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neighbors, who damage the inheritance that I have caused My people Yisrael to inherit.” And not only that but he brings exile upon himself and his descendants, as it states: “Behold, I am uprooting them from their land and I will uproot the House of Yehudah from among them.”

We also learn the tremendous value of praying in a “tzibbur” from the “ketores.” HKB”H commanded us to burn the “ketores” in the Beis HaMikdash twice daily—in the morning and in the evening. The Torah includes among the eleven spices of the “ketores” the “chelbinah,” as it is written (Shemos 30, 34): וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה קַח לְךָ סַמִּים נָטָף וְשַׁחֲלֵת וְחִלְבֵּנָה סַמִּים וְלִבְנָה זָכָה בַּד בְּבַד יִהְיֶה—Hashem said to Moshe: “Take yourself spices—‘nataf,’ and ‘shecheilet’ and ‘chelbinah’—spices and pure ‘levonah’; they shall be equal one to another.” Rashi explains: “‘Chelbinah’ is a spice whose smell is foul . . . Scripture counted it among the ingredients of the ‘ketores’ to teach us that we should not consider it insignificant to include the sinners of Yisrael with us as members of the congregation for our fasts and tefilos, so that they should be counted among us.

We can suggest a reason as to why HKB”H hinted to us to include even those members of Yisrael who resemble the “chelbinah” to participate in our tefilos. Seeing as the time when the “tzibbur” prays is an auspicious, favorable time, therefore HKB”H accepts even the tefilos of Yisrael’s sinners, who join the “tzibbur” in prayer. This explains very nicely Rabbi Acha bar Rabbi Chanina’s elucidation of the passuk regarding “tefilah b’tzibbur”: הֵן אֵל כְּבִיד—“behold, G-d does not despise the numerous. This passuk conveys the fact that HKB”H does not despise the tefilah of Yisrael’s sinners, who pray together with the “tzibbur.”

And how lovely are the words of our master, the Chatam Sofer, who interprets the words of Yisrael’s sweet psalmist (Tehillim 141, 2) in his Derashos (page 12, column 2): תִּכּוֹן תַּפְלִיתִי קְטוּרֶת לִפְנֶיךָ - כִּי תַּפְלַתְנוּ מִתְקַבֵּלֶת אֲגַב תַּפְלַת הַצַּדִּיקִים, לִכֵּן מִתְפַּלְלִים בְּכַנּוּפֵיהָ, חִלְבָּנָה בְּהָדִי בּוֹסְמִין, וְזֶהוּ תִּכּוֹן תַּפְלִיתִי קְטוּרֶת לִפְנֶיךָ, שֶׁתְּקַבֵּל תַּפְלִיתִי—“My tefilah should be considered as a ‘ketores’ before You”: Because our tefilah is accepted in conjunction with the tefilah of the tzaddikim; therefore, we pray in a group—the foul scent together with the fragrant. This is the meaning of the words: “My tefilah should be considered as a ‘ketores’ before You.” May You accept my tefilah in conjunction with the tefilah of the tzaddikim, just like the “ketores,” where the “chelbinah” was included with the other spices.

A “Tzibbur” Is a New Reality where the Individuals Are Insignificant

In this essay, we wish to examine and delight in the sacred words of one of the Rishonim, Rabeinu Nissim (the Ran). In Derashos HaRan (Drush 1), he enlightens us as to the source of the power of the “tzibbur.” As we have learned, the “tzibbur” possesses the virtue of having its tefilah accepted even in the presence of sinners in its midst—those resembling the foul-smelling “chelbinah.” Furthermore, we have learned in the Gemara regarding the virtue of the “tzibbur” (Sotah 40a): לַעֲוֹלָם—תִּהְיֶה אֵימַת צִיבּוּר עֲלֶיךָ, שֶׁהָרִי כֹהֲנִים פְּנִיָּהֶם כְּלָפִי הָעַם וְאַחֲרֵיהֶם כְּלָפִי הַשְּׂכִינָה—the awe of the “tzibbur” should always be upon you, for the kohanim face the people, while their backs are toward the Shechinah. The Ran explains this phenomenon based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Kiddushin 36a) regarding the passuk (Devarim 14, 1):

