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News

CHAG KIPPUR SAMEACH



& CHATIMA TOVA SUCCESSFUL ROSH HASHANA IN CALIFORNIA AND FLORIDA

1. Paul Lippi says that their meeting in Thousand Oaks was successful. Here is his message: For those who were unable to attend, our Rosh Hashana supper was a success. We were fifty hungry souls around the table. There was a sense of occasion and anticipation of new things G-d will do with us during the coming year. We're eager to enter whatever door he should open for us.

Yom Kippur September 18, 2010 10 Tishri 5771

2. Jeff had also a successful celebration of Rosh Hashana in his congregations of New Port Richey and St Petersburg. Here is a small part of his email; I will publish his new fully next year with pictures. Let's remember that most of the pictures I received are on our picasa website. Jeff said, "We had about 140 different people attend the four services for Rosh Hashanah and the Sabbath of Repentance (the Sabbath between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). Two services were held in New Port Richey and two were held in St. Petersburg. About 120 of those people are not-yet-members.

YOM KIPPUR THE JEWISH HOLIEST DAY

Jewish-Adventist congregations are very busy during this period of feasts. After Rosh hashana, Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) will be on September 18 and Succoth (The Tabernacle Feast) will be from September 23 to 30. Paul Lippi sent us a text of invitation for the meeting organized in Thousand Oaks, California:

We'd like you to join us Shabbat September 18, 2010 at 5:00 pm for נעילה. This is the final prayer on yom kippur, when according to tradition, the gates of heaven are closed and locked shut (ne'ila means locking). In Israel's worship this is the final opportunity to repent and change the verdict which the heavenly court handed down on Rosh Hashana. We're meeting at the Thousand Oaks Seventh-day Adventist Congregation, 480 W Gainsborough Rd. Thousand Oaks CA 91360. After sundown we'll end the fast together with a potluck. Please bring light items such as soup, salad, or juice. Nothing greasy, please.

That same Shabbat morning Pastor Paul will be speaking at the Thousand Oaks SDA Church for the regular 10:00 (summer schedule) worship service. The message will also have a Yom Kippur theme. His title is "Wasted Forgiveness— the Strange Case of Shimi ben Gera."



YOM KIPPUR

PARASHA READINGS ARE INTERRUPTED DURING THE FEASTS DAY OF ATONEMENT

Yom Kippur is the day of atonement. “Atonement” is a conjunctive of “At One-ment”—of reconnecting, strengthening the relationship with the Almighty, the reconciliation of the Almighty with each of us. Yom Kippur is our opportunity to reunite spiritually with the Messiah who is according to the letters to Hebrews our Cohen Gadol, (High Priest) and who is performing His Yom Kippur service in the heavenly sanctuary.

YOM KIPPUR SERVICE

The service of Yom Kippur is one of the most important services for every Jew on earth. Everyone, even those who are secular, try to participate in the service of Yom Kippur.

Several special prayers are included in the liturgy. One of them is the Viduy, a confession, and the Al Chet, a list of transgressions between man and G-d and between man and man. It is interesting to note two things. First, the transgressions are listed in alphabetical order (in Hebrew). This not only makes a comprehensive list, but gives a framework to include whatever transgression Jews wish to include under the appropriate letter.

Secondly, the Viduy and Al Chet are stated in the plural. This teaches Jews that they are one people and that they are responsible for each other. Even though they did not commit a particular offense, according to the Jewish tradition, they carry a certain measure of responsibility for those who transgressed—especially if they could have prevented the transgression..

On Yom Kippur we read the Book of Jonah. The lesson from the story is that God readily accepts the repentance of anyone who sincerely desires to do Teshuva, to return to the Almighty and to the path of the Torah - just as He did with the people of Nineveh.

THE MOST JOYFUL DAY

According to the Jewish tradition, in the days of the Temple, the Yom Kippur service concluded in a great outpouring of joy:

Rabban Shimon ben Gamiliel taught: There were not joyful days in Israel like the 15th of Av and Yom Kippur. (Mishnah Ta’anit 4:8)

The Sages tell of the streets of Jerusalem filled with well-wishers. The High Priest would not arrive home for hours after the services were complete. The greatest spectacle of celebration known as the Simchat Beit Hasho’eva would follow Yom Kippur by a week.

