

Yom Yerushalayim 5779

BS"D Yom Yerushalayim 5779

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

The Day the Old City Gates Spoke

IN HONOR OF THE 52nd YEAR OF RE-UNIFICATION OF YERUSHALAYIM –
YOM YERUSHALAYIM

The following is a translation of a composition by Mr. Yitzchak Navon, in honor of Yerushalayim, written when he was serving as our 5th president.

In June 1967, the Six Day War broke out. Israel's soldiers fought bravely and won many victories. Soon they reached the Old City of Jerusalem. They prepared to fight for it, and to take it back from Jordan. But they did not know through which of the seven gates to enter. As they tried to decide what to do, each gate begged, one louder than the other, "Enter the Old City through me. Enter the Old City through me."

Their voices reached heaven, but God and his angels could not decide which gate deserved to be the one through which the soldiers would enter. Then the angel Michael spoke. "God in Heaven, All the gates are beautiful, and each deserves to be the one through which the soldiers will enter the Old City. Let each gate speak and explain why it should be chosen. Then You will decide which gate is most worthy.

God thought this was an excellent idea and asked each gate to

speak for itself. **Sha'ar Yafo**, the Jaffa Gate, spoke first.

Two important roads go out from me. One leads to the city of Yafo and to the Mediterranean Sea. The other goes to Hevron where our ancestors Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivkah, and Ya`akov and Leah are buried in the Me'a-rat Ha-mach-pe-lah. Near me stands the Tower of David. I will make sure that the soldiers of Israel enter the Old City safely.

Then **Sha'ar Shechem**, the Damascus Gate, spoke out in a loud voice and said:

I am the biggest and most beautiful of all the gates. All roads leading north from Jerusalem start here with me. Let the soldiers of Israel enter the Old City through me.

Sha'ar Tzion, the Zion Gate, was the next to speak:

God in Heaven, I am named for your holy city—Tzion. Look at me. I am bruised and broken from all the fighting around me. It is only right that victory should come through me. Choose me, choose me.

Raising its voice, **Sha'ar Ha-ashpot**, the Dung Gate, said:

Dear God, look at me. I am miserable and ashamed. For centuries, Jerusalem's garbage was dumped on me. Now don't misunderstand, I would rather be covered with the garbage of Jerusalem than with all the precious jewels in the world. Every day, I try to comfort the Kotel, which is right next to me. It is sad because Jews cannot pray there now. Make us happy and let Israel's soldiers enter the Old City through me.

It was then the turn of **Sha'ar Ha-perachim**, the Flower Gate:

It would not be right for the soldiers of Israel to enter the Old City through the dirty Dung Gate. Let the soldiers of Israel enter through me and I will give them wreaths of flowers. It should be through me, through me.

Next the voice of **Sha'ar he-chadash**, the New Gate, was heard.

I am the smallest and newest of the gates. I am so new that I am not even counted as one of the seven gates. I am near the Israeli side of the city, and every day I watch as Israel's enemies fire upon her. I try to protect Israel, but I cannot. Please let Israel's soldiers enter through me.

Next in line to speak was **Sha'ar Ha-ra-cha-mim**, the Golden Gate. Its voice was muffled because it was closed in on both sides.

Master of the Universe. For years my entrance has been sealed shut. The other gates open and close, but large stones block me up. You promised that the Jews would return to rebuild the Beit HaMikdash through me, and that is why Israel's enemies sealed me shut. It is only right that the soldiers of Israel enter through me.

Only **Sha'ar Ha'arayot**, the Lions' Gate, was left to speak. God pointed to it, but it remained silent. Finally, it began to speak in a soft voice:

God in Heaven. From all directions I see soldiers fighting and being wounded. My heart is breaking, and I cannot bear to watch any longer. It doesn't matter through which gate the soldiers enter. Just make the fighting stop.

God and the angels heard these words and whispered among themselves. Then God turned to the Lions' Gate and said: All the other gates are interested in their own honor. But you care more about the soldiers of Israel than about yourself. Therefore, we have decided that the soldiers of Israel will enter the Old City through you. Let them enter through the Lions' Gate. Their armored cars swept through the alleyways, and they set the city free. At the Western Wall they blew a great blast on the shofar. The blast was heard throughout the land and everyone knew that the gates of the Old City were once again open to Jews. A miracle had occurred. Jerusalem was

united.

Dear Friends:

Chag Samayach to the entire House of Israel on the anniversary of one of the greatest miracles to ever have been performed by our Father in Heaven – and this in our own time – the reunification of Yerushalayim. We are now sovereign over the holy city for the first time in over 2000 years, and it will never be taken away from us – be'ezrat HaShem

Shabbat Shalom,

Nachman Kahana

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