

The [Secret](sod.html) of Place and Space

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The center of place and space is the [Temple](temple.html).[[1]](#footnote-1) What do we mean by place?

There are [ten](ten.html) concentric layers of space in the [world](worlds.html). The [Mishna](orallaw.html)[[2]](#footnote-2) mentions [ten](ten.html) levels[[3]](#footnote-3) of holiness, for these layers of space, within Eretz Yisrael:

1. The walled cities,[[4]](#footnote-4)
2. the [city](city.html) of [Jerusalem](city.html),[[5]](#footnote-5)
3. Mount Moriah, 4. the area within the surrounding rampart,
4. the Women’s Courtyard,
5. the Courtyard of the Israelites,
6. the Priestly Courtyard,
7. the area between the altar and
8. the Entrance Hall to the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html),
9. the building of the [Sanctuary](mikdash.html), and
10. the Holy of Holies.[[6]](#footnote-6)

The [world](worlds.html) is our place our space. As we move towards [Jerusalem](city.html), the quality of space and the material [world](worlds.html) is different. The material [world](worlds.html) is weightier. The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for ‘weight’ is the same word used for ‘honor’ or ‘dignity’ (The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for heavy or weight is *kaved* (כבד)*.* The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word for honor or respect is *kavod.* (כבוד) Yes, they’re related. They share the same root [letters](letters.html), and in [Hebrew](hebrew.html), that means they’re definitely related.)

On his way to [travel](mashal.html) to Eretz Yisrael, Rabbi Chanina used to lift up stones to weigh them. He wanted to [know](daat.html) when he crossed the border and entered the holy land. As long as the stones weighed their normal weight, he [knew](daat.html) that he was still outside the land. However, when he picked up a stone and it weighed much more than normal stones, he [knew](daat.html) that he had crossed into the Land. Tosafot notes that this episode is found in the Tanchuma,[[7]](#footnote-7) where the [Midrash](orallaw.html) tells us that as soon as Rabbi Chanina realized that he was in Eretz Yisrael, he kissed the stones as he proclaimed:[[8]](#footnote-8) “For your servants have cherished her stones, and favored her [dust](rock.html).”

Maharal writes that the fact that the stones of Eretz Yisrael are heavier than the stones outside The Land, לארץ חוץ, is a function of the greatness of the land. Even mundane objects such as stones are more [spiritual](physical.html) in their essence than those found outside the land. As a result, the stones are not as readily affected by external [physical](physical.html) forces, and they remain firm and stable, unchanged and unmoved when they are lifted. This results in their seeming heavier.

The [liver](body.html) is called kaved, the heavy organ. That is where the soul makes contact with the [body](body.html). When you move into [Israel](gen-jew.html), you move into the dimension of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s honor or glory.

The [Gemara](orallaw.html) says that the land of [Israel](city.html) expands to fit all of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people. This is called eretz tzvi.

The comparison of Eretz Yisrael to the skin of a deer which [one](one.html) [Talmudic](orallaw.html) Sage interpreted as a tribute to the lands ability to produce fruits quickly and plentifully was applied by Rabbi Chanina to the expanding nature of its territory.

Challenged by a heathen skeptic how it was possible, as the Sages claimed, that millions of [Jews](gen-jew.html) once lived in a part of Eretz Yisrael called Har HaMelech, he referred him to the Prophet Yirmiyahu’s description of the country as "the land of the deer". Just as when the skin of a deer is removed from its carcass it is impossible to once again have it envelop the animal’s flesh because of its contraction, so too when [Jews](gen-jew.html) live in Eretz Yisrael the land expands to absorb them after contracting when they are not there.

