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News

Our Ministry on Facebook

It is encouraging to see that our cyber-ministry is growing, on the 3rd of March we have passed the number of 525 friends in our World Jewish Adventist Friendship center page on Facebook. All these people receive our parasha and can participate to our discussions. Congratulation to our webmaster Santiago Cuellar who know very well how to lead this web site and to promote its ministry.

World Jewish-Adventist Advisory

On 14 and 15 March we will held the World Jewish Advisory in Florida with representatives from North America Division, Trans-European Division, South America Division, Inter-America Division, it is encouraging to see how people are responding to our ministry in all these territories where the great majority of the Jewish people are living. We will miss three Divisions where Jews are living: South Pacific Division (Australia and New-Zealand), Euro-Africa Division (France, Belgium etc.) and Euro-Asia Division (Ukraine and Russia). I hope that we will have good news from these territories and representatives who will share with us what happen there at the next World Advisory in 2012.

News from Copenhagen

In January 2010 David Barzola and myself have led a training in Copenhagen where a group of Adventist members wanted to start a special ministry for Jews in Copenhagen. I have been very happy to see that this ministry is going well and some Jews are already interested by what we could offer to them. I received an email from one of the leaders of this group: Lis Bucka-

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Christensen who gave me some encouraging news, saying that they will start this Friday (March 26th) their Jewish-Adventist service, here is her short message: "For your information I can let you know that we are having visitors of at least two Jewish-born women. One of them comes with her little granddaughter every second week to attend church services and helping us with serving soup for people of the street. The other started at cooking classes and yesterday she also decided to stay for Kai's teaching of John's Revelation. Sofia Kuperman (Jewish Polish lady), whom you talked to, will lead the musical part on March 26th" Let's pray for this new group.

Purim Celebration

I started to receive news and pictures of Purim celebrations in some of our Jewish Adventist congregations. I will share progressively these news in this newsletter. If you have not yet send me you news and pictures, do it please, it is always good to communicate and to know what happen everywhere in the world for this ministry.

West Florida's Celebration

Jeff sent us news and pictures, he said about New Port Richey in Florida: "A lot of people in New Port Richey dressed up as various Bible people". And about St-Petersburg he said "We had a good turn out and a fun time hearing the story of Esther in a unique way. The Bible encourages us to remember the miracle of G-d's grace by **"making them days of feasting and joy, of sending presents to one another and gifts to the poor."** (Esther 9:22) Thus we had a lot of joy as we laughed and sang, as we ate hamantashan, dressed up and drowned out the name of Haman with groggier and boos" (photos on Picassa)

Overview

Ki-Tissa

Exodus 30:11-34:35

Moshe conducts a census by counting each silver half-shekel donated by all men age twenty and over. Moshe is commanded to make a copper laver for the Mishkan. The women donate the necessary metal.

The formula of the anointing oil is specified, and G-d instructs Moshe to use this oil only for dedicating the Mishkan, its vessels, Aharon and his sons. G-d selects Bezalel and Oholiav as master craftsmen for the Mishkan and its vessels.

The Jewish People are commanded to keep the Sabbath as an eternal sign that G-d made the world. Moshe receives the two Tablets of Testimony on which are written the Ten Commandments.

The mixed multitude who left Egypt with the Jewish People panic when Moshe's descent seems delayed, and force Aharon to make a golden calf for them to worship. Aharon stalls, trying to delay them.

G-d tells Moshe to return to the people immediately, threatening to destroy everyone and build a new nation from Moshe. When Moshe sees the camp of idol-worship he smashes the tablets and destroys the golden calf. The sons of Levi volunteer to punish the transgressors, executing 3,000 men.

Moshe ascends the mountain to pray for forgiveness for the people, and G-d accepts his prayer. Moshe sets up the Mishkan and G-d's cloud of glory returns. Moshe asks G-d to show him the rules by which he conducts the world, but is granted only a small portion of this request.

G-d tells Moshe to hew new tablets and reveals to him the text of the prayer that will invoke Divine mercy. Idol worship, intermarriage and the combination of milk and meat are prohibited. The laws of Pesach, the first-born, the first-fruits, Shabbat, Shavuot and Succot are taught. When Moshe descends with the second set of tablets, his face is luminous as a result of contact with the Divine.