It was said, he who never saw the Simchat Beit Hasho’eva never saw joy in his life. (Mishnah Sukka 5:1)

TWO GOOD GOATS

In the Torah the service of Yom Kippur was marked by the fact that Aaron had to cast lots for the two goats; one lot for the Almighty, and the other lot for the Azazel. As Adventists we understand why G-d asked Aaron to cast lots between these two goats and their meaning. Here it is interesting to know how the Jewish people and the Jewish tradition have seen these goats.

For the Jewish tradition, the law seems to teach Israel about the stark difference between service of G-d which is accepted and beloved by God, versus Azazel “the scapegoat” which represents that which has been rejected by G-d. Yet there is more:

The two goats on Yom Kippur: the mitzvah is for them to be identical in appearance, size, and value, the two shall be chosen together (Talmud - Yoma 62a).

The Talmud teaches that these two goats should look identical—like twins. This seems strange to the Jewish people. They ask this question: Why would the goats need to be identical, especially when their purpose is so different?

The idea of twins—twins who are opposites—is a familiar theme in the Torah. The most famous twins in the Torah are, of course, Jacob and Esau. They were complete opposites, one good, the other evil. No one could ever confuse them. On the other hand, perhaps they did possess some similarities. Rashi (Genesis 25:27) as does the Midrash, tells us that until the age of 13 they were indistinguishable

Esau was worthy to be called Jacob and Jacob was worthy to be called Esau. (Midrash Zuta Shir HaShirim 1:15)

They were so similar that at times their similarity caused confusion. One dressed as the other, one spoke like the other.

It is strange that the divine plan required twins. Perhaps just being siblings would have been enough. Evidently the Torah wanted these two, Jacob and Esau, to be almost the same. Perhaps their similarity represents the thin line between acceptable behavior and idolatry, between good and evil.

Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner noted this parallel and suggested that when things look alike from the exterior, it is a sign that one must look within—at the essence—in order to discern the difference (Pachad Yitzchak, Purim, p.43).

The idea of the two goats is intrinsically related to the personalities of Jacob and Esau; identical on the outside but so different in terms of their essence. The reason that Jews need to send the second goat for Azazel is that so often they find themselves dressing up like Esau instead of behaving like the Jacob/Israel that they are.

The origin of the two goats themselves may very well be found in that famous episode when Jacob is persuaded by his mother to dress up like his brother. Rebecca instructs him: **“Go now to the herd and bring me two good goats...”** (Genesis 27:9).

The Midrash expands on this idea: “How do we know that it was in the merit of Jacob (that we take the two goats)? These are the goats that his mother referred to: **‘Go now to the herd and bring me two good goats...’** Why are they called ‘good’?”

Rabbi Brechia said in the name of Rabbi Chelbo: “They are good for you and good for your children. They are good for you when you enter, and take the blessings from your father, and they are good for your children, when they soil themselves in sin all year round. Then they will bring these two goats, and offer them and be cleansed” (Pesikta Rabbati 47).

Jacob’s entrance to his father may be paralleled with the once-yearly entrance of the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, into the Holy of Holies. Jacob prepared for this appearance with the two goats, as his descendants would in the future.

For the Jewish people, the idea of drawing lots is apparently a concession to the “random” element of human existence. And yet this attitude that life is randomly determined, rather than orchestrated by G-d, is considered evil and associated with the nation of Amalek, whom Israel was commanded to obliterate from the face of the earth. **“Remember what was done to you by Amalek on the way as you left Egypt. When they happened upon you...”** (Deut. 25:17-18).

