



**“A PERSON CANNOT WALK AWAY FROM
JERUSALEM UNCHANGED....”**

**2000 YEARS AGO THERE WAS A JEWISH KINGDOM WHOSE CAPITAL
WAS JERUSALEM, YERUSHALAYIM, ירושלים. DESTROYED AND
DESECRATED FOR CENTURIES, THE JEWISH PEOPLE WERE FINALLY
REUNITED WITH THE HOLIEST OF CITIES CENTRAL TO OUR FAITH,
OUR HISTORY AND OUR IDENTITY.**

**JOIN US AS WE CELEBRATE OUR ORIGIN, OUR
RETURN AND OUR CONNECTION TO ZION,
THE CITY OF GOLD!**

YOM YERUSHALAYIM: THE REUNIFICATION OF A PEOPLE AND A PAST

BY ELANA Yael HEIDEMAN

There has been a continuous Jewish presence in Jerusalem, and our connection to and passion for the city has been preserved as a memory by Jewish people around the world.

Though the modern state of Israel was born in 1948, for years Jews were cut off from the Old City of Jerusalem and the Kotel, the Western Wall - the heart of the Jewish people, the axis of our collective national and historical identity, the center of our faith, and the focus of the history of the Jewish people for generations.



Throughout Israel and around the world, on the 28th of the Hebrew month of Iyar, we celebrate being reunited with the city of Zion, Yerushalayim Shel Zahav, our only Jerusalem.

History shows that it was the Jews who have made Jerusalem important to the world. In 1004 BCE, King David established Jerusalem as the capital of the Kingdom of Israel (2 Samuel 5:6). Following the first exile, he proclaimed:



"If I forget you Jerusalem, let my right hand lose its strength. Let my tongue cling to my palate if I fail to recall you, if I fail to elevate Jerusalem above my highest joy."

Three times a day, or even just twice a year, for thousands of years, Jews turn their faces towards Jerusalem and the Temple Mount and pray for a return to Jerusalem and to Tzion.

When we build our houses we are to leave a square un-plastered, we keep a symbolic menorah on our shelves, and we break a glass at weddings in memory of the destruction of Jerusalem as a sign of our continued hope and commitment. Memory and connection were kept alive and the Jewish people lived with Jerusalem forever in our hearts.

In the spring of 1967, a war was forced upon us by the Arab countries that surrounded Israel who attacked the Jewish state, determined to destroy her. Instead of suffering defeat, Israel won the war in just six days.

On June 7 - more than 3000 years after King David sanctified it as the capital of Israel and the city of the Temple, and nearly 1,900 years after it fell and was torn from us during the destruction of the Second Temple - Jerusalem was united and once again was restored as the capital of the Jewish homeland.

The Israeli Knesset passed laws to protect holy sites and ensure freedom of worship to all. Since this important day in history, Christians, Muslims and Jews have all been granted full religious and cultural freedom in the holy city. Additionally, Arabs living within Jerusalem's municipal boundaries are granted Israeli citizenship.

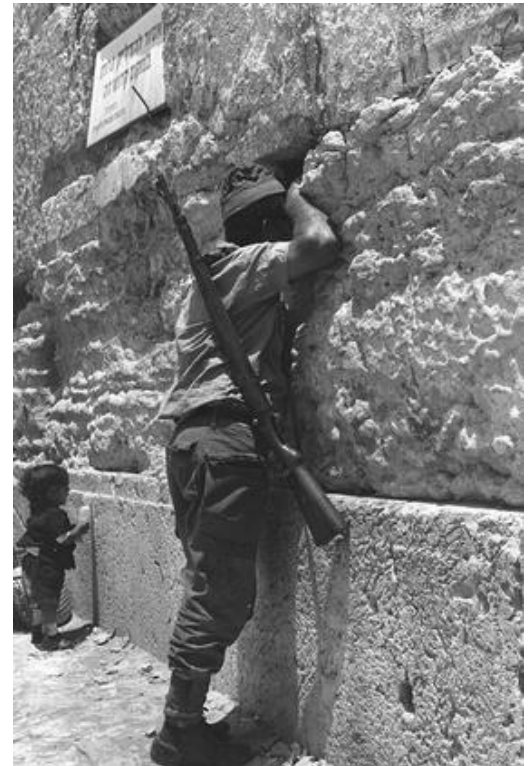
In a statement at the Western Wall, Minister of Defense Moshe Dayan



indicated Israel's peaceful intent and pledged to preserve religious freedom for all faiths in Jerusalem:

This morning, the Israel Defense Forces liberated Jerusalem. We have united Jerusalem, the divided capital of Israel. We have returned to the holiest of our holy places, never to part from it again. To our Arab neighbors we extend, also at this hour—and with added emphasis at this hour—our hand in peace. And to our Christian and Muslim fellow citizens, we solemnly promise full religious freedom and rights. We did not come to Jerusalem to conquer the Holy Places of others, and not to interfere with the adherents of other faiths, but in order to safeguard its entirety, and to live there together with others, in unity.

- June 7, 1967 (Iyar 28, 5727)



When Israeli soldiers liberated the Temple Mount area, site of the Western Wall, the holiest site in Judaism, they found the area to be covered in filth, neglected in every way imaginable.

