

# NO NEED TO GO ANYWHERE

by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

*These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion: Tape# 89, Returning From a Medical Emergency on Shabbos. Good Shabbos!*

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## If One Does Not Own Land, He Need Not Go 'Up' for the Festival

At the end of the parsha, the pasuk [verse] says, "Three times in the year all your males shall appear before the L-rd, Hashem, the G-d of Israel" [Shmos 34:23]. This is the command of "aliyah l'regel". On Pesach, Shavuos, and Succos the Jews were commanded to go up to the Beis HaMikdash to see and be seen by the Divine Presence of G-d.

The pasuk continues "...and no man shall covet your land when you go up to appear before Hashem your G-d, three times a year." We are guaranteed that we have nothing to fear while everyone is in Jerusalem. We might have been nervous about leaving no males at home because it would be an open invitation to thieves and enemies. The pasuk tells us to have no fear -- no one will covet our land while we go up to Jerusalem to see the Shechinah.

The Talmud derives a halacha from this -- whoever does not own land is not obligated to go up to Jerusalem on the Festival [Pesachim 8b]. The whole halacha of going up three times a year was for one who owned land.

The Kotzker Rebbe asked, "Why is it that someone who doesn't own land is excused from going up to Jerusalem?" The Kotzker Rebbe answered, "Because he doesn't need to."

Only the person who owns land, who has a connection to this world, who is into materialism, needs to go up to Jerusalem to see the Shechinah. The person who is unencumbered by materialism does not have to go anywhere to see the Shechinah, because he sees it everywhere.

One who has the property, the mortgage, the two garages and the Jacuzzi, etc., etc., has to go to Jerusalem to see the Shechinah. But one who is free of the materialism of this world sees the Shechinah \_everywhere\_, so he is excused from the mitzvah of 'Reiyah,' going to see.

## The Chofetz Chaim & Rav Shimon Schwab: A Tale of Two Grandfathers

This is a true story involving the Chofetz Chaim and Rav Shimon Schwab.

Rav Schwab once visited the Chofetz Chaim, and the Chofetz Chaim asked him if he were a Kohen, Levi or Yisroel. Rav Schwab answered that he was a Yisroel. We all know that the Chofetz Chaim was a Kohen.

The Chofetz Chaim said to Rav Schwab, "You know what the difference between me and you is? Soon the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt. Everyone will go for the first time, crowding the doors to get into the Courtyard of the Beis HaMikdash. There will be a guard at the door who will ask the people whether they are Kohanim, Leviim, or Yisraelim. The Kohanim will get to go inside and do the Service of the Temple. I will be one of those people. You, Rav Schwab, with all the other Yisraelim will be left outside. All the Yisraelim will be terribly jealous of me. They are going to want to do the Service, but the Halacha will be NO! -- Kohanim inside; Yisraelim outside. The Yisraelim will be angry and upset and jealous."

The Chofetz Chaim continued, "You know why, Rav Schwab, it's going to be like that? Because of something that happened thousands of years ago. Thousands of years ago there was something called 'the sin of the Golden Calf.' The Jewish people sinned with the calf. Only 3,000 people participated in that heinous act of idolatry. But when Moshe Rabbeinu called out and asked everyone else to come and put out the fire... When he issued those famous words 'Whoever is for G-d, gather around me' [Shmos 32:26], do you know what happened? Only the tribe of Levi showed up. My grandfather came and responded to that call and your grandfather sat there and did nothing. Therefore the Kohanim who come from the tribe of Levi, will go into the Beis HaMikdash. But you, Yisraelim are going to be on the outside because you sat there and didn't respond."

The Chofetz Chaim then looked at Rav Schwab and said to him, "What do you think? Am I trying to make you feel bad? Am I trying to rub your face in it? Chas V'Sholom! But I want to teach you a lesson. Many times in life you will hear a little voice go off in your head that will say 'Whoever is for G-d, gather around me.' There is going to come an event, there is going to come an issue, something, that everybody is going to be told 'Stand up and be counted.' In whose camp are you? I want you to know that questions like that and challenges like that have implications not only for you but for generations and generations after you. Because your grandfather did not answer 'Yes' in the affirmative to 'Who is for G-d, gather to me', you are excluded from the Temple Service. It was an act that has implications thousands of years later. Because my grandfather said yes, I am a Kohen now and I am going to do the Service."

"Never forget", the Chofetz Chaim told Rav Schwab, "everybody has his moments of 'Who is for G-d, gather around me.' When you hear that voice, stand up and be counted!"

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## Glossary

**aliyah l'regel** -- Going up (to Jerusalem) for the Festival

**Beis HaMikdash** -- House of Sanctity (Temple)

**Shechinah** -- Divine Presence of G-d

**halacha** -- Jewish law

**Reiyah** -- being Seen

**Kohanim** -- Priests, descended from Aharon the High Priest

**Leviim** -- Jews descended from the tribe of Levi.

**Yisraelim** -- Jews from tribes other than Levi.

**Chas v'Sholom** -- Heaven forbid

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## Personalities & Sources:

**Kotzker Rebbe** -- (1787-1859) Rav Menachem Mendel of Kotzk; one of leading Chassidic Rebbes of the mid-nineteenth century.

**Rav Shimon Schwab** -- (1908-1995) for many years a Rav in Baltimore at the Shearith Israel Congregation; later became the Rav of Khal Adath Yeshurun in Washington Heights, New York.

**Chofetz Chaim** -- (1838-1933) Rav Yisrael Meir HaKohen of Radin; author of basic works in Jewish law, thought, and ethics.

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This week's write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Torah Tapes on the weekly Torah portion (#89). The corresponding halachic portion for this tape is: Returning From a Medical Emergency on Shabbos. The other halachic portions for Parshas Ki Sisa from the Commuter Chavrusah Series are:

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