



Parashat Va'ethanan, Shabbat 13 August 2011

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NEWS

NORTH AMERICAN JEWISH ADVISORY

After being in Las Vegas for some trainings I have travelled to Sacramento for the North American Division Jewish Advisory, this advisory is always interesting because we meet many people from all over the States, and we receive news about the Jewish-Adventist ministries in North America (USA and Canada). 25 congregations are meeting in the territory of the NAD, many of them are small but they are doing a wonderful work, more than 500 people worship every Sabbath in these congregations.

One of the main topic discussed during this advisory was the future of a new project which will replace the magazine Shabbat Shalom. In fact Shalom will be replaced by two main initiatives, 1. A website called "Shalomadventure.org" which will be launch hopefully around the 15th of September and secondly a scholar magazine, which could be edited by a team led by Dragan Stojanovic, Executive Secretary of the Canadian Union. We hope and pray that these two initiatives will be successful.

ASI NATIONAL CONVENTION

The ASI convention is now behind us and I would like to praise the Lord for the work that was done there. This convention was held in Sacramento, CA from August 3-6. More than 3,000 people attended the worship and the offering reached the objective getting more than US\$2 million.



A lot of contacts have been established with people interested in the Jewish ministry. Hundreds of Shabbat Shalom magazines and tracts have been distributed and I am sure that this work will bear fruit even though Shabbat is not anymore published. We have to be patient and to share HIM with Jews. We know that the Lord has his own schedule for a strong revival among the Jewish people. Today we have only to prepare our own people to be ready for the time of the big harvest. Let's continue to pray for this ministry and the Jewish people all over the world.

ISRAELI ATHLETE

We are proud to account among our members in Israel an athlete, Dima Kreuter, The youth athletic club of Israel is counting on him for future victories. He is a champion in high jump competition. When he was 16, he won a gold medal at the International Association of Athletics Federations World Youth Championships held in Italy. And last year he participated to the Youth Olympic Games in Singapore for Israel from August 14 to 26 and won the Gold medal, jumping 2m19.

He is again selected this year for a new international competition, We hope that he will continue to succeed.

OVERVIEW

VA'ETCHANAN

Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11

Parasha

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Newsletter

Although Moshe is glad that Yehoshua will lead the nation, Moshe nevertheless prays to enter the Land of Israel in order to enjoy the promise land after the last forty years of hard work. Hashem refuses.

Moshe reminds Israel of the gathering at Sinai when they received the Torah—that they saw no visual representation of the Divine, but only the sound of words.

Moshe impresses on the people of Israel that the Sinai revelation took place before an entire nation, not to a select elite, and that only the God's people will ever claim that Hashem spoke to their entire nation.

Moshe specifically enjoins Israel to “pass over” the Sinai event to their children throughout all generations.

Moshe predicts, accurately, that when the people dwell in the land of Israel they will sin and be scattered among all the peoples.

They will stay few in number but will eventually return to Hashem.

Moshe designates three “refuge cities” to which an inadvertent killer may flee.

Moshe repeats the Ten Commandments and then teaches the Shema, “**Shema Israel Adonai, Elohenu, Adonai Echad**”, the central credo of Judaism, that there is only One G-d.

Moshe warns the people not to succumb to materialism and thus forget their purpose as a spiritual nation. The parasha ends with Moshe exhorting the people of Israel not to intermarry when they enter the land of Israel, as they cannot be a treasured and holy nation if they intermarry, and they will become indistinguishable from the other nations.

MOSHE'S PRAYER

Moshe wanted to enter the land of Israel, but the Almighty did not allow him to. The Torah states that Moshe said: “**And I prayed to the Almighty at that time saying...**”

(Deut 3:23). One of the Jewish ways of understanding the Torah is through gematria—examining the numerical values of words. What do we learn from the numerical value (515) of the first word of the verse, “Va’etchanan” (“and I prayed”) If something is important enough to you, you must persist in order to succeed. Yeshua taught us about perseverance in prayer by giving a parable: “**In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, ‘Grant me justice against my opponent.’ For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, ‘Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.’”** (Luke 18:1-7). The case of Moshe is very special. Because when we read this text we think that G-d did not answer positively to him even though he prayed 515 times on this same topic. However in fact. God answered him positively but his answer was — “Not now, later”. When we analyze the request of Moshe we understand that he wanted to enter the Promised Land or paradise after forty years of hard work. But the promised land of Canaan was not paradise. The work was not finished when they reached Jericho, the conquest of the land had just started. That’s why G-d wanted to give a better answer to Moshe. He wanted to give him the real paradise. Then when it was time for Moshe to die, G-d said to him that nobody had to attend his death. “**On that very day the LORD addressed Moses as follows: “Ascend this mountain of the Abarim, Mount Nebo, which is in the land of Moab, across from Jericho, and view the land of Canaan, which I am giving to the Israelites for a possession; you shall die there on the mountain that you ascend and shall be gathered to your kin, (Deut. 32:48-50)** The reason is that Moshe had no need to be buried by human beings. Moshe died and was resurrected immediately to go to paradise. “**Then Moses, the servant of the LORD, died there in the land of Moab, at the LORD’S command. He was buried in a valley in the land of Moab, opposite Beth-peor, but no one knows his burial place to this day.”** (Deut. 34:5-6). The Brit Hachadasha helps us to understand a very important point about the death of Moshe. We learned that the very special angel called Mikael came to take Moshe to heaven, even though Satan was not happy. “**But when the archangel Mikael contended with the**

