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American Friends of Ateret Cohanim/Jerusalem ChaiMaking the Old City young Again

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Parashat Ki Tavo / פרשת כי-תבוא Candle Lighting in Jerusalem 5:54 PM, Sept 23, 2016, 2016 20 Elul 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 Shabbat table, please [click here](#). To sponsor a Dvar Torah please [click here](#)

The Clarity of Yerushalayim

On the last day of Pesach of the fourth and seventh years of the shemittah cycle, there exists the special mitzvah of *vidui ma'asrot*. The farmer is supposed to declare that he properly fulfilled all aspects of the agricultural laws and treated the terumah and ma'aser appropriately. Many have noted the peculiarity of the word that Chazal chose to describe this mitzvah – *vidui*. We generally associate *vidui* with confession for one's sins, and here the farmer seems to be affirming just the opposite – that he properly performed all of the intricate agricultural laws.

Due to this problem, several commentators have attempted to find the sin that triggers the *vidui ma'asrot*. The Minchat Chinuch^[1] suggests that *vidui ma'asrot* is only relevant to one who has delayed giving his ma'aser up until this point and he is now rectifying his sin by properly distributing his ma'aser. The Seforno^[2] posits that the very fact that we need to give our terumah and ma'aser to kohanim and levi'im is due to the Jewish people's sins, as the original plan was the first born of each family should have the status of a Kohen.

Rav Kook,^[3] however, goes in a different direction. He suggests that a proper self-assessment that is necessary for spiritual growth needs to focus on the totality of a person. Just as recognizing one's faults is the first step towards rectifying those areas of one's life, so too, being happy regarding one's spiritual achievements is necessary for enduring spiritual growth. Since these two poles are really parts of a single enterprise of accurate self-assessment the Torah refers to both of them with the same term - "*vidui*."

With this in mind perhaps we can gain a deeper insight into another detail of *vidui ma'asrot*. The Torah says that this declaration is supposed to occur "*lifnei Hashem*" (in front of Hashem). As is often the case with this phrase, Chazal teach us that "in front of Hashem" refers to the Beit HaMikdash. While there is a dispute between the Rambam and the Ra'avad if this is just the ideal location for the declaration or the mitzvah cannot be performed elsewhere, ^[4]the basic connection between this mitzvah and the Beit HaMikdash is indisputable.

Self-assessment, the process of gaining authentic knowledge of oneself, requires a tremendous clarity. It is easy to be swayed in either direction and conclude that one is on a higher or lower level than what is accurate. Perhaps, therein lies the link between *vidui ma'asrot* and the Beit HaMikdash. It is only the proximity to the Shechinah that can truly clear our often-distorted human perspective and grant us the clarity to accurately evaluate ourselves. For this we need the light of Yerushalayim – "the light of the world."^[5]



Security is not an Option
A Rosh Hashanah message from Shani Hikind

In our our daily prayers leading up to the Yomim Noraim (High Holidays) we say:

אם תחנה עלי מחנה לא ירא לבי אם תקום עלי מלחמה בזאת אני בוטח
If a camp encamps against me, my heart shall not fear;
if a war should rise up against me, in this I trust.

How fitting is this sentence to the daily lives of our unique and amazing families living in what the world today refers to as East Jerusalem. There, mothers walk their children to school with bodyguards, transportation has to be secured with a bullet and rock proof jeep, and children old enough to understand, hear the hateful language hurled in daily taunts from an enemy that wants nothing more than to throw them deep into the Mediterranean Sea. This, just 5 minutes away from the Kotel and the bustling metropolis of our undivided capital, Jerusalem. For our courageous families living with determined resilience in the so called Moslem & Christian Quarters of the Old City, in Kidmat Zion, Maalei HaZeitim, and in Yemenite Village (Silwan) "**In this I trust**" ... is the badge of honor they wear.

