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(US)Parashat Emor / פרשת אמור (Israel) Parashat Behar / פרשת בהר
Candle Lighting in Jerusalem 6:52 PM, May 20, 2016 Iyyar 12, 5776 - 28 Days in the Omer

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](#).

The Joy of a Chag in Yerushalayim

The chagim are described in the Torah in several places, with each instance adding a new flavor to their multilayered character. It is clear that the list of chagim in Sefer Shemot is focused on the agricultural elements of the holidays and the list in Parshat Pinchas highlights the korbanot brought on each day. However, in our parsha the common denominator is less apparent. Instead of a direct theme we need to turn to the phrase that functions as the leitmotif of the section - "mikra kodesh" - which appears eleven times in the chapter. This recurrent, but enigmatic term seems to hold the key to the aspect of the chagim focused on in our parsha.[1]

While there are various suggestions amongst the commentators, the Rashbam[2] has a deceptively simple translation - "holy times." This indicates that our parsha really cuts to the core of each holiday – describing what makes each day into a "holy time" which is the basic definition of a holiday. With this in mind we need to pay special attention to what appears in this parsha as it will aid us in identifying the core elements of the chag.

With this background an interesting point emerges from a look at the subsection dedicated to Sukkot. One of the key pesukim teaches of the mitzvah of lulav and Etrog:

And you shall take for yourselves on the first day, the fruit of the hadar tree, date palm fronds, a branch of a braided tree, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for a seven day period.[3]

This is the only mention of the term "simcha" (joy) in our parsha and its precise interpretation is subject to debate.[4] However, one point emerges clearly – that the true joy of a chag occurs "before Hashem. While there is a mitzvah of simcha on each chag irrespective of location, the Torah is establishing an ideal paradigm by mentioning simcha only in the context of being "before Hashem" in our parsha. The quintessential holiday experience is to feel the joy of God's closeness in His presence.

And where is "before Hashem?" Commentators explain that it refers to the Beit ha-Mikdash,[5] and very likely should be expanded to the entirety of Yerushalayim.[6] It is only there that the true "mikra kodesh" of a chag can be experienced and the true simcha of a chag can be achieved. May we once again merit to experience our chagim "before Hashem" in Yerushalayim.

Join us as we celebrate the 37th (HaLev) Year of Ateret Cohanim - May 31, 2016 Terrace on the Park-Flushing Queens

honoring
The Honorable Bruce & Segal Blakeman
Dr. Steve & Hedy Rubel
Drs. William & Farla Frumkin and
Joseph & Dr. Gail Frumkin Notovitz
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Tuesday Evening, May 31, 2016 | 23rd of Iyar, 5776
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Program 7:30 PM followed by Dessert Reception
The dinner is dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Mechemia Lavi z"l and to the rebirth of the Tenenbe Village in the Shiloach


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Rabbi Joseph & Anne Stamm

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- [1]Idea heard from Mori v'Rabbi, Rabbi Michael Rosensweig.
- [2]Rashbam 23:2
- [3]Vayikra 23:40. Translation from Chabad.org.
- [4]See Yerushalmi Sukkah 3:1 and Rambam Hilchot Lulav 8:2 that it either refers to extra korbonot, taking the lulav, or general joy and jubilation.
- [5]See Rambam Hilchot Sukkah 7:13.
- [6]See Rambam Commentary to the Mishna, Sukkah 3:12.

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 in rededicating the Old City**



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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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