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NEWS

VISIT IN GERMANY

This week has been particularly busy for the WJFC (World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center). I was invited to a trip to Germany to see our Jewish ministry in Cologne (Köln) and in other cities from April 29 to May 5, 2011. So my weekend was with the group in Cologne where we had a Kabbalat Shabbat on Friday evening April 29. About 30 people attended this meeting. I gave a message on the text of the parasha and especially the famous mistvah to “love your brother as yourselves”, the kabbalat Shabbat practice of this congregation is interesting with the candles, kiddoush etc. but they certainly have to progress in order to be even more Jewish friendly.

Pastor Michael Moritz invited me to his Russian speaking congregation on Shabbat April 30, for a wonderful time of Sabbath school and worship, However, I can say that the key moment of this weekend was the afternoon meeting at a lake close to Cologne where we had the tevilah (immersion) of five people among whom one Jewish lady who accepted Yeshua as her savior. I am sure that the L-rd will bless this group and they will grow for the glory of the L-rd. In the evening I had a meeting with the President and the Director of Adventist mission of that Conference. They are very supportive and want even to do more in their Conference since they are in charge of an area where about 17 millions people are living and many Russian speaking people arrived in Germany among whom of course a lot with a Jewish background. We need to pray for this conference and the work in Germany.

Parashat Emor, Shabbat 7 May 2011

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Then I took the road to go down to Landshut close to Munich to meet a group of pastors and to give a lecture to a group of Russian speaking people in the congregation of Pastor Stephan Brass. Some invitations were sent to the Jewish community of this area. I have presented on Tuesday 4th of May a lecture in front of about 60 people in the main church building of Landshut among them some Jews. After the lecture about the Messiah and his sufferings a lot of questions were asked, it was a good time to share our understanding of the Messiah.

The day after, on the 4th of May, I left Munich at 4:00 am to be in the Union office in Stuttgart at 7:30 am for the devotional, for a meeting with the leaders of the Union and especially with Günther Machel, President of the South German Union of Conference. I had also the opportunity to participate in the Union's Office to a meeting of the Youth and Mission leaders of the two German Union, who were also very interested by the Jewish ministry.

SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY IN JERUSALEM

On Shabbat May 7, we will hold our spiritual assembly in Jerusalem. 5 to 600 people are expected to join us for this special Shabbat. Our guest speaker this year is Clifford Goldstein, editor of the Sabbath School He is an outstanding speaker, and writer, he will present a sermon during the worship time and his testimony in the afternoon since he met the Messiah in Israel long time ago. For everyone who want to join us, the meeting will be in the auditorium of the YMCA of Jerusalem, King David St. (facing the King David hotel) The Sabbath School will be at 10:00, worship at 11:30 and afternoon meeting from 14:45 to 17:30.

OVERVIEW

EMOR

Leviticus 21:1 - 24:22

The *Kohanim* are commanded to avoid contact with corpses in order to maintain a high standard of ritual purity. They may attend the funeral of only their seven closest relatives: father, mother, wife, son, daughter, brother, and unmarried sister. The *Kohen Gadol* (High Priest) may not attend the funeral of even his closest relatives. Certain marital restrictions are placed on the *kohanim* (Priests).

The nation is required to honor the *kohanim*.

The physical irregularities that invalidate a Kohen from serving in the Temple are listed.

Trumah (offering), a produce tithe given to the *kohanim*, may be eaten only by *kohanim* and their household. An animal may be sacrificed in the Temple after it is eight-days-old and must be free from any physical defects.

The nation is commanded to sanctify the Name of G-d by insuring that their behavior is always exemplary, and by being prepared to surrender their lives rather than murder, engage in licentious relations or worship idols.

The special characteristics of the Shabbat and other holidays are described, and the nation is reminded not to do certain types of creative work during these holidays.