In Hebrew, the word for security is "bitachon". It shares the same root as "בוטח" "trust". Today, nothing is more important to the mission of American Friends of Ateret Cohanim than ensuring the safety of our children, their parents, Yeshiva students, as well as the security personnel assigned to protect them. To that end, we need rooftop surveillance cameras, safety door locks, fencing on our rooftops and a Pinat Cham (a rest and refreshment area) to accommodate the over 150 police, security personnel and first responders who need to take a break in the midst of their very dangerous work day. This adds a layer of protection to our more than 200 children who attend the Wittenberg Children's Activities Center every day after school.

A little less than a year ago Rabbi Nechemia Lavi HY"D was murdered in front of his home in Beit Wittenberg as he tried to save a pregnant woman attacked by an Arab terrorist. Please be our partner helping us protect our courageous families who are keeping Jerusalem truly united with Jewish life. They are not afraid, but they need us to stand at their side. Contribute to these security projects that help safeguard them. This will help

^[1]Mitzvah 607.

[2]Devarim 26:13.

[3]Ein Ayah Berachos, end of chelek 2, siman 15.

[4]Rambam Hilchot Ma'aser Sheni 11:4, 6.

[5]Bereishit Rabbah 59:5.

WITTENBERG PLAY CENTER

offering a safe environment so kids can be kids



This Rosh Hashana 5777 marks the beginning of the 50th year since the redemption of Jerusalem during the Six Day War. It was our soldiers and our leaders who looked upward with trust and faith as they hoisted the Israeli flag on the Har Habayit and lovingly touched the stones of the Kotel, the Western Wall, after 2000 years of physical separation. Our commitment and deep appreciation to their service and sacrifice will IY"YH ensure that Jerusalem always remains in the secure hands of the Jewish people. Protecting the families who live there today is our duty and responsibility. This cannot be their struggle alone. **Become their partner.**

In the merit of your caring and tzedakah, may you and your family and all of Klal Yisroel enjoy "shalom" and the sweetest of New Years.

Shani Hikind

Shani Hikind, Executive Vice President

On behalf of the Executive Council of American Friends of Ateret Cohanim / Jerusalem Chai

Donate Now

Your gift helps us fund the following security projects:

- **4 Static security cameras requested by Old City Police on very strategic rooftops: \$3,000 each**
- **3 Moveable - rotating cameras required for other strategic rooftops: \$8,500 each**
- **2 Security systems to be synchronized with Old City Police systems to guard Beit Wittenberg & Beit Rubin \$30,000**
- **First ever Pinat Cham in the Old City for all security personnel and police: \$42,000**

Help us establish a critically needed "rest and refreshment" spot at the entrance to Beit Wittenberg for our first responders. *They protect us. Let's show them our appreciation. (projected cost \$42,000)*

- **Serving 100 security personnel**
- **8 hour schedule**
- **Free food, coffee and a restroom which will accomodate 100 security personnel working an 8 hour shift.**
- **Outside of Beit Wittenberg on the spot where Rabbi Nechemia Lavi HY"D was murdered last September.**

Prime Minister Netanyahu at the UN - 9-22-16

**"EMBRACE ISRAEL - DREAM WITH ISRAEL
WE CAN BUILD TOGETHER"**

ליבי במזרח

5727-5777 1967-2017

CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF THE REDEMPTION OF JERUSALEM

Stay Tuned.....

Join our BBQ in Kidmat Zion during Chol HaMoed

[click here](#)

CELEBRATE THE BEGINNING OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE REUNIFICATION OF JERUSALEM 5726-5776



OHIEL YITZCHAK



OUR JERUSALEM IS EAGER TO WELCOME YOU!
Tour with us during the High Holidays and Succot



5776 - תשע"ו May it be the year of "The City - Jerusalem" (עיר), and her residents. (ויושביה). May G-d's City - Yerushalayim, be rebuilt and restored to its previous glory for the Jewish People. Next year in a united Jerusalem with a flourishing Jewish life centred around religious educational institutes.



CONTACT US TO PLAN YOUR TRIP
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SILVER LININGS
 a movie produced by American Friends of Ateret Cohanim to understand our unique connection to Jerusalem

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