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Tazria-Metsora

April 17, 2010

3 Iyar 5770

News

FRENCH PASTORS AND MEMBERS TRAINED IN PARIS

It was with a great pleasure that I trained about ten French pastors from the North France Conference for the Jewish ministry from April 6 to 8 in Paris. I have met many motivated pastors for a Jewish ministry who are ready to help their members. then from April 9 to 11 I met motivated members and I trained them too. It is good to pray for this ministry in Paris which is a city with a large Jewish population (350,000).



YOUTH CAMP IN ISRAEL

The Israel Field youth department had a Pathfinder camp on Pesach, from March 31 to April 6. This camp was organized in the forest of Ben Shemen (close to the Judean hills) Between



Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. 23 Pathfinders and 12 leaders gathered together for this camp. (it was also a training camp for the leaders). The theme of this camp was "Around the World With Pathfinders" and the spiritual topic of this gathering was "Following the Footprints of the Apostles, Reading the Book of Acts". Day after day the pathfinders experienced the beauty of a Bible journey.



One young boy called Mark said "I went home with God in my heart", it was the best moment of our camp for all of us. He is willing to join every Shabbat the youth Bible study group in the Beer Sheva's kehila (congregation). Please pray for Mark and others young Israeli people. If you want to see more pictures go to <http://picasaweb.google.com/108728753684909130118/MaBIMK?authkey=Gv1sRgCI7d-MvHqdKX3QE#> <<http://picasaweb.google.com/108728753684909130118/MaBIMK?authkey=Gv1sRgCI7d-MvHqdKX3QE#>>

AMAZING FACTS ABOUT ISRAEL AND THE DAY OF INDEPENDANCE

I received an email from Aish yeshiva in Jerusalem which promotes a short video about Israel. This video has been prepared for the 62th anniversary of the State of Israel (1948-2010). Indeed next Tuesday (April 20) Yom Haatmaut (Independence Day) will be celebrated in Israel. It is a very special day with a lot of festivities and joy in the street of the country. To see this short video, just go to <http://www.aish.com/v/90073102.html>.

OVERVIEW

SPEAKING GOSSIP



TAZRIA

LEVITICUS 12:1 - 13:59

The Torah commands a woman to bring a korban after the birth of a child.

A son is to be circumcised on the eighth day of his life.

The Torah introduces the phenomenon of tzara'at (often mistranslated as leprosy)—a miraculous affliction that attacks people, clothing and buildings to awaken a person to spiritual failures. A kohen must be consulted to determine whether a particular mark is tzara'at or not.

The kohen isolates the sufferer for a week. If the malady remains unchanged, confinement continues for a second week, after which the kohen decides the person's status.

The Torah describes the different forms of tzara'at. One whose tzara'at is confirmed wears torn clothing, does not cut his hair, and must alert others that he is ritually impure. He may not have normal contact with people. The phenomenon of tzara'at on clothing is described in detail.

METSORA

LEVITICUS 14:1 - 15:33

The Torah describes the procedure for a metzora (a person afflicted with tzara'at) upon conclusion of his isolation. This process extends for a week and involves korbanot and immersions in the mikveh. Then, a kohen must pronounce the metzora pure. A metzora of limited financial means may substitute lesser offerings for the more expensive animals.

Before a kohen diagnoses that a house has tzara'at, household possessions are removed to prevent them from also being declared ritually impure. The tzara'at is removed by smashing and rebuilding that section of the house. If it reappears, the entire building must be razed. The Torah details those bodily secretions that render a person spiritually impure, thereby preventing his contact with holy items, and the Torah defines how one regains a state of ritual purity.

This week's Parsha deals with the issue of "tzara'at," a spiritual malady that comes from speaking gossip. In Judaism, gossip is defined as relating negative information about another, even if it is true. ("Slander" is when it's not true.) And not only does the Torah enjoin us not to speak gossip, but even further, we are required not to listen.

Rabbi Stephen Baars says that "In contrast with secular society, which often goes out of its way to glorify gossip, Judaism perceives it as extremely harmful. In fact, there is much Jewish literature on its divisive and insidious effects.