devil and disputed about the body of Moses, he did not dare to bring a condemnation of slander against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!" (Jude 9). Then Moshe finally got what he was asking for in his prayer. The "Promised land" or He was looking for paradise to rest. He got Eternal rest in heaven in the presence of God and a very few human beings such as Enoch who did not die (Gen. 5:24) and later they were joined by Elijah the prophet who did not die either (2Kings 2:11). That is why on the day of the transfiguration of Yeshua we see Moses and Elijah speaking with the Messiah about his death.

SHEMA ISRAEL

This parasha affirms the great confession of Israel, there is only one G-d. G-d gave to Israel the mission to affirm monotheism. "Shema Israel Adonai, Eloheinu, Adonai Echad", the central credo of Judaism, that there is only One G-d.

But this truth is repeated several times in the parasha.

"To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other beside him. From heaven he made you hear his voice, that he might instruct you; and upon earth he showed you his great fire; and you heard his words out of the midst of the fire." (Deut. 4:35-36)

"Know therefore this day, and consider it in your heart, that the Lord is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath; there is no other." (Deut. 4:39)

In the text of the Ten Commandments, we read: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery." (Deut. 5:6)

"Know therefore that the Lord your God, he is God, the faithful God, which keeps covenant and mercy with those who love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations." (Deut. 7:9)

G-d gives careful instruction to Israel, to avoid idolatry, that is why the text of this parasha say to Israel that they must worship only G-d, the G-d of earth and heaven.

GRATITUDE

The Torah states: "When you beget children and grandchildren and will become old in the Land, you will grow corrupt and make an idol, the image of anything, and you will do evil in the eyes of the Almighty, your God, to anger Him"

(Deut. 4:25). The Hebrew word, *noshantem*, from *Yashan* "to be old." If one becomes accustomed to what he has, then he no longer appreciates it. If he no longer appreciates it, he no longer feels a sense of gratitude to the Almighty. And without a sense of gratitude, a person will not only neglect his obligations to God, but can turn against Him.

Rabbi Packouz says that "The same principle applies in our relationships with our fellow human beings. Therefore, we must always focus anew upon our possessions and the favors we have received. Each day look at your possessions as if you just received them that very day. This will ensure gratitude. This will enhance our lives and those around us!"

MEZUZAH

In the secular world, a person has a right to his privacy, and no authority can dictate to him what to do behind his doors. The manner in which a person makes it be known that his house is under his control is by placing his name on either the door or door post. By placing a mezuzah on his door post (Deut 6:9), man is affixing G-d's name upon his home, thereby submitting to G-d that He is the authority of his home. Leaving a mezuzah behind when vacating a premises is an affirmation that this is G-d's home. A person who removes the mezuzah is denying Hashem's control over his home.

The mezuzah functions to make a home "G-d's home". Therefore, the object of the mitzva becomes the home, not the name affixed to it. Consequently, the mitzva is defined by the door post of the house.

Sources: These comments of the parasha are based on comments published by Rabbi Zalmen Pakouz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Rabbi Ari Kahn, Rabbi Noson Weisz, and Rabbi Avigdor Bonchek, from Aish HaTorah (Aish.com). By Rabbi Naftali Reich, Rabbi Berel Wein and Rabbi Yochanan Zweig, Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Torah.org (Project Genenis). By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair from Ohr Somayach, by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky. and Rabbi Zalmen Marozov.

COMFORT FROM RABBIS

How rabbis were able to find comfort even at the time and in the events of the destruction of Jerusalem.

Once Rabbi Gamliel, Rabbi Eliezer ben Azariah, Rabbi Yehoshua and Rabbi Akiva were traveling to Rome. From a distance, they heard the noise of the city. Three of the Rabbis began to weep, while Rabbi Akiva laughed.

"Why are you laughing?" they asked.

"Why are you crying?" Rabbi Akiva responded.

"These people destroyed our Holy Temple and worship idols. Yet they are living peacefully, while our Holy Temple, the House of G-d, lies in ashes.. How can we not cry?"

"That is exactly the reason I am laughing," answered Rabbi Akiva. "If people who transgressed G-d's will receive such goodness, imagine how much more good will G-d give those who obey Him and fulfill His Torah and mitzvot!"

On another occasion, the four rabbis were walking to Jerusalem. Upon reaching Mount Tzofim, they saw the site of the destroyed Holy Temple from the distance. At that point, they tore their clothes in mourning, as Jewish law dictates. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox roaming where the Temple once stood.

Three of the rabbis began to weep, while Rabbi Akiva laughed.

"Why are you laughing?" they protested.

"Why are you crying?" Rabbi Akiva replied.

