



JCCs of North America

מרכזים קהילתיים יהודיים בצפון אמריקה

## Jerusalem, City of Gold

The Talmud teaches, “Ten measures of beauty descended on the world; nine were taken by Jerusalem, one by the rest of the world”. Years later, Mark Twain said, “There is no beauty like the beauty of Jerusalem.” The character of Jerusalem, Israel’s capital, was transformed by a singular event more than forty years ago.

The Six-Day War started on June 5, 1967, and ended six days later, on June 10. Tension began to escalate between Israel and Arab countries in the 1960s, culminating in 120 terror attacks, resulting in 11 fatalities, during the 18 months preceding the war. Egypt, Jordan, and Syria— Israel's neighboring states— joined forces to battle Israel, and Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria contributed troops and arms.

At war’s end, Israel had gained control of the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, and most importantly, East Jerusalem. The results of this war affect the geopolitics of the region to this day.

### **Division**

At the end of the War of Independence in 1948, Jerusalem was divided between Israel and Jordan by armistice lines. The Jordanians expelled Jews from eastern Jerusalem and barred them from visiting their holy places, including the *Kotel* (Western Wall). After the Six-Day War, the entire city of Jerusalem and its holy sites came under Jewish control. Israel reunited the city, extending Israeli law, jurisdiction, and administration to the parts previously occupied by Jordan. The Israeli Knesset passed laws to protect holy sites and ensure freedom of worship to all, and offered Israeli citizenship to Jerusalem’s Arab residents, most of whom declined. In 1980, Israel passed the Basic Law, reaffirming unified Jerusalem as its eternal, undivided capital.

### **Holy to Three Religions**

Since 1004 BCE, when King David established Jerusalem as the capital of his kingdom, there has been a continuous Jewish presence in Jerusalem, the holiest city in Judaism. Following the building of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, and the designation of other holy sites by Constantine the Great in 333 CE, Jerusalem became a destination for Christian pilgrimages. During Umayyad rule from 661 to 750 CE, the Dome of the Rock and the Al Aqsa

Mosque were built on the site where the Jewish Temples had once stood, and Jerusalem became the third holiest city in Islam.

Jerusalem is Israel's largest city, both in terms of population and acreage. Jerusalem's total population is 774,000, around ten percent of the total Israeli population. Sixty-five percent are Jews (of which a small minority is not Jewish or Arab) and 35 percent are Arabs. Both Jewish and Arab Jerusalemites bear an average of four children per family.

### **Numbers Don't Lie**

The Jerusalem Haredi community (ultra-Orthodox) numbers 96,000, 12 percent of the total population of the city, and almost forty percent of the total Haredi community of Israel. Thirty-nine percent of Jerusalem's students are Haredim. Thirty-four percent come from the Arab community, and only 27 percent go to secular or modern-Orthodox schools.

Jerusalem has 100 colleges and universities, with a total of 30,000 students. Jerusalem houses 90 research centers working on 2,700 research projects. Jerusalem has hundreds of cultural organizations and museums. About two million visitors visit the Jerusalem museums annually.

The city has approximately three hundred hotels, with a total of 9,000 hotel rooms. An average month in Israel hosts around two hundred and twenty thousand tourists from overseas; almost half of them will visit Jerusalem.

Approximately thirteen percent of all new immigrants, most from North America, choose to live in Jerusalem. The city has a relatively high percentage of young people: the average age is 23 (versus 29 in Israel in general).

Enjoy Matisyahu's - Jerusalem (Out Of Darkness Comes Light):

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-C74ovvhwY>

Listen to Neomi Shemer's Jerusalem of Gold by Ofra Haza:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UllJOAZ1pak&feature=related>

Enjoy Pictures of Jerusalem: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inRgHIPTFJY>