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Shabbat Beshalach

January 30, 2010

15 Shevat 5770

News

Tu Bishvat

Sabbath is the 15th of the Month Shevat, we call this date *Tu B'Shevat* in Hebrew, Tu is composed of the Hebrew letters *tet* = 9 and *vav* = 6 which make together 15. The 15th of the Month Shevat. It is a festive day. For the Jewish people is a new year day. The new year of the trees. The Torah praises the Land of Israel with reference to the fruits of the trees and the produce of the soil: **"A land of wheat and barley and vines (grapes) and fig trees and pomegranates; a land of olive trees and (date) honey. ...and you shall eat and be satisfied, and bless the Lord your God for the good land which He has given you"** (Deut. 8:8-10). The Jewish people rejoice in the fruits, in the Land and in the Almighty Who has given us life.

It is celebrated by eating the special types of fruits for which Israel is renowned: olives, dates, grapes, figs and pomegranates. It's also celebrated by planting trees in Israel. Just as others have planted for us, we plant for the future and those who will come after us.

In our home we put out a whole fruit display especially those mentioned above for which the land of Israel is praised. It is a time of appreciation for what the Almighty has given us and which we might take for granted. Let your attitude be gratitude!

Man is compared to a tree (Psalm 1). In Pirkei Avot it is written: "A person whose wisdom exceeds his good deeds is likened to a tree whose branches are numerous, but whose roots are few. The wind comes and uproots it and turns it upside down. But a person whose good deeds exceed his wisdom is likened to a tree whose branches are few but whose roots are numerous. Even if all the winds of the world were to come and blow

against it, they could not budge it from its place" (Avot 3:22).

It is very interesting to know that Tu Bishvat is also the time of the first flowers in Israel. Even though we are in the heart of the winter, the spring time will come very soon. All over Israel we start to see the almond tree flowers.

In the time of the temple, Tu Bishvat was a time of tithes. The Israelites gave tithes to the temple, two times a year the 1st of Ellul, the tithes of animals and at Tu Bishvat the tithes from fruit of trees.

Haiti

We have all heard about the earthquake in Haiti. One of the most destructive earthquake of the last century, right now there are about 150,000 deaths and some newspapers start to present the number of 200,000 people killed. This catastrophe like many others we had in the past demonstrate that Mashiach is coming very soon. Let's remember what Yeshua said, when he spoke about the last days, "For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes" (Math 24:7). More and more earthquakes will occur and as believers we have to be ready to be part of the various organizations that help on the sites. This week I was touch by two videos. The first one is about what the State of Israel is doing. Israel has sent a full hospital equipped of modern materials, here is report:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Oj10pRVWY3I&feature=player_embedded

The last news we have received from the Seventh-day Adventists is that they paid a heavy tribute, about 600 deaths and 55 church building destroyed. Here also we can see a report, <http://www.foxnews.com/search-results/m/28427041/haitians-helping-haitians.htm#q=Haiti+++Seventh-day+Adventist+church>.

Overview

Beshalach

Exodus 13:17-17:16

Pharaoh finally sends B'nei Yisrael out of Egypt. With pillars of cloud and fire, G-d leads them toward Eretz Yisrael on a circuitous route, avoiding the Pelishtim (Philistines). Pharaoh regrets the loss of so many slaves and chases the Jews with his army. The Jews are very afraid as the Egyptians draw close, but G-d protects them. Moshe raises his staff and G-d splits the sea, enabling the Jews to cross safely.

Pharaoh, his heart hardened by G-d, commands his army to pursue, whereupon the waters crash down upon the Egyptian army. Moshe and Miriam lead the men and women, respectively, in a song of thanks. After three days' travel only to find bitter waters at Marah, the people complain. Moshe miraculously produces potable water. In Marah they receive certain mitzvot. The people complain that they ate better food in Egypt. G-d sends quail for meat and provides manna, a miraculous bread that falls from the sky every day except Shabbat. On Friday a double portion descends to supply the Shabbat needs. No one is able to obtain more than his daily portion, but manna collected on Friday suffices for two days so the Jews can rest on Shabbat. Some manna is set aside as a memorial for future generations.

