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Shabbat Shmini

April 10, 2010

26 Nissan 5770

News

RACHEL HYMAN IN CONCERT

Rachel Hyman has been in Ukraine and is right now in Germany. Here are some news from her.

"I have just come back from minisitering in music at our Jewish congregations in Ukraine and encouraging them to do more outreach in their local communities.

I am now in Germany, where I will be giving 3 Jewish musical concerts at Adventist Churches at Achen, Cologne and Essen (I think I spelled them right. :)

I am very, very proud of the Cologne SDA Church where they used their own money to design and mail out 10,000 beautiful invitations to the Jewish communities in the area advertising my 3 concerts here. I have been told to expect atleast 50 Jewish people at Cologne this coming Sabbath.

Please, please pray for me as I need God's Spirit in such a special, powerful way as I seek to bring the gospel to the Jews who come to the concert

PESACH IN THE ADVENTIST UNIVERISTY IN ARGENTINA

We had been blessed with the opportunity of celebrating one more time our Seder of Pesach last week in Libertador San Martin, Argentina.

We had around 50 people, mostly students from the University. As usual our friend from Brasil, a medicine student, helped out with the music. Tree families colaborated with the food



PESACH IN BUENOS AIRES

I am writing to tell you that more than ninety people participated in the activities of the night of Passover. The proposal of this year, during the night of Passover, was rediscovered to Jesus in the tradition of Israel. The stories of Jesus life show him dealing with the preparations for Passover. The Seder of Pesach occupies an important place in the heart of Jewish life and so was for Jesus: "I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer..." At the end of the service, twenty-four new people left their phones and asked to be invited to the activities of our community.



OVERVIEW



SHMINI

LEVITICUS 9:1 - 11:47

On the eighth day of the dedication of the Mishkan, Aharon, his sons, and the entire nation bring various korbanot (offerings) as commanded by Moshe.

Aharon and Moshe bless the nation.

G-d allows the Jewish People to sense His Presence after they complete the Mishkan.

Aharon's sons, Nadav and Avihu, innovate an offering not commanded by G-d. A fire comes from before G-d and consumes them, stressing the need to perform the commandments only as Moshe directs. Moshe consoles Aharon, who grieves in silence.

Moshe directs the kohanim as to their behavior during the mourning period, and warns them that they must not drink intoxicating beverages before serving in the Mishkan.

The Torah lists the two characteristics of a kosher animal: It has split hooves, and it chews, regurgitates, and re-chews its food.

The Torah specifies by name those non-kosher animals which have only one of these two signs. A kosher fish has fins and easily removable scales. All birds not included in the list of forbidden families are permitted.

The Torah forbids all types of insects except for four species of locusts.

Details are given of the purification process after coming in contact with ritually-impure species.

Bnei Yisrael are commanded to be separate and holy—like G-d.

A STRANGE FIRE

The Torah States: **“And it came to pass on the eighth day, that Moses called Aaron and his sons, and the elders of Israel... And they brought that which Moses commanded before the tabernacle of the congregation: and all the congregation drew near and stood before the L-RD. And Moses said, This is the thing which the L-RD commanded that ye should do: and the glory of the LORD shall appear unto you.”** (Lev. 9:1, 5, 6)

On the eighth day, all was prepared; the Mishkan was completed and ready for service. It was meant to be a glorious day. On this day a revelation was promised, a revelation that would convey a message of forgiveness to the entire nation, and most particularly to Aharon.

“And Moses and Aaron went into the tabernacle of the congregation, and came out, and blessed the people: and the glory of the L-RD appeared unto all the people. And there came a fire out from before the L-RD, and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fat: which when all the people saw, they shouted, and fell on their faces.” (Lev. 9:23, 24). But suddenly the celebration turned to mourning, the joy in tears. Apparently, something went terribly wrong, and the anticipated forgiveness to bitter punishment. Two of Aharon's sons were suddenly dead. The Torah states **“And Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, took either of them his censer, and put fire therein, and put incense thereon, and offered strange fire before the L-RD, which he commanded them not.”** (Lev. 10:1). Nadav and Avihu, two of Aaron's sons, who bring a strange fire in the sanctuary. This was not acceptable for G-d so that a fire consumed them on the spot and they died. G-d's reaction is very surprising for a modern mind that's why it is important to try to understand what it behind this story.

