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News

CHANUKAH

I hope that each one of you had a joyful Chanukah, full of the light of the Mashiach. Some of our friends are celebrating "Christmas" I would like also to wish a Merry Christmas to every one of them.

STUDY CENTER DIRECTORS MEETING IN AMMAN

After a full week of meetings and committees, the delegate of the Study Center Directors meeting started to visit some archeological sites on Friday afternoon (Baptismal Site, Mount Nebo).



Jordan River, near Jericho

During the Shabbat service Jony Hadjaj, the pastor of Amman was ordained by the President of the East Mediterranean Field.



Shabbat Vayigash December 11, 2010 4 Tevet 5771

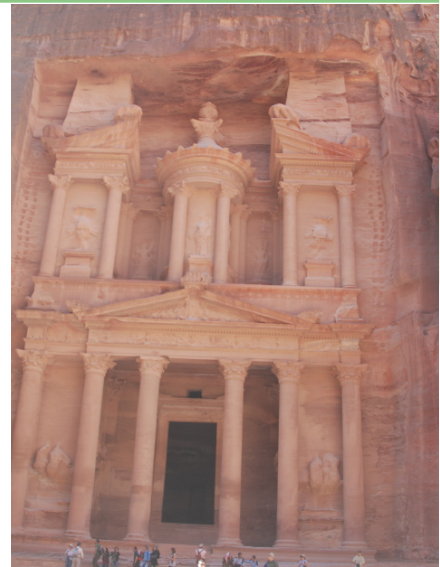
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We continued to visit some interesting archeological sites on Sunday (Petra) and on Monday, Jarash, one of the Decapolis cities during the time of Yeshua.



Nabatean Temple in Petra

NEWS FROM SAO PAULO

We have received some news from Reinaldo Siqueira who is the leader of the Jewish Ministry in Brazil. After buying a property in Sao Paulo he shares this news with us. "Right now, we are in the process of reforming the house we bought, in order to adequate it for the usage of our Beth B As Yeshua healed a paralytic man near the pool of Bethesda he was approached by some leaders who were not happy. It was a Shabbat, and certainly these leaders did not know the rabbinical rule that it is allowed to heal somebody on Shabbat. They were not satisfied with the behavior of Yeshua. It is then that Yeshua gave some strong statement about his relationship with our father in heaven nei Tsion, and to use it as an academic and research center, with the name of Shorashim (Roots). This center will be connected with our university, and will offer classes and accredited programs in areas of common interest for



OVERVIEW

VAYIGASH וַיִּגַּשׁ

GENESIS 44:18-47:27

With the discovery of the goblet in Binyamin's sack, the brothers are confused. Yehuda alone steps forward and eloquently but firmly petitions Yosef for Binyamin's release, offering himself instead. As a result of this act of total selflessness, Yosef finally has irrefutable proof that his brothers are different people from the ones who cast him into the pit, and so he now reveals to them that he is none other than their brother. The brothers shrink from him in shame, but Yosef consoles them, telling them that everything has been part of G-d's plan. He sends them back to their father Yaakov with a message to come and reside in the land of Goshen. At first, Yaakov cannot accept the news, but when he recognizes hidden signs in the message which positively identify the sender as his son Yosef, his spirit is revived.

Yaakov together with all his family and possessions sets out for Goshen. G-d communicates with Yaakov in a vision at night. He tells him not to fear going down to Egypt and its negative spiritual consequences, because it is there that G-d will establish the Children of Israel as a great nation even though they will be dwelling in a land steeped in immorality and corruption. The Torah lists Yaakov's offspring and hints to the birth of Yocheved, who will be the mother of Moshe Rabbeinu. Seventy souls in total descend into Egypt, where Yosef is reunited with his father after 22 years of separation. He embraces his father and weeps, overflowing with joy. Yosef secures the settlement of his family in Goshen. Yosef takes his father Yaakov and five of the least threatening of his brothers to be presented to Pharaoh, and Yaakov blesses Pharaoh. Yosef instructs that, in return for grain, all the people of Egypt must give everything to Pharaoh, including themselves as his slaves. Yosef then redistributes the population, except for the Egyptian priests who are directly supported by a stipend from Pharaoh. The Children of Israel become settled, and their numbers multiply greatly.

