



ההסתדרות הציונית העולמית
World Zionist Organization
מחלקה לפעילות בתפוצות
Department for Diaspora Activities

Beit Ha'am

Z-Talks


Beit Ha'am – Jerusalem Day Supplement

Dear Heads of Zionist Federations, Activists, shlichim, educators and colleagues,
On 1yar 28th, (which this year falls on May 17, 2015), we mark the Jerusalem Day – Jerusalem, the capital of Israel and of the Jewish people. This is an opportunity to reflect on the uniqueness of the city and its meaning for us, both as a nation and as individuals.

The name of Jerusalem, has a plural ending in Hebrew, pointing to Jerusalem as a city of duality. A city of Dreams and Wars, a city of Wishes and Questions, a city of Residents and Tourists, a city of the Sacred and the Secular. An old-new city, ancient, which does not cease to evolve and innovate. A city built as a special human mosaic, which is a home to a variety of populations, sectors, groups and religions that reside it in coexistence. The multicultural character of the city poses a few challenges, but also holds an opportunity for creating bridges of tolerance, acceptance and dialogue, as well as for understanding the price we paid for baseless hatred.

Jerusalem Day is another opportunity to hold a dialogue on what unites and what divides between us as a people, between us and our neighbors, and between Diaspora Jewry and the State of Israel. This is an opportunity to discuss how to create unity without requiring uniformity. The ability to recognize and respect diversity, and recognize and respect the power of partnership. On this page you will find an offer for a short discussion on Jerusalem, an excerpt from the Beit Ha'am booklet: That which Unites and that which Divides.

On the upcoming Jerusalem Day, it is worth remembering that Jerusalem's many names also include "Friendship", "City of Justice" and the "City of Peace". May Jerusalem be the place where opposites will turn into wholes, as luminaries of peace.

Sincerely, 

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Tourists/Yehudah Amichai

"... Once I sat on the steps by the gate of the tower of David, Two heavy baskets I placed by me.

A group of tourists stood around the guide and I was used as a reference point. "Do you see that man with the baskets? A bit to the right of his head is the arch From the Roman period, a bit to the right of his head."

"But he moves, he moves!" I thought to myself.

The redemption will come if They'll be told: Do you see over there the arch from the Roman period? It's not Important: But next to it, a bit to the left and down below it sits a man who bought Fruits and vegetables for his home.

1. How does the poet, a resident of Jerusalem, see the tourists' perspective? Do you agree with his point of view?
2. Visiting a place as a tourist or residing in it are mostly two different experiences. Is Jerusalem unique in that sense? What is the difference between being a resident or a tourist in Jerusalem?
3. Is the meaning of Jerusalem in Amichai's eyes similar to its meaning for Jews in the Diaspora? What is your own personal connection to Jerusalem?
4. Jerusalem has always been and still is, a meaningful symbol for the Jewish people. Do you think this symbol is an asset or a burden?