As Adventists we understand that the goat for God is a representation of the Mashiach who is sacrificed in the Temple in Jerusalem. However the Goat for Azazel is a representation of the devil, Satan, who at the end will die like the goat for Azazel died in the desert. Some could be astonished that these two identical goats could have two opposite destinies as one for good and one for evil. The Torah gives us an example of a same symbol used for good and for evil, the Serpent, In Genesis 3, Satan uses the serpent to push Adam and Eve to sin. The serpent became the symbol of evil, but in Numbers we read: **“Yahweh said to Moses, Make you a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard: and it shall happen, that everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live”** (Num. 21:8) The Nachash (serpent) became the savior, everyone who looked at it was healed and saved.

It is not by chance that in Hebrew “Mashiach” and “Nachash” have exactly the same numerical value: Mashiach = M=40 + SH=300 + Y=10 + CH=9 is 359 and Nachash = N=50 + CH=9 + SH=300 is 359.

They are identical but one is leading to life and the other is leading to death. The identification of Azazel with the Devil is still relevant today in modern Hebrew. When we are very angry towards someone and want to say to him: “Go to the Devil,” the equivalent of: “Go to Hell,” we say in Hebrew: “Lech La’azazel”.

At the beginning of Yom Kippur the goats were identical; both of them were “good” but lots were drawn to determine which of these two identical goats would be sacrificed in the Sanctuary for the forgiveness of the sins of Israel, and which would be for Azazel, sent to the Devil, carrying the true responsibility for humanity’s sin.

I have read: “In the typical service the Cohen Gadol (high priest), having made the atonement for Israel, came forth and blessed the congregation. So Mashiach, at the close of His work as mediator, will appear “without sin unto salvation,” to bless His waiting people with eternal life. As the Cohen (priest), in removing the sins from the sanctuary, confessed them upon the head of the goat for Azazel (scapegoat), so Mashiach will place all these sins upon Satan, the originator and instigator of sin. The scapegoat, bearing the sins of Israel, was sent away “unto a land not inhabited” so Satan, bearing the guilt of all the sins which he has caused God’s people to commit, will be confined for a thousand years to the earth which will then be desolate, without inhabitant, and he will at last suffer the full penalty of sin in the fires that shall destroy all the wicked” {FLB 213.4}.

YOM KIPPUR PRAYER

The story is told of a house painter who deeply regretted stealing from his clients by diluting the paint, but charging full price. He poured out his heart on Yom Kippur hoping for Divine direction. A voice comes from Heaven and decrees, "Repaint, repaint ... and thin no more!"

PLANTING GOOD SEEDS

A person who lived all his life in the big city decided one day to become a farmer. He bought a parcel of land and went to live on the farm. Knowing that his success depends on rain, he prayed fervently to G-d for rain. His prayers were answered and much rain descended on the fields. Now he was sure that his field would yield much fruits and vegetables. Yet, to his dismay, his field only yielded weeds. His disappointment became even greater when he saw that all his neighbors' fields were indeed filled with beautiful fruits and vegetables.

In despair, he approached one of his neighbors, "My field had the same amount of rain as yours. My field had the same sunshine as yours. My field is even the same size as yours, yet mine didn't yield any fruit while yours did?"

"The answer is simple!" explained the neighbor. "G-d's blessings are only effective when you do what is expected of you. I planted seeds, fertilized the ground and removed the weeds, so now G-d's blessing of rain has brought forth wonderful fruits. You, however, didn't do anything in your field. All you did was pray, but you didn't do anything to cultivate G-d's blessings. How can you expect His blessings to bear fruit?"

The same is true with our prayers. On Rosh Hashana we ask G-d to grant us everything we need in the coming year, but that is not enough. We have to do our part. The mitzvot and good deeds we perform are the seeds we sow in order for G-d's blessings to take effect. Now, between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, is the most appropriate time to begin planting!

G-D GIVES LIFE

A Chassid once came to his Rebbe complaining that he had a bad year financially. The Rebbe asked him, "How is your health and the

health of your family?" The Chassid replied that health was, thank G-d, good. The Rebbe told him to have trust in G-d and quoted him the words of the Talmud, "He Who gives life will surely give sustenance!"