In the Book of Daniel,[[9]](#footnote-9) Eretz Yisrael is described as "Eretz Ha-Tzvi." The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word tzvi connotes splendor, reflect­ing our [desire](needs.html) and love for the land, hence Eretz Ha-Tzvi, the desirable, beautiful land. Alternately, the word tzvi can mean "deer", hence "the land of the deer". The [Talmud](orallaw.html) explains: Just as the hide of the deer has the capacity to encompass its [body](body.html), but shrinks when separated from its flesh, so too can the Land of [Israel](city.html) expand to encompass its rightful inhabitants but shrinks when we are [exiled](galuyot.html) from it. If this be the case, should it not have been called Eretz Tzvi, "deer land", thus equating the nature of the land with the deer? Why then is it described as Eretz Ha-Tzvi (ארץ הצבי), "land of the deer," as if the possessor takes on the characteristic of the deer? Perhaps the lesson implied by our Sages is that only when the possessor of the land expands himself to the land can it attain the quality of the deer, allowing it to stretch to its inhabitants' [needs](needs.html). And we "expand ourselves" through the way in which we regard the land's holiness and respect its special qualities. Just as a deer who is killed would not be able to have all of its meat that was taken out of its [body](body.html) put back into its skin (which is too small to contain the meat after death), so too is Eretz Yisrael. When people are living there (as in when the deer is alive), there is a lot of space. When they are not, the land is small.

Thus we understand that the land of [Israel](city.html) will expand to include plenty of room for all the [Jews](gen-jew.html). This has some significant ramifications when you stop to think that the vast majority of [known](daat.html) [Jews](gen-jew.html) today come from just two [tribes](tribes.html): The [tribe](tribes.html) of Yehudah and the [tribe](tribes.html) of Levi. That means that 10/12th of all [Jews](gen-jew.html) are incognito even to themselves. If there are [fourteen](fourteen.html) million [Jews](gen-jew.html) from the [tribes](tribes.html) of Yehudah and Levi, then that suggests that the other [ten](ten.html) [tribes](tribes.html), when they are exposed, will [number](nchart.html) eighty-[four](four.html) million. That means that just the [Jews](gen-jew.html) living today will [number](nchart.html) ninety-[eight](eight.html) million! Now when you add to that by all the [Jews](gen-jew.html) of history, [one](one.html) can easily see two billion [Jews](gen-jew.html). And they will all comfortably fit in the land of [Israel](city.html)! This is remarkable when you consider that [Israel](gen-jew.html) is only slightly larger than [New](new.html) Jersey.

Now we understand that the land is weightier and more flexible than any other land. As we move into the inner circle of [Jerusalem](city.html), we move into a higher dimension of space. The [Mishna](orallaw.html) puts it this way:

*Avot 5:1 … a man never said to his fellow, "The place is too strait for me to lodge in* [*Jerusalem*](city.html)*”.*

The simple meaning is that there was lodging for the millions of pilgrims who went up for the [festivals](festivals.html). But the deeper meaning is that [Jerusalem](city.html) exists in a higher dimension of space when it comes to the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people.

As we move closer to the center, to the precincts of the [Temple](temple.html), you reach a far higher dimension of space. When the [Jews](gen-jew.html) came to celebrate the pilgrimage [festivals](festivals.html), they all fit into the courtyard. [One](one.html) can appreciate the flexibility of “space” within the [Temple](temple.html) when they see what happened on [Yom Kippur](kippur.html)im, according to the [Mishna](orallaw.html).[[10]](#footnote-10) In the Musaf [prayers](prayer.html) of [Yom Kippur](kippur.html)im, each [time](time.html) the [High Priest](priests.html) would utter the in­effable holy [name](name.html) of the Almighty, the Tetragrammaton, when the people heard it, they knelt and prostrated themselves, and then, too, the miracle of space occurred.

How tightly were they pressed together originally? The commen­taries associate the [Mishnah](orallaw.html)'s word tzefufim with the word tzaf, to float: *There was no room for anyone to move in any direction*; everyone was held pressed, as stiff as a beam, until his [legs](body.html) could be lifted from the ground, and he would float, as it were. Anyone who has ridden [New](new.html) York’s subways in the rush hours would [know](daat.html) what is meant here.

