



*Parasha Miketz
Shabbat 24 December 2011
28 Kislev 5772*

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CHANUKAH IN FLORIDA

Chanukah started on Tuesday December 20 evening, We have received news about Chanukah in some of our congregations in the Florida and Argentina. These news came from the most faithful leaders to our newsletter.

Jeff Zeremsky will have a special program on Friday 23 in St Petersburg and on Shabbat 24 in New Port Richey, I hope that many people will join these congregations to rejoice with their members and friends.

Eat Smart Cooking Seminar Once a month come experience health, healing, happiness, and good food. Every 2nd Sun. at 4 pm starting Jan. 8th. Expert lectures, cooking demos, delicious food, and great fellowship. (NPR location only).

Stop Smoking Forever 7 days to stop smoking for the rest of your life. Starting Sun Jan 1st at 7:00 and continuing each night until Sat Jan 7th (NPR location only) \$25. Smell better, feel better, save tons of money, greatly lower your chances of cancer. Be free this year of the tobacco addiction. You can do it, we can help.

Beginners Hebrew Class Starting Friday, Jan. 6th at 6 pm. (St. Pete location only) \$25.

Chanukah Celebration! Gigantic 10ft menorah lighting, eat latkes, sing Chanukah songs, dance, tons of fun. Senator Mike Fasano will be lighting the NPR menorah.

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Parasha

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Newsletter n° 456

CHANUKAH IN ARGENTINA

Chanukah is also celebrated in the Jewish Adventist synagogue of Buenos Aires, the Beth Bnei Tzion congregation.

The program organized in Buenos Aires will be on the 24th of December. This Shabbat will be a special Shabbat to remember the miracle of the light which occurred in Israel in the second century before the common Era.

This program will include in addition to the holy service of Shabbat an audiovisual program, a debate and a live concert.

I hope also that many people will participate to this special day in Argentina and will come with their friends.

OVERVIEW

MIKETZ

Genesis 41:1 - 44:17

Returning home, Yaakov sends angelic messengers to appease his brother Esau. The messengers return, telling Yaakov that Esau is approaching with an army of 400.

Yaakov takes the strategic precautions of dividing the camps, praying for assistance, and sending tribute to mollify Esau.

That night Yaakov is left alone and wrestles with the Angel of Esau. Yaakov emerges victorious but is left with an injured sinew in his thigh (which is the reason why it is forbidden to eat the sciatic nerve of a kosher animal). The angel tells him that his name in the future will be Yisrael, signifying that he has prevailed against man (Lavan) and the supernatural (the angel).

Yaakov and Esau meet and are reconciled, but Yaakov, still fearful of his brother, rejects Esau's offer that they should dwell together.

Sh'chem, a Caananite prince, abducts and violates Dina, Yaakov's daughter.

In return for Dina's hand in marriage, the prince and his father suggest that Yaakov and his family intermarry and enjoy the fruits of Caananite prosperity.

Yaakov's sons trick Sh'chem and his father by feigning agreement; however, they stipulate that all the males of the city must undergo brit mila. Shimon and Levi, two of Dina's brothers, enter the town and execute all the males who were weakened by the circumcision.

This action is justified by the city's tacit complicity in the abduction of their sister.

G-d commands Yaakov to go to Beit-El and build an altar.

His mother Rivka's nurse, Devorah, dies and is buried below Beit-El.

G-d appears again to Yaakov, blesses him and changes his name to Yisrael.

While traveling, Rachel goes into labor and gives birth to Binyamin, the twelfth of the tribes of Israel.

She dies in childbirth and is buried on the Bethlehem road. Yaakov builds a monument to her.

Yitzchak passes away at the age of 180 and is buried by his sons. The Parasha concludes by listing Esau's descendants.