Half-a-Shekel as a Ransom

The Torah states: "When you take a census of the Israelites to count them, each one must pay the LORD a ransom for his life at the time he is counted." (Ex 30:12). Then "every Jew was required to pay yearly a half shekel as "a ransom for his soul;" and the money thus collected was used for the support of the temple. "Receive the atonement money from the Israelites and use it for the service of the Tent of Meeting. It will be a memorial for the Israelites before the LORD, making atonement for your lives." (Ex. 30:16)

"Receive the atonement money" It is a very strange expression, in the text this money is also a "ransom for life" This ransom reminds us that G-d said that the first born of Israel belongs to him "After sending this judgment upon Egypt, the Lord said to Moses, "Sanctify unto Me all the first-born, . . . both of man and of beast: it is Mine;" "for on the day that I smote all the first-born in the land of Egypt I hallowed unto Me all the first-born in Israel, both man and beast: Mine shall they be: I am the Lord." Ex. 13:2; Num. 3:13. After the tabernacle service was established, the Lord chose the tribe of Levi in the place of the first-born of all Israel to minister in the sanctuary. But the first-born were still to be regarded as the Lord's, and were to be bought back by a ransom"

Why to pay a ransom? It is not easy to understand this point, but it is the price paid by Mashiach for our redemption. "The child for whom the redemption money had been paid was He who was to pay the ransom for the sins of the whole world. He was the true "high priest over the house of G-d," the head of "an unchangeable priesthood," the intercessor at "the right hand of the Majesty on high." Heb. 10:21; 7:24; 1:3. Spiritual things are spiritually discerned. [DA 52].

The Golden Calf

We are familiar with the story of the Golden Calf. The Jewish People heard G-d Himself, without an intermediary, speak and gave them His Torah. G-d also informed them that Moshe is His trustworthy prophet and that anything Moshe says in His Name should be accepted as G-d's word. Moshe then ascended to the top of Mount Sinai to

receive all the details of the Torah. Moshe told them he would return **“The L-RD said to Moses, “Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.” Then Moses set out with Joshua his aide, and Moses went up on the mountain of G-d. He said to the elders, “Wait here for us until we come back to you. Aaron and Hur are with you, and anyone involved in a dispute can go to them.” When Moses went up on the mountain, the cloud covered it, and the glory of the L-RD settled on Mount Sinai. For six days the cloud covered the mountain, and on the seventh day the L-RD called to Moses from within the cloud. To the Israelites the glory of the L-RD looked like a consuming fire on top of the mountain. Then Moses entered the cloud as he went on up the mountain. And he stayed on the mountain forty days and forty nights. (Exodus 24:12-18.)** When, according to their mistaken calculation Moshe tarried, they formed an image of a Golden Calf and worshipped it.

We must know that it was the “mix multitude”, the Egyptians who joined Israel who influenced Aaron and Israel to make the Golden Calf. The second Sochatchover Rebbi wrote in his *Shem Mishmuel* “This disaster was caused by the involvement of the *eirev rav*—the so-called mixed multitude of non-Jewish hangers—on who joined *klal Yisrael* (assembly) at the time of the Exodus. When a non converted joins God’s people, the result is very often complete ruin for G-d’s people, that’s why G-d’s asked his people not to married a non believer. This is what happened to Israel and Aharon. The *eirev rav* were not interested in the welfare of *klal Yisrael* and had no real fears about their ability to cope without Moshe; they were simply troublemakers, opportunists with their own agenda.”

We have confirmation of this statement in Patriarchs and Prophets where it is written: “The ‘mixed multitude’ had been the first to indulge murmuring and impatience, and they were the leaders in the apostasy that followed. Among the objects regarded by the Egyptians as symbols of deity was the ox or calf; and it was at the suggestion of those who had practiced this form of idolatry in Egypt that a calf was now made and worshiped.” [PP 316].

