

The background of the slide features a collage of three images. The top-left image shows a close-up of a rough, textured stone wall. The bottom-left image shows the back of a person with long, light-colored hair, looking towards the stone wall. The right side of the slide features a diamond-shaped inset containing a relief sculpture of several figures in ancient attire, with a menorah visible in the background.

בשערייך ירושלים

In the Gates of Jerusalem

Reflections
on the Eternal City
for the
High Holidays 5778
ימים נוראים התשע"ח

בשערי ירושלים

In the Gates of Jerusalem





For two thousand years, the Jewish people longed for Jerusalem. From the moment that David established it as the capital of his kingdom, and his son Solomon built there the House of God, Jerusalem has captured the Jewish imagination. When Jerusalem was destroyed, we promised never to forget it, and “Leshana Haba’a Be-Yerushalayim – Next Year in Jerusalem” became a Jewish creedal pronouncement, a prayer for spiritual and physical redemption.

And then, in six days in June 1967, two thousand years of longing came to an end. On the morning of June 7, the third day of the war, the commander of the paratroopers’ Brigade 55, Motta Gur, delivered the stunning pronouncement: “The Temple Mount is in our hands.” The words electrified all of Israel and indeed the Jewish people worldwide. Solemnity accompanied the joy and celebration, as everyone understood that at that moment, Israel had changed.

We were sovereign, once again, over all of Jerusalem. Not merely Jerusalem, the capital of modern Israel, but the Old City and the historic site of the First and Second Temples, a place designated for God’s dwelling and a house of prayer for all peoples, the focus of ancestral pilgrimage and our prayers through the generations, and the repository of our collective hopes and spiritual aspirations.

The reunification of Jerusalem, whose fiftieth anniversary we recently commemorated, fulfilled the dream of millennia. Yet that dream has contained within it multiple meanings, opportunities, challenges and responsibilities. During these High Holidays, our season of introspection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the State of Israel, in partnership with the Shalom Hartman Institute, invites you on a journey of reflection to explore some of the diverse meanings of Jerusalem and their implications for contemporary Jewish life and modern Israel.



בית הנשיא
THE PRESIDENT

Each time I enter the Old City of Jerusalem, I feel I am making a journey to my family roots. While some fly to Krakow or Casablanca to encounter roots, I need neither airplane nor passport, for my forefathers lived and worked in Jerusalem. And there is a particularly special place in the Old City for me: The Hurva Synagogue.

On the eve of Rosh Hashana, 5625 (1864), my great-grandfather Reb Yosef Yitzhak “Yoshya” Rivlin declared in the doorway of the Hurva Synagogue as it was dedicated for the second time:

“Anyone standing on one of the hills surrounding Jerusalem will be able to see the dome of this synagogue rising among all the other buildings in the city, like the moon among the stars... I well remember this place nine years ago — a site of total destruction... But now there rises a majestic temple that is a pride and a glory for this generation.”

As a child I was privileged to see the full glory of the Hurva from within when I came with my father to the synagogue service, and from outside, when I looked from the New City towards the Old City. Anyone who looked could see the dome of the Hurva. But I felt a special pride.

Then, on Lag Ba’Omer, 5708 (May 27, 1948), a terrible thing happened. During fierce fighting, the Jordanian Legion conquered the Hurva and raised the Jordanian flag over it. Three hours later there was a huge explosion. We looked over toward the Old City, but the dome of the Hurva was no longer there — its stones were shattered, its splendor destroyed, its Holy Ark turned into an animal stable.

In 1967, as a soldier in the Jerusalem Brigade, I went to the Kotel at the first opportunity after liberation, and from there to the Hurva. It was difficult for me to look at the sight; nothing was left of that beautiful synagogue.

Then in 2010, after an extensive renovation, the Hurva was rededicated. A century and a half after my great-grandfather Reb Yoshya's speech, I was privileged to stand where he had once stood and to again witness the renewed greatness of the Hurva, its glory rising from the ashes for a third time.

