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- **Adventist Mission Website:** <http://wjafc.adventistmission.org/> This website is the new resource provided by the Office of Adventist Mission of the General Conference of the Seventh-day Adventists.
- **Russian Website:** <http://www.boruh.info/> This website is in Russian, many articles and the parasha are posted on it every week.



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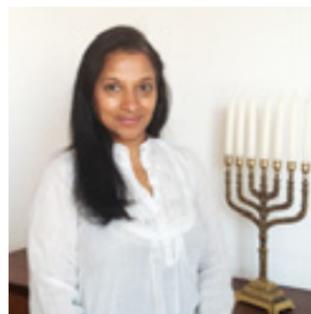
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Shabbat Shalom Newsletter

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We pray every week for leaders of the Jewish Ministry, according to our list of prayer for 2016, I suggest that our partners pray from May 8 through 14, 2016, for Valeriy Ruchko who lead the Jewish ministry in Minneapolis (MN), let's pray for his dedication and ministries.

Shabbat – אֶחָדֵי מוֹת'

אֶחָדֵי מוֹת'

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NEWS

SEDER IN LONDON

✿ It was with a great pleasure that Richard Elofer, spent time with the Jewish Adventist Friendship group in London on the first weekend of Passover. They were a group of about 35 people attending the Seder of Passover learning how Jews celebrate Passover, the link of Passover with the narration of the Gospels and the fulfillment of the specifications of this evening in the life of Yeshua the Messiah of Israel.



SHABBAT IN LONDON

✿ On the day after the Seder, the group met in a very interesting building called the "Advent Center" which host the Central SDA congregation of London, it is an interesting building because in fact this building used to be a synagogue, which has been bought by the Seventh-day Adventists more than 20 years ago. A service was led in this building with a great

assembly of more than 100 people who enjoyed the sermon of Richard Elofer but also an informative and formative afternoon meeting.

The weekend was concluded by a training meeting on Sunday morning where about 35 people interested to build friendship and new relationships with Jews were present.

There is a great hope that this group of Adventists involved in a friendship process with Jews will multiply.

SEDER IN ISRAEL

✿ Israel is always a very special place where to be during the pilgrimage feasts as Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkoth. Last week was Pesach and we received a news from pastor Oleg, who organized a celebration of the Seder with his congregations in the South of Israel, Tel Aviv and Ashdod.



Parasha Overview: ACHAREI MOT

G-d instructs the *kohanim* to exercise extreme care when they enter the *Mishkan*. On *Yom Kippur*, the *kohen gadol* is to approach the holiest part of the *Mishkan* after special preparations and wearing special clothing.

He brings offerings unique to *Yom Kippur*, including two identical goats that are designated by lottery. One is “for G-d” and is offered in the Temple, while the other is “for *Azazel*” in the desert.

The *Torah* states the individual’s obligations on *Yom Kippur*: On the 10th day of the seventh month, one must afflict oneself. We abstain from eating and drinking, anointing, wearing leather footwear, washing, and marital relations.

Consumption of blood is prohibited. The blood of slaughtered birds and undomesticated beasts must be covered.

The people are warned against engaging in the wicked practices that were common in Egypt. Incest is defined and prohibited. Marital relations are forbidden during a woman’s monthly cycle. Homosexuality, bestiality and child sacrifice are prohibited.



ONLY ONE CAN ENTER

The Parasha starts saying: “The L-rd spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the L-rd and died, and the L-rd said to Moses, ‘Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the Holy Place inside the veil, before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die. For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.’” (Leviticus 16:1-2) Following the death of Nadav and Avihu, G-d warns against unauthorized entry “into the Most Holy.” Only one person, the *Kohen Gadol* (“high priest”), may, but once a year, on *Yom Kippur*, enter the most holy place in the Sanctuary to offer the incense to G-d.

YOM KIPPUR

Even though we have just finished to celebrate *Pesach*, the parasha describes the feast of *Yom HaKippurim* (Hebrew name of the Day of Atonement). The Jewish people has a special way to celebrate the feast of *Yom Kippur*, they

meet in the synagogue from the beginning of the day (evening) to the end of the day, fasting and praying. All these prayers are supposed to provide forgiveness to the Jewish people.