“בָּנִים אַתֶּם לַה' אֱלֹקֵיכֶם, בְּזִמְנָן שֶׁאַתֶּם נוֹהָגִים מִנְּהַג בָּנִים אַתֶּם קְרוּיִים בָּנִים, אִין אַתֶּם נוֹהָגִים מִנְּהַג בָּנִים אִין אַתֶּם קְרוּיִים בָּנִים, דְּכָרִי רַבִּי יְהוּדָה. רַבִּי מֵאִיר אָמַר, בֵּין כַּךְ וּבֵין כַּךְ אַתֶּם קְרוּיִים בָּנִים, שְׁנֵאמַר (יִרְמְיָה ד-כב) בָּנִים סְכָלִים הֵמָּה, וְאָמַר (דְּבָרִים לֵב-כ) בָּנִים לֹא אֲמוּן בָּם, וְאָמַר (יִשְׁעִיָּה א-ד) זֶרַע מִרְעִים בָּנִים מִשְׁחִיתִים, וְאָמַר (הוֹשֵׁעַ ב-א) וְהָיָה בַּמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר לָהֶם לֹא עָמִי אַתֶּם יֹאמַר לָהֶם בְּנֵי אֵל חַי.”

“You are children to Hashem, your G-d.” When you act as children should, you are considered His children; when you do not act as children should, you are not considered His children; these are the words of Rabbi Yehudah. Rabbi Meir says, either way you are considered His children . . . Rabbi Meir cites several pesukim from the Tanach to support his opinion.

The Ran is of the opinion that the halachah accords with Rabbi Meir—that in either event, even when they do not act in accordance with the will of the Omnipresent, they are nevertheless considered to be His children. It appears as if he concurs with the viewpoint of the Rashba (Kiddushin ibid.). We have a principle regarding disputes in the Gemara (Eiruvin 46b): “רַבִּי מֵאִיר וְרַבִּי יְהוּדָה, הִלְכָה כְּרַבִּי יְהוּדָה”—in disputes between Rabbi Meir and Rabbi Yehudah, the halachah accords with Rabbi Yehudah. Here, however, the halachah accords with Rabbi Meir, because the pesukim substantiate his position. The Ran explains why this is so—why even when Yisrael are not worthy of this designation, they are nevertheless considered to be His children. Here is his explanation:

“שֶׁאֵף עַל פִּי שֶׁכָּל אֶחָד מִצַּד עֲצָמוֹ אֵינוֹ רֹאִי לִזְהוּ, מִצַּד הַצֵּטְרָמוֹ לְזוּלוֹ, יִקְנֶה הַכֹּלֵל שְׂבַח וּמַעֲלָה יוֹתֵר מִמָּה שֶׁרֹאִי מִצַּד פִּרְטוֹ... וְכִבְרָ רְמִזּוֹ לָנוּ (כְּרִיתוֹת 1:): בְּחִלְבָּנָה שֶׁהוֹשְׁמָה עִם סַמִּי קְטוּרֶת, וְהָיָה מִן הַנִּרְאָה שֶׁתַּפְסִיד אוֹתָם לְהַפְסֵד

הריח הזה, ועם כל זה אימתה לנו הנבואה שאין להם שלמות זולתה, כי כן הענין בהצטרף עמנו בעבודתנו לשם יתברך החוטאים והפושעים, שלא יפסידו עבודתנו, אבל תהיה בזה יותר שלימה”.