The story of the Hurva is a microcosm of our Jewish history, our nation that returned to its homeland – from destruction to splendor, then again destruction, and again splendor. We who truly love Jerusalem, who fight for her, who link our destiny to hers, who mourn her desolation and rejoice in her rebuilding, know that there can be no Zion without Jerusalem. We continue to believe that there is nothing more moral or just than our right to build and to be rebuilt within this city. The Hurva is a symbol of the reunited Jerusalem.

As we approach Rosh Hashana, I wish you all good health, joy and peace in the coming year.
May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for a good year — לשנה טובה תיכתבו

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'R. Rivlin', followed by a long horizontal line.

Reuven (Ruvi) Rivlin

JERUSALEM



Dear Friends,

Jerusalem is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. It was the heart of Israel's kingdoms, the seat of rebellion, and later a neglected administrative outpost on the edge of the desert. Yet through it all, it has been the capital of the Jewish people and the focus of our prayers for three millennia.

In 1948, after two thousand years of exile, Jerusalem again became the center of Jewish sovereignty. However, it was not until the Six Day War in 1967 when the city was liberated and reunified that our beating heart became whole again.

Jerusalem is not just the eternal capital of the one and only Jewish state. It has meant many things to many people over the centuries. My Jerusalem has changed and evolved over the years, along with the city's golden skyline. During my childhood, Jerusalem was small and divided, rent in half by a no-man's land of fences and barbed wire, where Jordanian snipers fired on Jewish residents walking by. I vividly remember climbing onto roofs to catch a glimpse of the Temple Mount, the object of our people's long centuries of yearning.

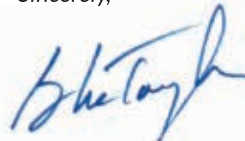
Then came the euphoria of the liberation of the Wall, the crowds of people making their way to touch the ancient stones.

Today, Jerusalem is a modern and vibrant city, a global hub of cultural, religious and scientific achievement. Since liberating the city, Israel has guaranteed freedom of worship and protected the holy sites of all. We will continue to build Jerusalem to ensure that its promising future is worthy of its glorious past.

This time of joy is also a time of introspection. It is an opportunity to reflect on the year that has passed, but also to look ahead. Israel and Jewish communities around the world are bound by the values that have been the source of our strength and the foundation of Western civilization. The history of the Jewish people has proved that united, we can overcome all challenges and threats. I remain committed to working together in the years ahead to ensure our common future.

I wish you all a *Shana Tova and Gmar Chatima Tova*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ben Netanyahu', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Benjamin Netanyahu

JERUSALEM



The poet and anti-Nazi partisan Abba Kovner survived the Holocaust and came to Israel shortly before the founding of the state. Here, Kovner, a secular Zionist, describes his first encounter with the Wall. In his words, Kovner describes two distinct arrivals at the Kotel, the physical and the emotional. What makes him, even as a secular Jew, feel that he had fully arrived?

ABBA KOVNER, ONE OF THE MINYAN

In all my crises along my path, one thing never broke. I never ceased to be a believer. Even amidst my greatest breakdown, the firm land of my faith never collapsed. Faith — its core is ritual and its soul is prayer. There is no real poetry which is not a prayer.

During my first week in Israel, I stood at the Western Wall. My late mother of blessed memory had given me no instruction, as we had no opportunity for farewell. I stood one pace from the Kotel, from its stones, and felt that I did not belong. I felt rooted in a different reality. I had not moved away even one step, but someone pulled at my sleeve and asked me to join the minyan. I put on a hat and joined them for the Mincha prayer. I had arrived.

Perhaps this is the most significant thing in Judaism. To know that the nine needs the tenth, and the one needs the nine. Even the prayer leader before the ark who leads the service is not more than a solitary person. Life is meaningless if it is only for itself, and only in connection to experience, to the words that meet you and come towards you from afar, is there meaning in being. To be one — but of the community.

I KINGS 8: 27–30

27 But will God really dwell on earth?
Even the heavens to their uttermost
reaches cannot contain You, how
much less this House that I have built!

28 Yet turn, O Lord my God, to the
prayer and supplication of Your
servant, and hear the cry and prayer
which Your servant offers before You
this day.

29 May Your eyes be open day and
night toward this House, toward the
place of which You have said, ‘My
name shall abide there’; may You heed
the prayers which Your servant will
offer toward this place.