Fifty-eight synagogues, some hundreds of years old, were destroyed, their contents looted and desecrated while Jewish religious sites were turned into chicken coops or animal stalls. The Jewish cemetery on the Mount of Olives, where Jews had been burying their dead for over 2500 years, was ransacked; graves were desecrated; thousands of tombstones were smashed and used as building material, paving stones or for latrines in Arab Legion army camps. On top of the cemetery, graves were demolished to make way for the building of the Intercontinental Hotel and surrounding roads.

On May 12, 1968, the Chief Rabbinate of Israel declared the 28th of Iyar a minor religious holiday as a way of thanking G-d for answering the 2000 year old prayer: "L'Shana Ha'Baa B'Yerushalayim, Next year in Jerusalem". On March 23, 1998, the Knesset passed the Jerusalem Day Law, making the day a national holiday celebrated by parades through the city of thousands of people from around the world. This day holds such importance for the Jewish people that Hallel, the prayer of celebration, is recited.

The eternal Jewish love for and commitment to Jerusalem are deeper and stronger than any other. Our continued commitment to this city of our national legacy are the most important tools to ensure Jewish sovereignty in our historic and sacred Jerusalem FOREVER.



DID YOU KNOW...

The name Jerusalem appears in the Torah at least 667 times with the first biblical reference in Bereshit 14:18 to a town called "Salem" and the first reference by the name "Jerusalem" in Judges 1:8

Jerusalem was again recalled in the prophecy of Isaiah which was heard in this city 2,700 years ago and which still resonates: "How pleasant are the footsteps of the herald upon the mountains announcing peace, heralding good tidings..."

Jerusalem appears in the Christian New Testament 154 times.

Until the 10th Century, Muslims called Jerusalem, "Ilya." From the 10th Century on, Muslims used names with Jewish references: "Beit Al-Makdis," the Arabic version of Beit HaMikdash (Hebrew, for the Jewish Temple), "Al Quds"—a version of "Ir HaKadosh" (Hebrew, for Holy City) and even "Siyyun" (Zion).

The 13th Century Arab biographer and geographer, Yakut, wrote: "Mecca is holy to Muslims, and Jerusalem to the Jews."

A census taken in 1864 found Jerusalem to be 84% Jewish

3000 years ago Jerusalem was built as the capital of the Jewish sovereignty in the Land of Israel. It has been attacked 52 times, Captured and Recaptured 44 times, Beseiged 23 times, Ransacked 39 times, Destroyed and rebuilt 3 times - each time only by the Jewish People.

3000 years and Jerusalem is now and forever the eternal capital for the Jewish People and our ancestral homeland.

WITNESS: THE RECAPTURE OF JERUSALEM

Colonel Motta Gur [on loudspeaker]: We are sitting right now on the ridge and we're seeing the Old City. Shortly we're going to go in to the Old City of Jerusalem that all generations have dreamed about. We will be the first to enter the Old City. Eitan's tanks will advance on the left and will enter the Lion's Gate. The final rendezvous will be on the open square above. [The open square of the Temple Mount. Sound of applause by the soldiers.]

Yossi Ronen: We are now walking on one of the main streets of Jerusalem towards the Old City. The head of the force is about to enter the Old City. [Gunfire.]

Yossi Ronen: There is still shooting from all directions; we're advancing towards the entrance of the Old City. [Sound of gunfire and soldiers' footsteps.] [Yelling of commands to soldiers.] [More soldiers' footsteps.] The soldiers are keeping a distance of approximately 5 meters between them. It's still dangerous to walk around here; there is still sniper shooting here and there. [Gunfire.]

We're all told to stop; we're advancing towards the mountainside; on our left is the Mount of Olives; we're now in the Old City opposite the Russian church. I'm right now lowering my head; we're running next to the mountainside. We can see the stone walls. They're still shooting at us. The Israeli tanks are at

the entrance to the Old City, and ahead we go, through the Lion's Gate. I'm with the first unit to break through into the Old City! There is a Jordanian bus next to me, totally burnt; it is very hot here. We're about to enter the Old City itself. We're standing below the Lion's Gate, the Gate is about to come crashing down, probably because of the previous shelling. Soldiers are taking cover next to the palm trees; I'm also staying close to one of the trees. We're getting further and further into the City. [Gunfire.]

Colonel Motta Gur announces on the army wireless: The Temple Mount is in our hands! I repeat, the Temple Mount is in our hands! All forces, stop firing! This is the David Operations Room. All forces, stop firing! I repeat, all forces, stop firing! Over. Commander eight-nine here, is this Motta (Gur) talking? Over. [Inaudible response on the army wireless by Motta Gur.]

Uzi Narkiss: Motta, there isn't anybody like you. You're next to the Mosque of Omar.

Yossi Ronen: I'm driving fast through the Lion's Gate all the way inside the Old City. Command on the army wireless: Comb the area, discover the source of the firing. Protect every building, in every way. Do not touch anything, especially in the holy places. [Lt.- Col. Uzi Eilam blows the Shofar. Soldiers are singing 'Jerusalem of Gold'.]

