

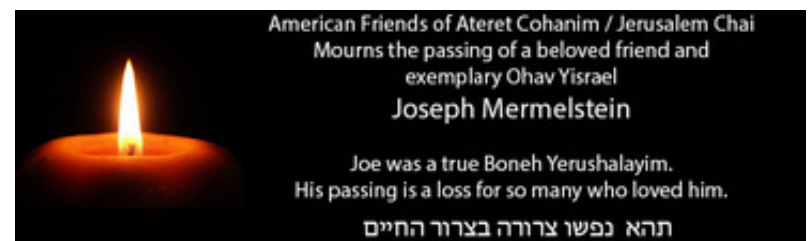
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Parashat Metzora / פרשת מצרע / **Shabbat HaGadol** / שבת הגדול /
Candle Lighting in Jerusalem 6:23 PM, April 15, 2016 Nissan 7, 5776



Jerusalem Divrei Torah

The centrality of Jerusalem to the Jewish People is indisputable and is the core of our mission. Our Divrei Torah by Rabbi Yosef Bronstein focus on Jerusalem and its connection to the weekly Torah portion. For a pdf to discuss at the Shabbat table, please [click here](#). To sponsor a Dvar Torah please [click here](#)

A Strong Connection

One of the few practical remnants of the laws of ritual impurity appears at the end of this week's parsha – the laws of niddah.[1] A woman's menstrual flow renders her ritually impure which prohibits the couple from engaging in marital relations. The midrash notes that this is an extremely difficult mitzvah to keep, describing in very vivid terms the almost superhuman restraint that must be gathered to fully observe these commands.[2] In fact it was assumed among the local non-Jewish population that the Jews, in fact, were violating these laws in the privacy of their homes.[3]

But the ultimate purpose of the mitzvah is not the difficulty or the burden. The Gemara[4] cites the opinion of Rabbi Meir who explains the rationale behind niddah:

Because he is accustomed to her, he will find her repulsive. So the Torah said that she should be ritually impure for seven days in order that she should be beloved to her husband like the time that she entered the chuppah.

According to Rabbi Meir the distance that the laws of niddah create is not a goal in and of itself. Rather, the separation is to be thought of as a springboard for a deeper connection. As difficult as the separation is, it is specifically through the distance that a stronger marital bond is created.

Perhaps it is for this reason that we find the cycle of Jewish exile and redemption being referred to in terms of the niddah cycle. For example, Yechezkel tells the people that due to their continued cleaving to idolatry they "have contaminated their land with their ways and actions, as the impurity of a niddah was their path before Me." [5] Therefore, Yechezkel continues, they will need to go into exile. In other words, the separation of the Jewish people from their land and Hashem is similar to the separation of a husband and wife during the niddah period.

This imagery is particularly strong when the Jewish people are personified by Yerushalayim. Twice in the first perek of Eicha[6] we are told that Yerushalayim, representing the Jewish people as a whole, has become like a



A Giant for Jerusalem has gone to "Jerusalem of the Heavens".

(Papa Joe now in Yerushalayim shel Maalah)

I have just returned from an emotional levaya on Har Menuchot.



Joe Mermelstein (Yosef ben Alexander Yitzchak) was brought from America to his "spiritual home" in Israel, which he loved with a passion.

His body was just buried in Jerusalem, but his neshama has gone to Jerusalem of the Heavens - Yerushalayim shel

Maalah.

Joe Mermelstein who was also affectionately known as Uncle Joe or "our" Papa Joe, for so many years, was a pillar and stalwart of Ateret Cohanim and of Jerusalem in general. There were no hespedim given during this month of Geulah-Nisan, but all who attended the levaya, could have given a moving, full of praise hesped for the man of action, who "gave

niddah. Eicha describes the beginning of the separation, a time of much pain and difficulty in the relationship between Hashem and Yerushalayim.