30 And when You hear the
supplications which Your servant
and Your people Israel offer toward
this place, give heed in Your heavenly
abode—give heed and pardon.

כז כִּי, הָאֲמָנָם יֵשֵׁב אֱלֹהִים עַל הָאָרֶץ הַזֶּה
הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַיִם הַשָּׁמַיִם לֹא יִכְלְפוּךָ אִף כִּי
הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה אֲשֶׁר בָּנִיתִי.

כח וּפָנִיתְּ אֶל תְּפִלַּת עַבְדְּךָ וְאֶל תַּחֲנוּנוֹ יְהוָה
אֱלֹהֵי לְשִׁמְעֵךָ אֶל הַרְנָה וְאֶל הַתְּפִלָּה אֲשֶׁר
עַבְדְּךָ מִתְפַּלֵּל לְפָנֶיךָ הַיּוֹם.

כט לִהְיוֹת עֵינֶיךָ פְּתוּחוֹת אֶל הַבַּיִת הַזֶּה לַיְלָה
וַיּוֹם אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַרְתָּ יְהוָה שְׁמִי שָׁם
לְשִׁמְעֵךָ אֶל הַתְּפִלָּה אֲשֶׁר יִתְפַּלֵּל עַבְדְּךָ אֶל
הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה.

ל וְשָׁמַעְתָּ אֶל תַּחֲנוּנוֹת עַבְדְּךָ וְעַמְּךָ יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲשֶׁר
יִתְפַּלְלוּ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וְאַתָּה תִּשְׁמָעֵם אֶל
מָקוֹם שְׁבִיתְךָ אֶל הַשָּׁמַיִם וְשָׁמַעְתָּ וְסָלַחְתָּ.

Having fulfilled his father’s dream to
build in Jerusalem a House for the
Lord, King Solomon reflects on the
meaning and indeed very possibility
of sacred space. In monotheism,
as Solomon recognizes, “even the
heavens to their uttermost reaches
cannot contain You, how much less this
House that I have built.” What does
holy space mean for King Solomon?
What is the meaning of the Jerusalem
of Prayer?

We do not merely direct our prayers toward Jerusalem, but pray about Jerusalem three times a day in our Amidah. The following are two versions of the same prayer. What is the difference between praying for God's return to Jerusalem and praying that God turns toward Jerusalem? Is Jerusalem merely the repository of prayers, or is it also the City of God?

AMIDAH PRAYER, TRADITIONAL

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירָךְ בְּרַחֲמִים תָּשׁוּב. וְתֵשְׁכֶן בְּתוֹכָהּ כְּאֲשֶׁר דִּבַּרְתָּ. וּבִנְהָ אוֹתָהּ בְּקֶרֶב בְּיָמֵינוּ בְּנֵין עוֹלָם. וְכִסֵּא דָוִד מְהֵרָה לְתוֹכָהּ תִּכְיֶין. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה', בּוֹנֵה יְרוּשָׁלַיִם.

To Jerusalem Your city may You return with mercy and dwell in the midst of it as You have spoken, and build it soon and in our day as an eternal structure. The throne of David quickly establish. Blessed are You, O Lord, the Builder of Jerusalem.

AMIDAH PRAYER, LIBERAL

וְלִירוּשָׁלַיִם עִירָךְ בְּרַחֲמִים תִּפְנֶה, וִיהִי שְׁלוֹם בְּשַׁעְרֶיהָ וּשְׁלֹוה בְּלֵב יוֹשְׁבֶיהָ, וְתוֹרָתְךָ מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא, וּדְבָרְךָ מִירוּשָׁלַיִם. בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, ה', נוֹתֵן שְׁלוֹם בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם.

And turn in compassion to Jerusalem, Your city. May there be peace in her gates, quietness in the hearts of her inhabitants. Let Your Torah go forth from Zion and Your word from Jerusalem. Blessed is Adonai, who gives peace to Jerusalem.

YEHUDAH AMICHAÏ, JERUSALEM 1967 SECTION 5

On Yom Kippur in 1967, the Year of Forgetting, I put on
my dark holiday clothes and walked to the Old City of Jerusalem.
For a long time I stood in front of an Arab's hole-in-the-wall shop,
not far from the Damascus Gate, a shop with
buttons and zippers and spools of thread
in every color and snaps and buckles.
A rare light and many colors, like an open Ark.