Although each individual is not worthy of this designation in his own right; yet, by joining together, the congregation as a whole acquires a status and prominence far beyond what it deserves based on its individual parts . . . They already alluded to this with regards to the “chelbinah,” which was placed together with the spices of the “ketores”; it would have seemed that the inclusion of its foul smell would have detracted from the “ketores”; nevertheless, we are taught that the spices of the “ketores” were not complete or perfect without it. This same principle applies when the sinners and evildoers join us in our service of the Almighty; not only do we not lose out, but our service is deemed more complete and perfect.

The Investigation of the Esteemed Gaon of Rogatchov regarding the Concept of “Tzibbur”

Upon closer analysis of the words of the Ran, we begin to appreciate that he has provided us with a tremendous chiddush regarding the unique definition of the term “tzibbur.” He helps us resolve an important inquiry addressed by many of our illustrious Acharonim, led by the esteemed gaon Rabbi Yosef Rosen—acclaimed as the Genius of Rogatchov, ztz”l. He addresses this subject on numerous occasions in his sefarim entitled Tzofnas Paaneiach. Here is the gist of the inquiry.

We are well-aware of the fundamental principle that when ten men gather together, their status is elevated to that of a “tzibbur” regarding all matters of kedushah. It is worthwhile investigating the nature and definition of a “tzibbur.” Is it merely a collection of individuals, whereby each individual maintains his individuality even after forming a “tzibbur”? Or, perhaps, after gathering together to form this single entity known as a “tzibbur,” they achieve a new status, in which each individual concedes his individuality.

Let us explain the matter in a more tangible way based on a classification found in the Shulchan Aruch (Y.D. Hilchos Taaroves). There are two categories of “taarovet”—mixtures: (1) “יבש ביבש”—several types of food, which were not cooked or prepared together, became mixed with one another in their dry, more solid form. In this mixture, each food with its unique taste remains distinguishable and discernible. (2) “לח בלח”—several types of food were cooked together forming a soup; this mixture possesses a new taste of its

own, which is the product of all of the components mixed together; the individual components are inseparable.

In similar fashion, we can analyze the nature of a “tzibbur.” Is it merely a collection of individuals resembling a mixture of “יבש ביבש”—where each individual maintains his own individuality? Or, perhaps, after the individuals join together to form a “tzibbur,” a new entity is formed resembling a mixture of “לח בלח”; in this latter case, each individual concedes his individuality to the entity of the “tzibbur.”

The Rogatchover Gaon Explains the Dispute between Rabbi Yossi HaGelili and Rabbi Akiva

The Rogatchover Gaon, as is his way in matters of kedushah, was able to survey all of Talmud Bavli and all of Talmud Yerushalmi with the commentaries of the Rishonim all at once. He brings proofs for both viewpoints in terse language that requires interpretation. To aid in this discussion, we shall present a short excerpt from Michtvei Torah, where he explains an amazing aspect concerning the matter of the “tzibbur.” We have learned in the Mishnah (Berachos 49b) that regarding the blessing of “zimun” recited over a cup of wine after meals, a difference exists whether there are three participants or ten participants. If only three are present—but less than ten—G-d’s name is omitted and the following formula is employed: “נברך שאכלנו משלו”. If ten participants are present, however, G-d’s name is added and the following formula is employed: “נברך אלקינו שאכלנו משלו”.

Rabbi Yossi HaGelili and Rabbi Akiva argue as to whether or not additional names are added to the berachah when one hundred or one thousand men participate in the ritual. According to Rabbi Yossi HaGelili, it is necessary to add names. According to Rabbi Akiva, it makes no difference whether there are ten participants, one hundred or one thousand; the formula remains the same. Here is the passage from the Mishnah:

“כיצד מזמנין, בשלשה אומר נברך... בעשרה אומר נברך אלקינו... במאה הוא אומר נברך ה' אלקינו... ובאלף הוא אומר נברך לה' אלקינו אלקי ישראל... רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר לפי רוב הקהל הם מברכים, שנאמר (תהלים סח-כז) במקהלות ברכו אלקים ה' ממקור ישראל. אמר רבי עקיבא מה מצינו בבית הכנסת אחד מרובים ואחד מועטים אומר ברכו את ה'”.