But the Biblical feast was much more complex than what the Jewish people is doing today on *Yom Kippur*; this complexity because the feast was connected to the Temple.

The *Torah* describes this feast in this parasha: “This is how Aaron is to enter the sanctuary area: with a young bull for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering” (Lev 16:3). Since it is a feast for the atonement of the whole people, the *Cohen Gadol* (high priest) was to offer big sacrifices. Here is the process to follow:

The first step is that he must accept from the people of Israel “two male goats for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering” (5) The people is involved in the rituals. The people have to know that what is happening is about them.

The second step is that the *Cohen Gadol* has to remember that he is a sinner as anyone else among the people that is why “Aaron is to offer the bull for his own sin offering to make atonement for himself

PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK Acharei Mot אַחֲרֵי מוֹת

Leviticus 16: 1 - 18:30

and his household.” (6)

The third step is that one of the two goats has to be offered to the L-rd, but since they don’t know which one (they are identical) the *Cohen Gadol* has to cast lots for them “Then he is to take the two goats and present them before the L-rd at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. He is to cast lots for the two goats — one lot for the L-rd and the other for *Azazel*.” (7-8).

The fourth step is that the goat for the L-rd is offered as a sacrifice “Aaron shall bring the goat whose lot falls to the L-rd and sacrifice it for a sin offering.” (9)

The fifth step is the ritual inside of the sanctuary “He is to take a censer full of burning coals from the altar before the L-RD and two handfuls of finely ground fragrant incense and take them behind the curtain. He is to put the incense on the fire before the L-RD, and the smoke of the incense will conceal the atonement cover above the Testimony, so that he will not die. He is to take some of the bull’s blood and with his finger sprinkle it on the front of the atonement cover; then he shall sprinkle some of it with his finger seven times before the atonement



“And Aaron shall bring the goat upon which the L-RD’S lot fell, and offer him for a sin offering.”
(Leviticus 16:9)

cover.” (12-14) The incense and the blood are the most important part of this rituals. According to the book of Revelation the incense represents the prayers of G-d’s people, that is why the Jewish people is right to pray on that day. And the blood represents the blood of *Yeshua* who gave his life for our forgiveness.

At the end of the day, the goat of *Azazel* is to be sent to the desert to die there “The goat will carry on itself all their sins to a solitary place; and the man shall release it in the desert.” (22) In fact this goat represents the one who is the real responsible for all the sin of Israel, The Satan. That is why in the Jewish and Hebrew thinking *Azazel* is Satan. When someone in Israel is really upset against you and wants to say something very bad to you, he says “*Lech LaAzazel*” which could be translated as “Go to the devil”. The ignorance of most of the Christians is shown when they identify *Azazel* to the *Mashiach*. A simple knowledge of the use of this word by the Jewish people would help them to understand that *Azazel* cannot be the *Mashiach* but the devil.

Azazel who dies in the wilderness is the symbolic

representation of Satan, the devil who will die at the end of history as responsible of all our sins. He does not die for our atonement. The atonement is done by the first goat, the one who dies for the L-rd.

Satan dying at the end is really a biblical idea. 1) There is a being, compared to the king of Babylon who is called “morning star” and who has been cast down on the earth “O morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth” (Is 14:12) He wanted to replace G-d “You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of G-d; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of the sacred mountain.’” (13) However at the end he will die “But you are brought down to the grave, to the depths of the pit.” (15). How? In the Talmud it is written: “for R. Kattina said: ‘The world is to last six thousand years, and one thousand it will be desolate’” (Rosh Hashana 31a) this one thousand year of desolation is well known by Rabbi Yochanan who wrote the book *Hitgalut* (Revelation) in the *Brit Hachadasha*. He said to us what will happen to the devil during that

one thousand years “He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time. (Rev 20:2-3) This abyss is symbolized in the ritual of *Yom Kippur* as the desert where *Azazel* is left. Then, at the end of 1,000 years “When the thousand years are over, Satan will be released from his prison and will go out to deceive the nations in the four corners of the earth — Gog and Magog — to gather them for battle. In number they are like the sand on the seashore.” (Rev 20:7-8) and will be definitely destroyed “And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulfur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever.” (10) This lake of fire will not last forever, because the verse 14 explains that “Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death.” The second death is the definitive