When the Jews again complain about a lack of water, Moshe miraculously produces water from a rock. Then Amalek attacks. Joshua leads the Jews in battle while Moshe prays for their welfare.

Do the Best for God

The Torah states: "This is my God, and I will glorify Him" (Exodus 15:2). The Talmudic sage, Abba Shaul, commented that it means "Emulate Him. Just as God is compassionate and merciful, so too, you should be compassionate and merciful" (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 133b).

The Talmud writes in reference to this verse, "When you do God's mitzvot (commandments),

glorify the mitzvah. Have a beautiful succah..." (Shabbat 133b). We find the same concept in reference to charity. Rambam writes, "When you give food to a hungry person, give him your best and sweetest food. When you give a needy person clothes, give him your best clothes" (Hilchos Isurai Mizbaiach 7:11).

Shabbat of Song

Rabbi Zalmen Marozov reminds us that this Shabbat is called "Shabbat Shira" — "Shabbat of Song". The reason for this name is that in this week's Parasha, Beshalach, we read about the splitting of the Red Sea and the "Shira," the "song" which Moshe and the people of Israel sang praising G-d for the great miracle which they just witnessed.

The morning prayers begin with verses of praise to G-d (P'sukei D'Zimra) which describe the wonders of G-d's creations and that G-d rules the world through the laws of nature. We recite the "Az Yashir," because it shows how G-d can change nature whenever He sees fit. The Exodus from Egypt wasn't complete until Jews were rid of the Egyptians. This occurred only after they crossed the sea. Thus, the song of Az Yashir represents the culmination of the Exodus. The Torah commands us, "Remember the Exodus each day of your life." By reciting the "Az Yashir", we fulfill the mitzvah of remembering the Exodus each day. Reciting the "Az Yashir" every day also teaches us an important lesson. The splitting of the sea occurred when Jews couldn't see any way out of their grave situation. The last thing they would think of doing was going into the sea. Yet, that is what G-d chose for their salvation. Similarly, we are reminded each day that no matter how difficult things may seem, one must not give up. Instead, we should continuously have faith in G-d. For, just as with the splitting of the Red Sea, His help and salvation can occur at any moment and from a most unexpected place.

Manna and Shabbat

The Torah states: "They journeyed from Eilim, and all of the congregation of the Children of Yisrael came to the Sin wilderness, which is between Eilim and Sinai, on the fifteenth of the second

month after their Exodus from Egypt.” (Exodus 16:1) The Gemara expounds this verse saying: “That day was Shabbat, as it says, In the morning you will see the glory of God (ibid., 7). And it further says, For six days you shall gather it (ibid., 26). (Shabbat 87b). The Sochatchover Rebbe says, “It is not a coincidence that the giving of the manna occurred on Shabbat; there must be an intrinsic connection between them. Indeed, we find a well-known connection between manna and Shabbat: we eat *lechem mishneh* (two loaves) at each Shabbat meal to commemorate the double portion of manna which fell every Friday, one for Friday and one for Shabbat. On consideration, it would be more reasonable to have the double bread on Fridays, as that is when the extra portion actually fell. Since we do it on Shabbat itself, there must indeed be some connection between the two”.

Shabbat Given Before Sinai

The Torah states, “If you will give earnest heed to the voice of the LORD your God, and do what is right in His sight, and give ear to His commandments, and keep all His statutes, I will put none of the diseases on you which I have put on the Egyptians; for I, the LORD, am your healer.” (Exodus 15:26). Like a distinguished lady walking in the center of an armed bodyguard, so the Ten Commandments are preceded by laws and followed by laws, while it is in the center. Hence it says, “I walk in the way of righteousness, In the midst of the paths of justice” (Proverbs 8:20). With the Torah in the center and laws preceding it and following it. Preceding it, as it says, ‘There He made for them a statute and an ordinance,’ and following it, as it says, ‘Now these are the ordinances’ (Midrash Rabah 30:3). Once again, we are taught that certain laws were given to the people prior to Sinai. The question is, which laws were chosen to be taught at this juncture, and why?

