

Chanukah 5781

BS"D Chanuka 5781

Rabbi Nachman Kahana

The Real Story Behind President Trump's Recognition of Yerushalayim as Israel's Capital

Yerushalayim – the very word resonates as a symphony in the authentic Jewish soul.

Yir'ah (fear of God) and Shalem (perfection) combine to form the name Yerushalayim; for these are the qualities which the city bestows upon those who love her and are faithful to her.

Yerushalayim, in its various forms, appears over 650 times in the TaNaCH. Yerushalayim is not mentioned or even alluded to in the Koran by any name. The Christian world abandoned Jerusalem over fifteen hundred years ago to take up residence in Rome.

A Moslem in prayer turns his back on Yerushalayim in order to face Mecca. Jerusalem is not part of the Christian liturgy. It is only we – HaShem's chosen people who relate to Yerushalayim. A Jew outside of Yerushalayim turns to her in prayer, and we in Jerusalem face the site of the Holy Temple.

King David, himself the embodiment of fear of God and perfection, foresaw the future Babylonian exile and wrote in Tehillim 137:

By the rivers of Babylon, there we sat and wept when we remembered Zion.

There, upon the willows, we placed away our harps for
there, they that led us captive, asked of us words of song
and our tormentors asked of us to be of joy

‘Sing us one of the songs of Zion’.

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

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand lose its strength.

Let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth if I remember thee not, if I set not Yerushalayim above my greatest joy.

When I recite this chapter, memories of my youth in Brooklyn, New York uninvitedly creep into my mind. I don't recall myself or my friends as teenagers ever sitting by the Hudson, Neversink or Potomac Rivers weeping over Zion. I don't recall looking at the gentiles as our "captors" or "tormentors," and

they in turn never requested of us to sing for them the "Song of Zion."

I had no problem singing the Lord's song there, because I did not feel I was in "a foreign land". Days and weeks would pass when the memory of Yerushalayim did not cross my mind. Yet the "fast ball" exploding from my "right hand" pitch never lost "its strength," when the third strike cannon-balled into the catcher's mitt.

I must admit that the joy of Yerushalayim could not compare to the delight the chevra felt when the Yankees beat the Boston Braves in a doubleheader.

Yes, we were the products of the frum yeshiva system of Rabbi Jacob Joseph, Torah Ve'daas, Chaim Berlin, Tiferes Yerushalayim, etc. We learned Torah while we slowly, but steadily, became assimilated into the gentile world around us.

The quicksand of American culture gripped and pulled us down, with no one to extricate us, because we were all entrapped – students and rabbis alike!

Even the holiday of Chanukah, with its memory of the miraculous military victory over the Greeks and the amazing miracle of the lights, the re-unification of the Holy City and purification of the Bet Hamikdash, could not draw us closer to the contemporary city of Yerushalayim or Medinat Yisrael. We were typical yeshiva bachurim, students of typical yeshiva rabbis to whom the ox that gored a cow was real and the history of our people a myth.

Today, as I sit by the rivers of Eretz Yisrael, I weep when I remember the Jews in the foreign land of the United States of America, ninety percent of whom have forgotten Zion.

HaShem endowed Yerushalayim with a sensitive soul. He who remembers her is indelibly engraved in the eternity of the city. He who forgets her, she too forgets him.

But HaShem, the Master of History, once again showed his hand. From out of nowhere he plucked an individual whose party rejected him just as he rejected it. Whose final tally of the popular vote was in favor of his opponent but won the election because of the electoral college. And this man has thrilled every feeling Jew in a way that few events have done in our time.

Against the better judgment of his top advisors and threats of the primitive Moslem world and the hypocritical European descendants of Esau, President Donald Trump directed the world to take a good look at reality. Jerusalem is the capital of the State of Israel: the Knesset presides in Yerushalayim, as does the President of the State, the Prime Minister, and the major ministries of the government.

And here is the real story behind the President's move.

HaShem has no direct or even indirect communication with the gentile world. Once they rejected HaShem's offer to receive the Torah (as stated in the Midrash), their connection with the spiritual world was severed, as stated by the prophet Yeshayahu (40,15), and as quoted in the daily shacharit liturgy:

Surely the nations are like a drop in a bucket; they are regarded as dust on the scales;

What we read in the news and whatever the goyim do is background static to blur out HaShem's clear calls to his nation Yisrael.

Mr. Trump has touched the sensitivities of the Jewish world. Jewish hearts were emboldened by the recognition of the obvious, while the gangrenous hearts and minds of our enemies were inflamed by the thought that the Jewish people have intensified and reinforced our religious and historical ownership over the holy land.

We can't know why Mr. Trump took this very courageous step. Chances are that his grandson said, "Saba you have to recognize Yerushalayim – don't you know it's Chanuka time".

But we do know it was the right step by the reaction of our enemies; the more they rant and rave in frustration the clearer it becomes that this is a step closer to the mashiach.

Mr. Trump's announcement was primarily a wakeup call; perhaps one of the last great emotionally moving calls to the Jews of the galut, to rise up to the greatness of the moment and come home to Eretz Yisrael. One can still come easily, but no one knows what tomorrow might bring in this unpredictable world. The cancer of anti-Semitism is not going away. It metastasizes to all parts of western society; to the universities, the workplace, the city parks, the outer wall of your synagogues, to your supermarkets – wherever there is a neo-fascist or Moslem presence.

The gates of the Medina and our alt-neu capital are wide open. The President courageously oiled the hinges to widen the entrance a bit more. Unknown to him, HaShem is using the President to send a clear and present message meant for the Jews of the world. Whatever it does for the goyim, it is no more than irrelevant background static.

Mr. Trump has aroused in many Jewish souls the spirit of Chanuka, which began as an uphill military effort and ended with the rededication of the Bet Mikdash in Yerushalayim.

Chanukah Sameach!

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