I told him in my heart that my father too
had a shop like this, with thread and buttons.
I explained to him in my heart about all the decades
and the causes and the events, why I am now here
and my father's shop was burned there and he is buried here.

When I finished, it was time for the Closing of the Gates prayer.
He too lowered the shutters and locked the gate
and I returned, with all the worshippers, home.

Prayer is not only directed toward God, but often is a reflection and representation of a conversation with ourselves and our surroundings. The secular Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai is spiritually drawn to the Jerusalem of Prayer, and makes a pilgrimage to it on the first Yom Kippur after the Six Day War. He too experiences the awesomeness of the moment of Neila, the ending of Yom Kippur when the Gates of Repentance begin to close. To whom is he praying? What is he praying about? Why does he pray in Jerusalem?



Three times a year, Jews are commanded to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem in order to be present and be seen by God. As the multitude of Jews descend on a city that transcends space, but which at the same time is very limited in space, the Mishna declares that no one ever felt cramped or spatially limited. Is this a descriptive or prescriptive statement? What do we need to do today to ensure that in our newly unified Jerusalem all members of our People can feel at home?

MISHNA AVOT 5:5

Ten miracles were performed for our forefathers in the Holy Temple... They stood crowded but had ample space in which to prostrate themselves... And no man ever said to his fellow, "My lodging in Jerusalem is too cramped for me."

עשרה נסים נעשו לאבותינו בבית המקדש...
עומדים צפופים ומשתחוים רווחים... ולא
אמר אדם לחברו צר לי המקום שאלין
בירושלים.

TOSEFTA BERACHOT 3:16

היה עומד בחו"ל יכוין את לבו כנגד ארץ ישראל... היה עומד בא"י יכוין את לבו כנגד ירושלים... נמצאו העומדין לצפון פניהם לדרום העומדים בדרום פניהם לצפון העומדים במזרח פניהם למערב העומדים למערב פניהם למזרח ונמצאו כל ישראל מתפללין למקום אחד.

Those that are standing inside the Bet Hamikdash [should] direct their hearts towards the Holy of Holies and [only then] pray, as it is said, "...they will pray towards this place." (I Kings 8:30) It comes out that [all of those] standing in the north will be facing the south, [all of those] standing in the south will be facing the north, [all of those] standing in the east will be facing the west, [and all of those] standing in the west will be facing the east. And it will come out that all of the Jewish people will be praying towards one place.

SIGD PRAYER EXCERPT

And the priest and prophets will bow down in Jerusalem
And kings and princes will bow down in Jerusalem
And the great judges will bow down in Jerusalem
And they will come east and west and worship in Jerusalem
And they will come north and south and worship in Jerusalem
And they will come from four directions and worship in Jerusalem

The Jerusalem of Prayer not only draws our attention, but also demands that we turn physically toward it as we pray. In doing so, we do not merely see Jerusalem, but each other. The rabbinic Tosefta's depiction of the experience of everyday prayer and the Ethiopian Jewish prayer during the holiday of Sigd, a day of fasting and prayer for return to Jerusalem, both speak of the profound potential of Jerusalem as a unifying force in Jewish life. Can Jerusalem be the City of Brothers and Sisters now that we are sovereign over it? What does Jerusalem's status as capital demand of us?

Journalist Bambi Sheleg writes lovingly of the exhilarating diversity that is Jewish Jerusalem. Despite the frequent denominational acrimony, Jerusalem has emerged as the most religiously pluralistic city in Israel. It is not merely a city of diverse pilgrims, but of diverse inhabitants with very different notions of what it means to be a Jew and what Jerusalem must look like. What does Sheleg mean when she argues that this diversity is what attracts pilgrims in search of salvation? What is Jerusalem's great potential, and what is the question that it inspires us to ask?