HOW DO WE SPEAK ABOUT OTHERS

Pharaoh dreamt two disturbing dreams and all his wise men failed to interpret them to his satisfaction. Pharaoh's chief butler had previously been in the same jail as Joseph, where Joseph successfully interpreted his dreams. The butler now suggests that Pharaoh seek the advice of Joseph. Note how the butler recommends Joseph's talents to Pharaoh: **"And there was with us there (in jail) a Hebrew lad (na'ar), a slave to the Captain of the Guard and we told him (our dreams), and he interpreted to us our dreams; to each man according to his dream he interpreted"** (Genesis 41:12). Rashi comments on the butler's statement to Pharaoh: "Cursed be the wicked, for even their goodness is not complete. The butler praises Joseph's ability, but in contemptuous terms: a) na'ar (a lad): a fool, and not fit for greatness b) Hebrew: he doesn't even know our language c) a slave: and it is written in the statutes of Egypt that a slave cannot rule nor don royal garments."

Rabbi Yeruchem Levovitz comments that the butler actually meant to speak well of Joseph, for Joseph had been kind to him. Nevertheless, a completely favorable statement will never emerge from the lips of a wicked person. Even when praising someone, he will off-handedly add a derogatory comment.

Rabbi Packouz concludes that every person should check his own behavior with regard to this pitfall. When you speak favorably of someone, do you habitually add something unfavorable? For example: "She is very charitable, and always makes sure that people know it" or "He's very kindhearted now, but you should have seen him five years ago."

IS MY FATHER STILL ALIVE?

According to Rabbi Zev Leff, When Joseph revealed himself to his brothers with the words, "I am Joseph; is my father still alive?" the brothers were so overwhelmed that they could not answer him. The Midrash comments, "Woe to us from the Day of Judgment and the day of reproof, for if the brothers could not answer the rebuke of Joseph, their younger brother, how much more so will we be overwhelmed by God's reproof when He in the future

rebukes each one according to his deeds.”

Bait HaLevi explains that the essence of Joseph’s rebuke was pointing out the inconsistency of their actions. Until the moment Joseph revealed himself, Yehudah was pleading with Joseph to take into account the suffering of their aged father and therefore free Benjamin. To this Joseph replied, “I am Joseph. Where was your concern for our father’s pain and sorrow when you sold me and convinced him that I was dead? Is he still alive after that? When it is convenient, you are concerned with our father’s welfare, and when it serves your purposes, you are oblivious.

WE MUST FILL OUR HEART WITH LOVE

When the brothers returned home, Yaakov chided them for revealing the whereabouts of Rachel’s lone surviving son; he was reluctant to allow them to bring Binyamin to Egypt citing his fears for his son’s safety.

But the brothers convinced Yaakov that there was no other option and finally he sent them off with the following blessing: **“If it must be so, then do this – Take of the land’s glory in your baggage and bring it down to the man as a tribute -- a bit of balsam, a bit of honey, wax, lotus, pistachios, and almonds . . . Take your brother, and arise, return to the man. And may Almighty G-d give to you mercy in front of the man that he may release to you your other brother as well as Binyamin. And as for me, as I have been bereaved, so I am bereaved.”** (Genesis 43:11-14).

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky says that the expression, “may Almighty G-d give to you mercy in front of the man” seems strange. Why did Yaakov pray the the Almighty give the brother’s mercy? Shouldn’t Yaakov have prayed that Hashem give Yoseph the attribute of mercy, saying, „may G-d let the man have mercy upon you. Why is Yaakov asking Hashem to bestow the brothers with mercy instead asking the Almighty to bestow the attribute of mercy upon the antagonistic Viceroy whom they would soon face?

Rabbi Avraham Chaim of Zlatchov explains: Yaakov explained to his children that in order for the Viceroy to have mercy upon them, they must approach him with mercy as well. Thus he says, “may Almighty G-d give to you mercy in front of the man.” Sometimes it is we who must fill our hearts with love in order to get that same love and mercy back in return.

