



*Parashat Ki-Tavo,
Shabbat 17 September 2011
18 Elul 5771*

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NEWS

NEW JEWISH-ADVENTIST SIDDUR AND SONG BOOKS

We received a news from David Barzola about his new edition of the *siddur*. "When the Jewish Adventist Community of Buenos Aires began in 2000 we had no prayer book. Thus we started to work on a project to provide a *siddur* to our communities in Argentina. On the following five years we produced three different samples and finally in 2006 we published our first edition called *Sefer Tefilot*. Using it, we progressively discovered its weakness and strengths. Over the following five years we continued to work on this project editing the first edition, improving it and today we are happy to publish the 2011 edition.

Our Jewish-Adventist congregation is a cross-cultural community. Our members are European Jews (*Ashkenazi*), Eastern Jews (*Sephardi*), Jews who have lost their Jewish identity and culture, Adventist-Jews, Non-Jews married to a Jewish spouse etc. Thus when we decided to publish a prayer book we wanted to fit all kind of Jews and non-Jews of our congregation and to be sure that everyone would feel comfortable during the worship.

Jewish worship is very different of Adventist worship. Most of the time, Adventists, follow the Protestant or Evangelical pattern of worship, where the order is very much fixed, singing hymns, praying spontaneously, reading the bible and listening to the pastor or elder who deliver a sermon. Whereas the synagogue service is much more oriented to singing and praying ancient texts, from the Bible or written by some wise (*chacham*) people of the ancient time. These Biblical texts are gathered together in order to raise our mind to God, to glorify his

name and to worship him in the pure sense of the term. From time to time a silent prayer is proposed, but most of the prayers are written.

Our *Sefer Tefilot* is composed by a number of traditional Jewish songs and prayers, which help those who are new in this kind of worship and is contextualized for Jews who come from a traditional synagogue and like to find their traditional songs on Shabbat worship. Even though traditional Jews don't play music instruments on Shabbat, many Jewish musicians have composed melodies for the different sections of the traditional Jewish *siddur* (prayer book). Thus our *Sefer Tefilot* is a collection of Jewish traditional songs and Adventist hymns. After many tries, we found that this form of worship is the most appreciated by our members (Jews and non-Jews). The tunes and songs collected for this *Sefer Tefilot* are from different sources: Middle Eastern, Sephardic, Ashkenazi, traditional and modern, from rabbinical libraries, internet, and even from the memory of people.

Professor Cynthia Wainz compiled and arranged 1226 scores. These scores are in three volumes with 1760 pages in total. All Hebrew texts have Spanish phonetics and we already have started to prepare an English edition of this material. The price of the *Sefer Tefilot* is US\$18. The music edition is much more expensive, because we have printed only few copies. Everyone can buy them for US\$73 the volume or US\$ 219 the set of three volumes.

***Chag Sameach Ve
Shana Tova to every
one. Happy New Year***

OVERVIEW

KI-TAVO

Deuteronomy 26:1-29:18

Parasha

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Newsletter

When the children of Israel dwell in the Land of Israel, its first fruits are to be taken to the Temple and given to the kohen in a ceremony expressing recognition that it is G-d who guides the history of the Jewish People throughout all ages.

This text forms one of the central parts of the *Haggadah* that we read at the *Passover Seder*. On the last day of *Pesach* of the fourth and seventh years of the seven-year *shemitta* (jubilee) cycle, a person must recite a disclosure stating that he has indeed distributed the tithes to the appropriate people in the prescribed manner. With this mitzvah Moshe concludes the commandments that G-d has told him to give to the Israel.

Moshe exhorts them to walk in G-d's ways, because they are set aside as a treasured people to G-d.

When Israel cross the Jordan River they are to make a new commitment to God and the Torah.

Huge stones are to be erected and the Torah is to be written on them (according to the Jewish tradition in the world's seventy primary languages, in order to specify that these laws are for everybody, not only Israel). After which they are to be covered over with a thin layer of plaster.

Half the tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim, and half on Mount Eval, and the levi'im (priests) will stand in a valley between the two mountains. There the levi'im will recite 12 commandments and all the people will answer "amen" to the blessings and the curses.

Moshe then details the blessings that will be bestowed upon *Bnei Yisrael* (children of Israel). These blessings are both physical and spiritual. However if the Jewish People do not keep the Torah, Moshe details a chilling picture of destruction, resulting in exile and wandering among the nations.

12 LAWS REPEATED ON MOUNT GARIZIM AND EBAL

The Torah states, "Cursed is the man: 1. who carves an image or casts an idol — a thing detestable to the LORD, the work of the craftsman's hands — and sets it up in secret..."

2. who dishonors his father or his mother...
3. who moves his neighbor's boundary stone...
4. who leads the blind astray on the road...
5. who withholds justice from the alien, the fatherless or the widow...
6. who sleeps with his father's wife, for he dishonors his father's bed...
7. who has sexual relations with any animal...
8. who sleeps with his sister, the daughter of his father or the daughter of his mother...
9. who sleeps with his mother-in-law...
10. who kills his neighbor secretly...
11. who accepts a bribe to kill an innocent person...
12. who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out." Then all the people shall say, "Amen!" " (Deuteronomy 27:15-26).

