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American Friends of Ateret Cohanim/Jerusalem Chai

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Sukkot / סוכות Candle Lighting in Jerusalem 5:43 PM October 2, 2015 Tishrei 19 5776

Jerusalem Divrei Torah

The centrality of Jerusalem to the Jewish People is indisputable and is the core of our mission. Our Divrei Torah by [Rabbi Yosef Bronstein](#) focus on Jerusalem and its connection to the weekly Torah portion. For a pdf to discuss at the Yom Tov table, please [click here](#). To sponsor a Dvar Torah please [click here](#)

A Time of Peace

The holiday of Sukkot is a time of peace. The midrash^[1] relates that each of the four species represents a certain type of Jew and the mitzvah to take them together represents the need for unity. The Gemara^[2] teaches that one does not need private ownership over the sukkah in order to fulfill the obligation to live in the sukkah. This is derived from the verse: "All of the citizens of Israel shall sit in sukkot"^[3] which is taken to mean that "All of Israel can sit in the same sukkah." As not all Jews can own the same sukkah, there is clearly not a requirement for private ownership. Many understand this as a halakhic expression of the unity among people that the sukkah is supposed to engender.^[4]

But there is an additional dimension to the peace of the sukkah. On Friday nights we conclude the birkot kri'at shma with the following blessing: "Blessed are you Hashem, who spreads a sukkah of peace on us and on all of Israel, and on Yerushalayim." On one level we are simply praying that all of Israel and Yerushalayim merit security, or peace as a lack of war. But is there a deeper significance to the inclusion of the sukkah metaphor in a blessing that speaks of all of Israel and Yerushalayim?

A look at a passage from the Talmud Yerushalmi, which is one of earliest sources of this blessing, might contain the key. The Talmud^[5] analyzes Shlomo's prayer upon the dedication of the Beit ha-Mikdash and derives that irrespective of one's geographic location, Jewish prayers must always be said facing the Beit ha-Mikdash. Immediately following these derivations Rav Avun teaches the following:

Yerushalayim is the mountain that all mouths pray about... In birkot Kri'at Shma we say "who spreads a sukkah of peace on us and on all of Israel, and on Yerushalayim."

The Yerushalmi juxtaposes the fact that all Jews pray about Yerushalayim through this unique blessing for a sukkah of peace, with the fact that all Jews pray towards Yerushalayim.

According to this passage, Yerushalayim is a source and symbol of Jewish unity. All Jews pray towards and about the same central place. A connection to Yerushalayim is a common denominator of all Jews; it is part of our shared DNA. It is the city that all Jews visited on the three festivals to reconnect to Hashem and to His people.

It is for this reason that a sukkah of peace over Yerushalayim is a powerful symbol. It combines a holiday of peace and unity with the city of peace and unity. This Friday night we have the merit to recite this prayer on Sukkot itself. May our prayers be answered.

^[1]Vayikra Rabbah 30:12.

^[2]Sukkah 27b.

^[3]Vayikra 23:42.

^[4]See, for example, Rav Kook in Ma'amarei ha-Re'iyah pg. 148.

^[5]Talmud Yerushalmi, Brachot 4:5. See Rav Amram Gaon's siddur, Seder Shabbatot, for an early source that connects this formulation with exclusively Shabbat and Yom Tov.

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ברוך דיין האמת

American Friends of Ateret Cohanim along with the entire civilized world mourns the tragic murder of an Israeli couple, Rabbi Eitam and Naama Henkin HY"D from the community of Neria. They were murdered by PA terrorists near Itamar while driving home. The couple leaves behind four orphaned children, aged 4 months, 4, 7 and 9. They were in the vehicle but were not hit by the gunfire.

We pray the children will have the strength to overcome the horrific loss of their parents. And we pray that the disease of terrorism be obliterated.

*This Succot help us build a canopy of protection
over our children's playgrounds in East Jerusalem.*



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block by **block**
courtyard by
courtyard
neighborhood
by **neighborhood.**

Children living in the Shiloach (Silwan) and East Jerusalem are subject to:

DAILY HARASSMENT • STONES AND ROCKS • FIREBOMBS

We respond by building
SAFE AND PROTECTED PLAYGROUNDS

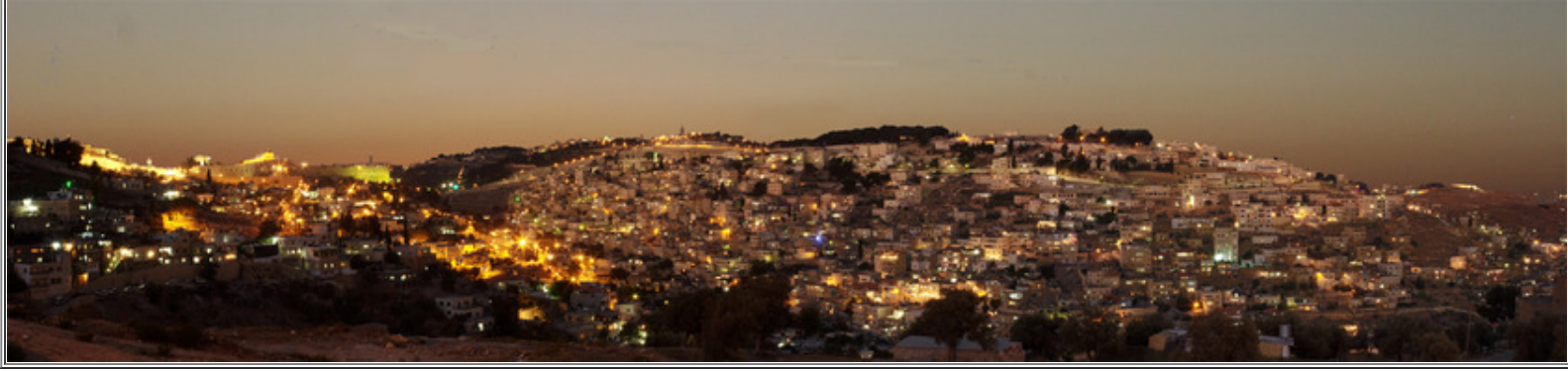
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Our View of the Old City from Kfar HaTeimanim



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