FORGIVENESS

The Torah States, **“And they said one man to his brother (Joseph’s brothers), we are guilty about our brother. We saw the suffering of his soul when he pleaded to us and we did not listen to him. Therefore, this misfortune has befallen us”** (Genesis 42:21). Rabbi Dovid of Zeviltov comments in the commentary Otzer Chaim: If a person did something wrong and recognizes that he has done wrong, he will be forgiven. However, if a person does something wrong and denies it, there is no atonement for him. When Joseph’s brothers previously said that they were innocent, Joseph responded by calling them spies. When they said that they were guilty, Joseph was full of compassion for them and cried.

According to Rabbi Zelig Pliskin Many people deny their faults and the things that they have done wrong because they mistakenly think that others will respect them more by their doing so. In reality people admire someone with the honesty and courage to admit his mistakes. It takes a braver person to say, “Yes, I was wrong.” This kind of integrity will not only build up your positive attribute of honesty, but will also gain you the respect of others. When you apologize to someone for wronging him, he will feel more positive towards you than if you denied that you did anything wrong. This awareness will make it much easier for you to ask forgiveness from others.

Yeshua said **“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.”** (Matt. 6:14). But one of the questions was how many times to forgive: **“Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, “Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother when he sins against me? Up to seven times?” Jesus answered, “I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.”** Matt. 18:21-22” **No Limit...**

Sources: These comments of the parasha are based on comments published by Rabbi Zalmen Pakouz, Rabbi Zelig Pliskin, Rabbi Ozer Alport, 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.

WHATEVER YOU WANT

Rabbi Packouz once went to a tailor in Singapore to make a suit. He asked him, “What would you like?” The rabbi told him, “a double-breasted suit.” He advised “you’d look better in a single-breasted suit.” Rabbi Packouz instructed him that he didn’t need back pockets in the pants or a button hole in the lapel. He responded, “You never know when you’ll need back pockets; you should have them anyway. The same for the button hole in the lapel; you never know when you’ll want to wear a flower or a pin.” Then the rabbi told him that I didn’t want cuffs on the pants. He said, “No, cuffs are more formal; it’ll look a lot better with cuffs!” At this point Rabbi Packouz was feeling a bit frustrated, so he asked him, “What do you think is the biggest advantage of getting a suit tailor-made in Singapore? And he responded — without batting an eyelash — “You can get whatever you want!”

REPENTANCE THROUGH LOVE

Rav Yoseph Chaim Sonnenfeld would tell the story of the Rav of Shadik, Poland. He was newly appointed when he was warned of a particular Jew who was known as a government informer, who would strong-arm the previous Rabbi and community leaders into giving him high honors in the synagogue and into allowing him to lead the rituals.

The new Rav would stand for none of this. When the man was called for the sixth aliyah the first Shabbos, he began making his way from his seat on the eastern wall of the synagogue to the bimah, when suddenly the new Rabbi began to shout. “Where do you think you are going? You are known as an informant to the government which is of the worst crimes a Jew can commit. How dare you show your face in the synagogue, let alone take a place for an aliyah? Get out of the shul! The man froze in horror. Then, before storming out of the synagogue, he shook his fist at the Rabbi while muttering, “I will teach you all a lesson.”

A few months later, the Rav who was also a mohel, was on his way to perform a bris. He

was a mile or so outside the city when suddenly a wagon containing the informer overtook his own coach. The informer jumped to the footrest of the wagon, and while the Rabbi’s two students recoiled in fear, the man threw himself in front of the Rabbi and began to beg for forgiveness from the entire community.

The Rabbi explained, “Shlomo Hamelech tells us, ‘Like a reflection in the water so is the face of man to man’ (Proverbs 27:19). From the moment after I admonished this fellow, all I did was try to find out about his good qualities. Then I concentrated my hardest on creating a deep love for this Jew and that love exuded from my soul. When the alleged informer saw me today, he experienced that love that I had for him and he reciprocated. As he felt the same way about me as I did for him. He understood his terrible misdeeds of his past life and repented with a sincere heart. It is only through that love that he repented and we became endeared to each other.”