Uzi Narkiss: Tell me, where is the Western Wall? How do we get there?

Yossi Ronen: I'm walking right now down the steps towards the Western Wall. I'm not a religious man, I never have been, but this is the Western Wall and I'm touching the stones of the Western Wall.

Soldiers: [reciting the 'Shehechianu' blessing]: Baruch ata Hashem, elokeinu melech haolam, she-hechianu ve-kiemanu ve-hegianu la-zman ha-zeh. [Translation: Blessed art Thou L-rd G-d King of the Universe who has sustained us and kept us and has brought us to this day]

Rabbi Shlomo Goren: Baruch ata Hashem, menachem tsion u-voneh Yerushalayim. [Blessed are thou, who comforts Zion and bulids Jerusalem]

Soldiers: Amen!

[Soldiers sing 'Hatikva' next to the Western Wall.]

Rabbi Goren: We're now going to recite the prayer for the fallen soldiers of this war against all of the enemies of Israel: [Soldiers weeping]

El male rahamim, shohen ba-meromim. Hamtse menuha nahona al kanfei hashina, be-maalot kedoshim, giborim ve-tehorim, kezohar harakiya meirim u-mazhirim. Ve-nishmot halalei tsava hagana le-yisrael, she-naflube-maaraha zot, neged oievei yisrael, ve-shnaflu al kedushat Hashem ha-am ve-ha'arets, ve-shichrur Beit Hamikdash, Har Habayit, Hakotel ha-ma'aravi veyerushalayim ir ha-elokim. Be-gan eden tehe menuhatam. Lohen ba'al ha-rahamim, yastirem beseter knafav le-olamim. Ve-yitsror be-tsror ha-hayim et nishmatam adoshem hu nahlatam, ve-yanuhu be-shalom al mishkavam [soldiers weeping loud] ve-ya'amdu le-goralam le-ketsha-yamim ve-nomar amen!

[Merciful G-d in heaven, may the heroes and the pure, be under thy Divine wings, among the holy and the pure who shine bright as the sky, and the souls of soldiers of the Israeli army who fell in this war against the enemies of Israel, who fell for their loyalty to G-d and the land of Israel, who fell for the liberation of the Temple, the Temple Mount, the Western Wall and Jerusalem the city of the Lord. May their place of rest be in paradise. Merciful One, Okeep their souls forever alive under Thy protective wings. The Lord being their heritage, may they rest in peace, for they shalt rest and stand up for their allotted portion at the end of the

days, and let us say, Amen.]

[Soldiers are weeping. Rabbi Goren sounds the shofar. Sound of gunfire in the background.]

Rabbi Goren: Le-shana HA-ZOT be-Yerushalayim ha-b'nuya, be-yerushalayim ha-atika! [This year in a rebuilt Jerusalem! In the Jerusalem of old!]

Transcription courtesy of: IsraCast, pulled from Archives of the Avi Yaffe Recording Studio in Jerusalem.

REFLECTIONS BY THE SOLDIERS

These reactions from IDF paratroopers as they arrived at the Kotel are a powerful reminder of the place Jerusalem has held in the Jewish heart for centuries.

“The Wall was before us. I trembled. There it was as I had known it - immense, mighty, in all its splendor... overcome, I bowed my head in silence.”

-General Uzi Narkiss, Head of Central Command during the Six Day War

“I felt truly shaken and stood there murmuring a prayer for peace. Motta Gur’s paratroopers were struggling to reach the Wall and touch it. We stood among a tangle of rugged, battle-weary men who were unable to believe their eyes or restrain their emotions. Their eyes were moist with tears, their speech incoherent. The overwhelming desire was to cling to the Wall, to hold on to that great moment as long as possible.”

- Chief of Staff Yitzchak Rabin

“I am speaking to you from the plaza of the Western Wall, the remnant of our Holy Temple. ‘Comfort my people, comfort them, says the Lord your God.’ This is the day we have hoped for, let us rejoice and be glad in His salvation.



Photo: Courtesy Werner Braun/Jerusalem Post Archives

Lord our God, King of the universe, who has kept us in life, who has preserved us, and enabled us to reach this day. This year in Jerusalem – rebuilt! “

– General Shlomo Goren, Chaplain of the Israeli Defense Forces, at the Western Wall

“For some two thousand years the Temple Mount was forbidden to the Jews. Until you came - you, the paratroopers - and returned it to the bosom of the nation. The Western Wall, for which every heart beats, is ours once again. Many Jews have taken their lives into their hands throughout our long history, in order

to reach Jerusalem and live here. Endless words of longing have expressed the deep yearning for Jerusalem that beats within the Jewish heart...You have been given the great privilege of completing the circle, of returning to the nation its capital and its holy center...Jerusalem is yours forever.”

– Commander Motta Gur to his brigade upon their recapture of Jerusalem’s Old City and holy sites



EXPRESSIONS OF JERUSALEM

EXCERPT FROM ISRAEL: AN ECHO OF ETERNITY, A.J. HESCHEL

“July, 1967...I have discovered a new land. Israel is not the same as before. There is great astonishment in the souls. It is as if the prophets had risen from their graves. Their words ring in a new way. Jerusalem is everywhere, she hovers over the whole country. There is a new radiance, a new awe.

