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NEWS

IMMERSION SERVICES IN THE JORDAN RIVER

Sabbath July 10 was a great day for our congregations in Israel. It was a day in Galilee and at the Jordan River to witness the immersion of 5 people who wanted to contract a "covenant of peace" with G-d.

First we met at 10:00 am with the congregation of Afula/Nazareth for the immersion of one person, a lady who has accepted Yeshua as her mashiach with tears in her eyes. She was very thankful to G-d for all his blessings and love for her after a long life without knowing him.



Then when this congregation left, I welcomed the second one at about 11:15 am. A big congregation of about 100 people who came to encourage 5 new members from Tel Aviv and Ramat Gan to give their heart and life to G-d. It was a wonderful celebration, very well organized led by pastor John and Emmanuel, both of them having experiences for this kind of celebration and immersion. After the celebration we went to visit some biblical sites as the Mount of Beatitudes and Capernaum, places very well known but visited with pleasure.

Parashat Pinchas, Shabbat 16 July 2011 14 Tamuz 5771



Parasha

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Newsletter n° 434

THE 17TH OF TAMUZ

Next Tuesday, July 19th, will be in the Jewish calendar the 17th of Tamuz a fast day for the Jewish people. It is a special day when Jews pray and fast in a particular way. They pray and they fast because on that day according to the Jewish tradition several events occurred:

- 1) Moshe broke the first Tablets of the Ten Commandments when he descended from Mt. Sinai and saw the worshipping of the Golden Calf.
- 2) The Daily Sacrificial Offerings ceased in the First Temple due to lack of sheep.
- 3) The walls of Jerusalem were breached during the siege of the Second Temple.
- 4) A Roman, Apustumus-the-Wicked burned a Sefer Torah three weeks before the destruction of the Temple.
- 5) An idol was placed in the Sanctuary of the Second Temple.

Rabbi Packouz describes this fast in that way: "The purpose of the fast is to awaken our hearts to repentance through recalling our forefathers' misdeeds which led to tragedies and our repetition of those mistakes. The fasting is a preparation for repentance -- to break the body's dominance over a person's spiritual side. One should engage in self-examination and undertake to correct mistakes in his relationship with God, his fellow man and with himself." It is interesting at a time we are speaking so much on Revival and Transformation

OVERVIEW

PINCHAS

Numbers 25:10 - 30:1

G-d tells Moshe to inform Pinchas that Pinchas will receive G-d's "covenant of peace" as reward for his bold action - executing Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi.

G-d commands Moshe to maintain a state of enmity with the Midianites who lured the Jewish People into sin.

Moshe and Elazar are told to count the Jewish People.

The Torah lists the names of the families in each tribe. The total number of males eligible to serve in the army is 601,730.

G-d instructs Moshe how to allot the Land of Israel to Bnei Yisrael. The number of the Levites' families is recorded. Tzlofchad's daughters file a claim with Moshe: In the absence of a brother, they request their late father's portion in the Land.

Moshe asks G-d for the ruling, and G-d tells Moshe that their claim is just. The Torah teaches the laws and priorities which determine the order of inheritance.

G-d tells Moshe that he will ascend a mountain and view the Land that the Jewish People will soon enter, although Moshe himself will not enter.

Moshe asks G-d to designate the subsequent leader, and G-d selects Yehoshua bin Nun.

Moshe ordains Yehoshua as his successor in the presence of the entire nation.

The Parasha concludes with special teachings of the service in the Beit Hamikdash

PARASHA'S NAME

This week's Parasha is Pinchas. It is one of only six Parashiot which carries the name of a person. The other five are; Noach; Chayei Sarah; Yitro; Korach; Balak. Not all of them were people of G-d. Noach, Sarah, Yitro and Pinchas behaved according to the will of G-d, but not Korach and Balak.

PINCHAS THE COHEN

The Parasha begins, "G-d spoke to Moshe saying, 'Pinchas, the son of Elazar the son of Aaron the priest has turned my wrath away from the children of Israel, while he was zealous for My sake and as a result I did not consume the children of Israel... Therefore I give him My covenant of peace.'" (Leviticus 25:11-12) In last week's Parasha, the Torah describes that Pinchas risked his life when punishing the head of the tribe of Shimon who engaged in an immoral and sinful act with a Midianite woman. By killing them both, he risked his own life, but as a result, he stopped a plague which had taken the lives of 24,000 people.

G-d rewarded Pinchas by giving him G-d's covenant of peace — by making Pinchas a kohen (priest).

Rabbi Naftoli Tzvi Berlin comments: Pinchas did a zealous act that could cause someone to become aggressive even when it would not be appropriate. Therefore, the Almighty blessed him with a covenant of peace. In all other areas of his life he should be a man of peace.

Our usual state should be one of peace. Let's remember that we become molded by our behavior. If we keep acting a certain way, it becomes part of our usual personality.

There is a danger that a trait which is frequently negative and sometimes positive depending on the circumstances will be used negatively if it becomes a part of our character. To prevent this from happening with the trait of aggression, someone who has to be aggressive on occasion should go out of his way to be extremely kind and compassionate in other instances.