New grain may not be eaten until the omer of barley is offered in the Temple. The Torah explains the laws of preparing the oil for the menorah and baking the *lechem hapanim* (Bread of his face) in the Temple. A man blasphemes G-d and is executed as prescribed in the Torah.

SAVING LIVES,

G-d spoke to Moses, "Speak to the *kohanim*, the sons of Aaron, and say to them, "Do not defile yourselves with the dead among your people." (Leviticus 21:1)

In this verse, one of the central characteristics of the "priestly family" (the *kohanim*) is

introduced: A *kohen* is not permitted to come into contact with the dead. This *mitsvah* helps us to understand the Good Samaritan parable given by Yeshua, saying that when the man was half-dead, a *Levite* and a Kohen passed but they did not help him. Just because they did not know if the man was dead or not, so the *kohanim* did not want to take the risk to become unclean. But for Yeshua, to save a life is more important than ritual cleanness.

In another way, many Jews have seen this interdiction in connection with the immediate preceding verse which gives this prohibition: "A man or woman who is a medium or spiritist among you must be put to death. You are to stone them; their blood will be on their own heads." (Lev. 20:27) This verse discusses the punishment for alien practices which were known as *ov* "mediums" and *yid'oni*, "oracles," which involved communication with the dead. Not to be in contact with the corpses of dead people would certainly be the best way not to try to communicate with dead people. This prohibition is repeated in several verse of the Torah. "When you enter the land the L-rd your G-d is giving you, do not learn to imitate the detestable ways of the nations there. Let no one be found among you who sacrifices his son or daughter in the fire, who practices divination or sorcery, interprets omens, engages in witchcraft, or casts spells, or who is a medium or spiritist or who consults the dead." (Deut 18:9-11)

TO BE COMPLETE WITH G-D

The text of our parasha this week wants to teach that when we serve G-d we have to give the best of our service, the best possible, the most perfect things is for G-d. When we do the *motse* (blessing G-d for the meal) we must do it with a bread. However, a whole roll takes precedence over a much larger portion of a loaf of bread. Because the whole roll is not broken, it is more perfect than the large portion. The Torah says about the *kohanim* who are offering the service to G-d "They must be holy to their G-d and must not profane the name of their G-d. Because they present the offerings

made to the L-rd by fire, the food of their G-d, they are to be holy.” (Lev 21:2) and then many rules are given about their relationships with their family, with women, with others, with the offerings offered to G-d etc. And the people of Israel have to regard them with very high respect “Regard them as holy, because they offer up the food of your G-d. Consider them holy, because I the L-rd am holy — I who make you holy.” (Lev 21:8). Rabbi Zev Leff says “The Kohen is G-d’s representative and the one most directly involved in His most exalted service. He must reflect perfection, and therefore physical imperfections render a Kohen unfit for service in the Sanctuary.” Let’s remember that Yeshua is our Kohen Gadol, our High Priest and he made us priests in his kingdom, (Rev 1:6). It is an indication of what G-d is expecting from us.

7 FULL WEEKS = 49 DAYS

According to our parasha we have to “be holy” (Lev 21:2), because we are the priests of the new covenant (Rev 1:6), which means that we have been put aside by G-d for a special service, that is the right understanding of being “holy” “kadosh”.

It is interesting to notice that the people of Israel had to count 49 days before receiving the Torah, or celebrating the next feast, which is the Feast of the Weeks or Pentecost or Shavuot. “From the day after the Sabbath, the day you brought the sheaf of the wave offering, count off seven full weeks.” (Lev 23:12) After Passover or the Exodus the Torah was given on the 50th days, that is why they have to count 49 days, and then, the day after to celebrate the gift of the Torah. In the Jewish tradition, fifty represents the perfection that is why to count to 49 is linked with the number 7 (they have to count seven full weeks (7 x7). Seven is also linked to the completeness. G-d has completed his creation in seven days. However our task is to count 49 (counting the omer after the first day (Shabbat) of Pesach). But we are not capable of creating perfection (we are not able to arrive to 50). Only G-d can make something perfect (only G-d is able to give the perfect Torah and the 10th commandments on the 50th day.) All we can do is to strive towards