The [Mishna](orallaw.html)[[11]](#footnote-11) tells even more: When they bowed amid ample room, each person had [four](four.html) cubits of space about him, [one](one.html) cubit in each direction, so that no [one](one.html) would [hear](mashal.html) another’s [prayer](prayer.html). But, something more basic can be learned here, from the “timing" of the miracle: it happened *only* when all [prayed](prayer.html) and bowed in [prayer](prayer.html). Not until then did the great pressure of crowding abate. [One](one.html) cannot help but see that when [one](one.html) empties their ego and prostrates to [HaShem](hashem.html), then, and only then, does everyone have room to prostrate. Our egos certainly take up a lot of space!

So, in the [Temple](temple.html) we have a higher dimension of space, the dimension of the miraculous.

Now, lets move to the most inner circle, the area [known](daat.html) as the Holy of Holies. Here space no longer has meaning as we understand it.

The essence of this [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) is that it can exist only within the confines of space and [time](time.html). In the [worlds](worlds.html) above this [world](worlds.html), there is no space, no [time](time.html). They are [spiritual](physical.html) [worlds](worlds.html). Between this existence and its neighbors, however, there exists a place of transition, a border. Where is the border between this [world](worlds.html) and the next? Where is this gateway to eternity?

In the [First](one.html) [Temple](temple.html), in the middle of the Holy of Holies, there sat the Aron Kodesh, the holy [Ark](ark.html). There's an amazing fact about the Aron. It took up no space. Even though **it had** [**physical**](physical.html) **dimension**, nevertheless it occupied no space.

If you went into the holy of holies and measured from [one](one.html) wall to the Aron, and then you measured from the other side of the Aron to the far wall, those two measurements combined would be the same as the distance from [one](one.html) wall to the other. In other words, the distance between the two walls of the holy of holies was the same whether you measured from the walls to the sides of the Aron or whether you measured its entire width.

How was this possible? how was it possible for the Aron to have measurements and yet occupy no space in this [world](worlds.html)?

Wherever there is a border between two entities, we can expect to see elements of both. The Aron was the border of two [worlds](worlds.html). It sat on the even Shetiya[[12]](#footnote-12), the [rock](rock.html) from which [HaShem](hashem.html) extruded the entire universe. This was the "border post" between two [worlds](worlds.html); thus the characteristics of both this [world](worlds.html) and the next were manifest. The Aron occupied no space because it rested on the even Shetiya, the stone from which this [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) was extruded, the gateway to beyond space. On the other [hand](fourteen.html), from the place of the Aron flows all [creation](bara.html), all space and [time](time.html). This is the place where the [physical](physical.html) [world](worlds.html) begins; thus, it had dimensions. The Aron was in this [world](worlds.html), but it was not of this [world](worlds.html); it had dimensions without occupying space.

The even Shetiya as the origin of space, occupies no space. This is where space is [created](bara.html), yet space has no meaning at this place.

While [Jerusalem](city.html) is a [city](city.html) which is the capital of [Israel](gen-jew.html), it is also the capital of reality. The even Shetiya, in the center of [Jerusalem](city.html), as the origin of space, occupies no space. This is where space is [created](bara.html), yet space has no meaning in this place. The Ramban makes note of the fact that the ‘rules’ of space do not apply to the point where space comes into being. The sorrow we [experience](experience.html) for the destruction of the [Temple](temple.html) and of [Jerusalem](city.html) is that we can no longer tap in to power of [time](time.html) and space, in that place. Yet, [HaShem](hashem.html), obviously is the origin of [time](time.html) and place and we still have some limited access to Him, we no longer have the direct access that we used to have.

[Yitzchak](isaac.html)[[13]](#footnote-13) experienced ‘death’ on the altar, above the even Shetiya. Never the less, he also experienced [resurrection](techiyat.html) in that same place. Note how he and his parents were prepared for this, given the [name](name.html) given to him by [HaShem](hashem.html): יצחק, [Yitzchak](isaac.html) (“He shall [laugh](mashal.html)”).

