

Yom Yerushalayim

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Behar Bechukosai 5767
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As you all know, parking in NYC is often a difficult task. They tell a story of a certain fellow who was driving around trying to secure a parking space. After driving and driving, the man was ready to give up. In a final act of desperation, he began to pray. "Dear God," he began, "I know I'm not the best of Jews. I don't go to Shul often, need to be more involved in Jewish activities and a bit more charitable with my finances. I'll tell you what - open a parking space for me and I'll become a model Jew - from observing the shabbos to supporting the synagogue - I'll even double my, no triple my annual contributions to the local federation." As if on cue, a limo pulls away from the curb opening 3 spaces directly in front of the man. He quickly reconnects with his Master: "Dear God, -- forget about it" the situation cleared up on its own. Thanks for listening and I'll catch you next time.

Funny as the story is, it echoes much of the uneasiness I feel and the conflict in the celebration here today, of the 40th anniversary of Mota Gur's famous radio transmission and the irreplaceable declaration "Har HaBayit B'Yadeinu."

There it was - the answer to our daily Tefilla: *V'Sechezeina Eineinu B'Shuvcha L'Tzion* - the hope and the dream, the aspiration of Jews worldwide to return and see the glory of Hashem return to his central headquarters in Yerushalayim - and on a single day Chaf Chet - Koach Iyar it was achieved. "Har HaBayit B'Yadeinu" - How does one NOT celebrate with Kufa Kabobs and falafel or even with some extra dessert (as the Mirror Yeshiva does Ad HaYom) with Berachos to Hashem SheAsa Nissim BaZman HaZeh.

And yet, 40 years later what DO we have? Har HaBayit - indeed all of Yerushalayim is subjected to being a pawn in a tenuous chess game between Bnei Esav of Europe and Bnei Yishmael. Ignorance of the significance of Yerushalayim is rampant through the scandal-ridden Memshala and even the general populace of the state. Yerushalayim itself is home to many Hafganot and battles among her citizenry about fundamental spiritual matters like Shemirat Shabbat and Toavot Arayot that have led secular Israelis in a recent Maariv poll to consider their Chareidi brethren a greater threat to Israel than her Arab enemies. *V'Al Eileh Ani Bochiya*.

Which brings me to Hillside (Yerushalaim Harim Saviv Lah) on this, the Shabbos surrounding Yom Yerushalayim wondering how - and even if - to celebrate in face of the concerns facing Yerushalayim in the year 5767. What to do?

Thank God the history continues to guide us. My conflict is not new. For within the first 20 minutes of the Nissim of Koach Iyar, Rav Shlomo Goren, then Chief Rabbi of the IDF approached the Kotel. To quote his own diaries :

ourselves are not as yet ready to be oleh Es Yerushalayim physically, let our celebration be a start to a reconnection to the true history and sovereignty of our place in Yerushalayim. Tzion He Doreish Ein Lah ?? Says the Talmud MeKlal Dâ??Bayei Drisha. We have an obligation to be Shoeil Bâ??Shalom Yerushalayim. Letâ??s make our knowledge ??and that of our kids ?? of the geography and topography of Yerushalayim as common place as their knowledge of Hillside. Lâ??Maan Achi Vâ??Reiai Adabrana Shalom Bach. Lâ??Maan Beis Hashem Elokeinu avaksha Tov Lach.