Most of the believers in Yeshua want to be free from the Torah, they don't realize that many laws from the Torah are still valid for our every day life. We agree to say that the 10 commandments are still valid —even though most of the Christians keep only 9 commandments, rejecting the 4th one, which commands us to keep the Seventh-day Shabbat as holy and as the day of worship. However we don't have to forget these 12 laws that the priests repeated to the people of Israel when they entered the promise land. These laws are so crucial for the social justice and peace that there is a curse for everyone who break them. G-d asked a personal commitment from his people for each one of these laws that is why when each one of these laws were given, the people had to say "Amen".

In the Torah it is written "Be careful to obey all these regulations I am giving you, so that it may always go well with you and your children after you, because you will be doing what is good and right in the eyes of the LORD your God." (Deut 12:28) Every mitzvah is important. In fact, at times it is the "small" mitzvot which make a big difference.

A LIGHT TO THE NATIONS

The Torah states: “If you do not obey the LORD your God and do not carefully follow all his commands and decrees I am giving you today, all these curses will come upon you and overtake you The LORD will drive you and the king you set over you to a nation unknown to you or your fathers” (Deut 28:15; 36). Our Parasha speaks about the exile of the Jewish people. This exile started during the biblical time. G-d continued to send visions and prophecies to his people in exile. That is why we have some books that were written during the exile time and help us to understand the reasons of the exile. These books are Daniel, Esther, Ezra, Nehemiah etc. The common denominator of these books is that the people of G-d are used by G-d to fulfill his mission. That is why the book of Daniel tells us how Daniel for example was a witness in the court of Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylon, and Darius, king of Media.

The mission G-d gave to Israel was to be a light to the nations, to share G-d's principles with the world. Israel did not fulfill very much her mission when she were in the promised land, that is why G-d used exile to assist Israel to understand the sense of her mission. And in fact it seems that Israel was more faithful and a better witness when she was in the diaspora, than in Israel. We have the testimony of Haman about Israel in the book of Esther “There is a certain people dispersed and scattered among the peoples in all the provinces of your kingdom whose customs are different from those of all other people” (Esther 3:8)

The rabbis understood the exile in this way too. The Talmud itself, hundreds of years after the destruction of the Second Temple, offered that the scattering of the Jewish people throughout the world was to allow non-Jews who wished to convert to Judaism be afforded the opportunity to do so. Others suggested that the Jewish Diaspora was to allow biblical values and attitudes to penetrate the non-Jewish world as well. It was through the bitter exile itself that the Jewish people would fulfill its mission of being a light unto the nations of the world.

BIKURIM OR FIRST FRUITS

The Torah states: “When you have entered the land the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance and have taken possession of it and settled in it,

take some of the firstfruits of all that you produce from the soil of the land the LORD your God is giving you and put them in a basket. Then go to the place the LORD your God will choose as a dwelling for his Name” (Deut 26:1-2)

Rabbi Zelman Marozov says that Once in Jerusalem, the basket of fruit was given to the Kohen (priest). The person bringing the basket of fruit would thank G-d for taking the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt, for all the miracles which G-d has done for the Jewish people, and for bringing us to this place and giving us this land, a land that flows with milk and honey.

The Torah concludes the mitzvah of Bikurim with the following, “you shall rejoice in all the good things the LORD your God has given to you and your household.” (Deut 26:11)

The mitzvah of Bikurim teaches us that before we enjoy the bounty and blessings which G-d gave us, we must first give back what belongs to G-d. This is accomplished by giving a share to Tzedakah and providing for the poor and needy.

The mitzvah of Bikurim also teaches us to be happy and rejoice with whatever G-d has given us. A person who believes that whatever he or she has is a gift from G-d, will not be jealous of others and thus truly rejoice and be satisfied and happy in life.

Acts of goodness and kindness is not only the right thing to do, it is also a gateway to happiness. In this time of year, just before Rosh Hashana, it is also time to count all the blessings of the year, all what the Lord gave us and to share part of it with our congregation, our preferred organization, or even poor orphans, widows we know and who have not been so blessed during the past year.

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.

EVERY ACT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

A poor man once came to the home of a wealthy person asking for old clothing. The people of the house had pity on the man and told him to go to the attic and choose whatever clothes fit.

The poor man went to the attic, found some old clothing and made a bundle. Now he needed a piece of string to tie his bundle. Looking around, he noticed some rope tied around a nail. The rest of the rope dropped down through the floor of the attic. Without thinking, he took his pocket knife and cut a piece of rope to tie his bundle.

Suddenly, he heard a tremendous crash down below. Everybody came racing up to the attic. "Do you know what you have done?" they yelled. "You broke our most beautiful and expensive chandelier!"

"But I only took a small piece of rope," the poor man said, defending himself.

