

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](#)

Searching for Yerushalayim Within

The opening Mishna in Pesachim instructs us to search for chametz by the light of a candle on the night before Pesach. The Gemara^[1] sources the requirement of a candle in two verses – “At that time I will search Yerushalayim with candles”^[2] and “A man’s soul is the candle of Hashem which searches all the chambers of one’s innards.”^[3] Gemara explains The are both are necessary for the derivation that the search for chametz requires a candle. The linkage of these two verses indicates the existence of a parallelism between the locations being searched. Yerushalayim and a person’s inner chambers are both scrutinized by God for failures and flaws. In the context of the Gemara this teaches of the need to search for our chametz in the same way that Hashem searches for our sins. However, some^[4] assert that by choosing the imagery of Hashem searching for our sins, the Gemara is hinting that the actual search for chametz needs to be paralleled by a process of teshuvah - the removal of our inner chametz.

It may be that the parallelism itself has what to teach us about the relationship between Yerushalayim and our inner thoughts, particularly in the context of Pesach cleaning. Perhaps the juxtaposition of these items indicates that in order to experience a truly “chametz” free Pesach we need to scrutinize not just our inner thoughts in general, but particularly those Yerushalayim. While each of the Shalosh Regalim requires a pilgrimage to Yerushalayim, Pesach is the most Yerushalayim-centric. The centerpiece of the seder is the korbon pesach which must be eaten in Yerushalayim. The end of the seder is one of the two times during our year that we sing “Next year in Yerushalayim!”

Nowadays, most Jewish seders do not take place in Yerushalayim and even those that do are lacking the korbon pesach. A key issue becomes to what extent we realize how much we are lacking. As we go through the seder are we cognizant of the fact that as beautiful and inspiring as our Pesach is, it is a pale shadow of what our ideal seder should be like in Yerushalayim? Do we pause to think and truly daven for “Next year in the rebuilt Yerushalayim?”

In a very enlightening article, Rabbi Daniel Yolkut^[5] details how almost every part of our seder contains elements intended to remind us of what the seder was like in the days of yore when the Beit ha-Mikdash stood. In addition to reliving the Exodus, our seder is also supposed to make us nostalgic for the glory days of Yerushalayim. Let us pray that our yearning for Yerushalayim should make this the last year without the korbon pesach.

[1]Pesachim 7b.

[2]Tzefanya 1:12.

[3]Mishlei 20:27

[4]See, for example, the article of Rav Yaakov Nagen available here <http://www.daat.ac.il/chazal/maamar.asp?id=146>.

[5]Available at <http://www.yutorah.org/toqo/pesach/>.

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Arts and Crafts at the Wittenberg Play Center help the children get ready for Pesach



support. If they marched in the Parade he was extremely philanthropic. In 1967 he was so taken by the Miracle of the Six Day War he moved his whole Family to Israel immediately after. They stayed for close to a year.

Business drew him back. He was at the top of those who freed the Prisoners of Zion from the Gulag and Soviet jails. Natan Sharansky credited Joe Mermelstein as the Man who brought him to Freedom. Natan Sharansky attended his Funeral in Israel this past week. President Reagan signed a Bill to free Sharansky and all the Refuseniks at the behest of Joe Mermelstein and Rabbi Avi Weiss. I met Joe Mermelstein for the first time in 1985 when he was honored by the American Friends of Ateret Cohanim.

Prime Minister Bibi Netanyahu who was a close friend was the keynote speaker. Joe Mermelstein maintained a close relationship with Prime Minister Netanyahu throughout his life. Joe Mermelstein became the Chairman of the Board of Ateret Cohanim and chose me to succeed Jack Friedler, Z'L as President in 1991. He was always in my corner. He was always tremendously supportive. He was always straightforward, kind, generous and giving. He built Beit Mermelstein in the so-called Moslem Quarter (rightfully was the Old Jewish Quarter until the Pogroms of 1936). The House stands today as a testament of Joe Mermelstein's Z,L vision, generosity, and devotion. It has inspired others to do the same. He was the First. He helped transform the Old City of Jerusalem.

During the Oslo years from 1993 until the so-called Disengagement from Gaza in 2005 (rightfully called the Gush Katif Expulsion), Joe Mermelstein did not stop for a minute trying to save the Land and People of Israel. I can't begin to tell one how many Ads in Jewish and secular Newspapers (the Jerusalem Post and the New York Times were his mainstays) Joe Mermelstein sponsored. I can't begin to tell one how many rallies, conferences, and Press events, Joe helped both physically and financially. Every waking moment was spent on helping the Jewish People. It worked. It was truly effective. The effort was well worth it. Israel is stronger today than ever before. Jerusalem is stronger today than ever before. A new generation of Israeli Political Figures have all learned from the Mesirut Nefesh of Joe Mermelstein. I know Prime Minister Netanyahu thinks of him often. He had a profound influence on the Prime Minister.

I remember well Joe constantly stressing over and over again that "There is No East or West Jerusalem, **There is Only One Jerusalem**". He eventually made this a Title of one of his many Ads. A whole generation was educated by this Giant of a man. He ended every speech he ever made with the clarion call "Am Yisrael Chai". When he said it, the Earth shook. He was that powerful. He dedicated a Basketball Court/Gymnasium in Sderot . In Operation Protective Edge in 2014 the Building was used by the IDF as a launching Pad for operations into Gaza. Everything he did had a profound effect.

He is left by his beloved wife, Helen, son and Daughter-in-law Bernie and Fran, and daughter and son in law Aviva and Paul Gross. May his family be comforted among the mourners of Zion and Yerushalayim.

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 Dr. Gail (Frumkin) & Joseph Notovitz
 Hedy & Dr. Steve Rubel
 Anne & Rabbi Joseph Stamm

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5776 - תשע"ו May it be the year of "The City - Jerusalem" (עיר), and her residents. (יושביה) 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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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
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