

Shabbat Chukat

June 19, 2010

7 Tamuz 5770

A Gallery of Photos Is Available At

<http://picasaweb.google.com/jewishadventist>

Join Our Forum of Discussion on Internet

<http://groups.google.com/group/jewish-adventists>

Visit our website

<http://www.jewishadventist.org>

Subscribe to our Facebook group

<http://www.facebook.com> (search for Jewish Adventst Friendship)

News

PRAY FOR ISRAEL

I have been this last week in Budapest, Hungary for a training seminar. The Hungarian Jewish community paid its tribute during World War II. 600,000 Jews were murdered during the Holocaust. And when we see what happens today all over the world, it seems that the world has not learned anything from the past and as usual Israel is the scapegoat of the world. A flotilla has been organized by some very suspicious organization, IHH and Free Gaza, (http://www.terrorism-info.org.il/malam_multimedia/English/eng_n/html/hamas_e105.htm) they attacked savagely the Israeli solders and again the world condemned Israel, who is the only country in the world who has no right to defend itself. According to the last news, Iran is going to send two ships to Gaza, more than 100,000 Iranians have signed up to board the ships, but only those with "expertise" would be accepted. If it happen, it will be a clash in high sea, but guess who will be condemn again, it will be Israel. I am sure that our readers are praying for Israel, May G-d protect the children of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

TRAINING IN BUDAPEST

It was a very interesting experience to be in Budapest last week. The new leadership of the Union is very supportive of the Jewish Adventist Friendship ministry, they have just appointed a new coordinator for this work, Dr Imre Tokics, Professor of Hebrew and Old Testament in the Adventist Hungarian University.



Dr Tokics has very strong relationships with the Jewish University of Budapest. On Friday morning 11th of June

we had an appointment with the Rector of the university, a meeting which helps me to understand better the specificity of the Jewish community in Hungary.

On Shabbat I had the privilege to preach in the Central Church of Budapest. Many non adventists attended the worship among them about 10 Messianic Jews who wanted to know more about the Seventh-day Adventists. It was a very interesting meeting, just after the worship we had a meal together, they ask many questions and were very satisfied of our meeting. They said that they are a group of 25 Jews who believe in Yeshua, they meet together on Shabbat once a month and would certainly be ready to take some bible study with Dr Tokics.

Sunday was dedicated for Members' training, a good group of members attending this training.

GC SESSION ATLANTA

The General Conference Session, the most important meeting of the Seventh-day Adventists, will be held next week, from June 23 to July 3, in the Georgia World Congress Center and Georgia Dome in Atlanta. The spiritual theme of this session is "Proclaiming G-d's Grace"

During this Congress reports will be heard from the Administrators (President, Secretary, Treasurer) and from the General Conference departments and services. The world leaders of the Seventh-day Adventists will be elected for a new quinquennium (2010-2015).

The World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center will be present at the exhibition hall. Our booth will be in the space of Adventist Mission (815-900), we hope that many of our subscribers and readers will come to see us.

Each visitor who will refer to this announcement will receive a gift at the WJFC booth.



OVERVIEW

CHUKAT

NUMBERS 19:1 - 22:1

The laws of the para aduma the red heifer are detailed. These laws are for the ritual purification of one who comes into contact with death. After nearly 40 years in the desert, Miriam dies and is buried at Kadesh.

The people complain about the loss of their water supply that until now has been provided miraculously. Aharon and Moshe pray for the people's welfare. G-d commands them to gather the nation at Merivah and speak to a designated rock so that water will flow forth. Distressed by the people's lack of faith, Moshe hits the rock instead of speaking to it.

He thus fails to produce the intended public demonstration of G-d's mastery over the world, which would have resulted had the rock produced water merely at Moshe's word. Therefore, G-d tells Moshe and Aharon that they will not bring the people into the Land.

Bnei Yisrael resume their travels, but because the King of Edom, a descendant of Esav, denies them passage through his country, they do not travel the most direct route to Eretz Yisrael. When they reach Mount Hor, Aharon dies and his son Elazar is invested with his priestly garments and responsibilities.

Aharon was beloved by all, and the entire nation mourns him 30 days.

Sichon the Amorite attacks Bnei Yisrael when they ask to pass through his land. As a result, Bnei Yisrael conquer the lands that Sichon had previously seized from the Amonites on the east bank of the Jordan River.

