



Bowing to the Glory of Yerushalayim

The very first time we find explicit mention of *Har HaMoriah* in the Torah is when Avraham goes there to perform *Akeidat Yitzchak*. Avraham actually ended up performing two acts there: he bowed and he brought a *korban*. Since that moment, every time we go up to *Har HaMoriah*, we are commanded to perform these two acts.¹ Today there is unfortunately no Mikdash and no *kohen*, so we pray to return to the way things were, in Mussaf of the *Shalosh Regalim*.

The *hishtachavaya* (bowing) in the Beit haMikdash has two parts. One aspect is *hoda'a*, thanking G-d for all of the good He has done for us. The second is *bakasha*, asking G-d to provide what we still lack. Today, when we no longer have the privilege to bow in the Beit HaMikdash, we find these two aspects of *hishtachavaya* in several places. For example, in two different places in the *tefillah*: on the one hand, we bow as we say “*Modim anachnu lach*,” thanking G-d for our lives, souls, and all of the daily miracles, wonders and kindnesses He performs for us; on the other, we have a *hishtachavaya* referred to as *nefilat apayim*, through which we ask G-d to show us mercy, accept our prayers, and save us for the sake of His Name.

These two aspects of *hishtachavaya* appear in *Kabbalat Shabbat* too. רוממו ה' אלקינו והשתחוה להדם רגליו “Exalt Hashem, our L-rd, and bow to His footstool” – is *bakasha*; רוממו ה' אלקינו והשתחוה להר קדשו “Exalt Hashem, our L-rd, and bow to His holy mountain” – is *hoda'a*.

We find these two aspects once more when we shake the *lulav* during Hallel on Sukkot. When one shakes the *lulav*, he must bow forward a little. We shake and bow once as we say הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו “Give thanks to G-d for He is good, for His kindness lasts forever” – *hoda'a* – and once as we say אָנָּה ה' הוֹשִׁיעָה נָּא “Please, G-d, save now” – *bakasha*.

The fact that these two aspects of *hishtachavaya* appear in so many places is a sign of their great importance. Chazal tell us that every *geula*, individual or communal, is only in the merit of *hishtachavaya*: Avraham merited to return from *Har HaMoriah*, *Geulat Mitzrayim* was only in the merit of *hishtachavaya*; the Torah was given, Chanah was remembered, future exiles will be ingathered and the Beit HaMikdash will be built and the dead will come back to life only in the merit of *hishtachavaya*.

As we approach Yom Yerushalayim, we must recognize G-d's kindness and give thanks, but at the same time we must beseech G-d for the future, בְּנֵה בֵיתְךָ כְּבַתְחִילָה וְכוּן בֵּית מִקְדָּשְׁךָ עַל מְכוּנוֹ “Build Your house as it once was and establish Your Temple upon its foundation.” It is not enough just to give abundant thanks – the Mishnah teaches that we silence one who says, “מוֹדִים מוֹדִים” (Berachot 5:3).

However, in order for our *bakasha* of בְּנֵה בֵיתְךָ כְּבַתְחִילָה to be accepted, we must show we are deserving. Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to remember – today more than ever – that what makes Yerushalayim so

special is that it is עִיר שְׂחִבְרָה לָהּ יְחֻדוּ – which the Yerushalmi explains as in Yerushalayim the Jews become united, הַבְּרִים זֶה לָזֶה. None can stand and none can be victorious against our *achdut*.

On the eve of the Six-Day War, the Jerusalem Municipality, together with the *chevra kadisha*, prepared tens of thousands of coffins in the event that they would need to bury a large number of casualties in a short period of time. In His abundant mercy, G-d ensured that these coffins would be used to build *sukkot* in Yerushalayim. If you are united, G-d says, I will sit you all together in a *sukkat shalom*. Every one of those burial coffins was turned into wood of life.

Yom Yerushalayim always falls one week before *Kabbalat HaTorah*, one week before בָּאִישׁ אָחַד בְּלֵב אָחַד. If we elevate Yerushalayim and establish it as our top priority, achieving that which Yerushalayim requires of us and demands of us, we will merit not only to return to the Kotel, but to once again ascend the mountain itself, *Har HaMoriah*.

¹ Hilchot Beit haBechirah 1:1.

Summarized by a student of Rabbi Goldwicht.

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