



The Jerusalem March during the 2009 Succot celebration.

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The Feast of Tabernacles

A Biblical mandate—the Feast of the LORD

This feast was one of the biblically-mandated holidays when Jews made pilgrimages to the Temple in Jerusalem. In the book Leviticus we read, “On exactly the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when you have gathered in the crops of the land, you shall celebrate the feast of the LORD for seven days, with a rest on the first day and a rest on the eighth day. Now on the first day you shall take for yourselves the foliage of beautiful trees, palm branches, and boughs of leafy trees and willow of the brook; and you shall rejoice before the LORD your God for seven days (Leviticus 23:39–40).

Succot—The Feast of Booths

“You shall live in booths for seven days; all the native-born in Israel shall live in booths, so that your generation may know that I had the sons of Israel live in booths when I brought them out from the land of Egypt. I am the LORD your God” (Leviticus 23:42–43).

The holiday lasts seven days. Coming as it did at the completion of the harvest, Succot was regarded as a general thanksgiving for the bounty of nature in the year that had passed. It is a thanksgiving especially for the fruit harvest.

The Hebrew word *succot* is the plural of *succah*, “booth, tabernacle.” The *succah* is intended as a reminiscence of the type of fragile dwellings in which the ancient Israelites dwelt during their 40 years of wandering in the desert after the exodus from Egypt. Throughout the holiday the *succah* becomes the living area of the house, and all meals are eaten in it. On each day of the holiday, members of the household recite a blessing over the *four species* that are a few branches of the three trees, called *lulav*, and a greenish citrus fruit, called *etrog*.

A festival for all nations

According to Zechariah 14:16–18, in the Messianic era, Succot will become a universal feast and all nations will make pilgrimages annually to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast. “Then it will come about that any who are left of all the nations that went against Jerusalem will go up from year to year to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, and to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”

“And it will be that whichever of the families of the earth does not go up to Jerusalem to worship the King, the LORD of hosts, **there will be no rain on them.** And if the family of Egypt does not go up or enter, then no rain will fall on them; it will be the plague with which the LORD smites the nations who do not go up to celebrate the Feast of Booths.”

Today Jews and gentiles from numerous nations make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles, an annual conference by the International Christian Embassy of Jerusalem (ICEJ). This year Succot falls on September 23–30. (*NAS version, ministry photos.*)



A light canopy decorated for Succot in Jerusalem.

No compromise on Temple Mount!

For the LORD has chosen Zion

“For the Lord has chosen Zion - he has desired it for his habitation: ‘This is my resting place for ever, here I will dwell, for I have desired it’” (Psalm 132:13–14, NAS).

When Israel reconquered Jerusalem in 1967, the military leaders guided by Moshe Dayan permitted Moslems to retain the Temple Mount, also known as Biblical Mount Moriah. On the surface it may have appeared as an act of generosity by the victors and a sign of deep respect for the Islamic faith, but with hindsight it may now be said that this same act of political generosity toward a vanquished foe, also laid the foundation for the nightmare facing the Jewish world today.

Since that time, and especially during the last decade, the Muslim Waqf on Mount Moriah, have done their utmost to obliterate any archaeological evidence that might serve as proof for Jewish ownership. This archaeological vandalism was part of the general process of de-legitimizing Israel. Ephraim Halevy, writing for YNET (July 7, 2010) warns against any deal with the Palestinians involving just the Kotel, saying, *“Renouncing Jewish right[s] for the Mount paves way to losing right[s] for the entire land...”*

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas recently expressed his *willingness* to let Israel maintain its control over Jerusalem’s Jewish Quarter and the Kotel, or Western Wall. Various Palestinian spokespeople and Knesset Member Dr. Ahmed Tibi were quick to stress, however, that this willingness comes with an unequivocal Palestinian position demanding full, exclusive sovereignty over the Temple Mount. Israel is confronted here with a typical Arab double speak.

Based on the Geneva Accord, Palestinians understand that **Kotel** refers only to part of the Western Wall—the small section where Jews pray today. Hence, Abbas’ words only refer to the limited plaza area at the Wailing Wall and not to the entire Western Wall, let alone the Kotel tunnels. Halevy goes on to say, “Israel’s demand for the Western Wall is not premised on the Kotel being a holy Jewish site in and of itself. The demand is premised on the Kotel being a remnant of our Temple. Anyone recognizing our right for the Western Wall must recognize the fact that the Kotel is part of a structure or several structures that Jews have no less attachment to than the Muslims.”

The key issue

The key issue, according to Halevy is that, “one, who has no right for the structure, also has no right for any wall of that structure.”

The Temple Mount **IS** intrinsic to Jewish life—it always has been, is and will be its focal point; it is not an optional extra for Israel. If Israel would lose the Temple Mount, it also would forfeit the right to Jerusalem and possibly its very existence as a Jewish nation. Many Christians are focused on the construction of the *“Third Temple”* but what matters now is the very hill on which the two earlier temples stood. It is to this present political situation Christians need to lend their voices and rally behind Israel to prevent international pressures from pushing Israel into an irreversible position.



Behind the Western Wall or Kotel on right is the Mount Moriah where the First and the Second Jewish Temple stood. Now it houses two Islamic mosques.

Strategic prayer points:

- Please pray for Israel’s leaders that they would begin to recognize the significance of the Temple Mount.
- Please pray that Christians would awaken to the reality that Temple Mount and Israel are inseparable.
- Please pray that all Israel would rise up in defence of the Mount.

(Excerpt: Watchman’s Prayer Letter by Frank and Karen Selch, www.theolivetreeconnection.com. Photo from the ministry files.)