HAFTARAH

1 Kings 3:15 - 4:1

The text of of the haftara is about Solomon the wisest man on the earth. “God gave Solomon very great wisdom” (1Kings 4:29). Here is the most famous story about the wisdom of Solomon: “Later, two women who were prostitutes came to the king and stood before him. The one woman said, “Please, my lord, this woman and I live in the same house; and I gave birth while she was in the house. Then on the third day after I gave birth, this woman

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also gave birth. We were together; there was no one else with us in the house, only the two of us were in the house. Then this woman's son died in the night, because she lay on him. She got up in the middle of the night and took my son from beside me while your servant slept. She laid him at her breast, and laid her dead son at my breast. When I rose in the morning to nurse my son, I saw that he was dead; but when I looked at him closely in the morning, clearly it was not the son I had borne." But the other woman said, "No, the living son is mine, and the dead son is yours." The first said, "No, the dead son is yours, and the living son is mine." So they argued before the king. Then the king said, "The one says, 'This is my son that is alive, and your son is dead'; while the other says, 'Not so! Your son is dead, and my son is the living one.'" So the king said, "Bring me a sword," and they brought a sword before the king. The king said, "Divide the living boy in two; then give half to the one, and half to the other." But the woman whose son was alive said to the king—because compassion for her son burned within her—"Please, my lord, give her the living boy; certainly do not kill him!" The other said, "It shall be neither mine nor yours; divide it." Then the king responded: "Give the first woman the living boy; do not kill him. She is his mother." All Israel heard of the judgment that the king had rendered; and they stood in awe of the king, because they perceived that the wisdom of God was in him, to execute justice. (1Kings 3:16-28)

BRIT HACHADASHA

Romans 5:1-11

We have seen last week that there is a parallel between Yoseph and Yeshua. Yoseph is called in the Jewish tradition "Yoseph hatsadik" (the righteous) and Yeshua is also called the tsadik in the brith hachadasha. Yochanan called him Yeshua Hamashiach Hatsadik (the righteous) (1 John 2:1).

But there is more, because in the Jewish tradition there is a presentation of a suffering Mashiach. The Jewish community of Chabad or disciples of the Rabbi of Lubavitch published an article about the sufferings of the Mashiach. They said "In his commentary on the Guemara Rashi adds that 'as well as being a perfectly righteous man, the Mashiach will know, just before his revelation, the most terrible sufferings.' According to

the expression of our Sages: 'Three measures of sufferings were introduced in the world; the first for the patriarchs, the second one for the period of persecutions and the third one will be for the Mashiach'. Why will it be so? Because before revealing the highest perfection in the world, the Mashiach would redeem his generation from their sins. It is through the suffering of the Messiah that this will be done. That's why, said the Alche'h, 'he will accept them with Joy'. And the Maharal of Prague said that the Messiah will suffer because it will be time to make all the evil disappear from this world. That is the task of the Messiah." (*Mashiach Maintenant* 58, July 22, 1993, p 3).

This suffering Messiah is called in the Jewish tradition "Mashiach-ben-Yosef". He is called this way in direct reference to Yosef the son of Yaakov. He will suffer so much that he will die and the Jewish people one day will mourn about the Messiah. The talmud, commenting on the Text of Zechariah 12:10 says "What is the cause of the mourning [mentioned in the last cited verse]? R. Dosa and the Rabbis differ on the point. One explained, 'The cause is the slaying of Messiah the son of Joseph...'" (Sukkah 52a).

In the Brith Hachadasha, it is explained why the Mashiach has to die for us. Rabbi Shaul has written "But God proves his love for us in that while we still were sinners Christ died for us." (Rom 5:8) We are all sinners, our sins have kept us far from G-d, however, G-d continues to love us and sent the Mashiach to save us from the devil and evil inclination. The Mashiach in his struggle against the devil, who is called Satan in the Tanach, was hurt and died for us. Isaiah confirmed it, "But he was wounded for our transgressions, crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the punishment that made us whole, and by his bruises we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5). It is difficult to understand the death of the Messiah, but let's remember that through his death salvation is possible for each one of us. "we were reconciled to G-d through the death of his Son, much more surely, having been reconciled, will we be saved by his life." (Rom 5:10)