Television shows, and even the news, thrive on gossip. They even go so far as to employ "professional" gossip columnists! And when the real thing can't be found, the media creates it. Witness that ever-popular and long-running American staple, the soap opera—a never-ending series of bad situations in which the characters are constantly demeaned.

All this further dilutes the quality of life. We are constantly made to feel our mistakes will be looked at in a disparaging light. We develop a fear of failure, knowing that every fault will be examined, illuminated and publicized. And, on top of that, we will be discussed behind our backs, with no form of defense or recourse. Closed court and no jury!"

WHY THE 'LASHON HARA' SINNER SHOULD LIVE ALONE

As a result of speaking lashon hara, the leper was banished from klal Yisrael, living outside the settlement: The torah states: **All the days in which the blight is upon him, he is impure; he shall live alone. Outside the camp shall be his dwelling. (Leviticus 13:46)**

Why is the this sick so different [from other sinners] that the Torah says, He shall live alone, outside the camp shall be his dwelling? He caused dissent between man and wife and between friends. The Sages said that since the metzora caused the separation of friends and the separation of husbands and wives, he should also be separated from others. Therefore the Torah says, He shall live alone. (Arachin 16b)

Rabbi Packouz says “The isolation of the metzora gave him time for introspection. He could now recall the marriages and friendships his malicious gossip has dissolved. Removed from society, he would feel the mental anguish he caused others when his slander caused them to be ostracized.

From here we see that a person should learn from his own experiences the pain that others feel when they suffer. If anyone ever spoke lashon hara against you, you certainly did not like it. Remember those feelings and refrain from speaking against others.”

KOHEN'S POWER

Since Gossip and slander are spiritual diseases only a Kohen (Priest) can diagnose the metzora and his healing. When a member of G-d's people suspects that he has contracted this illness, he must go to a Kohen (priest) for an examination. Even the greatest Torah scholar cannot diagnose the condition without the pronouncement of a Kohen. Likewise, the whole procedure of his atonement and rehabilitation is conducted by the Kohen. Only the Kohen can correctly see a failing in another of which this skin illness is a symptom. Likewise, only the kohen can objectively detect when the sick has repented and has sufficiently recovered his private nature to be allowed to join again the rest of society. The root problem of the sick is his failure to be adequately private in focus. It takes a master of this middah to banish him and then to help him return to full religious life once more.

TO CORRECT SELFISHNESS

The Torah tells us that before the Kohen comes to inspect the suspected discoloration to determine whether there is in fact tzara'at, all the contents of the house are to be removed. **“The priest shall command that they empty the house, before the priest goes in to examine the plague, that all that is in the house not be made unclean: and afterward the priest shall go in to inspect the house.” (Leviticus 14:35).** That way they do not become unclean if the house is declared to have tzara'at.

The Midrash, however, adds another reason for removing all the vessels: It is a corrective for the selfishness which causes tzara'at in the first place.

Selfish people often pretend that they have less than they do, to avoid lending others their possessions or giving tzedakah. Having to remove all his possessions in public causes him acute embarrassment and helps to correct his selfishness.

When the person whose house was afflicted with tzara'at was made aware of God's concern for every Jew's material possessions, his selfish view (tzaras ayin) was challenged and the corrective process begun. The embarrassment of being exposed to the neighbors' scrutiny was another aspect of the same process. The removal of the vessels to the public domain hints to the fact that their purpose is not just to serve oneself.

CHOOSE WHAT YOU

One common excuse is that the person afflicted with tzara'at is telling the truth. The other person has done so much wrong that it is important to publicize what a bad person he is. He claims that he would never do this without having elevated intentions and that he is actually performing a Mitzvah.

Although his claim might sound good at first, he causes much hatred, quarrels and pain. Therefore, the person with tzara'at was sent to Aharon, the priest. One of the traits of Aharon was that he did everything he could to make peace between people. When someone was told that the other person was speaking positively about him, he automatically felt positive about the other person and this greatly improved their relationship. Don't justify your harming and wronging others by claiming that you want to publicize the truth. Do all that is in your power to help people feel love for one another..

