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News

JOY IN JERUSALEM

Our congregation in Jerusalem will celebrate a very special service on Shabbat 17th of July. It will be the Bar Mitzva of Nitsan David, one of the son of one of our pastor, Shalom David.

I am sure that those who read regularly our newsletter remember that Shalom is a "sabara" Jew born in Israel who went to Newbold college to study theology and who is now pastor in Israel. His son Nitsan is 13 and will celebrate his Bar Mitzva in the presence of all his Jewish family. Ultimately, we would like to open a Hebrew speaking congregation in Jerusalem, that's why we started to instal an *Aron Hakodesh* in the temple with a *Sepher Torah* that will be used for the first time on Shabbat.



SADDEST DAY OF THE JEWISH HISTORY - TISH'A BE'AV (9 Av)

July 19th, Monday evening through Tuesday night, is Tisha B'Av, the 9th day of the Jewish month of Av. It is the saddest day in the Jewish year.

Tisha B'Av is observed to mourn the loss of the Temples in Jerusalem. What was the great loss from the destruction of the Temples? For Israel It is the loss of feeling God's presence. The Temple was a place of prayer, spirituality, holiness, and open miracles. It was the focal point for the Biblical worship, the focal point

of the sacrificial liturgy that pointed out on the Mashiach.

Here are the events that occurred on Tish'a Be'av.

1) The incident of the spies slandering the land of Israel with the subsequent decree to wander the desert for 40 years.

2) The destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem by Nebuchadnetzar, King of Babylon in 586 BCE.

3) The destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem by the Romans in 70 CE.

4) The fall of Betar and the end of the Bar Kochba revolt against the Romans 65 years later, 135 CE.

5) Pope Urban II declared the First Crusade. Tens of thousands of Jews were killed, and many Jewish communities obliterated.

6) The Jews of England were expelled in 1290.

7) The Jews of Spain were expelled in 1492.

8) World War One broke out on Tisha B'Av in 1914 when Russia declared war on Germany. German resentment of the Treaty of Versailles set the stage for World War II and the Holocaust.

9) On Tisha B'Av, deportation began of Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto.

Although now Tisha Be'Av is the saddest day of the year, yet, when Mashiach will come back it will be transformed into a holiday. For at that time we will be at a much higher spiritual level and thus we will see that even the events which are perceived today as negative will then be understood how they were in essence to our benefit, understanding that if G-d permitted the destruction of the Second Temple it was because sacrifices were not necessary any more. With the coming of the Messiah the type (symbols) met the anti-type (reality in the Messiah).



OVERVIEW

DEVARIM

DEUTERONOMY 1:1-3:22

This Parasha begins the last of the Five Books of The Torah, *Sefer Devarim* (hence the Greek/English title Deuteronomy). *Sefer Devarim* relates what Moshe told to the people of Israel during the last five weeks of his life, as they prepared to cross the Jordan into Eretz Israel. Moshe reviews the *mitzvot*, stressing the change of lifestyle they are about to undergo: from the supernatural existence of the desert under Moshe's guidance to the apparently natural life they will experience under Yehoshua's leadership in the Land.

The central theme this week is the sin of the spies, the *meraglim*. The parasha opens with Moshe alluding to the sins of the previous generation who died in the desert. He describes what would have happened if they hadn't sinned by sending spies into Eretz Israel. *Hashem* would have given them without a fight all the land from the Mediterranean to the Euphrates, including the lands of Ammon, Moav and Edom. He details the subtle sins that culminate in the sin of the spies, and reviews at length this incident and its results. The entire generation would die in the desert; Moshe would not enter Eretz Israel. He reminds them that their immediate reaction to *Hashem's* decree was to want to "go up and fight" to redress the sin. He recounts how they wouldn't listen when he told them not to go, that they no longer merited vanquishing their enemies miraculously. They ignored him and suffered a massive defeat. They were not allowed to fight with the kingdoms of Esav, Moav or Ammon - these lands were not to be part of the map of Eretz Israel in the meantime. When the conquest of Canaan will begin with Sichon and Og, it will be via natural warfare.