The Talmud enumerated three things in this pre-Sinai category: social laws, Shabbat, and honoring one’s parents. Both Rashi and the sages of the Talmud include Shabbat in their list of the mitzvot given before Sinai. The very next section of the Torah deals with Shabbat, and it presupposes some knowledge on the part of the people: And he said to them, “This is what God had spoken about: tomorrow is the day of rest, the Holy Shabbat to God...” (Exodus 16:23). This day of rest is referring to the text of the creation and the

Shabbat of the creation, “And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made. (Gen. 1:31-2:3). Shabbat was given before the sin of Adam for all humanity in commemoration of the creation. As soon as the people of Israel left Egypt G-d wanted them to celebrate the creation by keeping the Shabbat. “G-d requires that His holy day be as sacredly observed now as in the time of Israel. The command given to the Hebrews should be regarded by all Christians as an injunction from the Almighty to them. The day before the Shabbat should be made a day of preparation, that everything may be in readiness for its sacred hours. In no case should our own business be allowed to encroach upon holy time. G-d has directed that the sick and suffering be cared for; the labor required to make them comfortable is a work of mercy, and no violation of the Shabbat; but all unnecessary work should be avoided. Many carelessly put off till the beginning of the Shabbat little things that might have been done on the day of preparation. This should not be. Work that is neglected until the beginning of the Shabbat should remain undone until it is past. This course might help the memory of these thoughtless ones, and make them careful to do their own work on the six working days.

Every week during their long sojourn in the wilderness the Israelites witnessed a threefold miracle, designed to impress their minds with the sacredness of the Shabbat: a double quantity of manna fell on the sixth day, none on the seventh, and the portion needed for the Shabbat was preserved sweet and pure, when if any were kept over at any other time it became unfit for use.

In the circumstances connected with the giving of the manna, we have conclusive evidence that the Shabbat was not instituted, as many claim, when the law was given at Sinai. Before the Israelites came to Sinai they understood the Shabbat to be obligatory upon them. In being obliged to gather every Friday a double portion of manna in preparation for the Shabbat, when none would fall, the sacred nature of the day of rest was continually impressed upon them.” [PP 296].

OUR DAILY BREAD COMES FROM HEAVEN

The disciples of the Talmudic sage, Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai, asked him, “Why didn’t G-d give them a year’s supply at once? Why did they have to collect the Manna each day?”

Rabbi Shimon replied with the following parable: A king had a son whom he provided with his sustenance. In the beginning of the year, the king would give his son all that he would need for the entire year. As a result, the son would visit his father only once a year.

The king wasn’t happy with his son’s absence so he decided to provide food for his son one day at a time. From then on, the son appeared before his father each day!

“The same was with Israel,” explained Rabbi Shimon. “By having to depend upon G-d for their sustenance each day, the people of Israel were compelled to direct their hearts to their Father in heaven on a daily basis!”

The story of the Manna teaches us that our daily sustenance comes from heaven. Also, the fact that G-d doesn’t give us our needs all at once for the rest of our lives, shows His love toward us, so that we should continuously look up to Him. This enforces our relationship with Him!.

A PERFECT FAITH

Someone once asked the Magid of Dubna, “How can I close my business on Shabbat when I am burdened with the responsibility of providing sustenance and a livelihood for my family?” The Magid answered with the following parable: A poor man was walking alongside the road carrying a heavy bundle. The town was far and the bundle was heavy, yet the poor man couldn’t pay transportation and thus had no choice but to walk to his destination.

As he was walking, a rich man drove by in his carriage. He had pity on the poor man

and offered him a lift, which the poor man happily accepted. After a while, the rich man noticed that the poor man was still carrying his heavy bundle on his shoulder. “Why don’t you put the bundle down?” he asked.

The poor man politely answered, “You kindly offered me a ride in your carriage, how can I also burden you with my bundle? This would be too much chutzpah on my part!” The rich man laughed and said, “It’s all the same to me whether you put your bundle down or not. My carriage is carrying you and your bundle anyway. So you might as well take the load of your back and enjoy the ride!”

“The same,” explained the Magid, “is with Shabbat. During the six days of the week, G-d carries us and supplies our needs. If He takes care of us all week, he certainly can supply our needs if we listen to His commandment and rest on Shabbat”..