How do we perform “zimun”? When there are three participants, the leader says נברך . . . When there are ten participants, the leader says נברך אלקינו . . . When there are one hundred participants, the leader says ה' אלקינו . . . When there are one thousand participants, the leader says

Rabbi Yossi HaGelili says: They recite the blessing in accordance with the size of the group assembled, as it states: "In assemblages, bless G-d, Hashem, from the source of Yisrael." Rabbi Akiva said: What do we find in the "beis-kenesses"? There is no difference whether there are many or there are few; the leader says ברכו את ה'.

The Rogatchover Gaon explains that their dispute hinges on this inquiry regarding the definition of a "tzibbur." According to the opinion of Rabbi Yossi HaGelili, a "tzibbur" is composed of a collection of individuals who do not lose their individuality. Hence, it makes a difference if the "tzibbur" is made up of ten members or one hundred members or one thousand members. The greater the number of the "tzibbur," the greater the power of the "tzibbur"; for it contains more individuals maintaining their status as individuals. Therefore, if there are one hundred or one thousand men breaking bread together, it is necessary to add names of kedushah to the berachah of "zimun."

Now, according to Rabbi Akiva's opinion, although the "tzibbur" is composed of a collection of individuals, nevertheless, in the process of becoming a "tzibbur," a new reality is formed. Every individual in the group loses his individual status and becomes an inseparable part of the "tzibbur." Hence, it makes no difference whether the "tzibbur" is composed of one hundred men or one thousand. In the end, there is merely one entity and one reality—that of the "tzibbur." Therefore, according to his point-of-view, even if one thousand men participate in the blessing, the same formula is used as when only ten men participate in the "zimun." This is the gist of his explanation.

It is necessary to add one vital point. The halachah accords with Rabbi Akiva that it makes no difference whether there are ten participants, one hundred or one thousand. In any event, the very same formula is employed, just as the halachah states in the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 192, 1). Therefore, we can conclude that from a halachic point-of-view, a "tzibbur" constitutes a new reality in which individuals no longer exist.

Explanation of the Ran's Notion regarding the Exalted Status of the "Tzibbur"

We can now rejoice at having shed some light on the profound words of the Ran. He explained Rabbi Meir's reasoning—supported by numerous pesukim—for concluding that no matter what, even if Yisrael fail to act in accordance with the will of the Omnipresent, they are still regarded as His children:

"שאף על פי שכל אחד מצד עצמו אינו ראוי לזה, מצד הצטרפו לזולתו יקנה הכלל -- שבח ומעלה יותר ממה שראוי מצד פרטיו" although each individual is not worthy of this designation in his own right; yet, by joining together, the congregation as a whole acquires a status and prominence far beyond what it deserves based on its individual parts.

Let us explain. Say that an individual person is not worthy of being called a son of HKB"H's, due to his evil deeds and ways. Yet, as a part of "klal Yisrael," he becomes part of a new reality, in which each individual loses his individual shortcomings. For, he now becomes an inseparable part of "klal Yisrael"—of whom it is said: **בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם**—**you are children of Hashem, your G-d.** With this understanding, we can also appreciate the continuation of the Ran's remarks. He substantiates this notion as follows:

וכבר רמזו לנו בחלבנה שהושמה עם סמני הקטורת, והיה מן הנראה שתפסיד אותם להפסד הריח הזה, ועם כל זה אימתה לנו הנבואה שאין להם שלמות וזולתה, כי כן הענין בהצטרף עמנו בעבודתנו לשם יתברך החוטאים והפושעים, שלא יפסידו. They already alluded to this with regards to the "chelbinah," which was placed together with the spices of the "ketores"; it would have seemed that the inclusion of its foul smell would have detracted from the "ketores"; nevertheless, we are taught that the spices of the "ketores" were not complete or perfect without it. This same principle applies when the sinners and evildoers join us in our service of the Almighty; not only do we not lose out, but our service is deemed more complete and perfect.

