for Mt Zion? Will you stand with us?

[As Josef says the last lines he stands up, and other Yeshiva and faculty members approach him and stand around him until a large and impressive group stands there. Inspiring music cuts in and the camera shifts upwards towards the blue sky. A panoramic view of the Mt Zion scene filmed on the roof of Kever David, where the camera spins around slowly showing the entire scene over and over. Then it all fades to blue sky. END]