Haftara Overview

Ezekiel 22:1 -19

The text of the parasha is about Yom Kippur, the day of the Judgment. The L-rd said to Moses: Tell your brother Aaron not to come just at any time into the sanctuary inside the curtain before the mercy seat that is upon the ark, or he will die; for I appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat. (Leviticus 16:2).

In the text of the haftara, we have a story of Judgement. The prophet is called by G-d to Judge the “bloody city”. “The word of the L-rd came to me: You, mortal, will you judge, will you judge the bloody city? Then declare to it all its abominable deeds. You shall say, Thus says the L-rd G-d: A city! Shedding blood within itself; its time has come; making its idols, defiling itself. You have become guilty by the blood that you have shed, and defiled by the idols that you have made; you have brought your day near, the appointed time of your years has come. Therefore I have made you a disgrace before the nations, and a mockery to all the countries.” (Ezekiel 22:1-4).

G-d is going to scatter His people among the nations. I will scatter you among the nations and disperse you through the countries, and I will purge your filthiness out of you. (Ezekiel 22:15)



death from where nobody comes back.

We understand that *Yom Kippur* is the description of the religious history of humanity. Man ran away from G-d (outside of the sanctuary) but Yeshua came to give his life for us, his blood was taken inside of the Holy of Holy (heavenly sanctuary) when he went up to heaven he has been interceding for us and he is purifying us from our sin, at the end of this *Yom Kippur* time (according to the Jewish tradition after 6000 years) he will come back on the earth (as the *Cohen Gadol* came back on the courtyard) he will put all the responsibility on the goat of *Azazel* which is the devil who will be sent to the desert (the earth in desolation) for 1,000 years then he will die in the lake of fire. Our *Cohen Gadol* will change his clothes and will introduce his followers into eternity where will be no death, no sickness, no suffering only peace and joy. That is why right after *Yom Kippur* Jews celebrate the Tabernacle feast in Joy.

FORGIVENESS ON YOM KIPPUR

The Torah states, “For on this day (referring to Yom Kippur) you

“And he shall take a censer full of burning coals of fire from off the altar before the L-RD, and his hands full of sweet incense beaten small, and bring it within the veil: And he shall put the incense upon the fire before the L-RD, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is upon the testimony, that he die not:”

(Leviticus 16:12-13)

shall receive atonement to purify you for all your transgressions, before the Almighty you shall be purified” (Leviticus 16:30). We can ask the question: does Yom Kippur atone for ALL transgressions?

The Sages in the Talmud (Yoma 85b) clarify that Yom Kippur atones for transgressions between man and the Almighty. However, with regards to transgressions between man and man, Yom Kippur can only atone if a person first attains forgiveness from those whom he has offended or harmed. This includes returning what was taken and possibly financial recompense as well as asking for forgiveness.

From this principle, we see the importance of being careful not to cause other people harm, either financial, physical or emotional.

It is proper to forgive those who sincerely ask for forgiveness; however, it is not always easy to forgive. One has to be able to forgive with a full heart for the person to receive atonement from the Almighty. Therefore, since this is difficult for a person to do, we should be even more careful not to wrong or hurt someone.

INTIMATE LIVES

The Chapter 18 of our parasha is about the practice of the Egyptians and the Canaanite, as it is writ-

ten: “You shall not do as they do in the land of Egypt, where you lived, and you shall not do as they do in the land of Canaan, to which I am bringing you. You shall not walk in their statutes.” (Leviticus 18:3). And we discover that this chapter is about forbidden relationships as Rabbi Yossy Goldman put it: “If anyone was bent on convincing us that Torah was old-fashioned, this would be a good Parashah to prove it. Leviticus, Chapter 18, contains the Bible’s Immorality Act. Our moral code, the forbidden relationships, who may marry whom and who may not—all come from this week’s reading.