According to Rabbi Zvi Belovski the biggest problem of Israel at that time was the divisions among the people and their lack of unity. “Perhaps the greatest achievement of Moshe was to keep the *klal* as a unified

entity, preventing it from splitting into factions. There was no internal unity within *klal Yisrael* until after they crossed the Jordan and entered the land. Before that time, they needed a man of Moshe’s stature and immense spirituality to guide them through their collective experiences and to ensure that no selfish interest takes control of the people. His loss, however temporary, threw the nascent nation into disarray. They rapidly became a rabble of individuals, rather than a cohesive unit.”

Before jumping on the shoulders of Aaron and accuse him to be responsible of this sin, we have to remember that for the Biblical tradition Aaron is *kadosh* a holy man: **“They envied Moses also in the camp, and Aaron the saint of the L-RD” (Ps. 106:16 KJV).** in Hebrew “*Kedosh Adonai*”. And the fact that he was not part of the 3,000 who died for that sin (Ex. 32:28), shows us that he repented and understood his mistakes. Moses said too that he prayed for him and G-d forgave him: **“And the LORD was very angry with Aaron to have destroyed him: and I prayed for Aaron also the same time.” (Deut 9:20).** “In answer to the earnest intercession of Moses, his life was spared; and in penitence and humiliation for his great sin, he was restored to the favor of G-d.” [PP]

Love For Wisdom

The Torah states: **“And in the heart of each person who had a wise heart I have given wisdom” (Exodus 31:6).** Why does the Torah make having a wise heart a prerequisite for the Almighty granting wisdom?

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz, former Rosh Hayeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva, teaches that from here we see that a person needs wisdom to merit acquiring wisdom. What is this wisdom? It is the heartfelt desire for more wisdom!

Rabbi Pakouz says: “We can have a picture of what this desire is from the desire of Haman (in the Purim story) for honor. He was second to the king in power and the entire population of 127 countries bowed to him. Nevertheless, when Mordecai refused to bow down to him, he said that all his honor was as nothing since he was missing one person’s honor. So, too, a person who has a deep love of wisdom feels a strong lack for any wisdom he is missing. When you have this love for wisdom, the Almighty will give you greater wisdom!”

I AM NOTHING!

Rabbi Y'honasan Eibeschutz one of Jewry's most influential leaders during the early 1700s, was away from his home for one Yom Kippur and was forced to spend that holy day in a small town. Without revealing his identity as Chief Rabbi of Prague, Hamburg, and Altoona, he entered a synagogue that evening and surveyed the room, looking for a suitable place to sit and pray.

Toward the center of the synagogue, his eyes fell upon a man who was swaying fervently, tears swelling in his eyes. "How encouraging," thought the Rabbi, "I will sit next to him. His prayers will surely inspire me."

It was to be. The man cried softly as he prayed, tears flowed down his face. "I am but dust in my life, Oh Lord," wept the man. "Surely in death!" The sincerity was indisputable. Reb Y'honasan finished the prayers that evening, inspired. The next morning he took his seat next to the man, who, once again, poured out his heart to G-d, declaring his insignificance and vacuity of merit.

During the congregation's reading of the Torah, something amazing happened. A man from the front of the synagogue was called for the third aliyah (going up to read the Torah), one of the most honorable reading for an Israelite, and suddenly Rabbi Eibeschutz's neighbor charged the podium!

"Him!" shouted the man. "You give him shlishi (the third reading)?" The shul (synagogue) went silent. Reb Y'honasan stared in disbelief. "Why I know how to learn three times as much as he! I give more charity than he and I have a more illustrious family! Why on earth would you give him an reading over me?"

With that the man stormed back from the bimah toward his seat.

Rabbi Eibeschutz could not believe what he saw and decided to approach the man. "I don't understand," he began. "Minutes ago you were crying about how insignificant and unworthy you are and now you are clamoring to get the honor of that man's aliyah?"

Disgusted the man snapped back. "What are you talking about? Compared to Hashem I am truly a nothing." Then he pointed to the bimah (the pulpit)

and sneered, "But not compared to him!"

David said under the inspiration of the Ruach Hakodesh that Aaron was "a saint" *kedosh*, in Ps. 106:16, It is not Aaron who said that about himself. It is a human and natural tendency to be the first, the disciples had this dispute among themselves "they [the disciples] had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. Sitting down, Yeshua called the Twelve and said, "If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all." (Mark 9:34-35).

