



RABBI DOVID GOTTLIEB

RABBI OF BEIT KNESSET KOL ELIYAHU, RAMAT BEIT SHEMESH
DIRECTOR OF TZALASH

GUEST DVAR TORAH



Yom Yerushalayim: Reaching Up and Reaching Out

Yom Yerushalayim naturally inspires appreciation of the incredible and improbable military victory of the IDF over multiple enemies and on numerous fronts in 1967. And, of course, as religious Jews we express our belief that Hashem was the true Author of our success by blessing and thanking Him on this special day.

However, our celebration of these events and even our appreciation for the many miracles that took place during the Six Day War, is incomplete if we do not truly understand the meaning and significance of Yerushalayim.

The Psalmist (122:3) famously describes Yerushalayim as the “*ir she-chubrah lah yachdav*,” – “like a city that was joined together within itself.” Various explanations are offered for this enigmatic phrase. One

interpretation (*Ta’anit* 5a) maintains that the “earthly Jerusalem” is connected to the “heavenly Jerusalem.” This idea – though seemingly esoteric – reflects a reality which many of us have been blessed to experience and, therefore, can relate to. Namely, when we are in Yerushalayim we feel something special; we sense that this is in fact “*sha’ar ha-shamayim*,” the gateway to heaven. The spiritual alienation that many of us feel in our daily lives – the distance between the “heavenly” and “earthly” – often yields when we are in Yerushalayim.

Another explanation (*Yerushalmi Bava Kama* 7:7), however, suggests that the verse is highlighting that Yerushalayim is the “*ir she-mechaberet et Yisrael zeh la-zeh*,” a unifying social force that brings all Jews together. In other words, Yerushalayim is the place where we are called on to put aside our petty differences – and even those differences that aren’t petty – and focus on the essential brotherhood that binds all Jews.

These two interpretations combine to reveal the complete and true significance of Yerushalayim. On the one hand, this is where the “heavenly Jerusalem” comes into focus and we can most clearly sense the divine presence. On the other hand, this is the place which is “*mechaberet*” us to our brothers and

**BACK PAIN?
NECK PAIN?
SCIATICA?**

Don't rush into surgery or medication.
Get real relief—naturally.

DR. SHOLOMO GENE PLOTKIN

- 15+ years trained chiropractor (20+ years)
- Featured in The Jerusalem Post
- Zone Technique – only provider in Israel

Ramat 052-507-9895
Call or WhatsApp now!

\$50 OFF
your first visit!

sisters and where our sense of *achdut* should be the strongest. Yerushalayim is where we can feel closest to *Hashem* and to our fellow Jews.

While the first aspect of Yerushalayim, its sanctity and power to inspire religious devotion, has always remained at the forefront of Jewish consciousness, the second aspect of engendering *ahavat Yisrael* has not always been appreciated or acted upon. But it is this aspect, "*achdut ha-umah*" – "unity of the nation," that the Malbim (commentary to Tehillim 122) asserts is the essence, "*ikkar inyan,*" of Yerushalayim.

Not only is this idea of respect and appreciation a core element of what Yerushalayim was always supposed to convey to the Jewish people, it was perhaps *the* dominant feeling throughout Israel during, and in the immediate period after, the Six Day War. Jews of all stripes and traditions huddled together, fought as a unified force, and then celebrated as one. The stories are legion – personally I remain moved by Rav Mordechai Willig's inspiring account of the overwhelming *achdut* that he witnessed in Yerushalayim and at the Kotel during the *Shavuot* holiday just a week after the war.

The unifying power of Yerushalayim and the magic of that moment was beautifully

described by Yoska "Balagan" Schwartz, one of the paratroopers that liberated the Old City. Schwartz acknowledges, in an interview given many years later, that he had previously felt no connection to religious Jews – "I'm not like them, I'm a new Israeli man." However, on June 7, 1967 that feeling disappeared, "When I got to the Kotel I understood that I was just a Jew. It was an amazing feeling." It is no coincidence that this profound revelation took place where it did, as Schwartz himself declares, "Sitting in front of the Kotel, I felt Jerusalem."

Exactly.

He felt the mystic pull of the "*ir she-chubrah lah yachdav*" and he answered the call of the "*ir she-mechaberet et Yisrael zeh la-zeh.*"

It is appropriate to use this time to reflect on these important themes. It is not enough to celebrate the unification of Yerushalayim and the many other miracles that took place nearly sixty years ago. To be truly thankful for these most special gifts we must recommit to the twin ideals of Yerushalayim: we must reach up to *Hashem* and reach out to our fellow Jews. ■

Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb is rabbi of Beit Kneset Kol Eliyahu in Ramat Beit Shemesh and the Managing Director of Tzalash, an organization dedicated to providing spiritual and emotional support to religious chaya'im and their families.

לבינסון רז ושות'  **ewensohn Raz & Co.**
משרד עורכי דין ונוטריון Law Offices & Notary

**Estates, Probate,
and Inheritances***

**Real Estate
Transactions**

**Tama 38 and Renovation
Construction Projects**

* Durable Powers of Attorney for Health and Financial Matters



Moshe Raz,
Adv. & Notary

27 Keren Ha'Yesod St., Jerusalem | 02-6731000 | 054-6380149 | office@lawlr.co.il | www.lawlr.co.il