We read this same chapter every year on Yom Kippur afternoon. And every year in every Shul (synagogue) around the world someone asks the very same question. “Why on Yom Kippur, Rabbi? Was there no other section of the Torah to choose besides the one about illicit sex? Is this an appropriate choice to read in Shul on the holiest day of the year?”

Fair question. So the Rabbis explain that this is, in fact, the ultimate test of our holiness. The most challenging arena of human conduct, the one that really tests the mettle of our morality, is not how we behave in the synagogue but how we behave in our bedrooms. To conduct ourselves appropriately in public is far easier than to be morally consistent in our intimate lives.”

APOSTOLIC WRITINGS — HEBREWS 9:1-28

The best text we have in the *Brit Hachadasha* that explains to us the meaning of *Yom Kippur* is the chapter 9 of the letters to the Hebrews. It is a special letter written especially for the Jewish people, that is why it is called the letter to the Hebrews. The author of this letter is not known for sure, the oldest tradition says that the author was Rabbi Shaul (Paul), but the style is different of the other letters we have from Shaul, that is why it is possible that it was one of the disciples of Rabbi Shaul who wrote it through a teaching received from Rabbi Shaul, that is why the tradition has attributed this letter to Paul.

To understand what Rabbi Shaul teaches here, we have to remember what he said in the previous chapter: “Now the point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, one who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, a minister in the holy places, in the true tent that the L-rd set up, not man.” (Hebrews 8:1-2). G-d asked the people of Israel to build a sanctuary according to the model he showed them in the Sinai (Exodus 25 :8), this model shown to Moses was in fact the true sanctuary which is in heaven and was not build by human hands. When Yeshua went to heaven after the resurrection, he started a new phase of his ministry in this heavenly sanctuary as the new high priest of the new covenant.

Thus Rabbi Shaul explain what he had learned during his studies as a Rabbi, a Phar-

isee, and a doctor of the law. After describing the sanctuary and its furniture Rabbi Shaul wrote what happened on Yom Kippur “But only the Cohen Gadol entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance.” (Hebrews 9:7) it means “The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still standing.” (8) The author of this letter agrees with Jews when they said that it is impossible to perform some mitzvot today, because the temple is destroyed. G-d allowed the Romans to destroy the *Beth Hamikdash* because there is a better minister and ministry today “This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper.” (9) The real things came with the Mashiach “When Mashiach came as Cohen Gadol of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation.” (11) There is a sanctuary in heaven which is more perfect than the earthly one. “He did not enter by means of the blood of goats and calves; but he entered the Most Holy Place once for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption.” (12) I know that many Jews do not accept the Messianic

role of the death of Yeshua, it is a scandal for them, but it is a reality: “How much more, then, will the blood of Mashiach, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to G-d, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living G-d!” (14) Rabbi Shaul said also “G-d presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice,” (Rom 3:25). Atonement can be accomplished only by Yeshua. It is difficult for a Jew to understand this point, but it is also what the Hebrew Bible announced for example in the prophet Isaiah: “Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the L-rd been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by G-d, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.” (Isaiah 53:1-5). Let’s the *Ruach Hakodesh* speak to our heart.

This judgement of Israel is recorded also to illustrate in what situation we could be as G-d’s people today. How do we act every day, What is our relation with the Word of G-d, which relationship do we have with G-d. Are we the people of the Bible and a people of prayer.

Yom Kippur is every day for us, we are waiting for the coming of the Mashiach from the heavenly sanctuary, in the same way that the High Priest, at the end of the Yom Kippur came out from the tabernacle, to assure G-d’s people that they have received forgiveness.

Our G-d is a G-d of love, he is always ready to forgive us if we come back to Him in true and sincere repentance.

But for true repentance it is necessary to ask G-d to forgive our sins and also to ask our neighbor to forgive what we have done wrong to them.