TEACHING TORAH TO CHILDREN

The following story is found in the Jerusalem Talmud: Rabbi Eliezer was very charitable. Once when Rabbi Eliezer was not home some poor people came and were fed and left.

When Rabbi Eliezer returned he was told that the poor people ate and, before leaving, they blessed him. Rabbi Eliezer said, “In this case, there is not much reward for this mitzvah.”

On another occasion, Rabbi Eliezer was told that some poor people said derogatory things about him after they ate. “In this case,” said Rabbi Eliezer, “the reward for the mitzvah is great!”

EDITOR

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Richard-Amram Elofer
4, Abraham Lincoln
94186 Jerusalem
Israel

Tel. +972 504 535 121
Fax +972 2625 1319
email: richard@elofer.com
web: jewishadventist.org



Haftara

Judges 4:4-5:31

HAFTARAH: The text of the Haftara is about Deborah one of the rare prophetesses of the Bible: “At that time Deborah, a prophetess, wife of Lappidoth, was judging Israel..” (Judges. 4:4).

PARASHA: In the parasha we have the description of another prophetess, Miriam. It is said: **And Miriam sang to them: “Sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea.”** (Exodus 15:21). Miriam was the first prophetess of Israel. God uses men and women to reveal his will to the humanity.

HAFTARAH: Exactly as Miriam was a great support for Moses, Deborah supported Barak, the chef of the army of Israel: **“Then Deborah said to Barak, “Up! For this is the day on which the LORD has given Sisera into your hand. The LORD is indeed going out before you.”** So Barak went down from Mount Tabor with ten thousand warriors following him. **And the LORD threw Sisera and all his chariots and all his army into a panic before Barak; Sisera got down from his chariot and fled away on foot, ..”** (Judges. 4:14-15).

PARASHA: When Moses get his victory over the Egyptian army he sang a song with miriam: **Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD: “I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; horse and rider he has thrown into the sea** (Ex. 15:1).

HAFTARAH: When Barak get his victory over the army of Sisera, he sang a song with Deborah: **Then Deborah and Barak son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying: “When locks are long in Israel, when the people offer themselves willingly— bless the LORD! (Judges 5:1-2) “Awake, awake, Deborah! Awake, awake, utter a song! Arise, Barak, lead away your captives, O son of Abinoam. (Judg. 5:12) “In ancient times the Lord had connected with His work men of varied talents. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses with his meekness and wisdom, and Joshua with his varied capabilities were all enlisted in God’s service. The music of Miriam, the courage and piety of Deborah, the filial affection of Ruth, the obedience and faithfulness of Samuel—all were needed.”** (EGW)

Besorat Yeshua

Mark 14:45-59

WE ARE AT A SPECIAL TIME, TU-BISHVAT, THE NEW YEAR OF THE TREES AND AT FEW WEEKS FROM PASSOVER. Our reading of the gospel of Mark will coincide Passover with the death of the Mashiach on the wood at Golgotha.

BESORAH: It is the last night before the crucifixion, Yeshua is arrested: **“Then they laid hands on him and arrested him..”** (Mark 14:46)

The disciples want to defend him: **“But one of those who stood near drew his sword and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear”** (Mark 14:47).

But Yeshua knows that he has to accept his destiny and stopped the disciples: **“Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I was with you in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. But let the scriptures be fulfilled.”** (Mark 14:48-49). He did not come to take the sword and to fight the Roman army to deliver Jerusalem from the occupation.

What a disappointment for the disciples! They were sure that Yeshua was the Mashiach, the one who will deliver Jerusalem from the Roman army. They don’t understand and leave him: **“All of them deserted him and fled.”** (Mark 14:50).

What a disappointment for the disciples! They were sure that Yeshua was the Mashiach, the one who will deliver Jerusalem from the Roman army. They don’t understand, they leave him: **“All of them deserted him and fled.”** (Mark 14:50).

Yeshua is innocent, the high priest cannot prove that he is guilty, they even provided false witnesses: **“Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for testimony against Jesus to put him to death; but they found none. For many gave false testimony against him, and their testimony did not agree. ... “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple that is made with hands, and in three days I will build another, not made with hands.’”** But even on this point their testimony did not agree”. (Mark 14:55-59)