According to the Jewish Midrash (Yalkut Shimoni 524) Nadav and Abihu thought they were great people, they were aware of their high spiritual level. Yet they felt they had already reached the pinnacle of their achievement. It is in this context that the Jewish tradition see in this story seven faults,

1. Nadav and Avihu felt they had reached completion and perfection, so it seemed fitting for them to take over leadership of the Jewish people. That's why one of the first fault is that they were impatient for Moses and Aaron to die so that they could take over leadership of the people of Israel.

2. They felt they had achieved the epitome of Torah knowledge so they made religious legal decisions in front of Moses, their rabbi, without consulting Moses and the Elders, it was a sign of disrespect towards G-d's people leadership.

CHOOSE WHAT YOU DESIRE IN LIFE

3. Since they assumed they had reached their maximum potential, they felt they could relax, then they entered the holy area while intoxicated. They confused between sacred work and secular world.

4. Since they felt they had reached the height of purity, they no longer needed water to become purified, so they entered the holy area without first washing their hands and feet.

5. Since they felt they had achieved perfection, they no longer needed the atonement provided by the priestly garments (Arachin 16a), so they entered the holy area without wearing the priestly garments

6. They assumed that, since they had perfected themselves, God could speak with them at any time - as He did with Moses, who separated from his wife, Tzipporah, due to this consideration (Numbers 12:7-8) - so they did not get married.

7. Since they did not get married, they were halachically forbidden from having children outside of marriage.

Here are the Jewish seven reasons why Aaron's sons might have deserved death.

Now it is clear that they disobeyed G-d commandments: "At the hour of worship, as the prayers and praise of the people were ascending to G-d, two of the sons of Aaron took each his censer and burned fragrant incense thereon, to rise as a sweet odor before the L-rd. But they transgressed His command by the use of "strange fire." For burning the incense they took common instead of the sacred fire which G-d Himself had kindled, and which He had commanded to be used for this purpose. For this sin a fire went out from the Lord and devoured them in the sight of the people." [PP 359].

More lessons here:

Before doing something that is questionable, make certain to consult someone who is older and wiser. Though you feel you are right, you might overlook or be unaware of some factors.

Even if you decide to do the same action as someone else, discuss it with him. Every person has his own "take" on a situation and his own motivations. Discussing with a peer can give valuable feedback. For another person you can be objective, though not for yourself.

The Torah commands the Cohanim that: "Wine and other intoxicating beverages you shall not drink" (Lev. 10:9) before coming to do the service. The Midrash Vayikra Rabbah (a collection of homiletical stories and insights) warns against alcoholism: "If a person drinks too much wine, he will end up selling all that he owns to keep up his addiction to drinking."

The Midrash continues: The children of a drunk were worried that they would soon be penniless. They tied up their father when he was drunk and placed him in a cemetery; they hoped that when he became sober he would be shocked by the experience and become aware of the dangers of drinking.

That day a caravan carrying vats of wine was attacked and sped past the cemetery to outrun the attackers. A barrel rolled off the wagon and when the man woke up from his drunken sleep, he was surprised to find the spigot of the barrel next to his face. And he continued to drink.

The Almighty leads us in the direction we desire to go. The greater your desire to do something, the more successful you will be. Therefore, choose well what you desire in life. When you wish to accomplish in spiritual matters, build up a strong desire to accomplish and the Almighty will lead you in that path!

THE FOCAL POINT

When Israel travelled in the Wilderness, the Mishkan was always in the center of the camp. This was more than a convenient way of travelling. This was symbolic of the role that the Mishkan played in the nation. As long as the Mishkan was in the middle, all the Tribes could rally around one central idea and focal point.

THREE CROWNS

There are three crowns: the crown of Torah, the crown of priesthood, and the crown of kingship; but the crown of a good name surpasses all of them. (Rabbi Shimon)

TO DO AS MUCH AS WE CAN

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa was so poor that he only ate carob (considered a very cheap food) all week. So great a man was Rabbi Chanina, that the Talmud says, “The whole world received its food in the merit of Rabbi Chanina, yet he himself only has carob from Shabbat to Shabbat.”

Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa once saw a beautifully shaped rock which he very much wanted to bring as a gift to the Holy Temple in Jerusalem. However, the rock was too heavy and he couldn't afford to pay porters to deliver it to Jerusalem. Rabbi Chanina prayed to G-d. Soon five angels in the form of people appeared and offered to help. He told them that he would like them to carry the stone to Jerusalem, but he couldn't pay them.

The five angels immediately offered to carry the rock to Jerusalem, but on condition that Rabbi Chanina put his finger to the rock and help them carry it.

