

Deuteronomy 7:12 -11:25

News

LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

We pray every week for the Jewish Friendship Ministry and their partner. I suggest our friends to pray from August 8 through 15, for Alexander Vashchinin. The leaders of this ministry in the Euro-Asia Region. It is a huge territory which includes Russia, Ukraine and most of the countries of the former Soviet Union. let's pray for him and his family.

2021 TOUR IN ISRAEL WITH ZEFF ZAREMSKY AND HIS TEAM

Jeff Zaremsky is organizing a Tour to Israel in 2021, April 26-May 5, all together 10 days, 9 nights. Only \$2,990 for the land tour; the flight tickets are not included in the price.

According to Jeff: "The best tour ever has just gotten better."

Here is a small overview of the first few nights: 1st night overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. 2nd night overlooking the Dead Sea. 3rd hotel in the heart of Jerusalem, within walking distance to the Western Wall. 4th hotel overlooking the Sea of Galilee. This tour includes many more views of spectacular Israel.

There are no better locations in Israel than these. Get your deposit in now to reserve your hotel room, with still plenty of time to cancel for a full refund if things don't improve by then for travel. Check out Jeff's new [video](#) of the tour. If you are interested, contact Jeff at jeff@jewish-heritage.net

2021 FRENCH SPEAKING TOUR IN ISRAEL WITH RICHARD ELOFER

Richard Elofer has been invited by the Montreal Jewish Adventist ministry to organize an educational tour in Israel. Hoping that the current pandemic of the Covid 19 will be over, this French speaking tour is being planned for October 2021. We will communicate the details for this tour later (exact dates, cost, etc...). If you are interested, please contact Richard Elofer at richard@elofers.com.

WORSHIP IN LONDON WITH DR. ROGER LANG

Dr. Roger Lang has been invited to lead a service in London. We encourage everyone to connect to this virtual meeting to be edified and encouraged. Here is more information about this event.

Jewish Adventist Friendship (JAF-UK)

invites you
to
'Learn how to do a Kabbalat Service'
with
Dr Roger Lang (and his Family)
on
Saturday/Sabbath 29th August 2020
Time: 18:00pm - 20:00pm (BST)
Meeting ID: 916 6284 1214
Passcode: 223558

AUTUMN FEASTS

Summer is the time to prepare for the upcoming feasts. Are you preparing your virtual congregation to reach out your Jewish friends?

The current pandemic has demonstrated that great opportunities are at our doors to reach people as never before. People are not afraid to enter your congregation since they will do it from the comfort of their home, and in this way their privacy is preserved. A good way to gather people is to advertise your celebration on the Internet. Here again is some practical information about the autumn feasts.

Feast of Trumpets: *Rosh Hashanah*, the Jewish new year.

Day of Atonement: *Yom Kippur*, the holiest day of the Jewish calendar, the day of judgment and forgiveness.

Feast of Tabernacles: Seven days of *Sukkoth*, the feast of the harvest, reminding Yisrael of their stay in the wilderness.

Simchat Torah: Rejoicing in the Torah – the completion of the Torah-reading cycle and the beginning of a new cycle for the new year.

It is time to begin thinking about and making plans to have an online presence during these feasts. This is a great opportunity to hold friendship events that are attractive to Jews, since most of the synagogues will be closed. Let us invite our Jewish friends and neighbors to celebrate these festive moments on-line with us. The schedule this year for these feasts is:

Rosh Hashanah: *Shabbat*, 19 September, beginning Friday evening, 18 September

Yom Kippur: Monday, 28 September, beginning with *Kol Nidre* Sunday evening, 27 September

Succoth: *Shabbat* 3 October, beginning Friday evening, 2 October, through 10 October

Simchat Torah: Sunday, 11 October

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PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

EIKEV - עֵיקֵב

PARASHA OVERVIEW: DEUTERONOMY 7:12 - 11:25

If Bnei Yisrael (Children of Yisrael) will carefully observe even those “minor” *mitzvot* (commandments) that are often “trampled underfoot,” Moshe promises them that they will be the most blessed of the nations of the earth.

Moshe tells Bnei Yisrael that they will conquer *Eretz* (land) Canaan little by little, so that the land will not be overrun by wild animals in the hiatus before Bnei Yisrael are able to organize and settle the entire land.

After again warning Yisrael to burn all carved idols of Canaanite gods, Moshe stresses that the Torah is indivisible and not open to partial observance.

Moshe describes the land of Yisrael as a land of wheat, barley, grapes, figs, and pomegranates, a land of oil-yielding olives and date honey.

Moshe cautions Yisrael not to become haughty and think that their success in the land of Yisrael is a result of their own powers or vigor; rather, it is Hashem (G-

d) who gives them wealth and success.

Nor did Hashem drive out the Canaanites because of the people of Yisrael’s righteousness, but rather because of the sins of the Canaanites; for the road from Sinai had been a catalogue of large and small sins and rebellions against Hashem and Moshe.

Moshe details events that happened after Hashem spoke the 10 Commandments at Sinai, culminating in his bringing down the second set of Tablets on Yom Kippur.

Aharon’s passing is recorded, as is the elevation of the Levi’im to be Hashem’s ministers.

Moshe points out that the 70 people who went down to Egypt have now become like the stars of the heavens in abundance. After specifying the great virtues of the Land of Yisrael, Moshe speaks the second paragraph of the *Shema*, conceptualizing the blessings that accompany keeping *mitzvot*, and the curses that result from non-observance.