The great quality of a miracle is not in its being an unexpected, unbelievably event in which the presence of the holy bursts forth, but in its happening to human beings who are profoundly astonished at such an outburst. My astonishment is mixed with anxiety. Am I worthy? Am I able to appreciate the marvel?



I did not enter on my own the city of Jerusalem. Streams of endless craving, clinging, dreaming, flowing day and night, might, years, decades, centuries, millennia, streams of tears, pledging, waiting = from all over the world, from all corners of the earth – carried us of this generation to The Wall. My ancestors could only dream of you – to my people in Auschwitz you were more remote than the moon, and I can touch your stones! Am I worthy? How shall I ever repay for these moments?

The martyrs of all ages are sitting at the gates of heaven, having refused to enter the world to come lest they forget Israel’s pledge given in and for this world:



If I forget you, O Jerusalem
let my right hand wither.
Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth
if I do not remember you
if I do not set Jerusalem
above my highest joys.
-Psalm 137

They would rather be without heaven than forget the glory of Jerusalem. From time to time their souls would leave the gates of heaven to go on a pilgrimage to the souls of the Jewish people, reminding them that God himself is in exile, that He will not enter heavenly Jerusalem until his people Israel will enter Jerusalem here.

Jerusalem! I always try to see the inner force that emanates from you, enveloping and transcending all the weariness and travail. I try to use my eyes, and there is a cloud. Is Jerusalem higher than the road I walk

on? Does she hover in the air above me? No, in Jerusalem past is present, and heaven is almost here. For an instant I am near to Hillel, who is close by. All of our history is within reach.

Jerusalem, you only see her when you hear.

She has been an ear when no one else heard, and ear open to prophets denunciations, to prophets consolations, to the lamentations of ages, to the hopes of countless sages and saints; and ear to prayer flowing from distant places. And she is more than an ear.

Jerusalem is a witness. An echo of eternity. Stand still and listen. We know Isaiah's voice from hearsay, yet these stones heard him when he said... (2 : 2-4)

*It shall come to pass in the latter days...
For out of Zion shall go forth Torah,
and the word of The Lord from
Jerusalem...*

*And he shall judge between nations,
and shall decide for many peoples...
Nation shall not lift of sword against
nation,
neither shall they learn war anymore.*



Jerusalem was stopped in the middle of her speech. She is a voice interrupted. Let Jerusalem speak again to our people, to all people...

What is the secret of Jerusalem? Her past is a prelude.

Her power is in reviving. Here silence is prediction, the walls are in suspense...

This is a city never indifferent to the sky. The evenings often feel like Kol Nidre nights. Unheard music, transfiguring thoughts. Prayers are vibrant. The Sabbath finds it hard to go away...

Jerusalem has the look of a place that is looked at... "The eyes of the Lord your God are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year" (Deuteronomy 11:12). Psalms inhabit the hills, the air is hallelujah. Hidden harps. Dormant songs.

JERUSALEM LIBERATION DAY

BY JOSEF OLMERT

I remember it as if just happened.

On 7 June 1967, a little after 10 A.M , the Voice of Israel announced with less drama than what was justified, that "the IDF burst into the old city of Jerusalem". Words which sent shivers all over me then, words which send shivers all over me right now. I looked for my mother to see her reaction, and found her in her bedroom crying; "you", she said to me , "cannot really understand. The dream is a reality". But I understood, exactly because my parents kept telling me , that the return to Zion would never be complete without Jerusalem.

Let us start with the name given to the day since then-Jerusalem Day, the Day of Reunification . Yes, the two sides of the city were reunited, but it was an act of liberation which made it possible. Where else can Jews be liberators if not in Jerusalem?. Names are significant, they are symbols , and symbols are so important for every national movement, surely to us, Zionists.

Jerusalem has never been a capital of any Arab and Muslim state, not also after the Jordanian occupation and illegal annexation in 1948. In 1948, as for a century earlier, the Jews were the largest ethnic/religious community in Jerusalem, including in the old city.



The Jordanian commander who invaded Jerusalem and occupied the old city Abdallah al Tal, wrote in his memoirs , published in 1959; “For the first time in 1,000 years not a single Jew remains in the Jewish quarter. not a single building remains intact. This makes the Jews’ return here impossible”. Ethnic cleansing of the Jews, with ALL the synagogues there [over 60], desecrated and ruined, and our Holy Kotel vandalized, becoming the place for horses to do their business. Only the Jews were prevented from 1948 to 1967, to visit their holy cites. Not one protest ever, from anyone...

The fall of Jerusalem, as well as the fall of Judea and Samaria in 1948, were a Jewish disaster. The removal by occupation of Jews from their homeland, the ethnic cleansing of our homeland. David Ben Gurion called it ”Bchiyya ledorot-cry for generations”, but it took us less than a generation to return, to liberate Our Jerusalem. How wrong was the Jordanian commander.



Yom Yerushalayim is therefore the day nagila venishmecha bo - the day we should be happy and rejoice. Nothing is more natural than Jews marching in Jerusalem, celebrating a great national victory.