it. But by counting the 49 days, it is as if we counted the fiftieth also. For the fiftieth level is the automatic result of our efforts in securing the first 49. This reminds me the 70 weeks of Daniel 9. Seventy weeks is $7 \times 7 = 49 \times 10 = 490$. To count 49 in the Jewish tradition is to strive towards perfection, but never obtaining it by our work, we never arrive at 50 in our account, but to go further the number 49 in Daniel 9 is pushed 10 times (70×7), 10 means in the Jewish tradition “the minimum” before G-d. When Abraham bargained with G-d the salvation of Sodom he went down from 50 to 10, but not less than 10, going less than 10 would be indecent. So what is behind the number 490 (49×10) in the prophecy of Daniel 9? It is a time when G-d’s people goes to the right direction, towards perfection (50), but this perfection will never be reached by man there is always 1 less ($50 - 1 = 49$). If 49 is multiplied by 10 it is because this count of 49 towards perfection is the minimum required from G-d, we cannot go less than to do our best in the service of G-d. But if we go towards the perfection without attaining it, G-d will offer us the “rest” as a gift by the Messiah that is why the end of this period of 49×10 (or 70×7) days = 490 symbolic years is a Messianic period to:

1. finish transgression,
2. put an end to sin,
3. atone for wickedness,
4. bring in everlasting righteousness,
5. seal up vision and prophecy and
6. anoint the most holy

All these actions are what the Messiah has done to make this perfection part of us. It is what is called in theological terms, “Justification by Faith”. So we can thank Yeshua hamashiach for what he has done for us. Let’s rejoice with Rabbi Shaul who discovered this great truth and said “Therefore, since we have been justified (tsedaka) through faith (emunah), we have peace (shalom) with G-d through our L-rd (Adoneinu) Yeshua hamashiach, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace (Chesed) in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope (Tikva) of the glory of G-d (kavod Elohim).” (Rom 5:1-2)



IF ONLY I KNEW...

Rabbi Yitzchak said: “The Torah teaches us that when a person does a Mitzvah, he should do so with a complete and happy heart.

Had Reuven known that the Torah would record that he attempted to save Joseph from his brothers, he would have put him on his shoulders and run with him home. And if Aaron had known that the Torah would record that he would be happy when he met Moses after [was chosen], he would have come with drums and cymbals. And if Boaz had known that the prophets would record that he gave Ruth some parched grain to eat, he would have given her a royal banquet.” (Midrash - Yalkut, Shimoni Ruth 604).

G-D'S RELATION TO US

Our sages tell us that G-d's relation to us mirrors our action to Him. When one stretches forth a hand toward the mirror, the hand in the mirror extends toward the person. But when one brings their hand toward themselves, the hand in the mirror will also withdraw. Thus, when we stretch out our hand and give to the needy, G-d extends His hand toward us

DO YOU LOVE ME?

Rabbi Moshe Leib of Sassov said, “I learned the true meaning of this mitzvah from a Russian peasant.” Once I saw two peasants sitting and drinking together. One of them turned to his friend and said, “Do you love me?”

“Sure. I love you very much,” replied the other.

“In that case tell me what I'm lacking,” challenged the first.

“How should I know what you are lacking when you didn't tell me,” replied the second peasant. His friend gave a deep sigh and said, “If you do not know and feel what I am

lacking then how can you claim that you truly love me?”

Rabbi Moshe Leib explained that this taught him that true Ahavat Yisrael means to know and feel what the other person is lacking and helping them in that area.

DOG'S MOTHER NAME

“Rabbi, my pet dog is very sick and needs your blessing.” This was the heartfelt plea of a secular Jew who had come to the distinguished Torah scholar who had a reputation for invoking Heavenly mercy for sick people through his blessings and prayers.

