

Martin Oliner And RZA Anticipating Arrival Of Yom Yerushalayim's 50th Anniversary – In Washington And Israel

By Jeff Klapper

King David, in the Psalms, calls Jerusalem “*m’sos kol ha’aretz*,” the joy of the whole world.

Martin Oliner, chairman of the Religious Zionists of America, the American branch of World Mizrahi (HaPoel HaMizrachi), is spreading the joy of Jerusalem throughout the land. This year, Mizrahi will help run 250 Yom HaAtzmaut and Yom Yerushalayim celebrations from the Atlantic to the Pacific – but nothing will compare to the historic Yom Yerushalayim party, sponsored by Mizrahi, in the halls of Congress on May 17. Jewish leaders and legislators will toast *l’chayim* to Jerusalem on Capitol Hill.

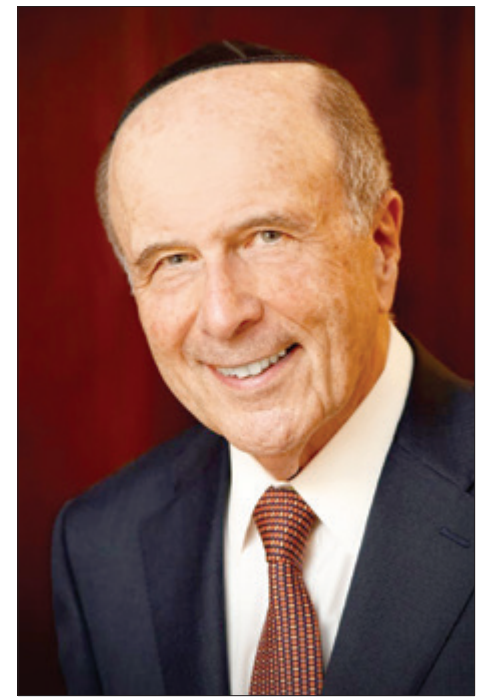
Jerusalem is ironically called “the city of peace,” but no city has known more war and strife. Jerusalem is always in a political fault line. Just recently, UNESCO denied the Jewish connection to the Har HaBayis. Most of the world refuses to recognize Israel’s sovereignty over its own capital. Even Israel’s strongest ally, the United States, has

he feels have become apathetic to Israel and Judaism at a time when most living American (and Israeli) Jews were born after 1967.

In the wake of the Six-Day War, American Jewry was euphoric. Oliner says the excitement of that miraculous victory can still kindle enthusiasm for Israel, among today’s distant youth. Oliner, as a religious Zionist, refuses to write off anyone, no matter how politically-opposed, secular, or apathetic. “Every Jew has the potential to be a religious Zionist,” he says.

Martin Oliner has appreciated Yom Yerushalayim since the day was proclaimed on May 12, 1968. He was born in the shadows of the Holocaust, in a displaced persons camp near Dachau. Israel was just a dream. “Enlightened” countries, including the US, shut their doors in the face of Holocaust survivors.

Beyond Oliner’s all-consuming Jewish communal work, “Marty” has enjoyed an illustrious legal career, having taught tax law at prestigious law schools. He still runs a



Martin Oliner

Jewish leaders and legislators will celebrate Jerusalem on Capitol Hill at a historic Yom Yerushalayim party, sponsored by Mizrahi, in the halls of Congress on May 17

yet to move its embassy from Tel Aviv.

Mr. Oliner says that while it’s impossible for the US senators and representatives to avoid politics at the Yom Yerushalayim event, for his part, he wants to just celebrate, avoiding thorny arguments of sovereignty and settlements. Nonetheless, The Religious Zionists of America drafted a four-part resolution that Oliner calls “mild.” The resolutions don’t call for political action, just broad moral recognition.

The resolution asks that the House of Representatives:

- 1) “Recognizes the 50th anniversary of the reunification of Jerusalem”
- 2) “Recognizes that the reunification and subsequent protection afforded (by Israel) by the Holy Places Law, is an affirmation of religious freedom”
- 3) “Encourages Congress to safeguard the American-Israeli alliance and advance the countries’ mutual interests”
- 4) “Recognizes the contributions of those who fought in the Six-Day War, the outcome of which helped to enable the unity of Jerusalem and religious freedom for all”

Twenty-five major National Jewish organizations will join Mizrahi at the Capitol, including Yeshiva University, the Simon Wiesenthal Center, the Zionist Organization of America, and Alpha Epsilon Pi.

Did you say Alpha Epsilon Pi? Is this some sort of sophomore prank? Actually, Oliner says the college campus is the new battlefield against Israel. The rare Jewish fraternity courageously fights BDS and the delegitimization of Israel in the trenches of academia.

Message of 1967 for Today’s Indifferent Youth

It is fitting that a Jewish college organization will attend. Oliner wants to send the message to today’s “millennial” youth, who

thriving law practice.

If Jewish affairs and law were not enough, Oliner was also the mayor of Lawrence (one of the Five Towns), in Nassau County. He beams when he recalls how he restored Lawrence in the wake (literally) of superstorm Sandy.

What Is the Future of Religious Zionism?

Mizrahi is the Rock of Gibraltar of Religious Zionism. It was founded in 1902, at the dawn of the Zionist movement, when most Jews in America were neither religious nor Zionist.

Oliner says the message of Religious Zionism is as important now as it was a century ago. One needs Zionism to have religion and vice versa, quoting the mantra of Bnei Akiva: “The people of Israel in the land of Israel according to the Torah of Israel.”

Marty Oliner sees a great future for Jerusalem as the city booms and expands and grows as a center of Torah study. Oliner hopes that Jewish visitors to Jerusalem appreciate the unique *k’dushah* of the city and give back that holiness.

View from B’nai B’rith

Daniel Mariaschin, CEO of B’nai B’rith International, sees the Washington event as an opportunity for the Jewish establishment to show that they are united in support of Israel and Jerusalem and to thank the legislators for their abiding, bi-partisan support for Jerusalem and Israel. He says it is particularly important to have this demonstration of support at the beginning of the Trump presidency to impress on the president the importance of Jerusalem.

Donde Esta el Presidente?

Unfortunately, Mr. Trump will not be able to attend because he will be in Israel

around the time of the DC event, but Vice President Pence strongly supported the event when he met with Mr. Mariaschin.

Mr. Mariaschin remembers the nail-biting tension as he watched the news in the study hall of his high school, in the weeks before the Six-Day War. When he visits Jerusalem it is always an “uplifting, spiritual,

emotional experience.”

The Yom Yerushalayim event designed for Jewish leaders and legislators will not be open to the public. It is not a grass-roots demonstration, like “NORPAC.” Nevertheless, the public will be able to view it on live-stream.

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