Nothing is more unnatural, than Jews who lament this fact, who are pained to see so many Israeli flags raised proudly in joy. Non/post/anti Zionists are up and arms against the Jerusalem liberation celebrations because for them Jerusalem is an occupied city, because they accept it being occupied by Arabs without Jews around, and do not accept it being controlled by Jews with many Arabs living freely within. It is the issue of Jewish rights which they find so difficult to accept.

Joy should be reserved only to the natural, justified celebration of the liberation of Jerusalem in the war of self-defense in June 1967.

The national mission to preserve awareness of Jerusalem and Jerusalem Day requires thought and a change of direction. If the public does not come to Jerusalem on this day, the state must spread the spirit of Jerusalem throughout Israel, in schools and city streets. The members of communities around the country driven by this mission are organizing Jerusalem Day parades and events across Israel this week. Working together with schools, community centers and residents of various cities, they are bringing the spirit of Jerusalem to Herzliya, Jaffa, Kiryat Shmona, Ramla, Ashkelon, Safed and Maalot. Jerusalem deserves as many Israeli celebrations as possible. Every community, circle of friends and scouts group should join in the festivities. The city that connects us all deserves all those who love it to celebrate.

Jerusalem Day is not just for Jerusalemites and Jerusalem-lovers. It is a day that gives expression to Israel's existence as a Jewish state. Jerusalem is a Jewish symbol, a symbol of continuity through the generations. Jerusalem Day must be recognized as an important and powerful day in the Israeli calendar, and on this day, we must all wave the flag of Jerusalem with joy and pride.

The State of Israel was founded on the dream of the Jewish people's return to Jerusalem, and it is up to us to celebrate this day with joy, so that when its 100-year anniversary comes around, Israelis will still tear up at the sound of "Jerusalem of Gold" and will feel the Jewish heartbeat.

FIVE POEMS FOR JERUSALEM

BY YEHUDA AMICHAI

Jerusalem Is a Port City

Jerusalem is a port city on the shore of eternity.
 The Temple Mount is a great ship, a pleasure yawl
 In splendor.
 From the portholes of her Wailing Wall, jubilant
 saints
 Peer like passengers. Hasidim on the pier wave
 Goodbye, yelling hurrah, bon voyage. She
 Is always docking, always embarking.
 And the fences and docks
 And policemen and flags and churches' high masts
 And the mosques and the smokestacks of synagogues
 and the chanteys
 Of praise and mountain-billows.
 The ram's horn sounds out sunset: one more
 Has set sail.
 Yom Kippur sailors in white uniforms
 Ascend between the ropes and ladders of tried-and-
 true prayers.
 And the profits of market and gates and goldencap
 domes:
 Jerusalem is the Venice of God.



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Jerusalem is a Spinning Carousel

Jerusalem is a carousel spinning round and round
 from the Old City through every neighborhood and
 back to the Old.
 And you can't get off. If you jump you're risking
 your life
 and if you step off when it stops you must pay again
 to get back on for more turns that never will end.
 Instead of painted elephants and horses to ride
 religions go up, down and around on their axes
 to unctuous melodies from the houses of prayer.

Jerusalem is a seesaw: Sometimes I go down,
 to past generations and sometimes up, into the sky,
 then like a child dangling on high, legs swinging, I
 cry

I want to get down, Daddy, Daddy, I want to get
 down,
 Daddy, get me down.

And like that, all the saints go up into the sky.
 They're like children screaming, Daddy, I want to
 stay high,
 Daddy don't bring me down, Our Father Our King,
 leave me on high, Our Father Our King!

Tourists

Visits of condolence is all we get from them.
They squat at the Holocaust Memorial,
They put on grave faces at the Wailing Wall
And they laugh behind the heavy curtains
In their hotels.

They have their pictures taken
Together with our famous dead
At Rachel's Tomb and Herzl's Tomb
And on the top of Ammunition Hill.
They weep over our sweet boys
And lust over our tough girls
And hang up their underwear
To dry quickly
In cool, blue bathrooms.

Once I sat on the steps by a gate at David's Tower. I
placed my two heavy baskets at my side.

A group of tourists was standing around their guide
and I became their target marker.

"You see that man with the baskets? Just right of his
head there's an arch from the Roman period. Just
right of his head."

"But he's moving, he's moving!"

I said to myself: "redemption will come only if their
guide tells them, 'You see that arch from the Roman
period? It's not important: but next to it, left down
and a bit, there sits a man who's bought fruit and
vegetables for his family.'"



View of Jerusalem

On a roof in the Old City
laundry hanging in the late afternoon sunlight
the white sheet of a woman who is my enemy,
the towel of a man who is my enemy,
to wipe off the sweat of his brow.

In the sky of the Old City
a kite

At the other end of the string,
a child

I can't see

because of the wall.

We have put up many flags,
they have put up many flags.

To make us think that they're happy
To make them think that we're happy.

**"Jerusalem - the only city in the world, where the
right to vote is granted even to the dead."**

An Arab Shepherd is Searching for his Goat on
Mount Zion An Arab shepherd is searching for his
goat on Mount Zion and on the opposite mountain
I am searching for my little boy.