[Laughter](mashal.html) is a function of the [daat](daat.html). We respond with [laughter](mashal.html) to an [event](feasts.html), or sequence of [events](feasts.html), which have a certain form, and then this form reverses itself. The sharper the reversal, the sharper we [laugh](mashal.html). The sudden juxtaposition of two polar opposites causes us to [laugh](mashal.html). When [one](one.html) thing becomes its radical opposite, that’s what provokes [laughter](mashal.html). [Laughter](mashal.html) is a response to the unexpected. [Laughter](mashal.html) is the reaction of humans when the confines of reason have been broken. We [laugh](mashal.html) occasionally out of extreme [fear](fear.html) or out of extreme joy.

[Laughter](mashal.html) is the [experience](experience.html) of the soul to the transition from this [world](worlds.html) to the next. Death, from the [spiritual](physical.html) perspective, is the funniest [experience](experience.html) imaginable.

This [world](worlds.html) is the exact opposite of the next [world](worlds.html). In this [world](worlds.html) it seems that everything is headed for decay and death. When we suddenly transition to the next [world](worlds.html), we see that it is not like that at all.

Now that we [know](daat.html) what causes us to [laugh](mashal.html), let’s look at examples from the Torah. The [first](one.html) use of קחצ “[laugh](mashal.html)” is found in:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 17:17*** *Then* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *fell upon his* [*face*](body.html)*, and laughed, and said in his* [*heart*](body.html)*, Shall a child be born unto him that is an hundred years old? And shall Sarah, that is ninety years old, bear?*

This [first](one.html) occurrence of [laughter](mashal.html) indicates that this is where [laughter](mashal.html) was [created](bara.html). [Avraham](avraham.html), when confronted with the impossibility of having a son in his old age, laughs. This is where we learn that [laughter](mashal.html) occurs when we are confronted with the impossible, where two opposites come together. Both [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah laughed when confronted with the impending [birth](birth.html) of [Yitzchak](isaac.html):

***Bereshit (Genesis) 18:10*** *And he said, I will certainly return unto thee according to the* [*time*](time.html) *of life; and, lo, Sarah thy wife shall have a son. And Sarah heard it in the tent door, which was behind him. 11 Now* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *and Sarah were old and well stricken in age; and it ceased to be with Sarah after the manner of women. 12 Therefore Sarah laughed within herself, saying, After I am waxed* old shall I have pleasure, my lord being old also?

יצחק, [Yitzchak](isaac.html) (“He shall [laugh](mashal.html)”) is a person of extremes. He is also “the unexpected [one](one.html).” He is the person who we least expected to come onto the scene. [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah didn’t expect him. Ishmael was certainly jarred by his arrival. [Yitzchak](isaac.html) is a symbol of [laughter](mashal.html) because his very being is a suspension of reality.

[Laughter](mashal.html) is produced only by noticing something which strikes us as ridiculous. But where, in the whole [world](worlds.html) is there any greater absurd contradiction than the expectation that a hundred-year-old man and his ninety-year-old wife, who never had a child in the course of their long married life, now, practically at the end of their lives, should get a son!

Intrinsic to the [experience](experience.html) of [humor](mashal.html), is the [experience](experience.html) of happiness. For example: When a woman is in labor, literally dying to give life, she experiences extremely sharp pains. Just when it seems that it could not get any worse, then the child comes and the incredible pain is forgotten in the joy of a [new](new.html) life. This is the [time](time.html) for [laughter](mashal.html). Yet, the baby is not laughing, he is [crying](mashal.html). It is those on the outside, the mother and the father who [laugh](mashal.html). This is an important concept.

If a person slips on a banana peel, it is NOT funny to the [one](one.html) who slips. It is only funny to those watching. The same applies to those who transition from this [world](worlds.html) to the next. It is difficult for those making the transition, but it is funny to those watching the transition. This is the [secret](sod.html) of [laughter](mashal.html).