LEVEL OF LOVE

Regarding the Cohen (the priest) who administers the purification process with the ashes of the Red Heifer, the Torah writes: **"And the priest is impure until the evening."** (Numbers 19:7) Rabbi Yitzchok of Vorki taught that the essence of the Parah Aduma, Red Cow (that is, the whole procedure of purifying those who were spiritually impure) is the concept of "Love

your neighbor." His grandson, Rabbi Mendel of Vorki explained that this is because the Cohen (who was involved in the purification process) becomes impure himself through the process which purifies the person who came to him. When someone forfeits in order to help someone else, that is the ultimate in love for one's fellow human being.

What is interesting about this mitzvah is that when performing the sprinkling process, the person who was unclean becomes clean, while the Kohen, who performed the purification process, becomes impure!

According to our sages, this is one reason why the mitzvah of "Para Adumah" is called "Chukah"—a mitzvah with no rational explanation to it.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that although we can't comprehend the logic of this mitzvah, as the Torah didn't give us the reason for it, we can learn a very important lesson from it.

It teaches us, says the Rebbe, that we have to be ready to make personal sacrifices to help another believer come closer to G-d and that we cannot pass the responsibility unto others.

We learn this from the fact that the Torah commands the Kohen (priest) to personally help this individual even at the cost of temporarily becoming impure himself and being unable to enter the Holy Temple.

From this we learn that when we see a person who is spiritually lacking and we have the ability to help, we should not pass the job to someone else, it is up to us, even at the cost of self sacrifice, to help them in their spiritual quest.

Rabbi Kalman Packouz says that a person who is not willing to make any sacrifices for other people will always find reasons why it is too difficult for him to do acts of kindness for others. To help others takes time, energy and money. However, when someone truly loves another person, he feels pleasure in all the sacrifices that he makes for him. The greater your love for someone, the more sacrifices you are willing to make. Therefore, the test of your level of love for your fellow human being is the amount of sacrifices you are willing to make. A person who is not willing to make any sacrifices shows that he lacks love for others.

LEAVING SINAI

As Parashat Chukat begins, the people of Israel have moved away from Mount Sinai and begun their trek to the Promised Land. The

path would not be a simple one, for while the desert was relatively uninhabited, and they were therefore generally able to make progress unmolested, they had now left the desert. “The children of Israel, the whole assembly, arrived in the wilderness of Zin in the first month and the people settled in Kadesh.” (Numbers 20:1-2)

Rashi comments that the emphatic phrase, “the whole assembly,” is inserted into the text to let us know that by the time of this encampment all those that had been sentenced to die in the desert had duly passed away, and all those who encamped in the wilderness of Zin belonged to the succeeding generation and would all live to witness the entry into Israel.

Rabbi Noson Weisz precise that as part of the transition of the generations, the deaths of the great leaders of the Exodus generation, Miriam and Aaron—as well as the irreversible verdict that condemns Moses to die on the wrong side of the Jordan and is the harbinger of his imminent demise - all appear in our Parasha. The theme of death positively dominates the first part of Chukat.

MEETING EDMOM

And Moshe sent messengers from Kadesh to the king of Edom: “Thus says your brother Israel: You know all the travail that has befallen us; how our fathers went down into Egypt, and we dwelt in Egypt a long time; and the Egyptians dealt ill with us, and with our fathers. And we cried out to God, and He heard our voice and sent an angel, and brought us out of Egypt; and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city at the outer limits of your territory.” (Numbers 20:14-16). Edom is another name for Esav, who was the brother of Yaakov. Esav was not interested by the responsibilities of the firstborn, and sold his birthright for a pot of lentils. Being firstborn meant living up to the covenant that God had made with Abraham, a covenant that promised the Land of Israel at the cost of hundreds of years of slavery. Moshe seems to be politely communicating to our “brother”: the Children of Israel made a “down payment” on the Land of Israel with the slavery we endured in Egypt, and we are now ready to come home and take what is ours. Moshe then makes a request; he asks, as a long-lost brother, if Israel can pass through the land of Edom. His request is denied: “Please let us pass through your land; we will not pass through field or through vineyard, nor will we drink