An Arab shepherd and a Jewish father, both in their
temporary failure.

Our voices meet above the Sultan's Pool in the
valley between us.

Neither of us wants the child or the goat to get
caught in the wheels of the terrible Had Gadya*
machine.

Afterward we found them among the bushes and
our voices came back inside us, laughing and crying.

Searching for a goat or a son has always been the
beginning of a new religion in these mountains.

Ecology of Jerusalem

The air over Jerusalem is saturated with prayers
and dreams

like the air over industrial cities.

It's hard to breathe.

And from time to time a new shipment of history arrives
and the houses and towers are its packing materials.

Later these are discarded and piled up in dumps.

And sometimes candles arrive instead of people
and then it's quiet.

And sometimes people come instead of candles
and then there's noise.

And in enclosed gardens heavy with jasmine
foreign consulates,

like wicked brides that have been rejected,

lie in wait for their moment.



**If I forget thee, Jerusalem,
Let my blood be forgotten.
I shall touch your forehead,
Forget my own,
My voice change
For the second and last time
To the most terrible of voices --
Or silence.**

From Poems of Jerusalem by Yehuda Amichai. Tel Aviv: Schocken Publishing, 1987.

Yehuda Amichai has been Israel's best-known poet and the most widely translated. He was born in Wurzburg, Germany, in 1924, and immigrated with his family to Palestine in 1936. Although his upbringing was religious, upon reaching maturity Amichai became secular. In the university he studied Biblical texts and Hebrew literature. W.H. Auden and Dylan Thomas influenced Amichai poems. Sketching from various strata of language - from Biblical, Talmudic and classical to post-modern Hebrew - Amichai was a magician of words. Much of his work is autobiographical. "My personal history has coincided with a larger history," he said. "For me it's always been one and the same."

JERUSALEM: HEART OF OUR HEART, SOUL OF OUR SOUL

BY ELIE WIESEL

For me, the Jew that I am, Jerusalem is above politics. It is mentioned more than six hundred times in Scripture -- and not a single time in the Koran. Its presence in Jewish history is overwhelming. There is no more moving prayer in Jewish history than the one expressing our yearning to return to Jerusalem. To many theologians, it IS Jewish history, to many poets, a source of inspiration. It belongs to the Jewish people and is much more than a city, it is what binds one Jew to another in a way that remains hard to explain. When a Jew visits Jerusalem for the first time, it is not the first time; it is a homecoming. The first song I heard was my mother's lullaby about and for Jerusalem. Its sadness and its joy are part of our collective memory.

Since King David took Jerusalem as his capital, Jews have dwelled inside its walls with only two interruptions; when Roman invaders forbade them access to the city and again, when under Jordanian occupation, Jews, regardless of nationality, were refused entry into the old Jewish quarter to meditate and

pray at the Wall, the last vestige of Solomon's temple. It is important to remember: had Jordan not joined Egypt and Syria in the war against Israel, the old city of Jerusalem would still be Arab. Clearly, while Jews were ready to die for Jerusalem they would not kill for Jerusalem.

Today, for the first time in history, Jews, Christians and Muslims all may freely worship at their shrines. And, contrary to certain media reports, Jews, Christians and Muslims ARE allowed to build their homes anywhere in the city. The anguish over Jerusalem is not about real estate but about memory.

What is the solution? Pressure will not produce a solution. Is there a solution? There must be, there will be. Why tackle the most complex and sensitive problem prematurely? Why not first take steps which will allow the Israeli and Palestinian communities to find ways to live together in an atmosphere of security. Why not leave the most difficult, the most sensitive issue, for such a time?

Jerusalem must remain the world's Jewish spiritual capital, not a symbol of anguish and bitterness, but a symbol of trust and hope. As the Hasidic master Rebbe Nahman of Bratslav said, "Everything in this world has a heart; the heart itself has its own heart."

Jerusalem is the heart of our heart, the soul of our soul.

J IS FOR JERUSALEM

BY KELLY HERTOOG

They say home is where the heart is. If that's the case, then my heart has at various times and I guess always will belong in England, Australia and the United States, because these are the countries I have lived in. I also lived in Israel for 11 years, specifically in Jerusalem. But I wouldn't say Jerusalem has my heart.

Israel has my heart and my entire immediate family still lives in Israel. But I would say – unequivocally – that Jerusalem has my soul.

Because Jerusalem is just that kind of place. If you've never been, it's hard to describe. If you have been, then you probably know what I'm talking about. Jerusalem seeps into your pores and is impossible to shake. The sights, sounds and smells of a modern city clashing with an old one is nothing short of miraculous.

As a journalist whose job was to cover the City of Jerusalem every day, I had the extraordinary honour of learning about and interviewing everyone from school children to volunteers to government officials.

I could do my job every day because there's no real hierarchy – because your mayor and council members are in the phone book and you don't have to go through 47 publicists to get an interview.

In Jerusalem you can rail against a corrupt municipality and in the same breath witness extraordinary acts of chessed (kindness).

I know of no other place where can you walk the streets without a single car on the road on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) and chat to complete strangers.