Our sages explain that, although the angels didn't need Rabbi Chanina's help, the lesson is that G-d wants us to do as much as we can. Then G-d will take care of the rest..

A FOX WHO FAST

A fox once passed by a beautiful garden, filled with row after row of delicious fruits and vegetables. The food looked so tempting, the fox wanted to eat it all. But there was a problem. A tall fence surrounded the garden. The fox went around the entire fence many times determined to get in. Finally, he found a hole in the fence, but it was too small for him to fit through. The fox was not about to give up so easily. “Where there is a will there is a way!” he thought. So he decided to fast until he would be skinny enough to fit through the small opening.

For three straight days, the wily fox fasted. Finally, he was able to fit through the hole. Once inside the garden, he ate to his heart's content.

After enjoying the good life in the garden for some time, it was now time to leave and return to his family. But try as he might, he was now too fat and couldn't squeeze through the hole! He had no choice but to fast another three days until he could squeeze out again. When he finally made it outside the fence, he turned and looked back.

“Garden, garden, how sweet was your fruit!” he said with a shout.

“But what good is it to me; when the way I went in, is the way I came out!”

As we go through life, we too, like the fox, may be tempted to sacrifice real and lasting values for temporary and imaginary gains. Our sages in Pirkei Avot remind us to keep our priorities in proper perspective.

SERVICE TO G-D

Once, as Rabbi Sholem Dov Ber of Lubavitch was waiting to board the coach for a trip, he noticed the driver greasing the wheels after the wagon was already loaded. Rabbi Sholem Dov Ber said to the coachman, “Wouldn't it be easier if you greased the wheels before the wagon was loaded?”

“It is true, Rebbe, that it is more difficult to grease the wheels now,” replied the coachman. “However, if I grease it now it's more effective and lasts longer.”

Rabbi Sholem Dov Ber turned to the Chasidim and said, “This is a lesson in the service of God. Whatever comes easy doesn't last. However, when we serve God in situations which are difficult, the advantage is greater and last longer.”

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

2 Samuel 6:1 - 7:17

BESORAT YESHUA

Romans 12:16-21

PARASHA: In the text of the parasha the L-rd wants to impress Israel about the services in the sanctuary, they are holy; we must be careful on how to offer them to our G-d, **Aaron's sons, Nadab and Abihu, each took his censer, put fire in it, and laid incense on it; and they offered unholy fire before the LORD, such as he had not commanded them. And fire came out from the presence of the L-RD and consumed them, and they died before the L-RD. (Leviticus 10:1, 2).** The text tells us that they were under the influence of alcohol when they performed their holy service. because of this unholy act, the L-rd asked his people not to drink alcohol before performing their service in the temple.

HAFTARAH: In the text of the Haftara the people of Israel forgot the lesson given by G-d to Nadab and Abihu and David went to Baale-Judah to bring the Ark of the Covenant to his house in Jerusalem, The consequences of this move were dramatic, **'David and all the house of Israel were dancing before the LORD with all their might, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. When they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah reached out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen shook it. The anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah; and God struck him there because he reached out his hand to the ark; and he died there beside the ark of God. (2 Samuel 6:5-7).**

This text asks us a question about our own relationship to G-d, his temple and the manner we lead the holy service on Shabbat. Do we perform the service, do we worship our Lord remembering that we are all standing before the kind and the creator of the universe? Serving the L-rd in a proper way is a great blessing **The ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months; and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household. (2 Samuel 6:11)** Then David understood that he must perform the service of the L-rd following the Bible instructions and with respect, **So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet... (2 Samuel 6:15)**

PARASHA: According to the text of the parasha we must be humble before the L-rd and to remember every day that we have a service to perform, which necessitates discernment, **You are to distinguish between the holy and the common, and between the unclean and the clean; and you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the LORD has spoken to them through Moses. (Leviticus 10:10-11).**

BESORAH: Continuing to read Romans 12, verse 16 to 21 we discover several commands the L-rd give to his children in order to perform a service which will be acceptable to him.

1. **Live in harmony with one another;**
2. **Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly;**
3. **Do not claim to be wiser than you are.**
4. **Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all.**
5. **If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all.**
6. **Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave room for the wrath of God; for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."**
7. **"if your enemies are hungry, feed them;**
8. **if they are thirsty, give them something to drink; for by doing this you will heap burning coals on their heads."**
9. **Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good with the measure of faith God has given you" (Romans 12:16-21).**

Living these qualities and advice every day will be a powerful testimony for the L-rd, because everyone will see what the Almighty has done in our life.

