

BS"D

“Jerusalem- Where Heaven Touches Earth!”

By Rabbi Shalom Garfinkel- Director Project 613

This SHTEIG session is different from others in that we will be showing 1 video about the actual 6 Day War, then breaking out to learn sources about Jerusalem, then coming back together & ending with another video of Rabbi Sacks on the significance of the reunification of Jerusalem... An overarching theme I would like to present is that the physical reunification of East & West Jerusalem is only the BEGINNING of the larger spiritual project of the ultimate reunification of the Heavenly & Earthly Jerusalem... Stay tuned...

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?

This video is technical but exciting about the actual war. Most of the YPs do NOT have a clear idea of what happened during the war. Many young Jews might even see the 6 day war as something negative or the Jews becoming “conquerors.” Many young Jews actually think that J Street and pro-BDS is still being pro-Israel. I don't know who will be in the class, but please do not assume that they will be “pro-Israel” in the classic sense

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.

TRY TO SKIM & GET A BASIC OVERVIEW...you don't need to dwell on every detail of the infographic...

Questions to ponder:

1. When did the first Jewish history of Jerusalem begin? **With King David over 3000 years ago.** Which Biblical figures did what there? **It's on the infographic.** What is the symbolism and significance of Jacob's ladder? **The ladder symbolizes the connection of Heaven and Earth. It also symbolizes GROWTH one rung at a time... our mission in our lives is to continue to grow to live a more Heavenly life while on earth...**
2. From when was Jerusalem the capital of the Nation of Israel? **Over 3000 years ago with King David. And it NEVER CHANGED! The Temple was destroyed and we were exiled but our capital never changed. We just didn't have ACCESS to it... our hearts never strayed. This is a key point.**
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? **Most Medieval maps have Jerusalem as the center of the world. It is in the WORLD'S consciousness that Jerusalem is the center of the world... notice how much media coverage Israel gets compared to everywhere else...**
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.

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).

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:יט).

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.”

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.”**

ואמר ליה רב נחמן לרבי יצחק: מאי דכתיב [הושע יא, ט] בקרבך קדוש ולא אבוא בעיר, משום דבקרבך 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.

Questions to ponder:

1. What does it mean that Hashem will not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until He enters the earthly Jerusalem? **Hashem so to speak keeps Himself in “exile” as long as the Jewish people are in exile. If the JEWS aren’t in Jerusalem below, then Hashem refrains from being in Jerusalem above...**
2. What are Hashem’s conditions for entering the earthly Jerusalem? What do the Jews need to do for this to happen? **Very simple...when we Jews observe the Torah, we make a very friendly environment for Hashem to enter. When we are “good neighbors,” for Hashem, then He will want to come and be our neighbor. In fact, the name of Hashem dwelling near the Jewish people is the “Shechina,” which means “Neighbor” in Hebrew. Cool! Our sources say that the Shechinah never fully left from the Western Wall...which is why it is so precious to the Jewish people...**
3. What is the significance of Jerusalem being the “gateway of Heaven.” **Hashem sends His flow of blessing to the entire world THROUGH Jerusalem and specifically through the Temple. When the portal of blessing, the Temple, was destroyed, the flow of blessing to the world diminished. Also, our prayers from around the world are directed to Jerusalem, to the site of the Temple, and up to Heaven. It is true that talking to Hashem from Jerusalem is really a “local call.”**

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)