Rabbi Yaakov Menken says about this covenant of peace, "Peace is indeed precious, and one must be prepared to sacrifice one's rights and possessions on its behalf -- but not to sacrifice that which G-d has declared to be right and good. Peace can only be maintained when we are at peace with G-d. If someone fights those who are against Divine Goodness and Truth, explains Rabbi Hirsch, he is fighting for the Covenant of Peace.

A TRUE LEADER

When Moshe was told that he was about to die, he said to God: "Let G-d, the G-d of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation" (Numbers 17:16).

The Midrash elaborates and tells us that Moshe requested of the Almighty, "You know that the mind of one individual is not similar to that of another. Appoint a leader over the congregation who will be able to deal with every individual according to his mind" (Bamidbar Rabbah 21:15 cited by Rashi).

Rabbi Chaim Shmuelevitz commented that while a public speaker might play a major role in manipulating others, he is not a true leader. A true leader is one who understands every person individually and deals with each one accordingly.

The Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 21:2) states regarding this verse: "Just as the facial features of people are different, so too are their faculties of thought." For this reason, Moshe requested that God choose a leader who would be capable of dealing with every person according to his individual mentality.

Rav Mendel Kotzker understood that we can learn a lesson from this Midrash to avoid feuds and fights over differing opinions. By realizing that just as no one is ever disturbed by the fact that others do not have his exact facial features, we can appreciate and accept that no two people will ever agree on all matters.

RUTH THE MOABITE

The Torah states: "Attack the Midianites and kill them" (Numbers 25:17) Rashi points out that the Almighty commanded Moshe to decimate the Midianites and not the Moabites, although they were more instrumental than the Midianites in enticing Israel to sin. The Midrash explains that since Ruth, the great grandmother of King David, was destined to descend from Moav, G-d refrained from destroying them. If, in fact, Moav deserved to be destroyed, why could G-d not have orchestrated a scenario by which the majority of the nation is killed, but Ruth's existence is assured from the few who survive? Rabbi Yochanan Zweig says that "since Ruth was the progenitor of the Davidic dynasty, it was imperative that she herself descend from aristocracy and nobility; Ruth was the daughter of Eglon, King of Moav. In order for this to occur, the nation had to be preserved. If the nation had been decimated, Ruth would have stemmed from surviving refugees, making it impossible for her

to be born into a family of nobility. The benefits gained by Ruth stemming from aristocracy are twofold: 1) From the perspective of the Jewish nation, the genetic base of monarchy has already been established through her own personal standing. 2) From a universal perspective, the Messiah who will stem from the Davidic dynasty, will influence and teach all of mankind; having the infusion of a non-Jewish monarchy into the Davidic dynasty will allow for a greater universal impact." In this way we understand why Yeshua haMashiach had an universal influence and Ministry (shirut).

CHANGE IN LEADERSHIP

For forty years, Moses had fulfilled this role. During all this time, says Rabbi Neftali Reich, as he enjoyed daily prophetic encounters with G-d, Moses was constantly growing in holiness until he reached a point where he was, according to the Midrash, like an angel. Even so, whenever the people had challenged the divine will, he had fathomed their motivations and defended them. Even as he ascended from the mundane to the celestial, the gulf between him and his people had never widened to the point where he could not relate to them. Now that it was time for a change in leadership, the Almighty chose Joshua who also excelled in his sensitivity to the nuances of each individual's spirit. This was the fundamental quality that G-d wanted for a Jewish leader. Let's remember that G-d gave to Moses the privilege to be in heaven before the great day of the resurrection. That is why in Matatyahu 17:1-3 we see Yeshua glorified and speaking with Moses and Elijah, if Moses was not resurrected it would have not been possible because the Tanach says to us that those who are dead cannot not have any connection with the living. "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun." (Eccl 9:5-6)

NAPOLEON AND THE TEMPLE

The story is told of Napoleon walking through the streets of Paris one Tisha B'av (the 9th day of the Hebrew month of Av, a day of fasting and mourning for the destruction of the two Temples). As his entourage passed a synagogue he heard wailing and crying coming from within; he sent an aide to inquire as to what had happened. The aide returned and told Napoleon that the Jews were in mourning over the loss of their Temple. Napoleon was indignant! "Why wasn't I informed? When did this happen? Which Temple?" The aide responded, "They lost their Temple in Jerusalem on this date 1,700 years ago." Napoleon stood in silence and then said, "Certainly a people which has mourned the loss of their Temple for so long will survive to see it rebuilt!"

CAVIAR FOR SOLDERS

A revolutionary general was trying to revive the fighting spirit of his trapped and starving guerillas. "If we can fight our way out of this corner," he announced, "I will issue a large bonus to each man. You will have enough money to buy all the bread and meat and fruits and vegetables you need to recover your strength."

The guerillas responded to the promise. They fought like tigers and were able to break out and get away. As soon as they got to safer territory, the general, true to his word, awarded each man his bonus.

The next day, the one of the general's aides stormed into his tent. "Sir, a whole group of the men took their bonus money and wasted it!"

"Indeed?" said the general. "And what did they do?"

"Instead of buying food to rebuild their strength," the aide said furiously, "they spent all their money on tiny tins of caviar!"

