



*Parashot Netsavim, Ve Vayelech*  
*Shabbat 24 September 2011*  
*25 Elul 5771*

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## NEWS

### HEBREW SABBATH SCHOOL

**I**would like to inform our readers who read Hebrew that we have posted on our website the Hebrew version of the Sabbath School. It is a free PDF, everyone can download it to practice his Hebrew.

### JEWISH FEASTS

**W**e are in a very special period in Israel. We feel that people are preparing the autumn feasts which are coming very soon, the first one, Rosh Hashana will start on Wednesday September 28 evening. Don't forget that it is time to send your best wishes to every Jew you know. Israel is living in a very difficult period.

The Hamas has reiterated its treats to Israel, saying that whatever will happen this week in the UN, they will not recognize Israel and will continue to fight until the last inch of the land of Palestine will be freed.

The Palestinian Authority is going to the UN for a recognition of the state of Palestine without any negotiation with Israel. Israel has already done this mistake when accepting to leave Gaza Strip unilaterally, and we have seen the result of this initiative, today Gaza Strip is in the hand of a very hostile organization who sends bombs almost every day on Israel.

The President of Iran says every days that Israel is a cancer in the Middle East and that it should be erased from the map.

Turkey is now also threatening Israel with a lot of dangerous speeches against it.

Israel needs your prayers. This week I have contacted the Jerusalem Post in order to publish a bloc of good wish for the State of Israel. This advertisement will be published on Wednesday, the last day of the year, saying:

**The Seventh-day Adventists in Israel  
 Wish the State of Israel  
 President Shimon Peres  
 Prime Minister Benyamin Netanyahu  
 Members of the Knesset  
 And all its people  
 A Happy and prosperous  
 New Year 5772  
 May God give His peace to Israel  
 And may we all be inscribed  
 For a good year**

### ROSH HASHANA

**I**s considered as the day of the creation, God is celebrated as the creator of the Universe. Unlike the secular New Year which is celebrated in many parts of the "civilized" world by partying, drinking to excess etc. The Jewish New Year is celebrated by reflecting upon the past, correcting one's mistakes, planning for the future, praying for a healthy and sweet year and celebrating with holiday meals. Everyone wish to one an other

***Chag Sameach***  
***Ve Shana Tova***

### NEXT PARASHOT

**S**ince we arrive at the end of the Jewish year and the end of the reading of the Torah, I would like to remind everyone that on October 1 we will read the parasha haazinu (Deut 32). On October 8 and 15, there will be no reading of the parasha because it will be Yom Kippur and the feast of Succoth. and the last portion of the Torah Deut 33 and 34 will be read on the Sabbath following Succoth with the first parasha of the Torah: Bereshit.

# OVERVIEW

## NETSAVIM

### Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20

**O**n the last days of his life, Moshe gathers together all the people, both young and old, lowly and exalted, men and women in a final initiation.

The covenant includes not only those who are present, but even those generations yet unborn. Moshe admonishes the people again to be extremely vigilant against idol worship, because in spite of having witnessed the abominations of Egypt, there will always be the temptation to experiment with foreign philosophies as a pretext for immorality.

Moshe describes the desolation of the Land of Israel which will be a result of the failure to heed G-d's mitzvot (commandments). Both their descendants and foreigners alike will remark on the singular desolation of the Land and its apparent inability to be sown or to produce crops.

The conclusion will be apparent to all — the Jewish People have forsaken the One who protects them, in favor of idols which can do nothing. Moshe promises, however, that the people will eventually repent after both the blessings and the curses have been fulfilled.

However, after being assimilated among the nations, G-d will bring them back to Eretz (land of) Israel. Moshe tells the people to remember that the Torah is not a remote impossibility; rather its fulfillment is within the grasp of every Jew. The Parasha concludes with a dramatic choice between life and death. Moshe exhorts the people to choose life.

## VAYELECH

### Deuteronomy 31

**O**n this last days of his life, Moshe goes from tent to tent throughout the camp, bidding farewell to his beloved people, encouraging them to keep the faith. Moshe tells them that whether he is among them or not, G-d is with them, and will vanquish their enemies.