Rather than rebuke this fellow for making such an outlandish request, the rabbi listened carefully and even expressed empathy for the dog owner's agony. He then turned to him and said: “It is customary that when we pray for someone we mention the name of that person's mother as well. If you can supply me with the name of your sick dog's mother we will then consider the question of giving you the blessing you request.”

WHO IS THE BENEFACTOR?

The Talmud relates that when giving charity, the sages would make great effort that the poor should not know who their benefactor is in order that they should not be embarrassed.

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

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HAFTARA

Ezekiel 44:15-31

HAFTARA: Although G-d has said often enough that Israel is not faithful, in this Haftara we learn that G-d still has some among his people who remain faithful to him. Among them is the family of the high priest. **“But the priests, who are Levites and descendants of Zadok and who faithfully carried out the duties of my sanctuary when the Israelites went astray from me...”** (Ez. 44:15).

It was a great privilege for this family to receive such great approval from G-d, **“They alone are to enter my sanctuary; they alone are to come near my table to minister before me and perform my service”** (Ez. 44:16).

Then the text reminds of the Priesthood rules:

- No priest shall drink wine when he enters the inner court.
- They shall not marry a widow, or a divorced woman, but only a virgin.
- They shall teach my people the difference between the holy and the common.
- They shall show them how to distinguish between the unclean and the clean.
- In a controversy they shall act as judges, and they shall decide it according to my judgments.
- This shall be their inheritance: I am their inheritance; and you shall give them no holding in Israel; I am their holding.
- Etc...

PARASHA: In the text of the parasha we have chapter 23 of Leviticus which presents the Sabbath and holy days of Israel, among them Yom Kippur, **“The L-rd spoke to Moses, saying: Now, the tenth day of this seventh month is the day of atonement; it shall be a holy convocation for you...”** (Lev. 23:27).

HAFTARA: The haftara speaks that way about the priest family because it is a reminder of the various rules and laws given to the priests and of course the rules about Yom Kippur. **“On the day he goes into the inner court of the sanctuary to minister in the sanctuary, he is to offer a sin offering for himself...”** (Ez. 44:27). It is interesting to see that among the recommendations reminded by Ezekiel to the priests it is said **“I am to be the only inheritance the priests have.”** (Ez 44:28) we belong to the L-rd.

BESORAT-YESHUA

Matthew 18:15-23

BESORAH: In this text we have some rules about the life in the Kehila of Yeshua. Each one is important for the L-rd and should be careful not to hurt anyone. But we have also to be honest with people and tell them when they are doing something wrong. Yeshua advises us **“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over.”** (Mat 18:15). But the most interesting connection between the parasha and the Besorah is certainly the count Yeshua asked Shim'on to make in forgiving people. In the kehila it can happen that people have arguments together, it could happen that some disagreements happen then what to do? Shim'on asked this question to Yeshua **“L-rd, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?”** (Matt 18:21) up to seven times? we know that in the Jewish thinking 7 is the number of completeness, as G-d has completed the creation in 7 days. 7 in the whole things, the circle is circled, that means in this context the complete forgiveness. Then Yeshua went further **“I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”** (22) more than complete forgiveness, but perfect forgiveness. 70 x 7 times is the same number we have in the prophecy of Daniel 9. 70 weeks means 70 x 7 days. and we have seen in the comment of our parasha that 7x7=49 is to go towards perfection (50) but only G-d goes to 50. Israel is invited to count the omer for 49 days and then G-d gives the 10 commandments. Rabbi Shaul said about the law of G-d: **“the law is holy and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.”** (Rom 7:12), **“We know that the law is spiritual** (14) **“I agree that the law is good.”** (16) This law which is holy, righteous, good and spiritual, can only be given by a righteous, holy and perfect G-d on the 50th days after the exodus. Then when Yeshua said 70 x 7 means great completeness, but means also 7x7x10=490 forgiveness close to the perfect forgiveness that only G-d can give.