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

DO YOU LOVE FISH?

Rabbi Mendel of Kotsk once saw a man eating fish with great appetite. Rabbi Mendel said to him,

- Why do you eat fish?
- Because I love fish, the man replied.
- You're lying! says the rabbi
- If you would love fish you would keep it in water, care for it, feed it daily and make sure that the fish was alive and healthy! From your actions I see that you hate fish! What you really love is yourself!

HILLEL AND SHAMAI

In the third chapter of *Pirkei Avot*, which Jews will also recite this Shabbat, our sages emphasize the importance of being kind and respectful to others: "Rabbi Chanina ben Dosa said, 'Anyone with whom others are pleased, G-d is pleased with them; but anyone with whom others are not pleased, G-d is not pleased with them.'"

The Talmud illustrates this mitzvah with the following episode. A heathen once approached the Talmudic sage Shamai and said, "I want to convert to Judaism on the condition that you teach me the entire Torah in as short a time as I can stand on one foot." Shamai refused.

The heathen later approached the sage Hillel with the same request. Hillel accepted his condition and said, "Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you. This is the entire Torah. Everything else in the Torah is merely commentary on this mitzvah. Now go and study the rest."

ENTERING THE MOST HOLY PLACE

There is a famous story in the Talmud. (*Chagigah*, 14b). Four men entered the "Grove" (the mystical secrets of the Torah): Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Acher and Rabbi Akiva. Ben Azzai looked and died. Ben Zoma looked and was stricken (with madness). Acher mutilated the shoots (i.e., became an apostate). Rabbi Akiva "entered in peace and came out in peace."

On the face of it, the important difference between Rabbi Akiva and the other three was in how he came out of the "Grove." Why does the Talmud emphasize that he "entered in peace?"

But the truth is that how each of the four entered, determined how they emerged. Ben Azzai entered seeking ecstasy, not return; therefore he "looked and died." (It is interesting to note that his Divine service was generally characterized by aspects of withdrawal.)

But Rabbi Akiva entered "in peace," in obedience to the Divine will and seeking to unite the higher and lower worlds. That is why he came out in peace. His intention of returning was implicit at the outset of his path to religious ecstasy.

This, too, was how Aaron was to enter the Holy of Holies, in fear, obedience and self-abnegation. And in this way he was able to "make atonement for himself and for his house" and to say a prayer for the sustenance of Israel, each of them acts of concern for the world.

THE WOODCUTTER

Once upon a time, a very strong woodcutter asked for a job in a timber merchant and he got it. The pay was really good and so was the work

condition. For those reasons, the woodcutter was determined to do his best. His boss gave him an axe and showed him the area where he supposed to work. The first day, the woodcutter brought 18 trees.

"Congratulations," the boss said. "Go on that way!"

Very motivated by the boss words, the woodcutter tried harder the next day, but he could only bring 15 trees.

The third day he tried even harder, but he could only bring 10 trees.

Day after day he was bringing less and less trees.

"I must be losing my strength", the woodcutter thought.

He went to the boss and apologized, saying that he could not understand what was going on.

"When was the last time you sharpened your axe?" The boss asked.

"Sharpen? I had no time to sharpen my axe. I have been very busy trying to cut trees..."

Our lives are like that. We sometimes get so busy that we don't take time to sharpen the "axe".

In today's world, it seems that everyone is busier than ever, but less happy than ever.

Why is that?

Could it be that we have forgotten how to stay "sharp"?

There's nothing wrong with activity and hard work but we should not get so busy that we neglect the truly important things in life, like our personal lives, taking time to get close to our G-d the Creator.