Then he summons Yehoshua, and in front

of all the people, exhorts him to be strong and courageous as the leader of the Jewish People. In this manner, he strengthens Yehoshua's status as the new leader.

Moshe teaches them the mitzvah of Hakhel: That every seven years on the first day of the intermediate days of Succos, the entire nation, including small children, is to gather together at the Temple to hear the King read from the Book of Devarim. The sections that he reads deal with faithfulness to G-d, the covenant, and reward and punishment.

G-d tells Moshe that his end is near, and he should therefore summon Yehoshua to stand with him in the Mishkan, where G-d will teach Yehoshua. G-d then tells Moshe and Yehoshua that after entering the Land, the people will be unfaithful to Him, and begin to worship other gods. G-d will then completely hide his face, so that it will seem that the Jewish People are at the mercy of fate, and that they will be hunted by all.

G-d instructs Moshe and Yehoshua to write down a song — Ha'azinu — which will serve as a witness against the Jewish People when they sin. Moshe records the song in writing and teaches it to Bnei Yisrael.

Moshe completes his transcription of the Torah, and instructs the Levi'im to place it to the side of the Aron Hakodesh (Holy Ark), so that no one will ever write a new Torah scroll that is different from the original — for there will always be a reference copy.

## THE MITSVOT ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE

**I**n the Torah it is written: “[The Torah] is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who shall go up for us to heaven and bring it to us that we may hear it and do it?’ Nor is it beyond the sea that you should say, ‘Who shall go over the sea for us, and bring it to us that we may hear it or do it?’ “ (Deut. 30: 12,13) The Talmud (Eiruvin 55a) states on this verse that if the Torah were in heaven, you would still have to climb up to reach it. If the Torah were on the other side of the ocean, you would still have to go traveling for it.

According to Rabbi Pakouz, this means that the Torah is so crucial for one's existence that even if it were extremely difficult to acquire, you would still have to make every possible effort to acquire it.

## DID G-D FORSAKE HIS PEOPLE?

**T**he Torah states: “They will forsake me and break the covenant I made with them. On that day I will become angry with them and forsake them; I will hide my face from them, and they will be destroyed. Many disasters and difficulties will come upon them, and on that day they will ask, ‘Have not these disasters come upon us because our God is not with us?’ And I will certainly hide my face on that day because of all their wickedness in turning to other gods” (Deut 31:16b-18)

Parasha Vayelech explains what will happen to the people of G-d will forget their covenant with God. They will fill the absence of G-d, not because G-d will not be there, but because their sins will hide His face to them. The prophet Isaiah said to Israel, “**But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden his face from you, so that he will not hear.**” (Is 59:2). However the situation is not irreversible. The prophets of Israel have always affirmed G-d’s goodness and love for His people. G-d is waiting for His people to make Teshuva, to repent. A very important concept, right now few days before Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.

How to understand Teshuva: it could be understood as “to regret a bad act” or “to feel guilty about something wrong” and some other similar things. In Judaism it is recommended that a Teshuva should be by a verbal confession. Rabbi Zev Leff said that the Sefer Hachinuch offers two explanations of the benefit of verbal confession. First, verbalizing one’s repentance creates the feeling of conversing with a second party, which, in turn, **sensitizes a person to the reality of G-d’s presence**, G-d’s awareness of his every deed, and the need to render an account before G-d. The greater a person’s awareness that his sin was one in G-d’s presence, with His full knowledge, the greater His shame and regret. Secondly, verbal expression intensifies the process and leaves a more lasting effect. In addition to regret over the past, **Teshuva also requires a commitment not to repeat the sin again.** That commitment must be so decisive, resolute, and firm that God Himself can testify that at the moment of confession, the sinner does not contemplate ever committing that sin again.

Rabbi Leff adds, the Sefer Yerey’im specifies another dimension to verbal confession — **supplication for atonement.** There must be a clear recognition of the

seriousness of the damage caused by the sin, both in terms of the damage to one’s soul and one’s relationship to God, and in terms of the effect on the world by closing the conduits of blessing. For this, one must entreat God to forgive, heal and repair the damage.

