



# MACCABI WORLD UNION

## Department of Education

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כ"ד אייר תשע"ו

## ***Yom Yerushalaim Message***

### ***Jerusalem, between Heaven and Earth***

***Dear Friends,***

Probably no word, image, concept or place so instantly excites our Jewish souls as *Jerusalem*, our ancient, promised City, transformed over millennia of dispossession into a dream and desire, an idea that became the symbol of our national redemption, so long yearned-for, achieved in 1948, but so, so late in our time... Imagine if we had achieved independence and sovereignty it only 10 years earlier, in 1938... Imagine how very different our modern history might have been...

Our Sages of the Talmud promoted the dual quality of earthly and heavenly Jerusalem; they witnessed the end of Jewish national sovereignty, some suffered its immediate consequences. Our Sages saw a destroyed City conquered and ruined by the tyranny of Rome, and began to imagine *another* Jerusalem – ethereal, perfect, healing – as a home to all Jews and all people who will join it upon the coming of the Messiah. The *earthly* reality of an abused and distressed Jerusalem was so sad and that our Sages sought and found a kind of *refuge* in the concept of a redeemed and liberated *celestial* Jerusalem. Jerusalem of the Heavens – *Yerushalayim shel Mala* – was born to cope with the devastation of Jerusalem on Earth – *Yerushalayim shel Mata*.

Our People's overwhelming desire to return to Jerusalem flowed through the gateway of *Yerushalayim shel Mala* to rebuild Jerusalem on Earth, to redeem the city that had once possessed "9 parts" of the "10 parts of beauty" that the Almighty bestowed upon the world, to redeem our national sovereignty: "*Rebuild Jerusalem speedily in our days*" – "*uv'neh Yerushalayim bi'meyrah be'yameinu*" and "*L'shana ha'ba bi'Yerushalayim ha'bnuyah*" – "*Next Year in rebuilt Jerusalem*". The Holy One, blessed be His Name, was directly linked to this desire; this is Rabbi Yochanan quoting the Almighty in ***Ta'anit 5a***:

**"The Holy One, blessed be He, declared, 'I shall not enter the heavenly Jerusalem until I can enter the earthly Jerusalem'"**

Without concrete, national redemption, our Sages imagined God himself *unable* to relate to an ideal, ethereal Jerusalem – a Jerusalem disconnected from the suffering of His people, expelled from that same promised Capital... *How could He...* if in the 3000 years since King David made Jerusalem the Capital of Jewish Civilization, *only* the Children of Israel – no other people, no other ethnicity, no other religion, no other state – made, or even aspired to make the City the central hub and capital of



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its life. *Only* the Children of Israel had made and sought to make Jerusalem their spiritual Center (the Temples of David and Solomon), their seat of Government (Royal Palace), their legal system (the Sanhedrin), their Army, *only* the Children of Israel had given or could give Jerusalem the characteristic elements of a national Capital.

Now, we live that Promise. We live in a wonderful era of redemption and national reconstruction. Earthly Jerusalem, rebuilt, beautiful, vital and rich in culture, is open to the whole Jewish People and to all men and women to visit and worship in freedom. The millennia of longing for our return and the restoration of Jewish life in Israel is satisfied – we have returned to the regained beauty, charm and glory of Jerusalem which inspires the creation, strength, and growth of our People in our days.

When we celebrate *Yom Yerushalayim* – Jerusalem Day – we celebrate our joy of having regained our national life in the recovery of the Capital which always united the Jewish People everywhere, as it did in ancient times when it united the Northern Kingdom of Israel with Judah in the South, and today, filling the hearts of Jews *meh'arbah canfot haaretz*, from the four corners of the earth...

So may we celebrate Jerusalem today; may we celebrate the freedom to walk its streets, to enjoy its sights, sounds and aromas, to bask in the extraordinary colors as the light plays upon her stones, and to return and continue rebuilding her thresholds. May we feel in this joyous festival the emotions of hundreds of our generations who could only imagine her, praise her in their poems and sing of her in their songs, so that today, as it were, they enter her narrow passageways and ascend with us through her ascending footpaths.

***Yom Yerushalayim Sameach!***

***Chazak ve'ematz!***

**RABBI CARLOS A. TAPIERO**

Deputy Director-General & Director of Education

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