Or have a complete stranger open their home to you for a Shabbat (Sabbath) meal because they met you in the supermarket and asked if you had somewhere to go.

It's in Jerusalem that your heart will break over and over when there's a suicide bombing and scores of

innocent lives are lost; where your cell phone will give out because people around the country and the world will be calling to make sure you and everyone you know is okay. And then your heart will break all over again when an Ultra Orthodox organization will rally its volunteers and they will come out and collect every piece of shattered bone and tiny piece of flesh that used to be a person – collect them all and ensure that there is a proper burial.

In Jerusalem you can also rail against those Ultra Orthodox who curse those who travel on the Sabbath or who receive handouts from City officials; who wield so much power in local government.

In Jerusalem you'll dance in the streets on Simchat Torah and be proud to be a Jew in your Jewish homeland in the capital of the country. And you'll also be awoken to the unique sound of the muezzin call as the Muslims head to morning prayers.

You'll haggle in Hebrew with Israeli vendors for a better deal on a dozen apples at the outdoor shuk in Machane Yehuda. And in the Old City of Jerusalem you'll haggle in English or Arabic in that market too.



In Jerusalem you will find the best falafel of your life; you'll get up early just to head to the shuk to inhale the smell of pita with za'atar, to sample gleaming olives, to scarf down freshly-baked borekkas and watch old men play shesh besh (backgammon), while drinking strong black coffee or sipping tea with mint.



In Jerusalem you can walk to the Western Wall and touch stones that are thousands of years old; say a prayer; leave a note and then walk across the street to Sultan's Pool to see a rock concert or a movie.

In the Old City you can simply walk a few feet and be in four different quarters. You can run your hands along the stones in the Jewish, Christian, Arab and Armenian quarters.

You can see the bullet holes in the walls from wars.

In Jerusalem you'll watch in awe as hi-rises and new buildings tower over some of the most ancient structures in existence and whizz in your car down a major highway while struggling to negotiate the tiny one way streets in the heart of the city (with cars parked on the footpaths), knowing that it's so much easier to walk to wherever you want to go.

And if you are sitting in your car, who else will stop at the light, hoot their horn and ask you if you want to sell your car? And if you're in Jerusalem, the chances are that the person who asks will remind you that he saw you last week and asked you once before and do you have an answer for him yet?

Jerusalem is where you can be hospitalized and volunteers will show up during holidays and sing and dance for you and offer to say prayers for you.

Jerusalem is where an old world meets a new one and nobody blinks an eye.

Jerusalem is where a sunset over the Old City Walls will stop your heart; where you know summer is on its way because vendors start selling watermelon on the side of the road.

Jerusalem is where people from all over the world flock to live; to visit; to pray and to play.

Jerusalem is not an easy city to live in. She will break your heart many times over. But she'll also heal it, too.

Life in Jerusalem is an ongoing love affair of ups and downs and of struggles and triumphs. You have to give yourself over to Jerusalem in order to truly understand the beauty that his her and her alone.

And that is why she has – and always will have – my soul.

THERE IS NO ZIONISM WITHOUT JERUSALEM

BY ILANA BROWN

Jerusalem is part of the Jewish people in the same way that the heart is part of the human body.

It is not merely an organ that keeps the body functioning. Without it there would be no life.

The last line of the Passover Seder calls for “*Next Year in Jerusalem!*” Before the groom breaks the glass at his wedding he says “*If I forget thee, O Jerusalem...*”

When Jews pray, they face Jerusalem.

Ethiopian Israelis chose Jerusalem Day to commemorate the Ethiopians who died on the long trek to Israel.

The song “Jerusalem of Gold” is recognized the world over.

The national anthem of Israel concludes with the line “To be a free people in our land, the land of Zion and Jerusalem.” Both with religious and secular associations, the list goes on and on.

The State of Israel passed a law in 1980 declaring that “Jerusalem, complete and united, is the capital of Israel.” While not internationally recognized as such, until the law is changed, Jerusalem is the complete and united capital of the sovereign State of Israel.



Lt.-Gen. Mordechai “Motta” Gur, commander of the force in the Old City, a secular, native-born Jerusalemite, declared “The Temple Mount is in our hands! I repeat, the Temple Mount is in our hands!” He did not say “The Old City” or “The Jewish Quarter.” Rather, his Jewish heart told him that the important thing was the Temple Mount; the Temple Mount was in our hands.

By law, by religion, by emotion, Jerusalem is the center, the core, the heart of the Jewish people and the State of Israel.

Along with the idea of two states for two peoples, we are asked to consider Jerusalem as the shared capital for these two states. We are told that holding Arab-majority neighborhoods in east Jerusalem as jailers is morally abhorrent. We are told that misguided Zionism has turned us into overlords. It might be suggested that Jerusalem was divided from 1948-1967 and it did not destroy the State of Israel or substantially damage the Jewish people around the world.

From the year 70 CE, when Jerusalem fell to the Romans, until 1967, the city was not under Jewish control. And yet, Jews around the world continued to yearn for Jerusalem – not for Tiberias, not for Safed,



not for Hebron.