MORE THAN SACRIFICE

During the time of the Holy Temple, a wealthy man was leading his ox to be offered as a sacrifice in the Temple. Suddenly the ox refused to continue. Nothing worked and the ox stubbornly stood there and refused to move.

A poor man, holding a bundle of grass, saw all this and decided to help. He offered the ox his bundle of grass. The ox ate the grass and continued toward the Temple. The wealthy man felt great about his offering. That night, he had a dream. In his dream he was told, "The bundle of grass which the poor man sacrificed was appreciated in heaven even more than your sacrifice."

READ THE BIBLE

We are not allowed to say any portion of Holy Bible by heart, but must always read it from the Scroll. Thus when Rabbi Meier was once in Asia on Purim, and was unable to find a copy of the book of Esther, he wrote the book out from memory (as he knew it by heart), and then made another copy from which he read to the congregation. (Gen. Rabba 36).

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Haftara

1 Kings 18:1 - 39

PARASHA: Israel experienced a great apostasy in the time of Moses. “Ex. 32:4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.” (Exodus 32:4).

HAFTARAH: Israel Experienced a great apostasy In the time of the prophet Elijah: ‘So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. “O Baal, answer us!” they shouted. But there was no response; no one answered. And they danced around the altar they had made.’ (1Kings 18:26)

The people of Israel is under the domination of Jezebel, an evil queen and Ahab, a weak king. Jezebel kills many prophets of God while some of them are protected by Obadiah the governor.

Elijah decides to challenge the king Ahab: **Elijah said, “As the LORD Almighty lives, whom I serve, I will surely present myself to Ahab today.”** (1Kings 18:15).

What is strange in this story is that the one who is faithful, Elijah, is accused by the king to make trouble in Israel: **“When he saw Elijah, he said to him, “Is that you, you troubler of Israel?”** (1Kings 18:17)

Ahab is the one who brought idolatry to Israel, but he is so blind that he does not see anymore where is the problem. Elijah does not hesitate to say the truth to the king **“But you and your father’s family have. You have abandoned the LORD’s commands and have followed the Baals.”** (1Kings 18:17)

Elijah is a courageous man, even if later he will be afraid to be killed by Jezebel, it is this sort of man and woman the world needs. “Would that every minister (Pastor or Rabbi) might realize the sacredness of his office and the holiness of his work, and show the courage that Elijah showed! As divinely appointed messengers, ministers are in a position of awful responsibility.” (PK 149).

Besorat Yeshua

Mark 15:28-41

PARASHA: Israel experienced a great apostasy in the time of Moses: **“He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast ... Then they said, “These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”** (Exodus 32:4).

HAFTARAH: Israel Experienced a great apostasy in the time of Elijah: **‘So they took the bull given them and prepared it. Then they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. “O Baal, answer us!”** (1Kings 18:26)

BESORAH: Israel experienced a great apostasy in the time of Yeshua: **“In the same way the chief priests and the teachers of the law mocked him among themselves. “He saved others,” they said, “but he can’t save himself!”** (Mark 15:29-31).

The text of the Besorah has a clear link to the text of the Haftara, which is about Elijah, Yeshua says on the cross **“Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?”** (Mark 15:34). Some people have not heard very well what he said: **When some of those standing near heard this, they said, “Listen, he’s calling Elijah.”.** (Mark 15:34). The Jewish people was waiting for the coming of Elijah just before the coming of the Messiah (Malachi 4:5). When anyone claims that he is the Messiah, for a Jew the first question to ask is: where is Elijah? the four gospel contain twenty-six times the name of Elijah.

For Yeshua, Yochanan Hamatbil (John the baptist) was Elijah: **“And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come”** (Matthew. 11:14), later he said: **“But I tell you, Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him”** (Matthew. 17:12).

Yochanan had the same courageous attitude of Elijah, he did not hesitate to say to king Herod the truth. **‘For Yochanan had been saying to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” ’** (Mark 6:18). Herod killed Yochanan, He was beheaded by the king. However, his mission, to prepare the coming of the Messiah, was fulfilled.