Teshuva (repentance and verbal confession), therefore, is the return of the believer to his essence and the breakdown of the barriers that separate him from G-d. G-d does not leave the believer when he sins; rather the believer loses contact with G-d, Who still resides within him by the Ruach Elohim (Ruach Hakodesh). As the Sages say on the verse, “**I am asleep, but my heart is awake**” (Song of Songs 5:2), “my heart” refers to G-d. Though the believer sleeps and loses consciousness of G-d, G-d still occupies his heart.

In Leviticus we read “**When anyone is guilty in any of these ways, he must confess in what way he has sinned**” (5:5) and the purification on Yom Kippur must also pass by confession: **He [Aaron] is to lay both hands on the head of the live goat and confess over it all the wickedness and rebellion of the Israelites — all their sins (Lev 16:21).** Here it is the goat who will be sent to Azazel (Devil) and will die as the true initiator of the sins of Israel. The confession in this text serves as a transfer of responsibility. Confession will bring forgiveness and new blessings: “**But if they will confess their sins and the sins of their fathers — their treachery against me and their hostility toward me . . . I will remember my covenant with Jacob and my covenant with Isaac and my covenant with Abraham, and I will remember the land. . . . I will not reject them or abhor them so as to destroy them completely, breaking my covenant with them. I am the LORD their God. But for their sake I will remember the covenant with their ancestors whom I brought out of Egypt in the sight of the nations to be their God. I am the LORD.**” (Lev. 26:40, 42, 44, 45)

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

## ROSH HASHANA

**R**abbi Pakouz says the following story: There is a Midrash about a successful businessman who meets a former colleague down on his luck. The colleague begs the successful businessman for a substantial loan to turn around his circumstances. Eventually, the businessman agrees to a 6 month loan and gives his former colleague the money. At the end of the 6 months, the businessman goes to collect his loan. The former colleague gives him every last penny. However, the businessman notices that the money is the exact same coins he loaned the man. He was furious! "How dare you borrow such a huge amount and not even use it? I gave this to you to better your life!" The man was speechless.

Likewise, the Almighty gives each of us our life. He doesn't want us to finish it at the end of our days in the same condition that we received it. He wants us to better ourselves, to enhance our being by practicing the Bible. It is up to us to sit down before Rosh Hashana and make a list of what we need to correct in our lives between us and our fellow beings, us and G-d and us and ourselves!

### THE REVEREND AND THE STAR

**T**his is a true story: In December of 1944, already six months after D-Day, General George Patton's third Army found itself bogged down in Belgium. It was not only the Germans who were causing the problem, it was the weather. Rain, fog and extremely swampy conditions were making the advance and liberation of Eastern Europe and the defeat of Germany virtually impossible.

So Patton made an unprecedented military move. He called upon the chaplain of the third Army, Msgr. James O'Neill, and charged him with a task. "I'm tired of having to fight mud and floods as well as Germans. See if you can get G-d to work on our side. Compose a prayer to stop this rain." The Chaplain typed the following prayer on a 3x5 index card. O'Neill composed the following short but powerful entreaty: "Almighty and most merciful Father, we humbly beseech Thee, of Thy great goodness, to restrain these immoderate rains with which we have had to contend. Grant us fair weather for battle. Graciously hearken to us as soldiers who call Thee that, armed with Thy power, we may advance from victory to

victory, and crush the oppression and wickedness of our enemies, and establish Thy justice among men and nations. Amen."

General Patton read the prayer and returned it to O'Neill with a directive, "Have 250,000 copies printed and see to it that every man in the Third Army gets one. We've got to get every soldier in the Third Army to pray"

Indeed they did. As if by magic, six days of perfect weather followed. The rain stopped, the fog lifted, the sun shone and earth dried. The Third Army advanced confidently, handing the Germans a crushing defeat.

