



*Parashat Re'eb,
Shabbat 27 August 2011
27 Ab 5771*

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NEWS

ROSH HASHANA IS COMING

We know that the main festive season for the Jewish people are the months of September and October with the Autumn Feasts of Rosh Hashana (Jewish New Year) biblical Feast of the Trumpets, the starting of the Judgement. Then ten days after, it is Yom Kippur (the day of Atonement) end of the Judgement. And on the fifteenth day of the month start the Tabernacles' feast called in Hebrew Succoth.

This year the feast are late, because it is a special year with 13th months. Thus this year Rosh hashana will be on Tuesday September 29. Erev Chag (eve of the feast) will be on the evening of the 28th.

Even though Rosh Hashana is the celebration of the New Year, there is nothing in common between the Jewish celebration and the pagan celebration of the new year on the January 1. The essence of Rosh Hashana is to recognize that G-d is King, Creator, Sustainer and Supervisor of the world. The Jewish goal for the new year celebration is to renew their commitment to the Almighty. They are accountable and must discover where they have to transform their physical and spiritual life in order to please the Almighty.

- What are we living for?
- Are our actions leading us towards our goals or away from our goals?
- What can we do better?
- What goal would be more worthy to live for?
- If we have trouble identifying what is important to live for, then we can ask ourselves, "What would I die for?" Then, instead of dying for it, live for it!

ISRAEL FIELD CAMP MEETING

It has been several years now, the Seventh-day Adventists in Israel organize a camp meeting during the time of the Fall Feasts. This year it will be organized during the feast of Rosh Hashana. From September 28 to October 1. Four days of joy, fellowship, and spiritual reflection. The theme of this year is about "Family Life" the guest speakers will be Clair and John Sanches, Trans-European Division family life's Directors. This camp meeting will be held in a beautiful kibbutz, located on the Judean hills, "Neve Shalom" where is a nice swimming pool and good facilities. Maybe some our readers would like to join us, it is still possible to register, send an email to Nina at ninaus@netvision.net.il. The cost of the stay is per person full board Single room: 430 shekels, Double room: 320 shekels.

FRENCH CAMP MEETING

I have the privilege to participate this week to the camp meeting organized by the North-French Conference. This camp meeting is held from August 22 to 28 in the country side of France. Many guest speakers have been invited and 14 workshops are led every day. Of course I have been invited to lead the workshop on the Jewish ministry. The attendance is composed of 300 people from all over the country. Since I am in middle of this event, I will give more information about it next week.



OVERVIEW

RE'EH

Deuteronomy 11:26 - 16:17

Moshe presents to the nation the blessing of a spiritually oriented life, and the curse of becoming disconnected from Hashem.

When the nation enters Eretz Yisrael they must burn down any trees that had been used for idol-worship, and destroy all idolatrous statues.

Hashem will choose only one place where the Divine Presence will dwell. Offerings may be brought only there; not to a private altar.

Moshe repeatedly warns against eating animal blood. In the desert, all meat was slaughtered in the Mishkan, but in Eretz Yisrael meat may be shechted anywhere.

Moshe lists the categories of food that may only be eaten in Jerusalem.

He warns the nation against copying ways of the other nations.

Since the Torah is complete and perfect, nothing may be added or subtracted from it.

If a "prophet" tells the people to permanently abandon a Torah law or indulge in idol worship, he is to be put to death. One who entices others to worship idols is to be put to death. A city of idolatry must be razed.

It is prohibited to show excessive signs of mourning, such as marking the skin or making a bald spot.

Moshe reiterates the classifications of kosher and non-kosher food and the prohibition of cooking meat and milk.

Produce of the second tithe must be eaten in Jerusalem, and if the amount is too large to carry, it may be exchanged for money with which food is bought in Jerusalem. In certain years this tithe is given to the poor.

Bnei Yisrael are instructed to always be open-hearted, and in the seventh year any loans must be discounted -- Hashem will bless the person in all ways.

A Jewish bondsman is released after six years, and must be sent away with generous provisions. If he refuses to leave, his ear is

pierced with an awl at the door post and he remains a bondsman until the Jubilee year.

The Parasha ends with a description of the three pilgrimage festivals of Pesach, Shavuot and Succot

NEVER GIVE UP HOPE

The Torah states: "After the Almighty, your God, shall you walk, and Him shall you fear, and His commandments you shall observe and to His voice shall you hearken, and Him shall you serve and to Him shall you cleave" (Deuteronomy 13:5). Rabbi Pakouz says on behalf of The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, that the Hebrew word for "after" is *acharai* which denotes a far distance. He asks, "Since this verse tells us to follow the Almighty, why didn't the Torah use a term denoting closeness since we should be as close as possible to the Almighty?"

Rabbi Kagan explains that the Torah uses a term denoting distance to tell us that regardless of how far a person feels he is from the Almighty, he should never give up hope. With all of his power he should strive to come closer to the Almighty and he will find Him. Never despair and never allow any faults or transgressions to prevent you from coming closer to the Almighty.

