



## 5785 Divrei Torah on Jerusalem by Rabbi Reuven Schreier Yom Kippur / יום כיפור

### Bundled Together *Lifnei Hashem*

Only once a year was entry into the *Kodesh HaKadoshim* sanctioned. With the service of the *haktarat haketoret*, the burning of the incense, the *Kohen Gadol* was allowed to enter the holiest sanctum in the world. The *Gemara Keritot* (6a-6b) explicates the various different ingredients of the *ketoret* and their measurements. Almost all of the ingredients were aromatic and pleasant, except for one. The *chelbena* (galbanum) was a foul-smelling resin that was an essential ingredient of the *ketoret*. The *Gemara* famously explains that the *chelbena* represents members of *Klal Yisrael* who are unrepentant and sinful. Despite their mistakes and flaws, they are essential to complete *Am Yisrael*.

“Rav Chana bar Bizna says that Rabbi Shimon Chasida says: Any fast that does not include the sinners of the Jewish people is not a fast, as the smell of galbanum is foul and yet the verse lists it with the ingredients of the incense. Abaye says that this is derived from here: “It is He Who builds His upper chambers in the heavens and has established His bundle on the earth” (Amos 9:6).”

This important passage serves as the source for our strange proclamation preceding *Kol Nidrei*. אנו מתירין להתפלל עם העברנים, we sanction prayer with the transgressors. The commentaries to *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chayim* 619:1) explain that the afore mentioned *Gemara Keritot* serves as the source for this concept. But the question still remains: why is it important to deliberately invoke and invite the presence of those with such a foul spiritual odor? We would expect their presence to only taint the overall attempts of *Klal Yisrael* to achieve *kaparah*, and yet they seem to be indispensable for the *teshuva* process. Why?

*Yerushalayim* is the city in which all of *Klal Yisrael* exists as one. The *Kohen Gadol* serves as the chief spiritual officer of this holy city. He represents all of *Klal Yisrael*; it is this *shlichut* that allows him to access the innermost sanctums of the *mikdash*. No individual deserves such a privileged and private divine rendezvous. It is only because the *Kohen Gadol* carries the burden of the entire Nation of Israel on his shoulders.

But it isn't sufficient to represent *most* Jews. The *Kohen Gadol* must represent the totality of the metaphysical “body of Israel”. As we have discussed in the past, every Jewish soul is rooted in the same supernal “body”. When one Jew is missing, the *Sefer Torah* that represents *Klal Yisrael* is invalid.

Rav Yaakov Ettlinger (*Aruch Laner* to *Keritot* 6a) focuses on *Abaye's* source text for this concept, where the Jewish people are referred to as “His bundle below”. It is only when *Klal Yisrael* are bundled together that we can achieve *selicha*, *mechila*, and *kappara*. But, by definition, a bundle requires several components. If the *ketoret* only represented righteous individuals, this would not be considered a bundle. Rather, the *ketoret* must represent several different types of Jews to qualify as a true bundle of *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*. The same is true of the *lulav* bundle that we take up on *Sukkot*. Every type of Jew must be represented in order for us



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to present ourselves *lifnei Hashem*. As Rav Adin Steinzaltz tz'l once quipped, "when all Jews must be the same, you do not have unity, you have conformity."

More than a year ago, on September 8<sup>th</sup>, I wrote an article about Jerusalem and bundles for *Parshat Nitzavim*. When I returned to read it recently, chills ran down my back. Please allow me to quote from that *dvar Torah*:

"*Moshe Rabbeinu* opens our *parshah* with the words "*v'atem nitzavim hayom kulchem*" that all of you stand today in front of Hashem your God. The *Midrash* (*Yalkut Shemoni* 940) powerfully describes how *Klal Yisrael's* ability to withstand persecution and stand upright after so much suffering is solely dependent on our ability to unify ourselves into a single *agudah* (bundle). Hauntingly, the *Midrash* warns that while a man may struggle to break a bundle of twigs, a singular twig can be easily snapped by the smallest of children. Only when we bind ourselves together in God's presence, most palpably felt in Jerusalem, can we endure the machinations and hate of our enemies.

Jerusalem's uniting capability between different types of Jews is desperately needed now more than ever. Our ability to withstand the onslaught of Jewish hate is perhaps solely dependent on whether we can stand in front of Hashem as one. And yes, even those who are deemed "impure" must be included in Jerusalem's all-embracing bundle. With the Days of Awe approaching, let us prepare to fervently pray for the opportunity to serve Hashem as one *agudah* in the redeemed holy city of Jerusalem."

I cannot add anything more. The only way for us to reclaim the innermost sanctum, the *Dvir HaMutzne*, is through binding ourselves together. As impossible and uncomfortable as it may seem, every Jew must be included in this sanctified bundle. May we be *zoche* to stand together *lifnei Hashem* again witnessing the *Kohen Gadol* emerging from the *Kodesh HaKadoshim*, speedily in our days.

