SHABBAT AND JERUSALEM
YOM YERUSHALYIM 5780
RABBI DAN MOSKOVITZ – TEMPLE SHOLOM, VANCOUVER BC

Ahad Ha'am famously said: "More than Jews have kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jews." A pretty remarkable statement coming from the founder of cultural Zionism!

Those who observe any kind of sabbath at all, be it baking challah, powering down technology, abstaining from work or regular attendance in shul would agree that as essential to the day of shabbat observance itself is the preparation and anticipation of shabbat that takes place throughout the week.

The verse from Genesis rings true, for six days God laboured in the work of creation and on the seventh day God rested, so it is for us, we work all week so we can truly rest, restore and renew our spiritual and physical selves on shabbat. That regular and significant act is what Ahad Ha'am meant when he proclaimed that the sabbath has kept the Jewish people.

In a very similar way, the two-thousand-year longing for the return of the Jewish people to our eternal capital in the city and within the walls of Jerusalem has been a loadstar, a compass point for generations of Jews.

It has been the focus of our prayers, the subject of our poetry, music and art, the work of our organizations like JNF Canada and institutions, like my synagogue, Temple Sholom and those of my colleagues. It has been and continues to be the rallying cry of the brave men and women of the Israel Defense Forces and all of those who support them that one day;

There's a concept in Jewish tradition about the existence of two Jerusalems: *Yerushalayim shel maala* — the heavenly Jerusalem — and *Yerushalayim shel mata* — the earthly Jerusalem. On that day 53 years ago today both the spiritual and the physical dimensions of Jerusalem were conjoined. Like the entering sabbath bride when we sing L'cha Dodi, when our brave soldiers walk through the gates of our holy city, Jerusalem, like the sabbath bride was reunited with its people.

In Jewish tradition, one is supposed to face Jerusalem during prayer. If one prays from outside of Israel, face Israel. If one prays from within Israel, face Jerusalem. If one prays from within Jerusalem, face the old city. If one prays from within the old city, face the site of the Temple. If one prays from within the Temple, face the holy of holies.

Living in North America, we face *Mizrach*, East, when we pray, so that we physically and spiritually face Jerusalem. While we are temporarily unable to pray as a community facing East from within our beautiful synagogue sanctuaries, tonight in our homes when we light shabbat candles, we can breathe a sense of sabbath peace knowing that on the other side of the world there are Jewish families in Jerusalem, who only hours before lit their shabbat candles, like a beacon in the midst of the darkness directing our hearts and our prayers toward Jerusalem our eternal capital, our spiritual home.