



Pesach and Yerushalayim (Nissan 5778)

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Aside from the obvious connection of the Jewish People leaving Egypt to go to the promised Land and Yerushalayim, and aside from the centuries old statement - "Next year in a rebuilt Jerusalem" (לשנה הבא בירושלים הבנויה), to be said or sung at the Seder, there is a deeper message about Pesach and "our" Jerusalem, that is very relevant today.

Two "big" words of this chag (festival) but not the most obvious word "Freedom", are no doubt - MATZAH and CHAMETZ.

The unleavened and leavened bread. Much has been written about these two extremes - yetzer hara versus the yetzer hatov (Evil and good inclinations).the symbolic poor man's bread of affliction made in haste versus the rich bread of free men.....the plain, simple and humble versus the haughty and complicated.

Both bread and matzah have the same basic ingredients (5 grains with water), but one ferments with water and time, while the other doesn't and remains matzah.

The word Chametz is from the word **LeHachmitz (להחמיץ)**, which can be translated, as either to sour or to leaven, but can also be translated or means - to miss out, to delay, to set aside, to lose the opportunity..etc. In some ways these explanations are connected. If you forget or leave something alone and don't care for something, it can rot, sour, ferment or be ruined.

NOW THE JERUSALEM CONNECTION

One of the early sources for searching for chametz with a candle is from the passuk in the book of Zephania

וְהָיָה בַעַת הַהֵיאָ אֲחַפֵּשׂ אֶת־יְרוּשָׁלַם בְּנֵרוֹת

That the day will come when Hashem / G-d will search Jerusalem with candles and lamps....

According to Rav Moshe Weinberger from YU, we too need to search for the pure "Jerusalem" inside of each of us. The spark, the holy spirit, our neshama, the inner mishkan, all needs to be nurtured and not let to sour or rot.

Friends - there is a private inner "Jerusalem", and there is the very public national Jerusalem. She too, needs our input, our care and our attention.

We dare not **להחמיץ** - DELAY or FORGET or SET ASIDE or MISS THE OPPORTUNITY, for she -Jerusalem, will rot, sour and be ruined, without our ongoing input.

We can't sit on the fence or take "her" for granted, and we can't assume that we can afford to sit back, and let Hashem take care of His City.

This is one of the hidden messages of Pesach.

Yes - its clear and obvious that G-d took us out of Egypt, in order to serve Him, and to be His People in the Land of Israel. Its true and obvious that we must appreciate and thank G-d Himself for the many open and clear miracles. Its also obvious the messages of freedom to live as Jews, and our responsibility to educate our children and keep the chain of Jewish tradition going.
Yes - its all true

But there is also this hidden message about taking action and not letting Jerusalem stagnate. We don't want chametz (חמץ). We don't want to Lehachmitz. (להחמיץ)

The struggle to keep a united Jerusalem in Jewish hands is very real. And this battle is only over, one small part of east Jerusalem...and this is the focus of the work of Ateret Cohanim. It is the Holy Basin -the Old City and its environs.

Ateret Cohanim is at this forefront.

We do not LEHACHMITZ. We will not LEHACHMITZ.

And now - we are searching with a candle for Am Yisrael, who is willing to be our partner in many endeavours and projects. Too much is at stake and we simply cant afford to lehachmitz : "להחמיץ" - miss the opportunity.

The Gematria (Numerical equivalence of hebrew letters) of the word Chametz (חמץ) is 138. It is the same gematria as the word Chalak (חלק), which means division/split. We cant afford to either split Jerusalem or be separated-split from Jerusalem.

The Gematria of the word Matzah (מצה) is 135. It is the same gematria as the word Kehal (קהל) which means congregation, nation or group.

We must have all of Am Yisrael - the whole Kehal, to be involved. Everyone gave the half shekel for the Temple-Beit HaMikdash and to build Jerusalem.

All 12 tribes gave gold to King David to purchase Jerusalem, even after it was liberated.

The whole Kehal was involved.

And everyone in Persia and beyond, was involved in rebuilding the Second Beit HaMikdash.

And so that should be the take-away messages for Pesach.

- **Everyone being involved and active regarding Jerusalem.**
- **Not to LeHachmitz (Not to miss the opportunity or delay) regarding Jerusalem.**

That's something different about Jerusalem, Matzah and Chametz.

Chag Kasher VeSameach

A happy and Kosher Passover

NEXT YEAR MAMASH IN A REBUILT AND UNITED JERUSALEM

(Forget the exile of Egypt, USA, Australia, Brazil, Panama...etc.....COME HOME)

Daniel