YEHUDAH' SKILLS OF COMMUNICATION

When Tzaphnas Pane'ach, the second in command of Egypt (before he revealed that his Hebrew name was Joseph) informed his brothers that he was keeping Benjamin as a slave for stealing his wine cup, the Torah tell us: **“And Yehuda approached (Joseph) and he said, ‘Please, my master, allow your servant to speak in the ears of my master. And do not become angry at your servant for you are like Pharaoh’ (Gen. 44:18).**

According to Rabbi Kalman Packouz Yehuda demonstrated some skills of communication. First he began by asking Joseph not to become angry. When you think that what you say will be irritating to the person you are talking to, you can defuse his potential anger by mentioning right at the start that you hope that what you say will not get the other person angry.

In this one verse, Yehudah called the other person master twice, while referring to himself as “your servant” twice. He had his goal in mind and in order to make the other person more open to listen to what he had to say he spoke with great respect to him while at the same time putting himself down. One loses nothing by this, but gains much. Only pride prevents people from using this approach more often. It is a very powerful tool.

On the words, “For you are like Pharaoh,” Rashi comments that Yehuda had four different levels of meaning in his communication. We can learn from the progression of the four levels. The first meaning is that Yehudah said, “In my eyes you are as important as a king.” Start off with praise. Everyone wants a feeling of importance. If a person sees that you respect him, he will more readily listen to your requests.

The second meaning Rashi cites is that Yehudah said to him, “Just as Pharaoh was smitten by the Almighty when he caused difficulties for Avraham and Sarah, so too He will smite you.” On this level, Yehudah was speaking as a friend and giving warning that he should be careful or else he would suffer consequences.

The third meaning Rashi cites is that Yehudah was reprimanding him. He rebuked him for not keeping his word. “Just as Pharaoh is inconsistent, so are you.” In this approach Yehudah was making a plea for him to act in an ethical way. Yehudah pointed out that

what he was doing was wrong and censured him for it.

The final meaning cited by Rashi is that Yehudah threatened him. If you do not allow Benjamin to go free, I will kill both Pharaoh and you. If nothing else works to influence the other person, in extreme situations one might need to resort to threats. However, even in those situations such an approach must be used only as a last resort. First try to accomplish your goals with diplomacy. Only if lighter strategies are not effective, use the heavier approach.

WAGONS FOR JACOB

The Torah states, “Pharaoh told Joseph: ‘And now I command you to do the following: Take for yourselves from the land of Egypt wagons for you and your wives and transport your father and come here. And do not be concerned about your possessions, for the best of the land of Egypt will be yours.’” (Genesis 45:19) Pharaoh greatly desired that Joseph’s whole illustrious family come to live in Egypt, especially after witnessing the great benefit brought to the kingdom by Joseph.

Rabbi Zev Leff says that Pharaoh sought to remove any barriers to Jacob’s coming. He reasoned that Jacob might be deterred by the difficulties of acclimating to a new culture and society, and therefore told Joseph to tell his father not to worry about bringing his wardrobe, furniture, or utensils from Israel. He would be furnished with the best Egypt had to offer so that he could blend comfortably into Egyptian society. Therefore Pharaoh instructed Joseph to send wagons for the people but not for their possessions.

Joseph, however, knew that if this plan were conveyed to Jacob, he would never descend to Egypt. On the contrary, Jacob would need assurances that every precaution was being taken to combat the possibility of assimilation. Thus Joseph sent wagons “according to the word of Pharaoh” — not exactly according to the command of Pharaoh, but in accord with Pharaoh’s intention of enticing Jacob to Egypt. Joseph added wagons for their possessions so that they could recreate totally the environment of Israel in Egypt and remain insulated from Egyptian society and culture. Thus, Jacob’s family went down to Egypt with all “their livestock and all of their possessions which they acquired in the Land of Canaan...” (Genesis 46:6).