BAMBI SHELEG, ERETZ ACHERET 2011

Nowhere else in the world is the human encounter so charged and fascinating as in Jerusalem, the city of yearning. East and west combine in this unsolvable city. Suspiciousness and fright, fatigue and sorrow, side by side with a strange joy that occasionally bursts out. There are hundreds of Batei Midrash – ultra orthodox, religious, religious and secular, secular, conservative, reform – a Beit Midrash for everyone looking for knowledge and seeking their own way to faith. There are all kinds of schools, for all communities: Jews and Arabs, experimental, anthroposophic, democratic and Hasidic.

The city is full of holiness searchers and Temple builders. Kiryat Moshe, once a regular Israeli neighborhood, is today a home for Yeshivat Mercaz Harav. The Haredi neighborhoods are spreading out, in Kiryat Yovel bitter struggles occur, the Old City has taken on a Haredi flavor, and the Zionist Jews who renovated the Hurva synagogue are now displaced by Haredi factors which took over. Bakaa and the German Colony are today the most important religious-liberal-feminist neighborhoods in the Jewish world.

There are neighborhoods such as Armon Hanatziv and Gilo that represent Jerusalem as it used to be: a variety of people from east and west, educated and uneducated, rich and poor. Human warmth side by side with feelings of alienation. Signs of everyday life — balconies with flowers and cooking aromas from all sorts of kitchens. And a kind of typical obstinacy, a trait which those who live in Jerusalem acquire over the years. And of course, there's the unresolved encounter between American Jews, French Jews and Israeli Jews. And the saddest meeting, but the one with the most potential: the encounter between Jews and Arabs.

Jerusalem's great potential makes her the most exciting city in the world. Perhaps that is why pilgrims come to her, looking for salvation. But this enigmatic potential has something to do with our ability to reshape our national identity and answer the biggest question of all: What do we want to be? And what do we want to be in Jerusalem?

Already in 1928, Avigdor HaMeiri felt that Jerusalem was moving in the wrong direction. "From the Summit of Mount Scopus" he looks down on a broken and unredeemed city. "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, this is not what I dreamt about." What is needed if we are to truly rebuild its ruins? Are Jerusalem's ruins merely physical?

AVIGDOR HAMEIRI, FROM THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT SCOPUS

From the summit of Mount Scopus,
I will prostrate myself to you
From the summit of Mount Scopus,
O Jerusalem, peace unto you,
I have dreamt of you for a hundred generations
To merit/to cry and behold the light of your countenance

Jerusalem, Jerusalem
Light up your face to your son
Jerusalem, Jerusalem
From your ruins I will build you

I came here with a confident heart
To rebuild your ruins
Yet how can I build your temple
When there is no peace among your children?
Sephardi, Ashkenazi, Ethiopian, Yemenite, Russian
Haredi and Secular

Jerusalem, Jerusalem
This is not what I dreamt about
Jerusalem, Jerusalem
Make peace among your sons





The most iconic Biblical source on Jerusalem, By the Rivers of Babylon, tells of the experience of loss and hope. Exile is not merely a physical reality, but an experience of degradation, humiliation, and powerlessness. When we declare never to forget Jerusalem, what are we not forgetting? What does Jerusalem signify when juxtaposed to weeping by the Rivers of Babylon? Who will be redeemed when Jerusalem is redeemed?

PSALM 137

1 By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat down, yea, we wept, when we remembered Zion.

2 Upon the willows in the midst thereof we hanged up our harps.

3 For there they that led us captive asked of us words of song, and our tormentors asked of us mirth: 'Sing us one of the songs of Zion.'

4 How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

5 If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning.

6 Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, if I remember thee not; if I set not Jerusalem above my highest joy.

א על נְהָרוֹת בָּבֶל, שָׁם יִשְׁבּוּנוּ גַם בָּכִינוּ, בְּזָכְרֵנוּ
אֶת צִיּוֹן.

ב עַל עֲרָבִים בְּתוֹכָהּ תְּלִינוּ כִּנּוּרֵינוּ.

ג כִּי שָׁם שְׁאֵלוּנוּ שׁוֹבֵינוּ דְּבַרֵי שִׁיר,
וְתוֹלְלֵינוּ שְׂמִיחָה.

ד שִׁירוּ לָנוּ מְשִׁיר צִיּוֹן.

ה אֵיךְ נִשְׁרֵי אֶת שִׁיר ה' עַל אֲדַמְתָּ נֶכֶר.

