

BS"D

“Jerusalem- Where Heaven Touches Earth!”

By Rabbi Shalom Garfinkel- Director Project 613

INTRO: This coming Sunday May 9th at sunset until Monday evening May 10th, 2021. It is the day that commemorates the miraculous reunification of Jerusalem. Let's get some background:

In 1948 at the conclusion of the British mandate, Israel declared its independence and was attacked by the surrounding Arab countries. Israel miraculously survived but lost control over the Old City of Jerusalem that was controlled by Jordan. For 19 years, no Jew was able to live in the Old City or even to visit the Kotel. The Jordanians destroyed dozens of synagogues in the Old City & thousands of tombstones on the Mt. of Olives. The proverbial “heart of the Jewish people” had been ripped out of our collective Jewish body.

In 1967, faced with an existential threat from warmongering Egypt & Syrian, Israel launched a preemptive strike that became known as the 6 Day War. Israel recaptured the Old City & tripled its land mass controlling the West Bank, Golan, Heights, & the entire Sinai Peninsula. Future peace agreements would be made based on Israel relinquishing these territories. But Jerusalem was and is different. WHY?

Source 1. Video about the 6 Day War- “The Battle for Jerusalem (Survival of a Nation)” by JLI
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qunVQoSNMsY> (We will show this at SHTEIG)

Let's take a journey as to the history of Jerusalem to understand why it might be a holy place for many people but the eternal capital and the spiritual heart for ONE PEOPLE...the Jewish people.

Source 2. Jerusalem: Facts & Figures Infographic by Aish.com & Yvette Miller. Read questions below first and then look at the Infographic which is sent as a separate attachment.

Questions to ponder:

1. When did the first Jewish history of Jerusalem begin? Which Biblical figures did what there? What is the symbolism and significance of Jacob's ladder?
2. From when was Jerusalem the capital of the Nation of Israel?
3. Missing from the infographic- Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon (Iraq) destroyed the Temple in 586 BCE (422 BCE according to other scholars)
4. Missing from infographic- Ezra & Nechemiah return from Babylon in 516 BCE (or 352 BCE) to rebuild the Temple albeit in far lesser physical and spiritual glory than Solomon's First Temple.
5. What is the significance of the map having Jerusalem at the center of the 3 continents?
6. What are 3 facts that you did not know or that you find most fascinating about Jerusalem?

Source 3. Bereishit Rabbah 59:5 – Jerusalem is the spiritual source for the entire world & Hashem is the spiritual Source of Jerusalem.

<p>Jerusalem is the light of the world, as it is says, “Nations shall go by your light” (Yeshayahu 60:3) And who was the light of Jerusalem? Hashem! As it is written, “for Hashem shall be to you an everlasting light” (Ibid. 60:19).</p>	<p>ירושלים אורו של עולם שנאמר (ישעיה ס, ג) והלכו גוים לאורך ומי הוא אורה של ירושלים הקב"ה דכתיב והיה לך ה' לאור עולם (ישעיה ס:ט).</p>
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Let’s look further into Jerusalem being the source of holiness for the entire world.

Source 4. Talmud Bavli, Taanit 5a with Commentary of Maharsha – Jerusalem on earth is paralleled by a Jerusalem in Heaven; Hashem does not enter the Heavenly Jerusalem until He enters the Earthly Jerusalem. Where the two “cities” meet is the “Gateway to Heaven.”

<p>Further, Rabbi Nachman said to Rabbi Yitzchak: What is the meaning of the scriptural verse, ‘In the midst of the Jewish people is the Holy One, and I, Hashem, will not enter the city of Jerusalem’ (Hoshea 11:9)? [Surely, it cannot mean that] because the Holy One is in the midst of the Jewish people that He shall not come into Jerusalem!] Rabbi Yitzchak replied: Thus said Rabbi Yochanan: The Holy One, blessed be He, said, ‘I will not enter the Heavenly Jerusalem until I enter the Earthly Jerusalem.’ Is there then a Heavenly Jerusalem? – Yes; for it is written, “The built-up Jerusalem is like a city that was joined together with itself” (Tehillim 122:3). The Maharsha comments: This means to say that the rebuilt Jerusalem below resembles the Jerusalem above that are “joined together with itself,” meaning that in Jerusalem in Heaven above is facing the Jerusalem below which is aligned with the “gateway of Heaven.”</p>	<p>ואמר ליה רב נחמן רבי יצחק: מאי דכתיב [הושע יא, ט] בקרבך קדוש ולא אבוא בעיר, משום דבקרובך קדוש לא אבוא בעיר? - אמר ליה, הכי אמר רבי יוחנן: אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא לא אבוא בירושלים של מעלה עד שאבוא לירושלים של מטה. ומי איכא ירושלים למעלה? - אין, דכתיב [תהלים קכב:ג] ירושלים הבנויה כעיר שחברה לה יחדו. כלומר ירושלים הבנויה למטה היא כעיר ירושלים שחברה לה כו' דהיינו שהיא למעלה בשמים נגד ירושלים שלמטה שהיא מכוונת כנגד שער השמים.</p>
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Questions to ponder:

1. What does it mean that Hashem will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until He enters the earthly Jerusalem?
2. What are Hashem’s conditions for entering the earthly Jerusalem? What do the Jews need to do for this to happen?
3. What is the significance of Jerusalem being the “gateway of Heaven.”

Source 5. Video: Rabbi Sacks on Jerusalem: The 50th Anniversary of Reunification (2017)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dd9PCaqWQaI> (We will show this at SHTEIG)