The general stroked his chin thoughtfully for a few moments. "Thank you for telling

me this," he said to his aide. "It is important information. This caviar must have been very important to them if they would spend all their money on it even when they are starving and exhausted. Apparently, the men need occasional splurges of luxury to help them deal with the tensions of battle. I will make sure to provide it for them in the future."

In our own lives, as we seek to grow spiritually, we must never lose sight of the physical needs of those around us. A great sage once said, "My spiritual need is to serve the physical needs of others." There is profound spiritual fulfillment in bringing comfort and happiness to other people, even on the physical level. But in order to do so, we must be extremely sensitive and attuned, for as people are different from each other so are their needs.

WHERE IS THE MASHIACH?

The Orthodox Jewish thinker Irving Greenberg once remarked that he was ashamed that in his generation there wasn't at least one failed Mashiach. In a world this bad something's wrong when the Jews can't come up with at least one Mashiach, whether a successful Mashiach or a failed Mashiach. For Jews not to come up with even one, shows Jews have lost hope. For Jews to lose hope is more serious than a long string of failures.

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

1Kings 18:46 - 19:21

The Parasha is about Pinchas who killed Zimri and the Midianite princess Kozbi. "The name of the slain Israelite man, who was killed with the Midianite woman, was Zimri son of Salu, head of an ancestral house belonging to the Simeonites. The name of the Midianite woman who was killed was Cozbi daughter of Zur, who was the head of a clan, an ancestral house in Midian. " (Num. 25:14-15). G-d congratulated Pinchas for his action. The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: "Phinehas son of Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, has turned back my wrath from the Israelites... Therefore say, 'I hereby grant him my covenant of peace. (Num. 25:10-12).

The haftara reminds us of the story of Elijah who did great deeds as Pinchas did. Elijah killed the priests of Baal. "But the hand of the LORD was on Elijah; he girded up his loins and ran in front of Ahab to the entrance of Jezreel. Ahab told Jezebel all that Elijah had done, and how he had killed all the prophets with the sword. (1Kings 18:46-19:1). However, the leadership of Israel at the time of Elijah was not faithful to G-d. The queen wanted to kill Elijah, not to reward him. "Then Jezebel sent a messenger to Elijah, saying, "So may the gods do to me, and more also, if I do not make your life like the life of one of them by this time tomorrow." (1Kings 19:2). No prophet like Moses was there to protect Elijah and he was afraid of the reaction of Jezebel, the cruel queen. Then he was afraid; he got up and fled to save his his life, . . . he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a solitary broom tree. He asked that he might die: "It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life, for I am no better than my ancestors." (1Kings 19:3-4) Elijah was a great man. He was one who had the privilege of going to heaven without first dying, but he was a human being and became depressed. He slept and during his sleep God spoke to him through an angel: "Then he lay down under the broom tree and fell asleep. Suddenly an angel touched him and said to him, "Get up and eat.'" (1Kings 19:5). What a great encouragement for us; the Lord is taking care of us too. From time to time we might think that we alone are faithful to G-d. Elijah had the same feeling, but G-d told him that there was a remnant of 7,000 who also were faithful.

BRIT HACHADASHA

Matthew 17:1-9

This text of the Besorah is the apparition of Moses and Elijah to Yeshua and some talmidim two thousand years ago. "There he [Yeshua] was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light. Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Yeshua." (2-3).

But there is a problem in this text: according to the Bible "the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing; they have no further reward, and even the memory of them is forgotten. Their love, their hate and their jealousy have long since vanished; never again will they have a part in anything that happens under the sun." (Eccl. 9:5-6). Let's consider carefully the biblical text, it is written that the dead: **1.** know nothing. **2.** They have no further reward. **3.** Even their memory is forgotten. **4.** Their feelings (love, hate, jealousy...) does not exist. **5.** They will never appear to any living person. It is clear here that the person who dies, does not keep a conscience of what happens on the earth and is not yet in the presence of God, there is no immortal soul in the Bible. The Biblical promise is not the immortality of the soul but the resurrection of the death at the end, when the Mashiach will come back. This promise was given to the prophet Daniel "As for you, go your way till the end. You will rest, and then at the end of the days you will rise to receive your allotted inheritance." (Daniel 12:13). It is also said in the 13th principle of Maimonides which is considered as the profession of faith of Israel with the Shema' Israel. Then the question is: how then Moses who died in the mount Nebo can appear to Yeshua and speak to him. The only explanation is that God gave a tremendous privilege to Moses the main and greatest prophet of the Bible, who had the privilege to speak mouth to mouth with G-d, to raise up right after his death. That is why nobody could attend the funeral of Moses. And it is exactly what Yehuda, (Yeshua's brother) said in his letter "But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, 'The Lord rebuke you!' (Jude 9). When Michael wanted to raise the body of Moses up and to take it to heaven, Satan tried to stop him, because Moses did a great sin when he disobeyed G-d, but Michael received his order from G-d, and so he did what G-d asked him to do. So, it is perfectly right that Moses who was resurrected and Elijah who did not die (2 Kings 2:11) could appear to Yeshua and speak with him.