"This piece of rope was holding up the expensive chandelier," they answered bitterly. "By cutting this little piece of rope, the chandelier fell to the ground and shattered beyond repair!"

The lesson is: Even a seemingly insignificant act (for good or bad) may make a very significant difference!

MOSES, THE MEEKEST MAN

There's a Jewish legend that says Moshe came back down to earth early in the second century of the Common Era and visited Rabbi Aquiba's schoolhouse. He sat quietly in the back row incognito. Moshe was all ears. Rabbi Aqiba lectured on an incredibly well-developed legal system, that considered every interest, yet seemingly made room for every exception. It reflected a society that was profoundly human. Moshe was astounded that the children Israel had come so far in their walk with HaShem. They were way beyond him! This guy Rabbi Aquiba was so advanced in fairness and compassion that Moshe himself couldn't

follow all the ins and outs of the discussion. At the end of the astounding exposition, Moshe meekly raised his hand —let's remember that according to the Torah, Moshe is the meekest man who ever lived on the face of the earth— and asked Rabbi Aquiba where he had learned this teaching. Rabbi Aquiba, who didn't know who he was talking to, said, "Why, don't you know? Every Jew knows. This is the Torah HaShem gave our teacher Moshe on Mt Sinai. I learned it from him."

DON'T EMBARRASS OTHERS

Rabbi Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz was once invited to be the guest of a certain individual for the Friday night meal. Arriving home with his host, it was immediately obvious that the hostess had fallen asleep from an exhausting Erev Shabbos and had failed to awaken on time to put the finishing touches to the table. Her embarrassed husband berated her for her failure to cover the challahs.

Rabbi Shraga Feivel thought to himself how absurd it was for the man to humiliate his wife for not having covered the challahs - a custom designed to keep the challahs from being "embarrassed" during Kiddush and to teach us how sensitive we must be to another's honor. The host, in his concern for the custom, had completely ignored its implications.

EDITOR

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HAFTARA

Isaiah 60:1-22

This Shabbat is the fifth 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: This text of comfort reminds us the mission of Israel. “**Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the L-RD has risen upon you.**” (Is. 60:1). G-d's people has to shine and to reflect the glory of the L-rd, which is His character. Her testimony will bring nations and kings to her and through her to G-d. “**Nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn**” (Is. 60:3). However, to see people coming to her she must lift up her eyes and accepts evidences given by the L-rd “**Lift up your eyes and look around; they all gather together, they come to you;**” (Is 60:4). She will shine even more to be “radiant” “**Then you shall see and be radiant; your heart shall thrill and rejoice, because the abundance of the sea shall be brought to you, the wealth of the nations shall come to you.**” (Is 60:5) Even the Arabic world will come to Israel: “**A multitude of camels shall cover you, the young camels of Midian and Ephah; all those from Sheba shall come.**” (Is 60:6a) It will bring wealth to her “**They shall bring gold and frankincense, and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD.**” (Is 60:6b). To comfort Israel, G-d promises to her that she will see her children who are in exile come back home, “**For the coastlands shall wait for me, the ships of Tarshish first, to bring your children from far away, their silver and gold with them**” (Is 60:9a). That will come from the L-rd “**for the name of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel, because he has glorified you.**” (Is 60:9b). Israel will live in peace without fearing the nations and invaders “**Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth, with their kings led in procession.**” (Is 60:11). Blessings will be always there for her “**Your sun shall no more go down, or your moon withdraw itself; for the LORD will be your everlasting light, and your days of mourning shall be ended. Your people shall all be righteous; they shall possess the land forever. . . the smallest one a mighty nation; I am the LORD; in its time I will accomplish it quickly.**” (Is. 60:20-22).

BRIT HACHADASHA

1 Corinthians 15:1-58

Rabbi Shaul states: “**But Mashiach has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**” (1Cor 15:20). Our parasha asked every Jew to present the firstfruits of their field to the priest as an offering to G-d; An offering of joy to thank G-d for the blessings of the past year. Rabbi Shaul applies the title “firstfruits” to Yeshua saying that he was “**the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep**”. To understand what Rabbi Shaul says in this text we have to remember that this chapter of the first letter to the Corinthians is speaking about the resurrection of Yeshua. At the beginning of this chapter he affirms: “**For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Mashiach died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures**” (1Cor 15:3-4). In what sense Yeshua is the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep? The Bible teaches us that everyone who dies is not in heaven, praising God, or in Hell, punished for what he has done wrong during his life. King Shlomo says: “**Anyone who is among the living has hope — even a live dog is better off than a dead lion! 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 9:4-5). “The dead know nothing”; they are not praising G-d. And if they will never have a part in anything that happens under the sun, it means that it is not necessary to pray the dead (Abraham, Rachel, Joseph, David, or any other Rav or chacham). All the dead are asleep, that means they are in unconscious state compared to sleeping. They are waiting for the coming of the Mashiach who will resurrect everyone. However Yeshua did not wait for the Mashiach, he was himself the Mashiach, that is why when Yeshua died, he was raised, and thus became the firstfruits of the dead, the first one who was raised in this world of sin.