

PROTECTION OF HOLY PLACES LAW, 1967 p. 14

PROTECTION OF HOLY PLACES LAW, 1967

1. The Holy Places shall be protected from desecration and any other violation and from anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places.
2. a. Whosoever desecrates or otherwise violates a Holy Place shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of seven years.
b. Whosoever does anything likely to violate the freedom of access of the members of the different religions to the places sacred to them or their feelings with regard to those places shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of five years.
3. This Law shall add to, and not derogate from, any other law.
4. The Minister of Religious Affairs is charged with the implementation of this Law, and he may, after consultation with, or upon the proposal of, representatives of the religions concerned and with the consent of the Minister of Justice make regulations as to any matter relating to such implementation.

Exodus 3:1-5 –

1 Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian, drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of G-d. 2 An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a blazing fire out of a bush. He gazed, and there was a hush all aflame, yet the bush was not consumed. 3 Moses said, "I must turn aside to look at this marvelous sight; why doesn't the bush burn up?" 4 When the Lord saw that he had turned aside to look, G-d called to him out of the bush: "Moses! Moses!" He answered, "Here I am." 5 And He said, "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground."

Hakhtav vHakabalab on Exodus 3:5

Holy ground – in other words, [ground that is] designated for something exalted, which is why Yonatan Ben Uzziel added "And on it [this ground], you will one day receive the Torah to teach it to the Israelites" [check Aramaic translation!]

Therefore he said "holy ground" as a descriptive that is always coupled with an object [i.e. holy ground for]

Deuteronomy 11:12 –

12 It is a land which the Lord your G-d looks after, on which the Lord your G-d always keeps His eye, from year's beginning to year's end.

Leviticus 19:1-2, 15, 35-37 –

1 The Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 2 Speak to the whole Israelite community and say to them: You shall be holy, for I, the Lord your G-d, am holy.

Missing Ramban to Kedoshim Teeheeyoo

תשמור על
המקומות
הקדושים
של כל הדתות
*The State of
Israel... it will
safeguard the
Holy Places of
all religions;*

R. Nisim of Gerona, Derashot HaRan, Eighth Sermon

And therefore, the prophets and Hasidim [the especially pious] throughout the generations are endowed with Divine abundance and this radiates outward to those who are ready in their generation, and even more so to those whom they bring near them and collaborate with them. Not only during their lives, but even after their death, the abundance can be found at the places of their burial... because their bones, which were already vessels for the Divine abundance, still retain sufficient quality and

dignity for this. And on this account, our Sages said that it is good to prostrate oneself on the graves of tzaddiqim (righteous people) and to pray there, because prayer in that place is more accepted, where there are bodies that already receive the Divine abundance.

The Land of Israel is sacred in two ways – an integral sacredness due to the Shekhina that dwells there, and the sacredness that comes through the people of Israel and leads to the fulfillment of the commandments that can only be performed in Israel.

Encyclopedia of the Talmud, II, Eretz Yisrael (Heb.)

Mishna Keilim 1:6

There are ten levels of holiness. The Land of Israel is the holiest of all lands.... And what makes it holy? They bring from it the omer (barley offering), the first fruits and loaves of bread (an elevation offering of the first grains on Shavuot) things that are not brought from other lands.

"Kitzur Shulchan Aruch", Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried. Ch. 128:13

It is customary to go to the cemetery after the morning service on the day preceding Rosh HaShanah and pray at the graves of righteous people (tzaddiqim). During the visit, we give charity to the poor and recite many supplications to arouse the holy tzaddiqim who are buried there to intercede on our behalf on the Day of Judgment. Furthermore, since tzaddiqim are buried there, the place is holy and pure, and prayers recited there are received more favorably because they were recited on holy ground.

The Holy One, blessed be He, will surely deal compassionately with us on the merit of the tzaddiqim.

Yehuda HaLevi The Kuzari, Second Section 9-12 (Kuzari: The book of Proof and Argument. Isaak Heinemann. Oxford, England: Gurwen Press, 1947)

THE PRE-EMINENCE OF THE COUNTRY

9. THE KHAZARI: What though meanest by 'His people' is now intelligible to me, but thy word 'His country' is difficult for me to appreciate.

10. THE RABBI: But no difficulty is attached to (the assumption) that one country may have higher qualities than others. Obviously there are places in which particular plants, metals, or animals thrive well, or where the inhabitants are distinguished by their form and character – through the mingling of humours resulting in the perfection or imperfection of the soul.

11. THE KHAZARI: Yet I have not heard that the inhabitants of Palestine are better people than other people.

12. THE RABBI: It is the same case as with your hill on which you say the vines thrive so well. If they had not planted vine branches on it and cultivated them well, it would never have produced grapes. So precedence belongs to those particular people who, as stated before, represent the 'pick' and the 'heart' (of mankind); the land has also its part in this and so have the religious acts connected with it, which I would compare to the cultivation of the vineyard. But no other place could share with this pre-eminent people the influence of the Divine power, whereas other hills are also able to produce good wine.