JOSEPH MEETS JACOB

For twenty-two years, Jacob had grieved inconsolably over the loss of his beloved son Joseph. And now, his sons, returning from Egypt, had burst in on him with the most amazing news. Joseph was alive and well! Moreover, he had risen to the post of viceroy, becoming for all intents and purposes the undisputed ruler of the fabled Egyptian kingdom.

Surely, there can be no more dramatic instance of a dream come true. So what was Jacob’s first response to these wonderful tidings? Incredibly, he was incredulous. As we read in this week’s portion, he simply refused to believe them. Only after they repeated to him exactly what messages Joseph had sent to his father, and showed him the wagons he sent to transport the whole family back to Egypt, did Jacob finally accept their news. Only then was “his spirit revived.”

The Torah describes Joseph and Jacob encounter in this way, “Joseph had his chariot made ready and went to Goshen to meet his father Israel. As soon as Joseph appeared before him, he threw his arms around his father and wept for a long time. Israel said to Joseph, ‘Now I am ready to die, since I have seen for myself that you are still alive.’” (Gen. 46:29-30). Jacob was an old man, and his sight was going. Joseph came to this meeting wearing all his royal regalia, his uniform. As part of his royal garb he also wore a veil, with only his eyes showing. The Ramban says this was the custom in those days. So when he approached his father, Jacob could not recognize him (as his brothers hadn’t earlier). Then Joseph removed the veil, then “And he (Joseph) appeared before him (Jacob).”

Then the Ramban explains — between these two individuals, Joseph the young, very successful, ruler and Jacob the old, bereaved father — who would be the one most likely to show explosive emotion? Jacob, of course, seeing his beloved son after he had mourned for him for 22 years. It would also not be respectful, Ramban says, for the son to fall on the father’s neck. He would show more reserve in his father’s presence, as we see later when Joseph takes his own sons to see Jacob before his death (Genesis 48:12).

DO YOU COMPROMISE YOUR OWN VALUES?

A young man studied for many years in the academy of a great sage. One day, he decided to go out and seek his fortune. He took his leave of his mentor who had taught him wisdom for such a long time and left.

Many years later, a middle-aged man came to visit the sage. He wore vulgar and flamboyant clothing, and gaudy jewelry adorned his fingers. He took out a thick wad of money and handed it to the sage.

“This is for your academy,” he said.

“You may not remember me, but I was your student years ago. I have made a large fortune in the circus, and I have decided to give something to my alma mater. Life is strange, isn’t it? Would you ever have believed that a student of yours would one day manage a circus?”

The sage smiled sadly. “I would never have believed it, and I still don’t believe it. My student has ceased to exist. The man who owns the circus is an altogether different person.”

In our own lives, each of us developed a certain self-image during the formative years and still feels connected to that special person we once considered ourselves to be, even though the years may have coerced us into making certain compromises. But are we really? Only if our compromises did not involve sacrificing our basic values and ideals can we still be considered the same people we once were.

HONOR YOUR PARENTS

Why did Joseph prepare his chariot by himself? As ruler of Egypt, he could have had his servants prepare it?

Joseph wanted to have the mitzvah of honoring his father; therefore, he prepared the chariot. There are many tales of sages who served their parents themselves rather than letting their servants do it. Honoring parents is one of the greatest mitzvot. It is unfortunately so much neglected in today’s “I” society: (IMac, Iphone, IPod, Ipad, etc.)

The following quotes from the Code of Jewish Law shows the extent one has to go to honor parents:

- “One must be extremely careful with the mitzvah of honoring parents, for the Torah compares their honor to honoring G-d.” When we honor parents we are also honoring G-d.

- “One must not sit on the seat generally reserved for one’s father or mother. One must provide parents with food, drink and clothing, bring them home and take them out and provide them with all their needs cheerfully.”

- “If a son, dressed in costly garments, is presiding over a meeting and his father or his mother came and tore his garments, struck him on the head and spat in his face, he should neither insult them nor show distress in their presence nor display anger toward them. He may, however, legally seek payment for the damage they have caused him.”