Let us explain. He wants to prove that when an individual elevates himself to become an inseparable part of the "tzibbur," he discards his individual shortcomings. For, the Gemara teaches us that HKB"H commanded us to include the "chelbinah" in the "ketores" to teach us to include the sinners in Yisrael when we fast and pray. The "chelbinah" itself possesses a foul smell. Yet, when it combines and unites with the other spices in the "ketores" not only is its foul smell nullified, but it even enhances the overall mixture; it causes the other spices to produce a special, unique fragrance that HKB"H desires.

The same holds true when the seemingly undesirable elements of Yisrael participate in "tefilah b'tzibbur." In truth, they themselves are categorized as sinners and evildoers; however, when they join the "tzibbur" to pray, they shed their status as individuals—as sinners and evildoers. They are elevated and become an inseparable and even indispensable part of the "tzibbur." By becoming a part of the "tzibbur," they achieve a level of perfection, free of any shortcomings.

Thus, we have also gained a better understanding of Rashby's statement: **מאי דכתיב ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון, אימתי עת רצון, בשעה** "But as for me, my tefilah is to You, Hashem, at a favorable time"? **When is it a favorable time? when the congregation prays.** And we have similarly gained a better understanding of Rabbi Acha bar Rabbi Chanina's codicil, teaching us the same point from another passuk: **"הן אל כביר ולא ימאס"**—"Behold, G-d does not despise the numerous." Seeing as the entity of the "tzibbur" nullifies all of the individuals which it is comprised of, the result is a new "tzibbur" in the most perfect sense. Consequently, every individual that joins the "tzibbur," is elevated and achieves a modicum of completeness and perfection.

The Enlightening Words of the Maharal of Prague

I would now like to place on the royal table a remarkable reference shown to me by my teacher and Rav, the holy Master of Belz, shlit"a, in a shiur I had the privilege of learning from him. He presented ideas from the incredible teachings of the Maharal of Prague in his sefer Derech Chaim on Pirkei Avos (2, 4). Here is what he writes:

"אמרו בפרק קמא דברכות (דף ח.), ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון, אימתי עת רצון בשעה שהציבור מתפללין. הרי לך מבואר שהש"ת רצונו בציבור דוקא, ורצונו הוא כאשר מתפללין על צרכיהם מה שצריך להם... ודבר זה ענין עמוק, כי אין מקטרג לציבור, [כי] במה שהם ציבור יש להם כח כללי, ובצד הכלל אין חטא כי החטא הוא בפרטים, אבל בכללי לא שייך חטא וקטרוג, לכך הקטרוג לציבור מצד הפרט בלבד דהיינו מה שעשו היחידים, אבל מצד הכלל אין קטרוג, ותפלת הציבור בבית הכנסת הוא מצד הציבור ולפיכך הוא שעת רצון, וגם דבר זה ידוע לנבונים, ועל כל פנים הציבור הם דבוקים ברצונו יתברך כאשר ידוע."

He cites the Gemara in Berachos mentioned above expounding on the passuk: **"ואני תפילתי לך ה' עת רצון"** and deriving the fact that when the "tzibbur" gathers to daven together, it is considered a favorable, auspicious time. **Thus, we can conclude that the Blessed One desires a "tzibbur," specifically; and it is His will when they pray for the things they need . . . This is a profound concept; for there is no prosecutor for the "tzibbur"; because the "tzibbur" possesses the status of the general public. From the perspective of the general public, sin does not exist; because the sin only pertains to its individual components. Regarding, the group as a whole, the notions of sin and blame do not pertain. Therefore, blame of the "tzibbur" only applies to its individual components—what its individuals have done . . . And the tefilah of the "tzibbur" in the "beis-kenesses" comes from the aspect of the "tzibbur"; therefore, it is a favorable time. . . In any event, the "tzibbur" is dedicated to the will of the Almighty . . .**

After examining his powerful insight, we find that it coincides amazingly with the sacred words of the Ran. Recall that the Ran taught us that the "tzibbur" constitutes a new entity in which the individual components have been nullified. Now, blame is only associated with the sins of the individuals; therefore, the moment these individuals join to become an inseparable part of the "tzibbur," there is no longer any room for blame. For, in this new entity, individuals do not exist and sin does not exist.