ARE WE GOSSIPING?

It is good to think about ourself about gossip and slander, I read under the pen of Rabbi Baars these three questions, maybe a good reflection for each one of us:

1. What was the most harmful thing someone ever said about you?
2. Who do you know that is constantly gossiping (friend, coworker, etc.)? In what ways is this person getting you “down?”
3. What is the one thing you could undertake to reduce gossip in your life?

DER YID

Rabbi Meir Shapiro was a legend in pre Second World War Poland. He built the famous Chachmei Lublin Yeshiva, in Lublin, Poland. Young men, with exceptional minds, from all over Europe, were the students of his yeshiva. He initiated the daily study of Daf Yomi. Rabbi Meir Shapiro was also a member in the Polish parliament. In addition to his many achievements, Rabbi Shapiro was also known for his wonderful wit and humor.

With a population of three million Yiddish speaking Jews in Poland, there were many Jewish newspapers in the Yiddish language, printed there. There was a newspaper called the “Moment;” another one was called “Heint” (Today) and one of a religious nature which was called, “Der Yid” (the Jew).

One day, walking by a newsstand, Rabbi Shapiro asked for “Der Yid.” The proprietor said to Rabbi Shapiro, “Why do you want Der Yid? Why don’t you buy the more sophisticated papers, like the “Moment” or the “Heint?” In fact, you see that “Der Yid” is all the way on the bottom of the pile, beneath the “Heint” and the “Moment!”

“But I insist on buying “Der Yid!” said Rabbi Shapiro.

The proprietor bent down and pulled out Der Yid from the bottom of the pile and handed it to Rabbi Shapiro.

“I’m very curious,” he said to the Rabbi, “Why did you insist on buying “Der Yid?” After all, this newspaper has a small circulation and is of lesser quality than the other papers? In fact, you see that I keep “Der Yid” all the way at the bottom?”

Rabbi Shapiro smiled and replied, “Look at the names of the other papers: Heint” means “Today,” and “Moment,” means a “moment.” The “moment” will be gone in a moment and the day will be gone in a day. But “Der Yid,” at this moment and today he may be at the bottom... But in the end, “Der Yid” (the Jew) will rise to the top!”

A FOX WHO FAST

We should be hoping and anxiously anticipating returning home when the Mashiach (Messiah) comes. We derive this from Maimonides (Laws of Kings 11:1) “Anyone who does not believe that the Messiah will come or who does not await his coming denies Torah.” We must be aware that we are lacking something significant in our lives without Mashiach. There is no greater sadness than to lose the awareness of the bitterness of exile from Eden.

There’s a story told about a rabbi who was building a yeshiva in America, who appreciated this idea. The contractor offered to use Finnish wood that lasts 150 years, instead of regular wood which usually lasts 90 years before it begins to rot. The rabbi said, “Use the regular wood. We don’t want to make our stay on the earth too permanent.”

One of the questions that we will be asked after our 120 years in this world is whether we “yearned for the salvation” (Shabbat 31a). What does yearning means? It’s when a patient takes a biopsy exam and needs to wait 3 days for the results to see if the growth is benign or not. How he yearns! Those 3 days last forever! And on the 3rd day, every phone ring is met with anticipation—will this finally be the call he’s been waiting for?

Do we yearn for Mashiach? Often we ask ourselves why do we even need Mashiach? What are we missing? This is a symptom of our spiritual illness. We no longer recognize the need to relate to G-d in the holiest place and in the closest manner, which is what Mashiach will bring to the world.