ORAL LAW

Rabbi Pakouz tells us why the Jewish people believe that some material of the Talmud or the oral law are from Moses time, he says "One of the indications of the existence and necessity of the Oral Torah -an explanation and clarification (later redacted as the Talmud) of the written Torah (The Five Books of Moses) - comes from **Deut 12:21: "You will slaughter animals ... according to the manner I (God) have prescribed."** Nowhere in the Torah are we instructed in the manner of *shechita*, ritual slaughter. One might conclude that there was a very sloppy editor. Or -one might conclude that there are additional teachings clarifying and amplifying the written Word." this additional teaching was the "oral law" or Talmud.

SABBATICAL YEAR

The Torah states: "At the end of seven years, you shall institute a shemittah (sabbatical year)." (Deut 15:1) Rabbi Mordechai Gifter

related that during a shemittah year, the Ponevezher Rav zt'l once walked over to a tree, gave it a hug and a kiss, and said, "Happy Shabbat to you." :-)

Rabbi Yissocher Frand says that Using his dynamic style, the Ponevezher Rav taught us the amazing concept of shemittah. For an entire year, all the fields and orchards in the Land of Israel experience a Shabbat similar to the Shabbat we experience once a week. If we are fortunate enough to be in the Land of Israel during shemittah we should feel the holiness coming onto the Land just as we feel the holiness of Shabbat.

THE CHOSEN PEOPLE

One of the reasons of Anti-Semitism is the fact that the Jewish people was considered or considered themselves as the chosen people. This affirmation should not surprise us, if we ask Muslims and Christians each one of them will affirm that they are the chosen people. If a group of people organizes itself as a religious group, it is because they believe that they have been chosen by G-d for a special purpose.

The Bible does not speak about Muslims, but speak about the Jewish people and the Christians. The text of the parasha says why G-d has chosen Israel: **"You are a nation consecrated to G-d your L-rd. G-d has chosen you from all nations on the face of the earth to be His own special nation"** (Deut. 14:1-2). The Jews themselves understand that is not a privilege but a responsibility, Rabbis say: "We are chosen for responsibility, not privilege—to act morally and to be a "light unto the nations." The fact that some Jews do not believe in G-d, some others are seculars or very liberal does not change the fact that the Jewish religious people are aware of their spiritual responsibility and suffer for the sins of Israel.

These people among the Jews who suffer because of the sins of their people are as the prophet Daniel who suffered too and pronounced a very moving praying in the chapter 9. These people need comfort, that is why the prophet Isaiah says: **"Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and proclaim to her that her hard service has been completed, that her sin has been paid for"** (Isaiah 40:2) When we know the plan of G-d for his people it is clear that G-d provided it also for the people of Israel (the pronoun 'our' is clear) **"But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us**

peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5). If it is not clear that it was an individual who died for the people of Israel, the text says also: **"For he was cut off from the land of the living; for the transgression of my people (Mipasha' 'ami) he was stricken."** (Isaiah 53:8). When Yeshua came, the people of Israel was waiting for him, that is why it is written **"The next day Yochanan saw Yeshua coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of G-d, who takes away the sin of the world! (Jn 1:29).** Rabbi Shaul said to the people of Israel: **"From this man's descendants [king David] G-d has brought to Israel the Savior Yeshua, as he promised."** (Act 13:23) Israel has been called by G-d to be a light to the nations. What a blessing and a light would be Israel if they could recognize the blessings of the Messiah Yeshua. According to the prophets of Israel, they will recognize him very soon: **"Afterward the Israelites will return and seek the LORD their God and David their king. They will come trembling to the LORD and to his blessings in the last days."** (Hosea 3:5) We are in these *last days*, that is why I am convinced it will happen very soon. This miracle will be possible because of the action of the Ruach Elohim in the heart of the Jews. The prophet Zechariah affirms: **"And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, the one they have pierced, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a firstborn son."** (Zec 12:10). May our Lord make this day coming very soon.

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 Genesis). By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair from Ohr Somayach, by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky. and Rabbi Zalmen Marozov.

WATER IN ABUNDANCE

One of the commandments of this parasha Re'eh says "Be sure to set aside a tenth of all that your fields produce each year." Deut 14:22. Giving tithes is a blessing. Two stories from the Talmud of Jerusalem:

Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair once came to a city where the people complained, "We have a well that supplied us with enough water for all our needs. However, lately, it doesn't give as much water as it used to and we are in dire need of water."

Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair said to them, "Perhaps, you are being punished measure for measure because you are not giving proper tithes from your produce!" The people realized that they were indeed lax in the giving of tithes and took the sage's words to heart. They were now careful with their tithes and the well again gave water in abundance as before.

MICE IN ABUNDANCE

Another Talmudic story: Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair came to a city and the people of the city complained that they had a plague of mice who were devouring all of their produce.

Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair, with his G-dly powers, decreed that the mice come before him. They came in droves and screeched loudly. Rabbi Pinchas asked the people whether they understand what the mice were saying. The people replied, "No."

Rabbi Pinchas said to them, "They are saying that you are not tithing the produce as prescribed by the Torah and thus they have the right to eat it!"