Shortly afterwards, Patton called the Reverend into his office and pinned a Bronze Star on him, for an act that far surpassed his mortal military machinations.

## HAFTARA

### Isaiah 55:6-56:8

**T**his Shabbat is the last Shabbat before Rosh Hashana. That's why the Haftara is oriented towards repentance and a call to change our ways. which is the purpose of the month of Ellul and the 10 days days between the two feasts.

**HAFTARA:** The text starts with a call to repentance. "Seek the LORD while he may be found, call upon him while he is near" (Is. 55:6). Before *Yom Kippur* the people of G-d are invited to come back to him, to give up their old ways. The prophet affirms that the thoughts of G-d are very far away from human thoughts. "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways my ways, says the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts" (Is. 55:8-9).

## EDITOR

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

Richard-Amram Elofer  
4, Abraham Lincoln  
94186 Jerusalem  
Israel

Tel. +972 2625 1547  
Fax +972 2625 1319  
email: richard@elofer.com  
web: jewishadventist.org

Worshipping G-d in our assembly can make a great difference in our lives because attending a religious service let's us hear G-d's Word. Isaiah states under inspiration that the Word of G-d cannot return to G-d without having its effect on our heart. **"So shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent it..."** (Is. 55:11). The consequences of this action of G-d's word are joy, peace and happiness. **"For you shall go out in joy, and be led back in peace; the mountains and the hills before you shall burst into song, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands"** (Is. 55:12). Experiencing forgiveness, G-d's people are happy and ready to share G-d's love with the nations through songs.

The Lord is waiting for his people to do what is right. **"Thus says the LORD: Maintain justice, and do what is right"** (Is. 56:1). And what is just and right? To keep and observe Shabbat: **"Who keeps the sabbath, not profaning it, and refrains from doing any evil"** Is. 56:2). Even the foreigners and the excluded are welcome in the midst of G-d's people. **"To the eunuchs who keep my sabbaths, who choose the things that please me and hold fast my covenant, I will give, in my house and within my walls, a monument and a name better than sons and daughters; I will give them an everlasting name that shall not be cut off"** (Is. 56:4-5). Keeping the shabbat is one of the best ways to demonstrate our love to G-d who prepared an everlasting name, which will never be deleted.

## BRIT HACHADASHA

### 1 John 1:9

**T**he parasha Vayelech tells us that it is when G-d's people sin that G-d is not perceptible even though He is still there. We have discovered in our commentaries that according to Isaiah it is not G-d who hides His face **"But your iniquities have separated you from your God"**. When we discover our sins and iniquities we must make *Teshuva*, (repent). We also have discovered that a true *Teshuva* passes by a verbal confession. The best verbal confession we have in the Bible is certainly the confession of Daniel 9 from the verse 3 to 20. Here is a short abstract of his confession **"we have sinned and done wrong. We have been wicked and have rebelled; we have turned away from your commands and laws. We have not**

**listened to your servants the prophets, who spoke in your name to our kings, our princes and our fathers, and to all the people of the land."** (5-6)

Confession is a necessary part of repentance, without a confession there is no forgiveness, that is why our text of the *Brit Hachadasha* says **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9)** G-d is good, G-d is faithful, G-d forgives and purifies. That is the good news of the *Brit Hachadasha*.

But there is another consequence of the true repentance and confession, that is to bring salvation. Rabbi Shaul connects confession and believing in Yeshua as the Mashiach to salvation, he said **"If you confess with your mouth, "Yeshua is Adon," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."** (Rom 10:9). This confession gives salvation because Yeshua is the one who was prophesied in all the *Tanakh* through whom we can get salvation. He is the one who has been symbolized by the sacrifices in the Temple and he is presented as the one who suffers for the people of Israel in Isaiah 53 **"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. 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."** (3-5). For more explanation on this text, I recommend to our readers an article written by Doukhan, Jacques. 2009. *The Argument for Messianic Prophecies. In Comfort, Comfort My People: Toward a Growing Adventist-Jewish Friendship*, edited by R. Elofer. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University, Department of World Mission.