ו אִם אֲשַׁכַּח יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, תִּשְׁכַּח יְמִינִי. תִּדְבַּק
לְשׁוֹנִי לְחִכִּי אִם לֹא אֶזְכְּרֶיךָ, אִם לֹא אֶעֱלֶה
אֶת יְרוּשָׁלַיִם, עַל רֹאשׁ שְׂמִיחָתִי.

ISAIAH 2: 1-4

1 The word that Isaiah son of Amoz prophesied concerning Judah and Jerusalem.

2 In the days to come, The Mount of the LORD's House Shall stand firm above the mountains And tower above the hills; And all the nations Shall gaze on it with joy.

3 And the many peoples shall go and say: "Come, Let us go up to the Mount of the LORD, To the House of the God of Jacob; That He may instruct us in His ways, And that we may walk in His paths." For instruction shall come forth from Zion, The word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

4 Thus He will judge among the nations and arbitrate for the many peoples, And they shall beat their swords into plowshares And their spears into pruning hooks: Nation shall not take up Sword against nation; They shall never again know war.

א הַדְּבָר אֲשֶׁר חָזָה, יִשְׁעִיָּהוּ בֶן-אֲמוֹץ, עַל-
יְהוּדָה, וִירוּשָׁלַם.

ב וְהָיָה בְּאַחֲרִית הַיָּמִים, נִכּוֹן יְהִיָּה הַר בֵּית-
יְהוָה בְּרֹאשׁ הָהָרִים, וְנִשְׂאָ, מִגְּבָעוֹת; וְנִהָרֻ
אֵלָיו, כָּל-הַגּוֹיִם.

ג וְהָלְכוּ עַמִּים רַבִּים, וְאָמְרוּ לָכֵן וְנַעֲלָה אֶל-
הַר-יְהוָה אֶל-בֵּית אֱלֹהֵי יַעֲקֹב, וִירֹנוּ מִדֶּרֶכָיו,
וְנִלְכָּה בְּאַחֲרֵיתוֹ: כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה, וְדִבְרֵ-
יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַם.

ד וְשִׁפְט בֵּין הַגּוֹיִם, וְהוֹכִיחַ לְעַמִּים רַבִּים;
וְכִתְּתוּ חֲרִבּוֹתֵם לְאַתִּים, וְחֲנִיתוֹתֵיכֶם
לְמִזְמֵרוֹת-לֹא-יִשָּׂא גּוֹי אֶל-גּוֹי חֶרֶב, וְלֹא-
יִלְמְדוּ עוֹד מִלְחָמָה.

In one of Judaism's most famous and powerful depictions of the messianic era, Isaiah paints a picture of a redeemed world. In the days to come, it is not merely the Jews who will return to be sovereign over Jerusalem, but the entire world order will be transformed. Jerusalem as the City of Prayer will unify the world and bring forth a new Torah. What is the essence of the universalist vision of Isaiah? What is our responsibility toward fulfilling this hope now that Jerusalem is in our hands?

Immediately after the victory in 1967, Defense Minister Dayan ordered the removal of the Israeli flag hung by Israeli soldiers over the Dome of the Rock. In doing so, Dayan was declaring that our victory was not a defeat of Islam or Christianity and pledged that Israel would be committed to the religious freedom of Jews, Christians and Muslims alike. What is the meaning of Jewish sovereignty over a city which is holy not merely to Jews? Can our longing live side by side with the meaning and significance of Jerusalem for Christianity and Islam?

**MINISTER OF DEFENSE MOSHE DAYAN,
STATEMENT AT THE WESTERN WALL 1967**

To our Arab neighbors we extend, especially at this hour, the hand of peace. To members of the other religions, Christians and Muslims, I hereby promise faithfully that their full freedom and all their religious rights will be preserved. We did not come to Jerusalem to conquer the Holy Places of others.