The people of the city realized their mistake and promised to better their ways. "Rabbi, guarantee us that if we give proper tithes the mice will leave us alone." Rabbi Pinchas promised them and as soon as the townspeople began giving proper tithes, the problem with the mice was over!

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

The following story is found in the Jerusalem Talmud: Rabbi Eliezer was very charitable. Once when Rabbi Eliezer was not home some poor people came and were fed and left. When Rabbi Eliezer returned he was told that the poor people ate and, before leaving, they blessed him. Rabbi Eliezer said, "In this case, there is not much reward for this mitzvah." On another occasion, Rabbi Eliezer was told that some poor people said derogatory things about him after they ate. "In this case," said Rabbi Eliezer, "the reward for the mitzvah is great!"

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. Similarly, the story is told of a blind person who had a small stand near the rabbi's home where he would sell baked goods.

Once, as the rabbi walked past the stand, he heard the blind man bemoan his difficult situation. From then on the rabbi would each day buy all his merchandise.

"If you're going to buy all his baked goods anyway, wouldn't it be better to just give him the amount each week as charity?" someone asked the rabbi. "Then he wouldn't have to come out to his stand and you wouldn't have to pretend that you are buying his goods!"

The rabbi replied, "Now the blind person feels that he is running a successful business. As a result, he feels good about himself. Is it not enough that he has lost his eye sight, do you want him to feel badly that he is taking charity, too?"

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Isaiah 54:11-55:5

This Shabbat is the third Shabbat after *Tisha B'Av*. We are in a period called *Shiva D'nechemta*—“Seven weeks of comfort.” The seven *Haftarot* of the weeks between *Tish'a B'av* and *Rosh Hashana* are prophecies of comfort and hope for Israel and God's people at large.

Haftara: The text of Isaiah continues to comfort Israel. It is not the time to make Israel feel guilty, but to build her up with the most precious stones. “O afflicted one, storm-tossed, and not comforted, I am about to set your stones in antimony, and lay your foundations with sapphires. I will make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of jewels, and all your wall of precious stones” (Is. 54:11-12). A wonderful promise is made when G-d says that he will teach the children of Israel himself. “All your children shall be taught by the LORD, and great shall be the prosperity of your children” (13). This text reminds me of the promise made in Zechariah. “And I will pour out a spirit of compassion and supplication on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that, when they look on the one whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him, as one mourns for an only child, and weep bitterly over him, as one weeps over a firstborn” (Zech 12:10). G-d will pour out his Spirit on Israel and will teach them about the Messiah who has been pierced.

Israel has suffered. She has been persecuted by those who should be the first to show love. In order not to feel guilty, they say that all these sufferings came from G-d because of Israel's rejection of the Messiah. But the Lord said “If anyone stirs up strife, it is not from me; whoever stirs up strife with you shall fall because of you” (15). It is not from the Lord. That is a great comfort for Israel. It is better to be on the side of God. That is why it is better not to curse Israel, and not to build any weapon against her. “No weapon that is fashioned against you shall prosper, and you shall refute every tongue that rises against you in judgment. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD and their vindication from me, says the LORD” (17). The next chapter is a new call from the Lord to Israel. “Incline your ear, and come to me; listen, so that you may live. I will make with you an everlasting covenant, my steadfast, sure love for David” (Is. 53:3). Paul confirms this with “as regards election they are beloved” (Rom 11:28).

BRIT HACHADASHA

1 Peter 2:1-10

In the parasha, we have seen that Israel has been chosen by God. “You are a nation consecrated to G-d your L-rd. G-d has chosen you from all nations on the face of the earth to be His own special nation ...” (Deut. 14:1-2). And the Jewish people consider this election as a responsibility in the world and not only a privilege. There is no racism in this affirmation. As we read the text of the *Brit Hachadasha* for today we can see that God has given the same responsibility to the *Kehilah* of Yeshua. In it, it is written “But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” (1 Peter 2:9) That means Israel and the church share the same responsibility, no one would replace the other. No, it is a continuation of the same mission, Israel has been chosen as a kingdom of *Cohanim*, the *Kehilah* is “a royal priesthood”. Once again when Israel or the church say that they have been “chosen”, or “elected” by G-d it is not a racist statement but an acceptance of a calling. G-d called Israel and the Church to fulfill a mission, it is calling for a purpose. If the purpose of Israel is to be a “light to the nation” The purpose of the *kehilah* of Yeshua is to “declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light” that means to preach, to announce the goodness, the mercy, and the love of G-d who shows us the great light of the Messiah Yeshua. Yes before we were in darkness, but today we have seen the light of G-d and we are invited to share this wonderful light and love of G-d with everyone. And the election of Israel is not only for them but for everyone who accept the covenant with G-d. We have seen that in the Bible with the acceptance of Rahab, Ruth, etc. inside of the people of Israel. It is the same with the *kehilah* of Yeshua, we are called to share the goodness of G-d and his love with everyone, and everyone in the world can join the *kehilah*, can be part of these blessings and can benefit of the goodness and the love of G-d. It is not difficult, just to say to Yeshua that we believe that he is the Mashiach.