*Yeshayahu Leibowitz
Judaism 13-36 Expanded version of a lecture originally delivered at a seminar on Jewish Studies, Haifa (1953) Hebrew: Mitzvoth Ma'asiyoth" in Judaism, Human Values, and the Jewish State ed. Eliezer Goldman ; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992, Chapter 1*

Shaping life on the foundations of halakha means: creating a category of words and deeds in life whose meaning is sacredness. There is no sacredness – in the religious sense of the word, as distinct from the rhetorical-secular use of the word – except in the carrying out of the commandments: the special deeds devoted to and intended to serve God; while any other deed – whether it is considered "good" or "bad" – that a person does for his pleasure or to fulfill his bodily or emotional needs, i.e. to serve himself is profane. The difference between sacred and profane is the primary religious category, and it is a foundation of religious feeling in the world of institutional religion, the religion of Jewish law. In contrast, the concept of sacredness as an immanent [inherent] characteristic of certain things: people, places, institutions, objects, events – is a mystical-magical concept, from which emanates the scent of idol worship.

Mesbekh Chokhma (R. Meir Simcha HaCohen of Devinsk's commentary on the Torah) on Moses' breaking of the tablets:

Be under no illusion that the Temple and the sanctuary are sacred unto themselves, heaven forbid. The Blessed Holy One dwells among his children in order that they **worship him**, and if they are as a person who has transgressed a covenant, all sanctity is taken from them and they are like a profane vessel desecrated by vandals. Titus entered the Holy of Holies with a prostitute, and it was not damaged, since its sacredness was lifted. And moreover, the tablets are the writing of God, i.e. they are not holy in and of themselves, only for you, when you uphold what is written on them... **Ultimately, there is no sacred matter in the world. Only the One of Blessed Name is sacred...** because no creature is sacred. Only when Israel upholds the Torah according to the will of the Holy One Blessed be His Name... none of the sacred places receive this status from religion, but **insofar as they are dedicated**

places for the performance of the commandments. Mt. Sinai was the source of religion, until the Shekhina was exiled from it, and then it sheep and cattle began to climb on it.

Questions:

- ? How do places become sacred?
 - ? What is "sacredness"? What is there in sacred spaces and places that is lacking in other places? Can one speak of different types of sacredness?
 - ? What are the guidelines for maintaining a sacred place (whether sacred to us or to others)?
- [Is there even such a thing as sacred space? Mishna Kelim...]

Rabbis for Human Rights

We hope you have found these materials helpful and inspiring in exploring the vision of Israel and how we might work towards fulfillment of that vision. Rabbis for Human Rights developed these materials and we are distributing them free of charge. If you would like to support the creation, production and distribution of educational resources such as these, please consider making a contribution by using the form below. You may also make a contribution and find out more about RHR and RHR-NA on our websites: www.rhr.israel.net www.rhr-na.org

Name _____
Address _____
Phone (h) _____ (w) _____
Email _____
Congregation or faith community _____

Please indicate your level of support below:

\$1000 _____ \$360 _____ \$180 _____ \$72 _____ \$36 _____ Other _____

_____ My check to Rabbis for Human Rights – North America is enclosed.

PLEASE MAIL ALL CONTRIBUTIONS TO
RABBIS FOR HUMAN RIGHTS-NORTH AMERICA
BOX 1539, WEST TIBURY, MA.02575

Credit card information: Name as it appears on the credit card _____

Credit card type: Mastercard Visa American Express

Credit card number: _____

Credit Card Expiration Date: _____

Founded in 1988, Rabbis for Human Rights (RHR) is the only organization of rabbis in Israel including Orthodox, Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist and Renewal rabbis, and the only rabbinic organization that explicitly dedicates itself to the Jewish religious tradition of human rights. Dedicated to the physical security and moral vision of the State of Israel as reflected in Israel's Declaration of Independence, RHR develops educational resources on Judaism and human rights and teaches them in Israeli schools and pre-army programs; lobbies for economic justice in Israel; provides support for Palestinian families facing home demolition for administrative reasons; and protects Palestinian farmers' access to their agricultural land. RHR has received the Knesset's Award for Quality of Life and the 2006 Niwano Peace Prize. The work of RHR has been endorsed by the North American Rabbinic Associations of the Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist and Renewal movements.

Founded in 2002, Rabbis for Human Rights – North America (RHR-NA) is an organization of rabbis from all streams of Judaism dedicated to expanding support for the mission and work of RHR in Israel, and to education and advocacy on human rights issues in North America. In North America, RHR-NA has launched Honor the Image of God: Stop Torture Now, a Jewish campaign to end U.S.-sponsored torture. The campaign includes developing educational resources and programming for rabbis and Jewish communities nationwide and organizing Jews in local communities to participate in Jewish and interfaith efforts to end torture. In 2007, RHR-NA launched K'vod Habriot: A Jewish Human Rights Network, the first Jewish Human Rights network of rabbis, communities and individuals dedicated to the human rights of all. In 2008, RHR-NA will host The Second North American Conference on Judaism and Human Rights for rabbis, cantors, rabbinic and cantorial students, and all Jews committed to the protection of human rights for all.