The Rebbe explained it with a parable, "A wealthy businessman was traveling home from the fair with a large sum of money. The way home was long and for Shabbat he stopped at an inn run by a Jewish innkeeper.

"As it is not permitted to carry money on Shabbat, the businessman had no choice but to give his wallet of money to the innkeeper for safekeeping until after Shabbat. The wallet contained 5,000 rubles plus 5 kopikes (pennies).

"As he didn't know the innkeeper, the businessman was worried all Shabbat whether the innkeeper was trustworthy and will he ever see his money again. Immediately after Shabbat he asked for his wallet which the innkeeper returned. The merchant quickly went to his room to count the money. He counted the rubles and found the 5,000 rubles intact.

"Do you think," asked the Rebbe of his Chassid, "that after realizing that the innkeeper returned the 5000 rubles, would the businessman be worried whether the five pennies-kopikes were also there? Only a fool would suspect the innkeeper in not giving back the five kopikes when he was trustworthy with the large sum of 5000 rubles!"

"The same is with you," concluded the Rebbe. "G-d gave you and your family, health and life which is worth far more than anything else in the world. Don't you think that you should trust Him to give you your livelihood? If you believe that G-d gives you health, you will automatically have faith that He will bless you in your dealings and will provide you with your livelihood as well. For, "He Who gives life will surely give sustenance!"

EDITOR

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BRIT HACHADASHA

Heb 6:19-20

Heb 8:1-5

Heb 9:11-28

Since this sabbath is the special day of Yom Kippur I suggest to our Jewish Adventist Congregations concentrate their meeting on the explanation of Yom Kippur: what happened in the sanctuary, and what was symbolized by the services in the sanctuary. That's why I don't give any text for the Aftara. However, if some of you would like to read a text of the prophet, I suggest Isaiah 58 which is about fasting. For the Brit Hachadasha (Second Testament) I suggest a text from the letter to Hebrews, which gives an explanation of the tabernacle services in the light of Yeshua ha Mashiach. Here is a choice of texts from this letter without explanation; just the reading of these inspired verses can open many minds about the Ministry of Yeshua in heaven.

HEBREWS 6:19-20: "This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, a hope both sure and steadfast and entering into that which is within the veil; where as a forerunner Yeshua entered for us, having become a Cohen Gadol (high priest) forever after the order of Melchizedek."

HEBREWS 8:1-5: "Now in the things which we are saying, the main point is this. We have such a Cohen Gadol, who sat down on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man. For every Cohen Gadol is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices. Therefore it is necessary that this Cohen Gadol also have something to offer. For if he were on earth, he would not be a cohen at all, seeing there are cohanim who offer the gifts according to the Torah; who serve a copy and shadow of the heavenly things, even as Moses was warned by God when he was about to make the tabernacle, for he said, "See, you shall make everything according to the pattern that was shown to you on the mountain."

HEBREWS 9:11-28: "But Mashiach having come as a Cohen Gadol of the coming good things, through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation, nor yet through the blood of goats and calves, but through his own blood, entered in once for all into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal redemption. For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the ashes of a heifer sprinkling those who

have been defiled, sanctify to the cleanness of the flesh: how much more will the blood of Mashiach, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? For this reason he is the mediator of a new covenant, since a death has occurred for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first covenant, that those who have been called may receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. For where a last will and testament is, there must of necessity be the death of him who made it. For a will is in force where there has been death, for it is never in force while he who made it lives. Therefore even the first covenant has not been dedicated without blood. For when every commandment had been spoken by Moses to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of the calves and the goats, with water and scarlet wool and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book itself and all the people, saying, "This is the blood of the covenant which God has commanded you." Moreover he sprinkled the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry in like manner with the blood. According to the law, nearly everything is cleansed with blood, and apart from shedding of blood there is no remission. It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Mashiach hasn't entered into holy places made with hands, which are representations of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest enters into the holy place year by year with blood not his own, or else he must have suffered often since the foundation of the world. But now once at the end of the ages, he has been revealed to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment, so Mashiach also, having been once offered to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, without sin, to those who are eagerly waiting for him for salvation."