FROM TISH'A BEAV TO SIMCHA TORAH

This Shabbat we begin the fifth Book of the Torah—the Book of Deuteronomy (Devarim). Devarim is the last book of the Torah. To a large extent, the book of *Devarim* is a retrospective of events and laws

taught in previous sections of the Torah. For this reason, the book is often called *Mishneh Torah* or Deuteronomy, which both mean "repetition of the law". According to Deuteronomy 1:1-5 the time is the fortieth year after the Exodus, the place is Transjordan (East Bank of Jordan River), and the context is the aftermath of the battles with Sichon and Og—battles that were won and described in the Book of Numbers 21:33-35.

We begin the Book of *Devarim* on the Shabbat which is before the fast of Tisha B'Av (the 9th of Av), the saddest period in the Hebrew calendar. We conclude the Book of *Devarim* on *Simchat Torah*, one of the most happiest holidays of the year.

MOSHE REVIEWS DESERT'S EVENTS

In Devarim, Moshe recalls many of the events that happened to the Jewish people during their forty years in the desert.

The Book of Devarim, unlike the previous books of the Torah, was told to the generation who were about to enter the Holy Land. All the men who were twenty or over when they left Egypt died in the desert during the ensuing forty years. Since the men who remained were too young to remember many of the events, Moshe reviews the positive events as well as the sins that their fathers committed and the punishments that they received, so that this generation will avoid making the same mistakes. In the Mishne Torah Moshe wants to impress upon the generation which will be entering the Promised Land the importance of observing the commandments. For only then will they merit to inherit and dwell in the land of Israel

According to the Jewish tradition, Moshe said the entire Book of Devarim during the last 37 days of his life. It is Moshe's farewell message and instructions to the Jewish people. Although Moshe desperately wanted to enter into the Promised Land and prayed many times to be allowed to enter, G-d refused his request.

Why Moses wanted to repeat the history of the wilderness to this new generation of people? Rabbi Noson Weisz says that "Moses was not interested in merely retelling the story of the sin of the spies; he was interested in pointing out its underlying causes. If we accept the Torah view that Jewish sin is the underlying cause of all historic upheaval, then it

makes sense to attempt to unravel the underlying causes of sin itself. Learning the causes of sin is the way to avoid repeating the mistakes of history. If you know the cause of sin you can learn to avoid sins in the future and avoid the upheavals they cause.

This is the lesson that Moses wanted to teach the next generation. This is what needs to be corrected so we do not fall once again into the pit.

“TO ALL ISRAEL” IS A CALL FOR UNITY

Although this Parasha is about events that took place thousands of years ago, they are relevant today and especially during these days when we remember the events which occurred on Tish’a Be’Av.

In the Parasha Moshe recalls the story of the spies. After scouting the land for 40 days, the spies returned with a negative report about Canaan.

The people were so affected, that they refused to enter the land. G-d punished them by decreeing that the generation pass away in the desert.

According to the Jewish tradition, the spies returned on Tisha B’Av and the Jewish people’s refusal to enter the Holy Land took place on Tisha B’Av.

Also, the very first words of the Parsha, “These are the words which Moshe spoke to all of Israel,” ties these events together. The Spies and the people of Israel were divided, that is why the conquest of the land was postpone, to avoid the same sin, we must exhibit great love and unity, especially during this time of the year. This message is alluded in the very first words of the Parasha. The words “to all of Israel” hints to this point. It emphasizes that we must all stand united and together.

BE SENSITIVE TO OTHERS FEELINGS

The Torah states: “And I commanded your judges at that time saying, ‘Listen among your brothers.’”

Rabbi Zalman Sorotzkin writes that some judges may see themselves as elevated people and the litigants who come to them as wicked. Therefore, the Torah states, “Listen among your brothers.” That is, consider anyone who comes to you as a brother and treat him accordingly.

This concept applies to anyone in a position of authority. It is very easy to treat people as objects. However, our attitude towards others should be, “How would I feel, act and talk if this person were my brother?” This is especially important for anyone who is in a position where people in financial need or emotional pain come to him or her for assistance. The person you are talking with is suffering and often might feel embarrassed that he needs to come to someone for help. Be extremely sensitive to his feelings. If you are able to make him feel that you feel towards him as a close relative, it is a great kindness.

INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH G.D

The people of Israel have been very difficult during the 40 years in the desert. Moses started in the book of Devarim to recall them their sins (the golden calf, the story of the spies etc..) This repetition was necessary to help them to learn some lessons from the past. A maxim states; “a wise man should always learn from history. Only a fool repeats mistakes that have already been committed and suffers needlessly thereby”. The people of Israel had to understand that the situations which occurred during the last forty years demanded true repentance. God’s chief concern was not the act of disobedience itself; the cause of His powerful reaction was the underlying reason behind the sin.

He did not want the Jewish people in Canaan unless they fully understood that the goal of their entry was to maintain the strong and high level of intimacy with God in the context of ordinary life that they enjoyed in the desert. As soon as God declared, “I am not among you,” they should have abandoned every other project and focused on restoring a good and authentic relationship with God.

The laws of the Torah were given to us as to help us in our everyday lives to build this relationship with God. To give up the commandments is to give us our relationship with God, just because giving up the commandments will take us far from the will of God. Our lives must be focused on the establishment of an intimate relationship between man and God, to teaching how we can live a normal life in this world and still be obviously God’s holy people.

MOSES, A MAN OF WORDS

Rabbi Tanchuma said, This is compared to a peddler who was going around selling material. Wherever he went he would call out, 'I have special wool to sell.'"

Once he passed by the palace. The king called him over and asked him, "What are you selling?" The peddler replied, "I have nothing to sell."

"But I just heard you announce that you have special wool to sell," asked the king.

Said the peddler to the king: "It is true that I announced I have good wool to sell. But this is for the ordinary person. For you, my king, who is so mighty and who has the most expensive materials that can be found, for you I have nothing to sell and nothing that you would buy!"

The same says Rabbi Tanchuma was with Moshe. In the presence of G-d, who created a person's mouth, Moshe claimed that he was not a man of words. But now in front of the people of Israel, he was indeed a man of words. Thus, the Torah says, **"These are the words which Moshe spoke to all of Israel."**

TRAIN D IN NEW YORK

A young rabbi from Israel was traveling the D train from Brooklyn to Manhattan on his way to a meeting. As the subway rattles towards its destination, he sits quietly reading the History of Submarine Warfare in the South Pacific In World War II. Enters the train two post-six foot battle-scarred young men in gang jackets—with an oversized boom box playing at full volume.

Near the rabbi stands a little old lady tipping the scales at 80 pounds and reaching her full hunched-over height of nearly five feet. The little old lady does not like the booming "grunt" music and starts yelling, "Who's going to make them turn it off?" Everyone takes a deeper interest in what they are reading—including the rabbi.

One of the young toughs smiles wryly and says to the woman, "Lady, if you want to turn it off, you can turn it off." She shuffles across the subway car with her hand held in front of her, index finger poised to flick the power switch. And she turns it off! Young Tough puts down the boom box and hauls back to

deck her. Up jumps the rabbi and with a parrying move with his forearm, blocks Young Tough's punch.

Young Tough is puzzled and looks down at the rabbi and says, "What do you want, boy?" The rabbi replies with a big smile, "Just don't hit the lady," and returns to his seat to continue his book. The lady shuffles back across the car. And Young Tough flips the power switch on to bathe the car in full-force, deep-based, woofer and tweeter enhanced, penetrating sound waves.

The little old lady yells, "Who's gonna make him turn it off?" Everyone re-reads their previous sentence with increased concentration. Young Tough smiles and invites her over. Once again, the little old lady shuffles over, index finger extended and flicks the power switch off. Young Tough hauls back to hit, Rabbi jumps up to block, Young Tough looks confused and says, "Now you're getting on my nerves," Rabbi smiles and says, "Sorry. Just don't hit the lady" and returns to his seat. Little Old Lady shuffles towards the rabbi's seat and stands with her back to him. And ... both young toughs thankfully get off at the next station!

