

Shabbat Mispatim

January 29, 2011

24 Shevat 5771

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NEWS

FRENCH SPEAKING TOUR IN ISRAEL

Yossi Meirov, one of our Israeli friend who is living now in the South of France organizes a trip to Israel. It is a very good opportunity for French speaking people to visit Israel with someone who was born in Israel, who knows very well the country and who believes in Yeshua HaMashiach.

This trip will start on the 9th of May and will end on the 18th of May. During this trip the following sites will be visited:

Tel Aviv, Jaffa, Cesarea, Atlit, Haifa, Akko, Kibbutz Nof-Ginossar, Mount of Beatitudes, Sea of Tiberias, Golan Heights, Yardenit, Caphernaum, Tabgha, Nazareth Village, Mount Tabor and its village "Kfar" Tabor, Jordan Valley, Jericho, Qumran (where the Dead Sea manuscripts have been discovered, The dead Sea, Ein Guedi, Massada, Jerusalem, Mount of Olives, Gethsemane, all the biblical sites of Jerusalem.

Really this trip seems to be very interesting and exciting. If you are interested to join this group send an email to Yossi: meiyar@club-internet.fr

THE FUTURE OF ISRAELI POPULATION

Sofer, chairman of the geo-strategy department at Haifa University and vice-chair of its Center for National Security Studies, told Arutz 7 Wednesday that research shows that within a decade, the social situation in Israel could become a powder keg, as the

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religious population— especially the hareidi (Ultra Orthodox) population — continues to grow, increasing the already existing tensions between groups.

The study, presented at a meeting of the Knesset Aliyah and Absorption Committee, says that a majority in Israel will be religious by 2030. "We are on the way to a religious state," Sofer said. "The country will have a religious and/or Hareidi leadership and personality by 2030. Today, there are about 700,000 people in the religious Zionist community, and about 700,000 in the hareidi (Ultra Orthodox) community. "But within a few years, due to natural growth, both communities will have about 2.5 million members, out of a total population of 7 million. In 2007, 110,000 Jews were born — all but 18,000 to religious families. The only 'babies' secular families are having are puppies," said Sofer, in a play on an image generally associated with secular Israeli families - "parents, one child, and a dog."

By 2030, he predicts, 55% of Israelis will be members of the hareidi community, with another large segment belonging to the national religious community — with only a small minority of secular Jews, says Sofer. "I have 8 grandchildren from secular families, and I am not sure all of them will want to continue living here," he told Arutz 7. (Source: <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/141967>)

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OVERVIEW

MISHPATIM

EXODUS 21:1-24:18

The Jewish People receive a series of laws concerning social justice. Topics include: Proper treatment of Jewish servants; a husband's obligations to his wife; penalties for hitting people and for cursing parents, judges and leaders; financial responsibilities for damaging people or their property, either by oneself or by one's animate or inanimate property, or by pitfalls that one created; payments for theft; not returning an object that one accepted responsibility to guard; the right to self-defense of a person being robbed. Other topics include prohibitions against

- Seduction
- Witchcraft
- Bestiality
- Sacrifices to idols
- The Torah warns us to treat the convert, widow and orphan with dignity
- To avoid lying
- Usury is forbidden and the rights over collateral are limited.
- Payment of obligations to the Temple should not be delayed
- The Jewish People must be holy, even concerning food.
- The Torah teaches the proper conduct for judges in court proceedings.
- The commandments of Shabbat and the Sabbatical year are outlined.
- Three times a year — Pesach, Shavuot and Succot — we are to come to the Temple.
- Not to mix milk and meat.

G-d promises that He will lead the Jewish People to the Land of Israel, helping them conquer its inhabitants, and tells them that by fulfilling His commandments they will bring blessings to their nation. The people promise to do and listen to everything that G-d says.

Moshe writes the Book of the Covenant, and reads it to the people.

Moshe ascends the mountain to remain there for 40 days in order to receive the two Tablets of the Covenant.

613 COMMANDMENTS

According to the Jewish tradition the 613 mitzvot of the Torah are generally divided in two categories;

- 1) mitzvot which are between a person and G-d
- 2) mitzvot which affect one another.

We find these two categories in the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments (belief in G-d, prohibition to worship idols, not to swear falsely and in vain, observing Shabbat) are between us and G-d. The other mitzvot (honoring parents, not to commit murder, etc.) are between one person and another. However, in truth even the mitzvot between individuals have an affect in our relationship with G-d, while the mitzvot between us and G-d also affect everyone. For every good deed we perform enhances and strengthens our relationship with G-d and also benefits all of humanity. Parashat Mishpatim deals mostly with the category of mitzvot between one individual and the other.

CORRUPTION

The Torah states, “And bribery you shall not take, for a bribe will blind those who can see, and distort the words of the righteous.” (Ex. 23:8)

Rabbi Packouz asks: What is the difference between a person who is blind and a person who is prejudiced because of a bias?