NAIM ARAIDI, JERUSALEM DIVIDES (TRANSLATED FROM ARABIC)

Jerusalem cracks apart
And is no longer itself.
The mosque which was a church
Which was once a synagogue
Is no more what it was
And what has been will never be again.
The worshippers in the Dome of the Rock
Hear the whisperings of the notes
Infiltrating the cracks of the Wall
And do not know what is written there.
And between these and those
The voices of the Via Dolorosa
And many Christians carry and bestow
Many crosses on their shoulders
To all who are here
And to those who will follow.
And in the ceiling of the sky in a full moon
God presides and does not regret
What He did with Babel.
Babel and Jerusalem are two symbols
Of crime and punishment

Naim Araidi, an Israeli Druze poet, sees in Jerusalem's religious diversity a reflection of the brokenness of humanity. He sees in Jerusalem a place where our longings crash to earth and conflict with each other. What is the imagery of the Tower of Babel to which he alludes? Can we share one city, or is it the tragedy of human destiny that coexistence is only possible when we are spread across the earth?

Abraham Joshua Heschel, the poet of Jewish theology, is known for his writings about the role of sacred time in the Jewish tradition. Yet when he came to Jerusalem, he was inspired to speak about the meaning of sacred space. For Heschel, Jerusalem is a witness and an echo of eternity. What are his hopes for Jerusalem? What does he hope that Jerusalem will inspire Jews to understand? How do sacred space and sacred time merge in Jerusalem?

**ABRAHAM JOSHUA HESCHEL, ISRAEL: AN ECHO OF ETERNITY,
"YOU ALWAYS SEE WHEN YOU HEAR" PAGE 7 (1969)**

Jerusalem! I always try to see the inner force that emanates from you, enveloping and transcending all 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, an ear open to prophets' denunciations, to prophets' consolations, to the lamentations of ages, to the hopes of countless sages and saints; an ear to prayers flowing from distant places. And she is more than an ear. Jerusalem is a witness, an echo of eternity...

Jerusalem was stopped in the middle of her speech. She is a voice interrupted. Let Jerusalem speak again to our people, to all people. The words have gone out of here and have entered the pages of holy books. And yet Jerusalem has not given herself away. There is so much more in store. Jerusalem is never at the end of the road. She is the city where waiting for God was born, where the anticipation of everlasting peace came into being. Jerusalem is waiting for the prologue of redemption, for new beginning.

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. It may happen any moment: a shoot may come forth out of the stock of Jesse, a twig may grow forth out of his roots...

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.

Rabbi Tamar Elad Appelbaum longs for a Jerusalem which will inspire us to transcend the particular and to embrace the universalist aspiration of Tikkun Olam. Returning to Jerusalem is not merely the fulfillment of our dreams, but a responsibility to be dreamers. How does Zion challenge us to transcend the Zionist dream? How does the idea of a holy city inspire her moral vision?

**RABBI TAMAR ELAD APPELBAUM,
“THE TEMPLE MOUNT IS IN OUR HANDS”**

The Jewish obligation of Redemption is destined to pass through the Temple Mount, Jerusalem and Zion. It is now our generation's obligation. From this mountain, the horizon is vast, and it is the horizon of the absolute, not of the individual; its concern is the entire world, and not one nation only; it's the obligation to dream even bigger than the Zionist dream we have dreamt in the past 100 years, it is the Jewish dream that our heritage carried for hundreds of years.

Therefore, when we say the words “Shir Hamaalot... A Song of Ascents, When the Lord brought back those who returned to Zion, we were like those who dream” — we say it as a vow: we have returned to Zion in order to be dreamers, and not those who cease to dream.

We have returned to rise higher in our faith; to climb up to the top of the mountain of freedom, the top of life, here in the city of God. We have returned to build here a prayer house for all humanity. A Beit Midrash for all cultures. A city of refuge where broken hearts are healed. A food kitchen for the poor. A city of God which is the spiritual hub of humankind. A place of hearkening, a place able to contain the panoply of multiple voices of the world, all created by a sole Creator, different voices, colors, views, beliefs — all rooted in one point of freedom, one point of life.



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Reader designed by Vered Shapira

לשנה הבאה בירושלים

Next year may we meet in Jerusalem



During these High Holidays, our season of introspection, the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in partnership with the Shalom Hartman Institute, invites you on a journey of reflection to explore some of the diverse meanings of Jerusalem and their implications for contemporary Jewish life and modern Israel.