As the rabbi is settling back into his book, he glances up at the back of the little old lady standing right next to him and thinks, "Gee, I just risked my life not once, but twice to protect her and she doesn't even thank me." And after two minutes of self-righteous indulgence, the rabbi stops in his mental tracks with an incredible realization - "The Almighty just performed not one miracle, but two to save my life and did I stop to thank Him?"

There are probably many lessons to learn from this story - don't ride the subways in New York, beware of little old ladies who can get you killed, learn to love loud music, the power of an incongruous smile.... However, I think the most powerful lesson is to remember: When you point a finger at someone, three fingers point back at you ... and be sure to thank the Almighty!

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Isaiah 1:1 - 1:27

HAFTARA: The Haftarah reading is taken from Isaiah 1, a chapter that prophetically warns of the impending destruction of the first Temple. An examination of the details reveals that the Jewish people had not yet internalized the lessons of history that Moses had attempted to teach them. A reading of the Haftarah shows that the Jews of the period were diligently observing their duties toward God. They were offering the Temple sacrifices as proscribed, they were faithfully observing the tri-annual pilgrimage to the Temple, and they were being diligent in their prayers. Something else was missing, and it was this missing factor that caused the destruction, **“I reared children and brought them up, but they have rebelled against me. The ox knows its owner, and the donkey its master’s crib; but Israel does not know, my people do not understand” (Isaiah 1:3).** The L-rd is so upset with Israel that he call her Gomorrah **“Listen to the teaching of our God, you people of Gomorrah!” (10).** In the verse 11 The Almighty said to Israel that he did not like their sacrifices. G-d is not against sacrifices but Israel’s ceremonies have lost their significance and became just rituals. That’s why the Lord does not like not only sacrifice but also Sabbath and feasts **“bringing offerings is futile; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and sabbath and calling of convocation—I cannot endure solemn assemblies with iniquity. Your new moons and your appointed festivals my soul hates;” (13-14).** The L-rd never lose hope, his people is still his people, **“Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean...” (16).** It is a call to repentance **“Come now” (18).** The Lord is a God full of forgiveness and love for his people **“though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be like snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall become like wool. If you are willing and obedient...” (19-20).** G-d is willing to forgive Whatever Israel did in the past. However, if the people don’t want to repent and to ask forgiveness, the L-rd will not be able to bless them and they will fall under the rules of other power as Babylon and Rome. The text ends with a positive statement, **“I will restore your judges as at the first, and your counselors as at the beginning. Afterward you shall be called the city of righteousness, the faithful city. Zion shall be redeemed by justice, and those in her who repent, by righteousness” (26-27).**

BESORAT YESHUA

Mark 6:28-40

The text of the parasha *Devarim* is a synopsis of what took place with the Jewish people during their 40 years in the desert. In this book Moshe has compassion on Israel and repeat God’s law for the second time.

BESORAH: The disciples were tired, they worked very hard with Yeshua but they also were full of enthusiasm **“The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught” (Mark 6:30).** Yeshua saw that they were tired and decided to send them in a quiet place to take some rest **“Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while” (31).** However the crowds followed them and Yeshua had compassion for these people. They were under the rule of a very rude king—who just killed John the Baptist—and without spiritual shepherd **“he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd (34).** Yeshua taught the crowds, many hours, the sun was already down, the disciples were afraid that these people would not find any food, and they said to Yeshua **“This is a deserted place, and the hour is now very late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding country and villages and buy something for themselves to eat” (35-36).** Yeshua gives them a very strange order **“You give them something to eat” (37a).** How could it be possible for the disciples to give food to five thousand people? **“Are we to go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give it to them to eat?” (37b)** The disciples are ready to take all the responsibility, even though they don’t know how to do it. However Yeshua will show them that it is impossible to do this task without help from above. Yeshua ask a simple question **“How many loaves have you? Go and see.” When they had found out, they said, “Five, and two fish” (38).** They had only five leaves and two fish, that is nothing to feed five thousand people. But Yeshua did the miracle and they were able to feed all this people. this miracle was possible because the disciples were obedient. Are we obedient in order to let Yeshua to perform miracles in our life?

