

וכי יש קטן וגדול בירושלים (בישראל) (ביכורים ג:ג יא.)

*Is there in fact small or great among Israel?*

וכי יש קטן וגדול בירושלים (בישראל) אלא כיני מתני' באוכלוסין לפי רוב הנכנסים היו יוצאין (ביכורים ג:ג יא.)

The Mishnah in Bikkurim (3:3) teaches that the amount and types of officials that would go out to the people bringing the Bikkurim to the Temple Mount was commensurate with the esteem of the people.

The plain understanding is that by “esteem” the Mishnah refers to the learnedness, political position or general prestige of the individual. However, it is a given to the Talmud Yerushalmi that this is not true. When performing a divine commandment all Jews are on equal grounds. Learned, prestigious or peasant, all are created equal when they stand before God.

It is only in regard to numbers that one group is weightier than the other. The larger group is more estimable than the smaller group no matter what their respective compositions may be.

Talmud Yerushalmi discloses one of its core ethical beliefs. In matters between man and God, importance belongs to the group and not to the individual.