Rabbi Avraham of Sochotchov commented that when a person is blind, he realizes it and will ask someone who can see to help him; if a person has a bias, the bias blinds him to such an extent that he does not even realize that he is blind. He feels that what he perceives is reality and will refuse to listen to others.

Every human being is biased towards himself that he is correct. This keeps us from recognizing our mistakes and faults when people point them out. If you have an emotional knee-jerk reaction to reproof, weigh the matter very carefully. You will benefit in the long run

THE ENTIRE TORAH WAS GIVEN TO MOSES

In the end of the Parsha G-d said to Moshe, “Come up to Me to the mountain and be there and I will give you the tablets of stone and the Torah and the Mitzvot (commandments)...

And Moshe went up to the mountain and Moshe remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights.” (Ex 24:12) Our sages tell us that during the forty days which Moshe spent on Mount Sinai, he received not only the Tow Tablets, but he was taught the entire Torah and the mitzvot-commandments.

One of Maimonides’ thirteen principles of Jewish faith is, “I believe with complete faith that the entire Torah which we have now is the same one which was given to Moshe our teacher.” Just as the Ten Commandments were given by G-d at Mount Sinai, so, too, were the other laws of the Torah. Each of the 613 mitzvot come from G-d.

DEEDS OF KINDNESS

The Torah states, “When you will lend money to My people, to the poor with you, you shall not press him, neither shall you place upon him interest... for when he will cry to Me, I will hear for I am merciful.” (Ex 22:25) The mitzvah of helping people in need is called Gemilat Chasadim—performing deeds of kindness.— Gemilat Chasadim, according to our sages, is in a way even greater than charity (Tzedakah). Charity is only for the poor, whereas, the mitzvah of Gemilat Chasadim, helping through a loan, applies to anyone in need. In Proverbs (19) we are told that even the charity one gives to the poor is in essence “a loan to G-d Who is trustworthy to repay.” Our sages explain that G-d repays not only the amount which we gave to charity, but He pays back much more in ways which only He can. Yeshua says, **Then the King will tell those on his right hand, ‘Come, blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry, and you gave me food to eat; I was thirsty, and you gave me drink; I was a stranger, and you took me in; naked, and you clothed me; I was sick, and you visited me; I was in prison, and you came to me.’ “Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry, and feed you; or thirsty, and give you a drink? When did we see you as a stranger, and take you in; or naked, and clothe you? When did we see you sick, or in prison, and come to you?’ “The King will answer them, ‘Most assuredly I tell you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ (Matt. 25:34-40)**

HOW TO APPRECIATE GOOD EXPERIENCES

Before Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to receive the stone Tablets, he and seventy elders were at the foot of the mountain. There: **“They saw a vision of the God of Israel, and under His feet was something like a sapphire brick, like the essence of a clear sky” (Exodus 24:10).** Rashi comments that the brick was in the presence of the Almighty during the time the Israelites were enslaved in Egypt to remind Him of their suffering since they were forced to build with bricks in their slavery. **“The essence of a clear sky”** is a reminder that once they were liberated there was light and joy before the Almighty.

Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz comments that whenever the Torah tells us about the attributes of the Almighty, the purpose is to teach us how we should strive to emulate Him. When someone else suffers, it is not sufficient for us just to try to feel his suffering in the abstract, we should try to ease his suffering if we can. We should also do some concrete action that will clearly remind us of the person’s suffering — rather than just forgetting it and continuing on with our lives.

Rabbi Packouz says, “even at the time of redemption and joy, it is important to recall the previous suffering that one experienced. This adds an entire dimension to the joy. Many people would just like to forget all their suffering when it is over. The proper attitude is to remember it, and this will give a person an even greater appreciation for the good that he experiences.”

LEARNING THE TORAH

Rashi says that the verse, **“If you walk in the laws of Torah,” (Lev 26:3)** refers to striving in Torah. One must invest his entire energy and effort into Torah learning. But what if he does not? The Torah charts for us seven phases that man will pass through if he satisfies himself with anything less than the realization of his full potential. **“If you will detest my Torah and refuse to learn,” (Lev 26:15)** explains Rashi, inevitably you will not fulfill the Mitzvot properly. You will be ignorant of the basic details of Torah observance and not appreciate their beauty and significance.

SPIRITUAL HEALING

Rabbi Yehuda ben B'teira, Rabbi Masia ben Cheresch, Rabbi Chanina and Rabbi Yochanan were leaving Israel to settle abroad. When they came to Platus and remembered the Land of Israel they lifted their tear filled eyes, rented their garments and recited the verse, **"You shall possess it, and dwell in it, for in it you can observe all the laws"** (Deut. 11:31). Then they turned around and went back, saying, "Living in the Land of Israel is equivalent to performing all the commandments in the Torah!"

CHARITY

In Communist Russia a Jew named Berel, was summoned to the local Communist district office. "We heard rumors that your devotion to the Communist party is wavering."

"That's not true. I declare my complete and unquestionable loyalty to the party!" declared Berel.

"We'd like to ask you a few questions to be certain of your dedication," declared the officer. "Suppose somebody died and you were bequeathed 10,000 rubles, what would you do?"