Defenders of the Land and the people of Israel

Why do we assist the soldiers?

Since 1992, we (CFI-USA) have designated funds for the practical assistance of the IDF soldiers. This help includes buying winter fleece jackets, wind-block jackets, sweat pant & shirt sets, thermal underclothing, backpacks, tag covers, logo wallets, and other items. Soldiers, such the ones that are serving in the Paratroopers Unit, Tank Unit, Golani, Special Forces Unit and the Nachal Training Base, have been visited and given items according to their needs.

Many of the young soldiers have no family members in Israel. These lone soldiers lack their families' emotional and also financial support. The military has no funds for this purpose. Any support from Jewish and Christian organizations is warmly welcomed. Karen Lewis at CFI-Jerusalem office has for years been in contact with several army bases from the north to the southern part of Israel and developed close ties with soldiers and the commanders.

For this Chanukah our goal is to raise again funds to bless as many soldiers as possible with warm winter fleece jackets. Chasing terrorists or patrolling on roads does not offer much shelter, so their uniforms must keep them warm. Please join us in this effort with **\$25 per a jacket**.

An unfriendly neighborhood

The anti-Jewish nations around Israel make total of 305.2 million people compared to Israel's population of 7.0 million people. The world's hostility toward Israel is encouraging Moslem enemies to increase their pressure. So is the U.S. Administration's "soft" stand against Iran.



Continued attacks on Israel

Since the Gaza War last winter, there has been terrorist activity along the Gaza security fence, including gunfire against Israeli civilians and IDF soldiers and planting of explosive devices. Incidents like these are rarely, if ever, reported in the media.

The brutal ambush on May 31 on Israeli Navy Commandos, by the Gaza-bound flotilla *Marmara's* Turkish terrorist crew, brought the world's condemnation on Israel. Nobody seemed to have noticed that right before bridging the naval blockade the terrorists declared that **their fight was with the United States!**

On August 3, the Lebanese Army forces attacked Israeli soldiers during a routine maintenance along the border. The Israeli unit's commander was killed and one of his deputies was critically wounded. Tank and missile fire followed.

Israel files a complaint with the UN

Israel has filed an official complaint with the UN following the Grad rocket fired on Ashkelon and the mortar shells that exploded in the Negev at the end of July. In the letter to the United Nations Human Rights Council, Israel charged that **"the rockets were launched indiscriminately towards Israeli civilians and civilian targets, which constitutes a war crime and a crime against humanity."** Israel's UN envoy in Geneva wrote that the incident seriously threatens attempts to renew peace talks with the Palestinians. (*Used on-line news sources and recent CFI publications.*)

Photos: Woman soldiers on duty in the center of Jerusalem (left) and a prayer before a challenging deployment (right).



Jerusalem Mayor condemns UN's racist suggestion

Barkat at odds with the UN

“Mayor Nir Barkat condemns the racist suggestion of the UN secretary-general that construction permits in Jerusalem should be issued by religion, race or national identity,” the mayor’s spokesman, Stephan Miller, told The Jerusalem Post on August 8.

“Further, Mayor Barkat condemns the notion of any freeze of construction for anyone in the city of Jerusalem—a notion that would be deemed illegal in the State of Israel and in any Western democracy,” he added. “The municipality will continue to issue building permits to Jews, Christians and Muslims alike throughout the entirety of Jerusalem” said the Mayor’s office. Unfortunately, in many cases, the mentality of the Arabs is first to build illegally and then to apply or not to apply for a building license.

The mayor’s response came after remarks made by Ban Ki-moon during a meeting with Defense Minister Ehud Barak in New York. The two men discussed a variety of issues, including the possibility of beginning direct negotiations with the Palestinian Authority regarding the Israeli Navy’s May 31 raid on a Gaza-bound flotilla.

But the issue of building rights in Jerusalem—which has remained at a tense simmer since Barkat announced in June that he was moving forward with plans to redevelop sections of the eastern Silwan neighborhood—were also touched upon by the secretary-general, who asked that Israel continue its freeze on new **Jewish housing** in the West Bank (which is due to expire on September 26) and that Israel begin similarly restricting **Jewish construction** in the eastern half of the city.

The UN’s lack of understanding...

Barkat’s response is in line with the mayor’s longstanding opposition to a construction freeze in any part of the capital, and his insistence that Jerusalem remain united.

That stance has put Barkat at odds with Ban in the past, most recently regarding the mayor’s plans for Silwan, which the secretary general condemned when they were announced in June. In an official statement at the time, the UN chief called the plan for Silwan “contrary to international law, and to the wishes of Palestinian residents.” The statement also cautioned against “provocative steps” that could “heighten tensions” in the city. “The secretary-general is deeply concerned about the decision by the Jerusalem Municipality to advance planning for house demolitions and further settlement activity in the area of Silwan,” the statement continued.

Barkat responded then, as well, addressing a letter to the secretary-general that did not mince words: “It was with great dismay that I read your response to the Municipality of Jerusalem’s rezoning plans for the Jerusalem neighborhoods of Silwan and the King’s Garden, areas that were never planned for residential use and lie just hundreds of meters from the Temple Mount and Dome of the Rock,” Barkat wrote. “**Your response revealed a clear lack of understanding by the UN of our initiatives,**” the letter continued. *(Based on article Jerusalem Mayor condemns freeze request, Jerusalem Post, August 2, 2010.)*

Thank you Nir Barkat for standing for the Eternal City and for the independent state of Israel. Please pray for the Mayor’s daily protection. (Editor’s note)



Photo of the mainly Muslim populated Silwan neighborhood where the rezoning plan calls for demolition of illegal structures.