One might ask: What if the "tzibbur" sins together? This is not a problem; for, we have already learned from our blessed sages (Sanhedrin 26a): **"קשר רשעים אינו מן המנין"**—**a confederacy of wicked men cannot be counted as part of the quorum!** The title "tzibbur" can only be applied to a gathering that is l'shem shamayim. This is the message conveyed by the Mishnah (Avos 2, 4): **"הלל אומר, אל תפרוש מן הציבור"**—**Hillel says: Do not depart from the "tzibbur."** For, the power of the "tzibbur" is great; it elevates the individual to a new status, devoid of sin and blame.

We can add a pleasant tidbit applying this concept to explain that which we have learned in the Gemara regarding Rabbi Akiva's tefilah (Berachos 31a): **"כך היה מנהגו של רבי עקיבא, כשהיה מתפלל עם הציבור, היה מקצר ועולה מפני טורח ציבור, וכשהיה מתפלל בינו לבין עצמו, אדם מניחו בזוית זו ומוצאו בזוית אחרת, וכל כך למה מפני כריעות והשתחויות"**—**such was the custom of Rabbi Akiva. When he prayed with the "tzibbur," he would shorten his tefilah and finish, because of the burden placed upon the "tzibbur." When he would pray by himself, a person would leave him standing in this corner and find him in another corner. Why did this happen? Because of the bowings and prostrations.** This, in fact, is how the Rambam records the halachah (Hilchos Tefilah and Nesias Kapayim 6, 2): **"המתפלל עם הציבור לא יאריך את תפלתו יותר מדאי אבל בינו לבין עצמו הרשות"**—**one who prays with the "tzibbur" should not overly extend his tefilah; by himself, however, it is permissible.**

Based on what we have discussed, we can suggest that Rabbi Akiva's behavior is consistent with his opinion regarding the berachah of "zimun." We learned that he disagrees with Rabbi Yossi HaGelili and holds that there is no difference whether ten people or one thousand people participate in the blessing over the cup. In any event, the formula is the same as that recited by a gathering of ten men. The Rogatchover Gaon taught us that according to Rabbi Akiva a "tzibbur" is a new reality created by the joining together of individuals. From the moment they form a "tzibbur," all of the individual components are nullified. Therefore, when he prayed with the "tzibbur," he would shorten his tefilah and finish more quickly. Seeing as HKB"H accepts the

tefilah of the “tzibbur”—in which the flaws of the individuals are not discernible—it is inappropriate to trouble the “tzibbur.”

The Presence of the Shechinah on the “Tzibbur” Unites All of the Neshamos

Continuing onward along this exalted path, let us proceed to explain where, in fact, this incredible power of the “tzibbur” stems from. As explained, it has the power to nullify all of its individual components along with all of their transgressions. Consequently, HKB”H accepts even the tefilos of the evildoers among Yisrael who join the “tzibbur.” It appears that we can explain the matter based on what we have learned in the Gemara (Sanhedrin 39a): **“כל בי עשרה שכינת שריא”—the Shechinah resides with all gatherings of ten (Jews).**