EDITOR

A newsletter published by the
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HAFTARA

2 Kings 4:42-5:19; 7:3-20

PARASHA: In the text of parashot Tazri'a and Metzora we have the description of "tzara'at". Even though the Jewish tradition says that it is not leprosy all the symptom of this sickness look like leprosy

HAFTARA TAZRI'A: The old Jewish tradition has seen this parasha in connection with leprosy, that's why the corresponding text in the Haftara is about Naaman, a Syrian who got leprosy. **Naaman, commander of the army of the king of Aram, was a great man and in high favor with his master, because by him the L-RD had given victory to Aram. The man, though a mighty warrior, suffered from leprosy. (2Kings 5:1).** This man was highly appreciated, by men and by G-d. In his house was a young Jewish girl who served his wife. This young girl believed with all her heart in the G-d of Israel, she was sure that her master could be healed by G-d and his prophet. There is no discrimination of person for G-d, Jews and Gentiles are loved and receive blessings if they are faithful people. Naaman went to the king of Israel and then to the prophet Elisha. Elisha sent him to the Jordan river to be immersed seven times, then he was healed, **"his flesh was restored like the flesh of a young boy, and he was clean. He went back to the prophet and confessed that the G-d of Israel is the true G-d, "Now I know that there is no God in all the earth except in Israel... (2Kings 5:14; 15).** Naaman wanted to reward the prophet of G-d, but Elisha refused (2Kings 5:16).

HAFTARA MEZTZORA: Leprous men (2 Kings 7) are ready to accept their fate and to die, but before dying they want to help G-d's people in their war against the Syrians. **"Now there were four leprous men outside the city gate, who said to one another, "Why should we sit here until we die? If we say, 'Let us enter the city,' the famine is in the city, and we shall die there... (2Kings 7:3-4).** Usually, in Israel leprous are unclean people, people considered as cursed by the L-rd. But the story of this Haftara shows us a complete different perception of leprous, and these four men are going to be used by the L-rd to deliver Israel from her enemy and their army. **"For the L-rd had caused the Aramean army to hear the sound of chariots, and of horses, the sound of a great army, so that they said to one another, "The king of Israel has hired the kings of the Hittites and the kings of Egypt to fight against us." So they fled away in the twilight and abandoned their tents, their horses, and their donkeys leaving the camp just as it was, and fled for their lives (2Kings 7:6-7).** After eating and drinking in the tents of their enemies they decided to go to the Jewish camp and to say to the king of Israel what happened, **"So they went after them as far as the Jordan; the whole way was littered with garments and equipment that the Arameans had thrown away in their haste. So the messengers returned, and told the king" (2Kings 7:15).** Israel was saved. It is a great lesson for us, how many times we have some prejudices against some people, thinking that in their condition they can be blessed or even be a blessing for anyone. But the Lord like to surprise us and to take some special ways we have not thought before.

BESORAT YESHUA

Mark 1:29-45

PARASHA: The texts of the parasha and of the Haftara are about leprosy, Leprosy is a special sickness, which make people unclean and isolated from the rest of the world. This sickness was considered as contagious and the people who were touched by leprosy had to cry in the streets **"UNCLEAN, UNCLEAN" (Lev. 13:45)** in order not to be in contact with anyone and not to contaminate them. However, the Bible gives hope to leprosy people, they can be healed. **Leviticus 14 explains all the process to be cleansed from Leprosy.**

BESORAH: in the Besorah we have also many texts where Yeshua was in contact leprosy people, he always helped them to be cleaned.

Once, when he was in one of the cities, there was a man covered with leprosy. When he saw Yeshua, he bowed with his face to the ground and begged him, "L-rd, if you choose, you can make me clean." Then Yeshua stretched out his hand, touched him, and said, "I do choose. Be made clean." Immediately the leprosy left him (Luke 5:12-13). In the stories we have in the Besorah we see that Yeshua was very careful to follow the law given by G-d in the Sinai. In Leviticus 14 we have all the details of what a leprosy has to do, **The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: This shall be the ritual for the leprous person at the time of his cleansing: He shall be brought to the priest; the priest shall go out of the camp, and the priest shall make an examination. If the disease is healed in the leprous person, the priest shall command that two living clean birds and cedarwood and crimson yarn and hyssop be brought for the one who is to be cleansed. etc... (Leviticus 14:2-4).** In fact the process continues it is a very long one and complicate. Yeshua did not want to appear as one who does not follow the torah, all his life he followed the Torah, and he said to this leprosy man, **"show yourself to the priest, and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, as a testimony...." (Mark 1:44)**