"We see the most holy spot of the Beth Hamikdash, where at one time no one except the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) could enter, and then only on Yom Kippur, now foxes are roaming there! How can we not cry?"

Rabbi Akiva answered, "This is the reason I am laughing! When I see that the prophecies of destruction were fulfilled to the fullest, I am encouraged and confident that the prophecies such as, 'There will come a time

when old men and women will sit peacefully in the streets of Jerusalem' - which state that good times will come, will surely be fulfilled and come true."

The other rabbis said to Rabbi Akiva, "Akiva you have comforted us! Akiva you have comforted us!"

Our sages in the Talmud tell that Alexander the Great asked the sages, "Who is a wise person?" They replied, "One who sees the future!" Thus, while we mourn for the destruction of the Beth HaMikdash we must also see the future

- the coming of Mashiach when the Beth HaMikdash will be rebuild and good will be in abundance.

MAKE ME A COHEN

The story is told of a man who came to his rabbi with a request. "Make me a Cohen!" The rabbi was puzzled because a person acquires the designation of Cohen through paternal heredity -- only if his father was a Cohen. He replied to the man, "I am sorry; I can't make you a Cohen." Before the rabbi could explain, the man insisted, "You have got to make me a Cohen; I'll give you \$10,000!" The rabbi again apologized that he couldn't help him and started to explain, but the man interrupted again to raise the offer \$25,000. In exasperation the rabbi asks, "Why is it so important for you to be a Cohen?" The man replies, "Because my father was a Cohen, his father was a Cohen and my great-grandfather was a Cohen!"

EDITOR

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

Isaiah 40:1-20

This Shabbat is the first Shabbat after Tisha B'Av. It is called, "Shabbat Nachmu" ("Shabbat of comfort"), as the Haftarah of this week begins with the words "**Nachmu Nachmu Ami**" - "**Comfort, comfort, my people.**" There are seven weeks from Tisha B'Av until Rosh Hashana. This period is called, "Shiva D'nechemta" — "Seven weeks of comfort." These seven Haftarot are prophecies of comfort and hope for Israel and God's people at large.

Haftara: The root of the Hebrew word for comfort "**Nachem**", **nun-chet-mem** can refer to comforting the nation as well as to comforting an individual after the death of a loved one.

If the people of Israel are to be comforted, it is because the Lord is coming very soon. The text says, A voice rings out: "**Clear in the desert a road for the LORD! Level in the wilderness a highway for our God! Let every valley be raised, every hill and mount made low. Let the rugged ground become level and the ridges become a plain. The Presence of the LORD shall appear, and all flesh, as one, shall behold — For the LORD Himself has spoken**" (Is. 40:3-5 JPS).

It is interesting to notice that the Brit Hachadasha, which is an interpretation made 2000 years ago applied this text to the coming of the Mashiach. "**This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said, 'The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight'**" (Matt. 3:3). Matatyahu spoke about Yochanan HaMatbil who prepared the way of Yeshua in the desert near Jericho. What is interesting is that the brit Hachadasha did not apply **verse 5, 'The Presence of the LORD shall appear, And all flesh, as one, shall behold,'** (JPS) to Yochanan because this part of the verse will be applicable only at the end of time for the definitive presence or coming of the Mashiach, what we call the Second Coming of the Mashiach. Then all flesh (from everywhere in the world) shall behold.

Then we will see the real comfort and consolation of Israel. As it is written, "**That her iniquity is expiated; for she has received at the hand of the LORD double for all her sins**" (Is. 40:2). They have been pardoned for all their sins and they will enjoy eternal rest. Our mission today is to comfort Israel and to prepare Jerusalem for that great day, "**Nachmu Nachmu Ami**" - "**Comfort, comfort, my people.**" (Isaie 40:1

BRIT HACHADASHA

Luke 18:1-7

The parasha teaches us perseverance in prayer, especially Moses praying for entering the promised land. Perseverance is one of the characteristics of the people of G-d (Rev 14:12). In our text of the Besorah, Yeshua teaches us about perseverance in prayer by giving a parable. He introduced this parable with these words "**Then Yeshua told his disciples a parable to show them that they should always pray and not give up.**" (Luke 18:1) then he gave the story "**In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.'**" And the Lord said, "**Listen to what the unjust judge says. And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them?**" (Luke 18:1-7).

This topic of perseverance in prayer is very important for our spiritual life and for our faith. Yeshua knew that less and less people will pray just before his coming as the Mashiach Ben David. He even asked a question to his talmidim "**when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?**" (Luke 18:8) What a great question for each one of us! Why do we go to schul (synagogue in Yiddish) every Shabbat? Do we do it just by habit or by faith? Do we go to our Beth-Knesset (synagogue in Hebrew) to please our rabbi, pastor, members of our family or because we have faith in Hashem and want to worship the only one G-d of the universe?

Yeshua was clear on his expectation for the end of time in his speech on the last days, he said "**but he who stands firm to the end will be saved.**" (Matt 24:13) Do we want to be part of the saved? Then let's stand firm until the end.