However, it is specifically at this dark moment that Chazal find a ray of light in Yerushalayim becoming a niddah. Commenting on the pasuk "And Yerushalayim was a niddah amongst them," Rav Yehudah cites the following teaching in the name of Rav:^[7]

Just as a niddah becomes permitted, so too, will Yerushalayim become fixed.

In light of Rabbi Meir's explanation for the laws of niddah, this idea resonates even stronger. We have to spend our long exile away from Hashem and Yerushalayim as a means of making our ultimate relationship even stronger than it was earlier in our history.

[1]Vayikra 15:19-33

[2]Shir ha-Shirim Rabbah to 7:3.

[3]Sanhedrin 37a.

[4]Niddah 31a.

[5]Yechezkel 36:17.

[6]Eicha 1:8, 17.

[7]Ta'anit 20b.

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Arts and Crafts at the Wittenberg Play Center keep our children smiling

and then just gave more", to Am Yisrael, Klal Yisrael, Torat Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael.

Joe was a doer, who had the ideas and didn't wait for others to act. His love of Jerusalem, that was usually converted to his real and practical involvement (redeeming or reclaiming old Jewish property or donating for a project) was second to none. Joe helped run the American Friends of Ateret Cohanim for many years and the organization flourished with his input and while he was on the Board.

He will now be building the Yerushalayim Shel Maalah.

It was said at the levaya (Not a formal hesped) that at the time of the destruction of the 2nd Beit HaMikdash, Rabbi Yochanan Ben Zakai asked of the Romans - Yavne and her wisemen, the royalty, and a doctor for Rav Zaddok.

He thought of everything and everyone. From the small to the large. He felt the current pain of Am Yisrael and yet also realized what needed to be done for the future of Am Yisrael in Eretz Yisrael.

That was also Joe.

From taking an active interest and helping with the release of Natan Scharansky from the Russian Gulag (who attended and spoke briefly at the levaya), to supporting Yeshivot, the communities of Shderot and Chevron, World Emunah and a host of other groups and organizations..and of course being a power house of Ateret Cohanim for many years.....this is the legacy of Joe Mermelstein.

Amazing and very tough shoes to fill...but the challenge has been thrown out to Am Yisrael to follow suit.

He will be remembered fondly by the residents, families, and students of the Old City and its environs and by Ateret Cohanim (Israel and AFAC-Jerusalem Chai).

Our thoughts are with Helen and the Mermelstein family.

Long life and may they be comforted by Hashem and along with the other mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim.



Daniel Luria
Executive Director Ateret Cohanim.

Mati Dan-Chairman

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- Four Yaldei Tzion V'Yerushalayim Nurseries \$2000
- Monthly Hosting of Students in our neighborhoods for Shabbat: \$1,200
- 3 Closed Circuit TV Surveillance Systems \$70,000

Renovation and dedication of apartments in the area to add Jewish families or students

Major restoration of Beit Wittenberg as a monumental heritage house (Mark Twain also stayed in the building in 1867)

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Tuesday May 31, 2016
כ"ג באייר תשע"ו
Terrace on the Park, Flushing New York
Bonei Yerushalayim Awardees:
Segal & The Honorable Bruce Blakeman
Drs. Farla & William Frumkin
Dr. Gail (Frumkin) & Joseph Notovitz
Hedy & Dr. Steve Rubel
Anne & Rabbi Joseph Stamm

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BEIT DOLGIN on Sunday, April 24, the first Day of Chol HaMoed (In Israel)
Meet Executive Director, Daniel Luria at the Jaffa Gate for a walk and tour of
this new addition to the Ateret Cohanim Family. Make your reservations by
calling Daniel at 054-654-4407

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Rabbi Dolgin a"h presenting a Sefer Torah in Israel

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5776 תשע"ו - May it be the year of
"The City - Jerusalem" (עיר), and her residents. ('ויושביה')
May G-d's City - Yerushalayim, be rebuilt and restored to
its previous glory for the Jewish People.
Next year in a united Jerusalem with a flourishing Jewish
life centred around religious educational institutes.

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