- “If one’s father or mother is asleep and the key to the son’s store lies under their pillow, he must not wake them, even if he will lose much profit as a result.”

- “One must rise in the presence of their father or mother.”

DON'T FIGHT

The first rule of marital happiness: Don’t argue. “It takes two to fight.” If you don’t argue back, if you answer in a soft voice (‘A gentle answer turns away anger’ - Proverbs 15:1), then you won’t have fights. People think that they have to respond to invectives - often, either to defend themselves or as a psychological necessity to return hurt. It is important to keep focused on the goal - to stay happily married and build a life together. That was the goal when they got married and it should still be the goal. There are strategies to minimize fights and minimize the impact of the “slings of barbs and arrows.”

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Ezekiel 37:15 - 28

PARASHA: Yosef and Judah are the two leaders of Israel. Yosef rules in Egypt, Judah is the leader of Israel listed as the first and the one who defends his brothers and especially Benyamin: “Judah and his brothers came to Joseph’s house.” (Genesis 44:14). “Then Judah stepped up to him and said, “O my lord, let your servant please speak” (Gen. 44:18).

HAFTARAH: A schism has divided Israel in two kingdoms, Judah in the South and Israel (Yoseph) in the North. The Lord does not like this situation He would like to see Israel, his people to be united again. Yoseph and Judah are the symbol of this unity. “Mortal, take a stick and write on it, “For Judah, and the Israelites associated with it”; then take another stick and write on it, “For Joseph (the stick of Ephraim) and all the house of Israel associated with it”; and join them together into one stick, so that they may become one in your hand. (Ezekiel. 37:16-17). This text is clearly a Messianic text, that’s why some commentators have seen Judah as the representative of Israel and Yosef or Ephraim as representative of the kehilah (assembly) of the Mashiach.

The unity between Israel and Judah will protect them against apostasy and idolatry: “I will save them from all the apostasies into which they have fallen, and will cleanse them. Then they shall be my people, and I will be their G-d” (Ezekiel. 37:23).

David is presented as the future king: “My servant David shall be king over them;” (Ezekiel. 37:24). But David died long time before Ezekiel, that’s why we understand that “David” is the Messiah, who Son of David and therefore is called after the name of his ancestor David.

The spiritual leader of God’s people will be the Messiah. “and they shall all have one shepherd” (Ezekiel. 37:24). The Lord give many promises: 1) They shall live in the land ... forever. 2) David shall be their prince forever. 3) I will make an everlasting covenant of peace with them; 4) I will bless them and multiply them, 5) I will set my sanctuary among them forevermore. 6) My dwelling place shall be with them; 7) I will be their God, and they shall be my people... forevermore. (Ezekiel 37:28) The key word here is “forever”.

BRIT HACHADASHA

John 5:1-47

As Yeshua healed a paralytic man near the pool of Bethesda he was approached by some leaders who were not happy. It was a Shabbat, and certainly these leaders did not know the rabbinical rule that it is allowed to heal somebody on Shabbat. They were not satisfied with the behavior of Yeshua. It is then that Yeshua gave some strong statement about his relationship with our father in heaven, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. . . . For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him.” (John 5:19-23).

This strong relationship between Yeshua and God “His Father” reminds us the strong relationships between Joseph and Jacob in the book of Genesis and specially in the parasha for this week. Joseph was loved by his father. He was sent by his father to feed his brothers. His brothers did not accept him and they sold him to the Ishmaelites, he suffered a lot and through his suffering he saved his people from death. And in our parasha he is like resurrected and was given back to his father. It is a life in parallel with that of the Mashiach Yeshua. Yeshua was loved by his father. He was sent by his father to feed spiritually his brothers but they did not recognized him. They sold him to the Roman (30 pieces of silver) and he suffered a lot, but through his suffering he saved his people. This salvation will be even salvation from death, “I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son to have life in himself. (John 5:25-26). That is why God sent the Mashiach Ben Yosef.