Now, it is well-known that the holy Shechinah is the source of all the neshamos of Yisrael; they are all united there. When they descend to this world, however, to clothe themselves in a physical body, they diverge; each neshamah goes its own separate way. The author of the Tanya describes this phenomenon as follows in Likutei Amarim (end of Chapter 37): **“השכינה כנסת ישראל מקור: כל נשמות ישראל—the Shechinah, Knesses Yisrael, is the source of all Jewish neshamos.** In similar fashion, it states in Nefesh HaChaim (1, 17) that the Shechinah is referred to as **“Knesses Yisrael; for She is the source of the gathering of all of the neshamos of klal Yisrael.”** It turns out, therefore, that when we draw the presence of the Shechinah down to earth to rest upon the neshamos of Yisrael, we cause all of the neshamos of Yisrael—which are united at their source—to unite and bind together.

This explains very nicely the magnificent power of the “tzibbur.” We have learned that HKB”H rests His Shechinah—the source of all Jewish neshamos—on the “tzibbur.” Due to this Presence, all of the branches—the neshamos within the body—are nullified and submit to the root source. As a result, a new reality is formed—a “tzibbur” where all the neshamos together embody the ideal of “one man with one heart.”

This ties in magnificently with the illuminating words of Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk, zy”a, in his Noam Elimelech (Devarim). There he reveals to us the reason it is essential for every person to include himself among the congregation of Yisrael prior to engaging in his holy service:

“כי הטעם למה שאנו אומרים קודם כל עבודתנו ותפילתנו לשם יחוד כו' בשם כל ישראל, והכוונה היות (קהלת ז-כ) שאין צדיק בארץ כו' [אשר יעשה טוב ולא יחטא], ואם כן האיך יכול לעשות איזה דבר קדושה באברינו, כיון שנעשה בהם איזה עבירה חלילה ונפגם אותו האבר... אך שהתיקון לזה הוא במה שכולל עצמו עם כללות ישראל, כי יש עולם הנקרא 'כל ישראל', והעולם ההוא שלם בלי שום פגם, כי הכללות ישראל הם הצדיקים, כמו שכתוב (ישעיה ס-כא) ועמך כולם צדיקים, ואם כן איך שהפרטים חוטאים לפעמים, אבל הכללות הם תמיד קיימים בקדושתם, ואין שטן ואין פגע רע בהם חלילה.”

Prior to serving Hashem and praying, we utter the formula **לשם יחוד כו' בשם כל ישראל**. Seeing as there is no perfect tzaddik on earth who has acted only virtuously and has not sinned, how is it possible to perform any act of kedushah with our tainted limbs? The tikun for this quandary is to include oneself among the congregation of Yisrael; for there is a world known as **‘כל ישראל’**. It is a complete and perfect world without any flaws; because Yisrael as a whole are tzaddikim, as it is written: **“And Your people are all tzaddikim.”** Hence, even if the individuals sin occasionally, nevertheless as a whole, they always retain their kedushah. They lack a Satan and any harmful defects, chalilah.

In this passage, Rabbi Elimelech reveals to us the source of the “tzibbur”’s incredible power; for, as we have learned, HKB”H accepts their tefilah even if they are unworthy. Therefore, it is crucial to have even the evildoers among Yisrael join us in our prayers. By being included in the “tzibbur,” they succeed in connecting with the root of their neshamahs in the world known as **“כל ישראל”**. There all of Yisrael unite as **“one man with one heart.”**

We learn from all of this how important it is for each and every Jew to make a valiant effort to pray with the “tzibbur” in the “beis-kenesses.” As we learned from the divine Tanna, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, when the “tzibbur” davens, it is an extremely favorable and auspicious time in the heavens. Even if we are unworthy as individuals, nevertheless when we join the “tzibbur,” the following holds true: **“Behold, G-d does not despise the numerous.”** Furthermore, we have learned from the Ran and the Maharal of Prague that when a person joins the “tzibbur,” he is elevated to a new reality; there, all of his transgressions are annulled and the prosecutor cannot find him blameworthy. By acting accordingly, we will merit having HKB”H receive and respond to all of our hearts’ requests with mercy and favor.

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