of the water of the wells; we will go along the king’s highway, we will not turn aside to the right nor to the left, until we have crossed your border.’ And Edom said to him: ‘You shall not pass through me, lest I come out with the sword against you.’ And the Children of Israel said to him: ‘We will go up by the highway; and if we drink your water, I and my cattle, I will pay full price for it; let me only pass through on my feet; there is no harm in it.’ And he said: ‘You shall not pass through.’ And Edom came out against him with a heavy force of people, and with a strong hand. Thus Edom refused to give Israel passage through his border; and Israel turned away from him.” (Numbers 20: 17-21). It will be the same with the Ammonites. In fact Ammon and Moav, who are called “brothers” by Moses did not exactly behave like relatives should, when a relative comes to visit, you welcome him in and you provide food and drink, just like their great-uncle Avraham. “An Ammonite or a Moavite shall not enter into the Congregation of God; even to the tenth generation none of them shall enter into the Congregation of God forever; because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way, when you came out of Egypt; and because they hired against you Bil’am the son of Beor from Petor of Aram-Naharaim, to curse you.” (Deuteronomy 23:4- 5).

Instead of providing food they tried to curse Israel. The punishment for this behavior is they are no longer considered “brothers” and can not marry into the Jewish People. When they behaved as they did, in a manner that went against everything their great-uncle Avraham stood for, they severed their connection with the land which belonged to Avraham, and from the people who were Avraham’s legitimate heirs. However, Edom is still considered our brother: “You shall not abhor an Edomite, for he is your brother; you shall not abhor an Egyptian, because you were a stranger in his land.” (Deuteronomy 23:8).

The calm faith of their leader inspired the people with confidence in God. They trusted all to His omnipotent arm, and He did not fail them. Not mighty giants nor walled cities, armed hosts nor rocky fortresses, could stand before the Captain of the Lord’s host. The Lord led the army; the Lord discomfited the enemy; the Lord conquered in behalf of Israel. The giant king and his army were destroyed, and the Israelites soon took possession of the whole country. Thus was blotted from the earth that strange people who had given themselves up to iniquity and abominable idolatry. (PP 436).

I AM TOO OLD TO CHANGE

Rabbi Olesker gave a seminar in Boston. During a break, one of his students, a Jewish man in his early fifties asked to speak with him about a very important matter. They agreed to meet for dinner. And where do two Jews go when they want to have dinner? They went to a Chinese restaurant.

About half way through dinner the man began to broach the issue. He and his wife got married relatively late in life and thank God, were blessed with children. However, now the children were about to enter school. “Rabbi, I want my children to identify strongly as believers and to marry believers. I know the tremendous risk of assimilation by putting my children into a public school—in addition to the problems of the drugs and violence. However, how can I send them to a yeshiva or a Jewish Day School, and have them come home to a non-religious home? Should my wife and I become religious for the sake of our children?”

Rabbi Olesker laughed and the man asked him, “Why are you laughing at my question?” Rabbi Olesker responded, “Because you already know the answer to the question. You are uneasy with the answer; you want me to tell you what you already know. Then you’ll disagree with me and feel justified in not following what you know is the right answer.” “How can you possibly know that?” asked the man. “Simple,” responded Rabbi Olesker, “Why else would you ask this question to an Orthodox rabbi?”

The man laughed and said, “Maybe you’re right, but I would still like to hear your thoughts.”

“OK,” replied Rabbi Olesker, “a parent only owes his child three things—example, example and example. If having your children being part of the Jewish future is important to you, then there is no better way than to send them to a Day School and to have a consistently religious home.”

The man responded, “But it is so hard. I could never change.” Rabbi Olesker, who came from a non-observant home, responded, “Look, no one

has made more changes than me. If I can do it, you can do it, too!”

The man retorted, “It’s easy for you. You are a very adaptable person, but I am too old to change.” The conversation continued for a couple of minutes to no avail and then the topic changed for the duration of the meal.

After dessert, the waiter brought two fortune cookies. Rabbi Olesker opened his and began to laugh. “Why are you laughing?” asked his companion. “Look what my fortune cookie says,” and handed it to the man to read - ‘You are a very adaptable person.’ The man joined in the laughter and then queried, “I wonder what my fortune is,” as he opened his own cookie. When he read the fortune, he immediately turned white and began to tremble.

“What’s wrong?” asked Rabbi Olesker. “It’s the fortune from the cookie.” Rabbi Olesker took the slip of paper and read - **“You are never too old to change.”**

Today the man attends a congregation regularly, and he and his family are growing in their obedience to G-d. And his children are attending religious schools.

