



# Chagim uMoadim

from Masorti Olami & MERCAZ Olami

ד'תשע"ז

## “Jerusalem - 50 Years Since the Reunification”

A few kilometers southeast of Jerusalem, along the route to Bethlehem, there is a place called Rachel's Tomb. In 1967, the first thing the Israeli soldiers saw upon arriving at Rachel's Tomb, was the inscription on one of the walls, a phrase that generates a lot of emotion, the promise of God: “Repress your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears, for your work will be rewarded ... And the children will return to their own land” (Jeremiah XXXI: 16, 17).

Of all the cities in the world, Jerusalem is unique - there is only one! It is earthly and heavenly at the same time, a city that reflects sadness and regret, eternity and peace. Ramban says: “Jerusalem is a place of privilege, as a city that must live in peace and in stillness”.

Jerusalem, the city that contains the mountain where our patriarch, Abraham, offered up his only son, Yitzhak, to the Creator; the city that we remember every day in our prayers and pray to return to it. Conquered more than once, destroyed more than once, reconquered and rebuilt, this is the capital of survival, with its contrast between the old and the new. There is only one Jerusalem, with its precepts and customs intertwined as a thread of gold in the plot of our history and eternal affinity with the Promised Land.

The 28th of Iyar (May 24, 2017), marks the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation of the eastern part of Jerusalem, during the Six-Day War in 1967. Those who have a good memory will remember how this unwanted conflict began, in which the president of Egypt at that time, without any kind of provocation, announced that he would throw the Israelis into the Mediterranean.

How did the world respond? The silence was total, as usual absolute indifference.

Unfortunately, today nothing has changed; politicians around the world, as well as the media and the press, suffer from amnesia and it is extremely healthy to remember the origins of it. After fierce hand-to-hand combat fighting, when no one dreamed of or imagined such an outcome, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) managed to reconquer the city, including the place most sacred to the Jewish people, the Western Wall. The last remaining wall from the Temple devastated by Titus more than two thousand years ago.

Despite the world's absolute silence and indifference before the Six-Day War, following the reunification of Jerusalem, everyone magically became interested in the status of the Holy City, beginning by making suggestions to the State of Israel, followed by advice and finally moving on to pressures and coercions.

A great scholar said about Jerusalem: “It is the offering of Adonai for men and it is the Sanctuary erected by man in honor of God, expecting that both will live there with fear, in ecstasy and hope.”

We live in very special times. May God grant us the wisdom to appreciate them. The ties that join the Jewish people to Jerusalem have no point of comparison with those that any other capital in the world could have with its citizens. For the Muslims, Mecca and Medina are their two main religious centers, and Jerusalem is the third. For Christians, Rome is its first religious center and Jerusalem the second. With all due respect for the other religions, we as Jews, love Jerusalem as the only one, not as 'one more.' It belongs to us as written in three concepts: "Morasha" = Historical Heritage; "Goral" = Fate or Destiny and "Yeud" = Purpose/Designation. The Jewish people have put their "nesha-ma" into Jerusalem. Jerusalem is in our hands and there it will remain, since it is the tree of the Bible, parable of God and tower of legendary perfume.

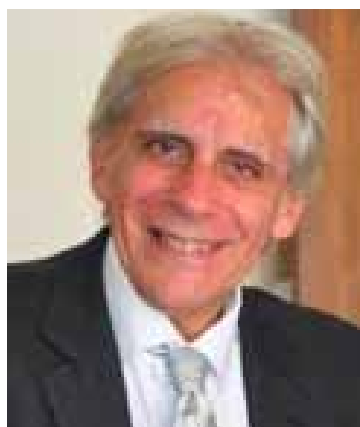
Fifty years after the reunification of Jerusalem, in this place of spiritual significance for the Jewish people, in addition to recognizing the hand of God in that miraculous triumph, we also remember the anguish of our Israeli brethren, as well as the indescribable feeling that accompanied the spectacular victory of the IDF.

"Next year in Jerusalem" is more than a prayer, it is more than a desire and of course, it is more than a geographic fact.

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