"I would give 5,000 to the party and keep the other half for myself."

"Very good! Now what if you had two houses?"

"I would give one to the party and keep the other!"

"Excellent. Now, suppose you had two pairs of pants?"

Berel hesitated for a long while and finally stammered out: "I don't think this question is fair. I do happen to have two pairs of pants!"

NO ONE LIED

It was said of Rabbi Tivumi that even if he was offered all the wealth in the world he wouldn't utter anything false from his mouth.

He came to the city of Kushta, which means "truth." No one died in Kushta before their time and everyone lived to a ripe old age, for the inhabitants of the city would speak only the truth. Rabbi Tivumi settled in Kushta and married.

Eventually, his wife gave birth to two sons.

Once while his wife was washing her hair, a neighbor knocked on their door asking for his wife. Rabbi Tivumi felt that it was not appropriate to let the neighbor in at this time, so he told her that his wife was not home.

A while later his two sons died. The people of Kushta were perplexed. "What did you do to deserve such punishment?" they asked. Rabbi Tivumi told them about the episode with the neighbor and the lie he said. The people of Kushta asked Rabbi Tivumi to leave their city.

BE CAREFUL ON YOUR SPEECH

There are many stories of sages who were so careful in their speech that they wouldn't say anything that could inadvertently turn out to be a lie. Upon coming home, if asked if it is raining, one rabbi would reply, "When I was outside it was, or it wasn't raining." He never simply said it is or it is not raining, because the conditions may have changed since he walked into the house.

SPEAK THE TRUTH

Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk was a great scholar. At the same time, he was very humble. He once said, "on the last judgment day, the Judge will ask me, did you study Torah to the best of your ability, I will answer, no. Did you pray to the best of your ability, I will answer, no. Did you do good deeds to the best of your ability, I will again have to answer no. They will then say to me, You speak the truth and for this alone you are worthy of the reward in the World-to-Come."

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Jeremiah 33:25 - 34:22

HAFTARAH: This Jeremy's prophecy was given when the Babylonians wanted to destroy Jerusalem and to deport its inhabitants: "The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD, when King Nebuchadrezzar of Babylon and all his army and all the kingdoms of the earth and all the peoples under his dominion were fighting against Jerusalem and all its cities: " (Jeremiah 33:26).

God said to the king of Judah that Babylon will have victory over Israel and the king will be deported too. "Thus says the L-RD, the God of Israel: Go and speak to King Zedekiah of Judah and say to him: Thus says the L-RD: I am going to give this city into the hand of the king of Babylon, and he shall burn it with fire. And you yourself shall not escape from his hand, but shall surely be captured and handed over to him;" (Jeremiah 34:2-3).

G-d said to Jeremiah that one of the reasons of the deportation was because Israel did not accept to observe the sabbatical year "The word of the L-RD came to Jeremiah from the L-RD: Thus says the L-RD, the God of Israel: I myself made a covenant with your ancestors when I brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery, saying, "Every seventh year each of you must set free any Hebrews who have been sold to you and have served you six years; you must set them free from your service." But your ancestors did not listen to me or incline their ears to me. " (Jeremiah 34:12-14).

However, the L-rd loves his people and will continue to love him, the deportation is a way G-d used to help Israel to understand their mission towards the nations, to be a light to the nations and to help each individual to believe in the only one G-d. Thus before giving the reasons of this defeat, God assured Israel that he will bring them back to their country: **Thus says the L-RD: Only if I had not established my covenant with day and night and the ordinances of heaven and earth, would I reject the offspring of Jacob and of my servant David and not choose any of his descendants as rulers over the offspring of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. For I will restore their fortunes, and will have mercy upon them.** (Jeremiah 33:25-26).

Matthew 25:31-46

In the parasha G-d asks us to take care of the poor, the orphan and the widow. The concept of charity is called in Judaism "Tsedakah" which means "righteousness", "justice". Indeed to make charity is not a favor done to the poor, it is a simple act of justice and righteousness.

Yeshua had the same concern for the poor and the people in need. We are saved by faith, but our salvation has to be translated in acts of kindness and love for the people in need. One day Yeshua met a rich man who wanted to follow him, "Yeshua looked at him and loved him. 'One thing you lack,' he said. 'Go, sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.'" (Mark 10:21).

Yeshua gave a parable showing how caring for the poor is important. Speaking about the final days, "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, ... He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left." (Matt. 25:31-33). The Mashiach is judging the nations. "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.' Why? 'For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, ...' (Mat 25:34-35). The people who are rewarded have manifested acts of kindness to those in need. In the opposite side we have the wicked people, those who will deserve punishment; what the Mashiach will say to them "Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.' Why? 'For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, ...' (Matt. 25:41-43). Each one of them are not aware of their acts, when the good people will ask to the Mashiach when have we done that, he will answer, "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." (Mat 25:40) And in the same way when the wicked will ask when they have not done that, the Mashiach will answer "I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me." (Mat 25:45).