יצחק, [Yitzchak](isaac.html) (“He shall [laugh](mashal.html)”) was born at a [time](time.html) when it was impossible to be born. Not only were [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah way past the age of bearing children, but Sarah did not have the [organs](body.html) of [birth](birth.html), she did not have a [womb](thebirth.html)! At this moment when it was impossible, then the [angel](angels.html) came and announced his [birth](birth.html). At that moment, [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah both laughed.

Sarah was criticized for not laughing enough. [Avraham](avraham.html) laughed because he experienced the [birth](thebirth.html) of [Yitzchak](isaac.html), and the holding of him at that moment. Sarah laughed because she would [experience](experience.html) holding [Yitzchak](isaac.html) in [forty](forty.html) weeks.

So, when [Avraham](avraham.html) and Sarah experienced the total reversal of their lives, they laughed. They laughed at the [birth](thebirth.html) of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people! Thus we derive the concept that the concept of the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people is that they are the people of the impossible, and that when the impossible happens, they will [laugh](mashal.html). We live at the moment of the impossible.

A [womb](thebirth.html) and a grave are both called “kever”, in [Hebrew](hebrew.html). Why are they both called the same word? They are called the same word because they are both portals between this [world](worlds.html) and the [Olam HaBa](futures.html). Thus we learn that [laughter](mashal.html) occurs when we [face](body.html) the impossible, the transition between [worlds](worlds.html).

The [letters](letters.html) in [Yitzchak](isaac.html) can be rearranged to: Ketz chai, which means “death in life”, or idiomatically as “the next [world](worlds.html) while yet in this [world](worlds.html)”. This give us a hint that the [Jewish](gen-jew.html) people should be people who are so tuned in to the [spiritual](physical.html) aspect that they can actually live in the next [world](worlds.html) whilst still in this [world](worlds.html).

[Yitzchak](isaac.html) means [laughter](mashal.html). [Laughter](mashal.html) occurs when two opposites come together. [Yitzchak](isaac.html) is the [connection](connection.html) between the higher and the lower [worlds](worlds.html). The higher [world](worlds.html) is just the opposite of this [world](worlds.html). It is what this [world](worlds.html) was supposed to be. No wonder this [connection](connection.html) was named [Yitzchak](isaac.html), [laughter](mashal.html).

The mystical concept of the root of [laughter](mashal.html) is as a response to deliverance from imminent, and certain, disaster.

People [laugh](mashal.html) when they encounter a sharp and unexpected encounter of opposites. The sharper the contrast between the opposites, the greater the [laughter](mashal.html).

***Mishlei (Proverbs) 32:25*** *Strength and dignity are her clothing; and she shall* [*laugh*](mashal.html) *on the day of the end (death).*

There can hardly be a sharper contrast between this [world](worlds.html) and the next. Thus we see that the woman of valor will [laugh](mashal.html) at this transition. To the woman of valor who has already seen through the mask of this [world](worlds.html), and sees the next [world](worlds.html) whilst still in this [world](worlds.html), this will be a [time](time.html) of [laughter](mashal.html).

The [Hebrew](hebrew.html) words for “[laughter](mashal.html)” and for “play” are closely related: tz’chok and s’chok; and it should be no surprise at all that the word used for intimacy between man and wife in Torah is this very word: “And [Isaac](isaac.html) was causing Rebecca his wife to [laugh](mashal.html)”, referring to marital intimacy. There are no empty expressions in Torah; the delicate and pure language of Torah is always exact. Thus when the woman of valor transitions to the next [world](worlds.html) and experiences the sensation of ‘arrival’ with no place to go and nothing more to do, then she laughs just as she laughed in marital intimacy when she ‘arrived’.

[Esav](edom.html)’s descendants see things as they are, selling their soul for a sweet-tasting moment.