The Almighty speaks to every person each and every day. We have to pay attention to get the message and then to understand the lesson in a manner that helps us grow, improve our character traits and faithfulness and come close to the Almighty. Not always is the answer as direct or as clear as the message this man received. Not always can we understand the whole message. However, if one is searching for buried treasure and only finds a diamond, he is still richer in life. All the more so with our efforts on a spiritual level! .”

EDITOR

A newsletter published by the
World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center
Under the umbrella of the
General Conference —Global Mission Office

Richard-Amram Elofer
4, Abraham Lincoln
94186 Jerusalem
Israel

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



HAFTARA

Judges 11:1-33

PARASHA: In the text of the parasha we have the story of Israel crossing the Negev and coming to the land of Edom. They ask permission to pass. **“Now let us pass through your land”** (Num. 20:17). But Edom refused. **“You shall not pass through, or we will come out with the sword against you”** (Num. 20:18). Israel did not insist and turned back and went around the land of Edom (Num. 21:4).

The same thing happened with the Amorites (Num. 21:21-26). However this time Israel did not accept the refusal of the Amorites and took their land and cities.

HAFTARA: The story in our Haftara occurred about three hundred years later, during the time of Jephthah the Gileadite, the son of a prostitute (Judg. 11:1). The Ammonites came to provoke Israel for what happened during the time of Moses. **“After a time the Ammonites made war against Israel”** (Judg. 11:4). The people of Israel called Jephthah to help them in this situation. Even though Jephthah was not happy, he sent a delegation to the Ammonites. **“What is there between you and me, that you have come to me to fight in my land?”** (Judg. 11:12). The king of the Ammonites recalled to Jephthah what had happened a few centuries before (Judg. 11:26) and pretended that he wanted to get back his original territory, **“Because Israel, on coming from Egypt, took away my land from the Arnon to the Jabbok and to the Jordan; now therefore restore it peaceably”** (Judg. 11:13). However, Jephthah did not want to accept this demand from the Ammonites. It was impossible, because the land had been given to the people of Israel by the L-rd himself. **“So now the L-RD, the God of Israel, has conquered the Amorites for the benefit of his people Israel. Do you intend to take their place?”** (Judg. 11:23). In fact Jephthah asked the Amorites if they wanted to oppose the will of G-d. They had not opposed G-d’s decision for three hundred years; it was better to continue that way if they did not want to be in trouble with G-d. The king of the Ammonites refused. **“But the king of the Ammonites did not heed the message that Jephthah sent him”** (Judg. 11:23). Of course the conclusion is the victory of Israel. It is crucial for us to know whether or not we oppose G-d’s will. Victory is in the hand of G-d, but only if we obey him.

BESORAT YESHUA

Mark 5:21-34

PARASHA: The text of the parasha is about clean and unclean people and how they can become pure through the ritual of the Red Heifer. The rules were very strong: Everyone who touched the Red heifer or burnt it was considered unclean (Numb. 19:6-8). Everyone who touched a corpse or the body of the dead was considered unclean (Numb. 19:11-13). Then we have the law of purification; how to be clean when an unclean man, animal, dead or even an unclean vessel had been touched. Even the one who cleans the unclean becomes unclean too. **“It shall be a perpetual statute for them. The one who sprinkles the water for cleansing shall wash his clothes, and whoever touches the water for cleansing shall be unclean until evening.”** (Numb. 19:21).

BESORAH: The Besorah too is about clean and unclean people. Yeshua is called to heal a young girl who is dying. **“The leader of the synagogue named Jairus came and, when he saw him, fell at his feet and begged him repeatedly, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Come and lay your hands on her, so that she may be made well, and live”** (Mark 5:22-23). It was forbidden to touch a corpse. Most of the people did not want to touch any **“almost dead”** body because they were afraid to become unclean. But Yeshua is the one who cleans, purifies, and forgives everyone, that’s why he answered positively and went to see Jairus’ daughter. On his way to heal Jairus’ daughter, he met a woman who was unclean because of her hemorrhaging. She had been in this bad situation for twelve years. This lady took a great risk yet she had faith in Yeshua and decided to touch him. She took the risk of making Yeshua unclean for seven days, but her healing was more important to her and she took Yeshua’s tsitsit (tassels) in her hand. Yeshua felt it and said: **“Who touched my tsitsit?”** (Mark 5:30). The lady was trembling. She was afraid of the reaction of Yeshua or his talmidim, but Yeshua congratulated her faith. **“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace, and be healed of your disease”** (Mark 5:34).