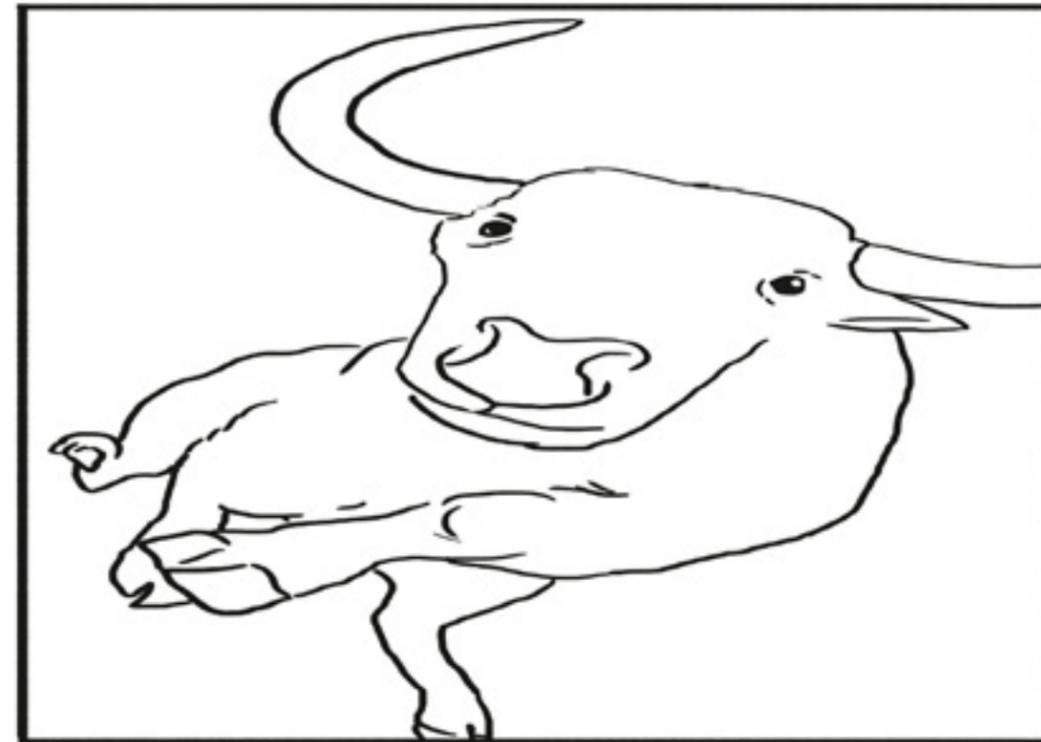
giving more time for our family, taking time to read the Bible, spiritual material etc.

We all need time to relax, to think and meditate on G-d's word. to learn and grow spiritually.

If we don't take the time to sharpen the "axe", we will become dull and lose our effectiveness.

KIDS PARASHA ACHAREI MOT

אַחֲרֵי מוֹת



Leviticus 16:1 - 18:30

"The L-rd said to Moses and Aaron, "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any man has a bodily discharge, the discharge is unclean. Whether it continues flowing from his body or is blocked, it will make him unclean. This is how his discharge will bring about uncleanness: "Any bed the man with a discharge lies on will be unclean, and anything he sits on will be unclean. Anyone who touches his bed must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. Whoever sits on anything that the man with a discharge sat on must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening. "Whoever touches the man who has a discharge must wash his clothes and bathe with water, and he will be unclean till evening." (Leviticus 15:1-7)

<http://www.bnai-tikkun.org.nz>

Inspirational Corner

❖ The cover of the sacred chest was called the mercy seat. This was wrought of one solid piece of gold, and was surmounted by golden cherubim, one standing on each end. One wing of each angel was stretched forth on high, while the other was folded over the body (see Ezekiel 1:11) in token of reverence and humility. The position of the cherubim, with their faces turned toward each other, and looking reverently downward toward the ark, represented the reverence with which the heavenly host regard the law of G-d and their interest in the plan of redemption. (PP 348)

Inspirational Corner

❖ The law of G-d, enshrined within the ark, was the great rule of righteousness and judgment. That law pronounced death upon the transgressor; but above the law was the mercy seat, upon which the presence of G-d was revealed, and from which, by virtue of the atonement, pardon was granted to the repentant sinner. Thus in the work of Messiah for our redemption, symbolized by the sanctuary service, "mercy and truth are met together; righteousness and peace have kissed each other." Psalm 85:10. (PP 349)