[Yitzchak](isaac.html)’s descendants, the Hakhamim (the wise men) sees the [future](future.html). Rooted to [one](one.html) spot, he knows that true success is the measure of a tree that’s solidly planted. [Yitzchak](isaac.html)’s descendants have seen through the mask of nature and see clearly the [spiritual](physical.html) [world](worlds.html).

[Yitzchak](isaac.html) will [laugh](mashal.html) - and he will [laugh](mashal.html) best.

Now [laughter](mashal.html) is what happens when two opposite things come together. For example: when the arrogant stumble. The [Temple](temple.html) is likewise, a place where two opposites come together: [HaShem](hashem.html) (The infinite Spirit) and man (the [physical](physical.html) and finite).

It is in the [redemption](redemption.html) that true happiness, accompanied by [laughter](mashal.html), will be experienced, as in the verse:

***Tehillim (***[***Psalms***](psalms1.html)***) 126:2*** *Then was our* [*mouth*](body.html) *filled with* [*laughter*](mashal.html)*, and our* [*tongue*](spirit.html) *with singing: then said they among the heathen,* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *hath done great things for them.*

It is amazing to note that after our [bodies](body.html) are reconstructed at the [resurrection](techiyat.html) of the dead, [HaShem](hashem.html) will provide underground passages through which they can be transported to the Holy Land. Until they reach the Land of [Israel](city.html), they will remain [bodies](body.html) without souls. Only there will [HaShem](hashem.html) grant them souls so that they can come to life. This is alluded to in the verse, “[ [HaShem](hashem.html)] gives a soul to the people in [the land]”.[[14]](#footnote-14) This indicates that [HaShem](hashem.html) will provide a soul for the [resurrected](techiyat.html) dead when they are in the Holy Land. Why does the [resurrection](techiyat.html) take place in eretz Yisrael? Because that is where man was [first](one.html) [created](bara.html). Eretz Yisrael is also [Gan Eden](eden.html)!

Finally, the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) word *Makom* - מקם is normally translated as *place*.

*Makom* is a word that we use rather lightly in the English [speaking](mashal.html) [world](worlds.html). In the [Hebrew](hebrew.html) [world](worlds.html) it is never taken or used lightly. You see, *HaMakom* (The Place) - המקם is [one](one.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html)’s names! By referring to [HaShem](hashem.html) as *The Place* we are saying that [HaShem](hashem.html) is not in the [world](worlds.html); rather, the [world](worlds.html) is in [HaShem](hashem.html). HaMakom asserts that [HaShem](hashem.html) is everywhere and everything: [physical](physical.html) and [spiritual](physical.html), matter and energy. All of this makes up the [oneness](oneness.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html). [HaShem](hashem.html) makes a place for the [world](worlds.html). He provides a place for the [world](worlds.html) to exist.

***Bereshit Rabbah 68:9***[*HaShem*](hashem.html) *encompasses the* [*world*](worlds.html)*; the* [*world*](worlds.html) *does not encompass Him[[15]](#footnote-15).*

The Land of [Israel](city.html) is also *HaMakom*, the place on earth set aside by [HaShem](hashem.html) as the Holy Land.

The Torah calls Mt. Moriah, HaMakom:

***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:4-5*** *Then on the* [*third*](three.html) *day* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *lifted up his* [*eyes*](body.html)*, and saw the place (HaMakom) afar off. And they came to the place (HaMakom) which God had told him of; and* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:9*** *And they came to the place (HaMakom) which God had told him of; and* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound* [*Isaac*](isaac.html) *his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood.*

***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:14*** *And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *called the* [*name*](name.html) *of that place (Makom) Adonai-Yireh: as it is said to this day, In the mount of* [*HaShem*](hashem.html) *it shall be seen.*

The [Midrash](orallaw.html) reiterates the significance of *HaMakom*:

[**Midrash**](orallaw.html) **Tehillim** [**Psalm**](psalms1.html) **90** R. Huna said in the [name](name.html) of R. Ammi: Why is the [name](name.html) of the Holy [One](one.html), blessed be He, called “place?” Because He is the place of the [world](worlds.html), as is said, “*Behold, there is a place by Me.* [Abraham](avraham.html) called Him *‘place’”,* as is said “*And* [*Abraham*](avraham.html) *called the* [*name*](name.html) *of that place Adonai-Yireh”*.[[16]](#footnote-16) [Jacob](israelja.html) called Him *‘place’,* as is said “*How full of* [*awe*](fear.html) *is this place”*.[[17]](#footnote-17) Moses called Him *‘place’,* as is said “*Behold, there is a place by Me”*.[[18]](#footnote-18)

Many of the items found in the [Bet HaMikdash](mikdash.html) did not have fixed places. For example, the menorah had a position relative to the Holy [Ark](ark.html), specifically, southeast of the [Ark](ark.html), but it did not have an absolute place in the [Temple](temple.html). In contrast, the Mizbeach, the altar, had an absolute place, and if it was not in that place, the obligation of performing the [Temple](temple.html) service was not fulfilled. Why? Because, says the Rambam, the *place* of the altar is the *place* from which man himself was [created](bara.html)!

We feel homesick when we have been away from our home (the place) for a protracted period of [time](time.html). No matter how humble, we long for our place of origin. We long for our home, our place. Thus we learn that our soul longs to return to [HaShem](hashem.html), it’s origin, it’s source. [Homesickness](mashal.html) was given to us as a [mashal](mashal.html) to help us understand that our soul longs to return to it’s home with [HaShem](hashem.html).

Thus we can understand that *makom*, place, is very significant. It is a [name](name.html) of [HaShem](hashem.html), it is where [HaShem](hashem.html) focuses His attention, it is a place we will ultimately call home.

**\* \* \***

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1. Much of this study is based on a shiur given by Rabbi Akiva Tatz, titled: *Israel and Jerusalem – The Secret of Space*. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. *Keilim* 1:6, quoted by the *Rambam*, in *Hilchot Beit HaBechirah* 7:13-22. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Of the ten levels of holiness descended onto the world, eight of the levels are on the Temple Mount where Yaaqob prayed. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The walled cities of Israel are those settlements physically protected from foreign invasion.  [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Maimonides writes that Jerusalem has a special level of holiness that never lapses. Therefore, even though the Beit HaMikdash lies in ruins entering the site of the Mikdash is forbidden, since we are not in a state of ritual purity. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The innermost room of the Beit HaMikdash, the Holy Temple, is called The Holy of Holies; the Holy Ark was placed in this chamber. This Ark stood on a rock. Our sages tell us this is the rock from which the universe was created. This point is the border between the world and its creator - God. The starting point of all creation is the Holy of Holies. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Parashat Shelach [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Tehillim (Psalms) 102:15 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Daniel 11:16 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. Avot 5:8 [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. Yoma 6:2 [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. The Ramchal, Rabbi Moshe Chaim Luzatto, brings this point home by explaining that all blessing and sustenance come to us from above, from the site of the holy Temple in Jerusalem: "There is a special place where all these roots come together. In that place is the root of all things. In that place are the roots of the earth and all it contains, the heavens, the heavens of the heavens and all their hosts without exception. In the place where all these roots come together, in the middle, there is a single stone. This stone is most precious. It possesses every kind of beauty and charm. It is called the Foundation Stone". [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Yitzchak, Isaac, was THE sacrifice on THE alter in THE place of the Temple: ***Bereshit (Genesis) 22:9*** *When they reached the place G-d had told him about, Abraham built an altar there and arranged the wood on it. He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.* [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Yeshayahu (Isaiah) 42:5 [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Bereshit Rabbah 68:9: Shemot Rabba 45:6 [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. Bereshit (Genesis) 22:14 [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Bereshit (Genesis) 28:17 [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. Shemot (Exodus) 33:21 [↑](#footnote-ref-18)