In 1948, when the Jewish state was established and immediately plunged into a war, the infant state was not able to hold Jerusalem. But still the people yearned for Jerusalem. And finally, when the paratroopers entered the Old City on June 7, 1967, religious and secular alike were awed by their achievement.

When a people fulfill a dream, a 1,900-year-old dream, how does that people abandon it and give it to someone else? How does one give up even part of that dream?

Zionism tells us that we have a legitimate right to have a state in our historic homeland. The heart of our homeland is Jerusalem. We need not apologize for advocating for our right to the Zionist dream, nor for fulfilling that dream.

Just try to imagine a Jewish homeland in Uganda, or in Alaska, or in Madagascar. Why does a Jewish homeland anywhere else seem hollow and empty? The answer is Jerusalem.

NO SENSE DENYING THE JEWISH CONNECTION TO JERUSALEM

BY STEPHEN M. FLATOW

Archaeologists have uncovered even more evidence of the ancient Jewish connection to Jerusalem — this right after UNESCO and the Palestinian Authority (PA) declared that Jews have no ties to the holy city. Talk about irony.

The latest discovery is a site where the Roman army assaulted Jewish forces guarding the outer walls of Jerusalem, during the Second Temple period. The find further discredits the lies of the UN and the PA.

The Romans were attacking Jewish forces; no evidence was found of any Palestinian forces in the area. The assault took place during the Second Temple period — the temple that the PA says never existed.

Every time archaeologists dig in Israel, another piece of the Palestinian propaganda line crumbles. Earlier this year, scientists unearthed two ancient document seals in Jerusalem, dating to the late eighth century or early seventh century BCE. The script on the seals is in Hebrew, not Arabic or any other language connected to Arabs or Muslims.



One of the seals bears the name of a man, “Sa’adyahu ben Shebnayahu.” The other is the name of a woman, “Elihanah bat Goel” (or Gael). Jewish names. Not Arab or Muslim or Palestinian. The archaeologists note that the names were “in typical Judean fashion for this time period.”

Another important archaeological discovery earlier this year was the discovery of the world’s oldest glass kilns, alongside a railroad track at the foot of Mount Carmel, near Haifa. Professor Ian Freestone of London’s University College, a specialist in the identification of the chemical composition of glass, noted that the kilns prove that “Israel constituted a production center on an international scale — hence its glassware was widely distributed throughout the Mediterranean and Europe.”

Roman-era glass kilns unearthed alongside newly laid train tracks in northern Israel in 2015. (Assaf Peretz, courtesy of Israel Antiquities Authority)

The kilns date from around the year 400 C.E., some 300 hundred years after the Romans destroyed the Second Temple, killed an estimated 600,000 Jews, and destroyed more than 1,000 Jewish cities and towns.

Despite that devastation, the Jews were so attached to the Land of Israel that they rebuilt their society, to the point of serving as a glass-production center that exported its wares throughout the Roman Empire. One of the most famous discoveries in this field is an edict by the Roman emperor Diocletian, in which he set the prices for what he called “Judean glass.”

Not “Palestinian glass,” but “Judean glass.” Because everyone knew that Judea was the name of the region. That’s what the Bible called it. That’s what historians have called it for more than 2,000 years.

OUR RESPONSIBILITY FOR JERUSALEM

The national mission to preserve awareness of Jerusalem and Jerusalem Day requires thought and a change of direction. If the public does not come to Jerusalem on this day, WE must spread the spirit of Jerusalem throughout Israel, in schools and city streets, and throughout the Jewish world.

The members of communities must be driven by this mission to organize Jerusalem Day events and learning opportunities, for Jerusalem deserves as many celebrations as possible by the entirety of Am Yisrael. Every community, circle of friends and scouts group should join in the festivities of this city that connects us all deserves all those who love it to celebrate.

The State of Israel was founded on the dream of the Jewish people's return to Jerusalem, and it is up to us to celebrate this day with joy, so that when its 100-year anniversary comes around, Israelis will still tear up at the sound of "Jerusalem of Gold" and will feel the Jewish heartbeat.

Jerusalem Day is not just for Jerusalemites and Jerusalem-lovers. It is a day that gives expression to Israel's existence as a Jewish state. Jerusalem is a Jewish symbol, a symbol of continuity through the generations. Jerusalem Day must be recognized as an important and powerful day in the Jewish calendar, and on this day, we must all wave the flag of Jerusalem with joy and pride.



DISCUSSING JERUSALEM

Bring Yom Yerushalayim home and enjoy a vibrant discussion on the personal meaning of our holy city with your friends, family, students or kids and explore your connection to Jerusalem as a Virtual Citizen of Israel.

- 'Jerusalem- The City of Gold': what does that phrase mean to you?
- Do you feel more connected to Jerusalem than to other cities in Israel?
- What are two main aspects of the Jerusalem society that you love?
- Why do you believe Jerusalem should be the capital of Israel?
- If you had to spend one day in Jerusalem, what would you do there?
- Do Yerushalmim (people living in Jerusalem) have certain shared characteristics?
- Why do you think this tiny city is so filled with tension and focused on by the entire world?
- If the State of Israel had to give up Jerusalem, how would you feel?

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