EKEV, PARASHA’S TITLE

The word עֵיקֵב (*Ekev, Akev* for English pronunciation) is the second Hebrew word of our *parashah* – a word that is used 13 times in the Hebrew Bible. The first use is in connection with humanity’s salvation: “... he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel (עֵיקֵב *Akev*)” (Genesis 3:15 NKJV). The dictionary *Nidotte* says Genesis 3:15 “describes the archetypal seizing of the serpent at the heel of humankind. Here the heel serves as the point of impact for the manifestation of hostility between the seed of humankind and the serpent.”

Rabbi Hirsch says this *parashah* was called *Ekev* because it describes what follows “on the heel” of obedience to *Hashem*. Hence, the Sages of Yisrael learn from this expression the spirit in which the commandments are to be fulfilled. The commandments are interconnected, and one that appears insignificant in our eyes may have far-reaching repercussions. All the commandments are valid, without exception. We must consider them all equally important. That is why Yeshua says “whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever keeps and teaches them, this one shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I tell you that unless your righteousness exceeds that of the Pharisees and Torah scholars, you shall never enter the kingdom of heaven!” (Matthew 5:19-20). *Ekev* denotes something that was not deliberately sought, something that one did not have in mind. The Sages of Yisrael say that in each generation attention must be paid especially to the observance of those commandments that tend to be neglected in that generation because they seem trivial. These are the “*mitsvot* on which people tread with their heels, leaving them behind as they walk over them and trample them because they consider them to be of little significance.”

In fact, the word *Ekev*, is an unusual word. Since the word’s literal translation is derived from ‘heel’, the back of the foot, it is therefore taken to mean ‘that which follows’, as the heel follows the foot. Thus, the verse describes the relationship with *Hashem* that will result from our observance of the laws and statutes—a relationship of spiritual and physical bounty. In his commentary on this verse, Rashi employs the metaphor of the heel of the foot in a more literal fashion: “And due to your listening if a [person listens] to the simple *mitzvot* which people (usually) trample with their heels.” (Rashi, on *Devarim* 7:12) Instead of stressing the grandiose, or the “important” *mitzvot*, Rashi stresses the light or easy *mitzvot*, the ones that are performed in a nonchalant fashion. If those small, seemingly less-significant *mitzvot* are fulfilled, *Hashem* will fulfill the covenant He made with our forefathers and will treat us with kindness.

THE RIGHTEOUS AND HIS BLESSINGS

The *parashah* begins with the verse: “Then it will happen, as a result of your listening to these ordinanc-



es, when you keep and do them, that *HASHEM* your God will keep with you the covenant kindness that He swore to your fathers” (Deuteronomy 7:12). The final verses of the preceding *parashah* explain that the truly righteous individual should not expect to receive his personal reward for his good deeds while he himself is still living on the earth. Scripture describes the blessings that will come to the community if it lives in accordance with its duty. These blessings come as a result of such a life, but they are not rewards to be pursued for their own sake. Rabbi Hirsch comments, “That is why all the commandments of the Torah are subsumed here under one term *Hamishpatim*—they are none other than legal axioms through which the many varied aspects and relationships of physical and spiritual life of both individual and nation receive their rightful due, in accordance with the standard of *Tsedek*, the Divinely-set ideal state of the world.”

KEEPING THE MITZVOT

This week’s *parashah*, *Ekev*, records Moshe’s words to the people of Yisrael before his death, as does the remainder of this fifth book of the Torah, *Devarim* (Deuteronomy).

Knowing that he will not enter the Promised Land, Moshe spends his final days preparing the Jewish nation for their future. He cautions them to adhere to all the *mitzvot* (commandments) of *Hashem*, especially when they enter the land—their physical and spiritual welfare and prosperity depend on their actions.

He reminds them that if they keep the *mitzvot*, in return *Hashem* will fulfill His promises to them: “And He will love you and bless you and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the produce of your soil ...” (Deuteronomy 7:13). In Chapter 9, Moshe reviews the sin of Yisrael in the worship of the Golden Calf and warns Yisrael not to repeat their past mistakes.

GOD’S BLESSINGS

In commenting on the text: “He [*Hashem*] will love you, bless you, and multiply you. He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the produce of your soil, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your herds and the young of your flock, in the land that He swore to your fathers to give you” (Deuteronomy 7:13), Rabbi Hirsch gives us three results or blessings of our faithfulness:

The first result of observing God’s commandments is LOVE (*AHAVA*). God regards us as His faithful servant, for we set aside our will in deference to His: therefore, He loves us, as a master loves his faithful servant.

He will love you, bless you and make you numerous. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your land, your grain, your wine, your oil, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks, in the land that He promised your fathers that He would give to you. (Deuteronomy 7:13)

The second result of observing God’s commandments is BLESSING (*BRACHA*). Since our deeds further only what is in accordance with His will, and our success means the success of God’s work on earth, He grants us success in all our ways.

The third result of observing God’s commandments is MULTIPLYING (*ARBEH*). Biological multiplication is also presented as a blessing from God. Each generation gives repeated, multiple expression to our spirit, to our heart, and to the faithfulness of our deeds, and our increasing population extends the borders of God’s kingdom on earth. (2009, 157).

Rabbi Hirsch concludes: “Parallel to this richness is the increasing thriving of the riches of the soil, as described in the continuation of the verse.” (Ibid.) “He will also bless the fruit of ...” is merely the continuation of “multiplying”—the Land will blossom and meet the needs of the increased population..

FAITHFUL TO GOD

Chapter 8 of Deuteronomy is a new exhortation to be faithful to *Hashem* and His commandments: “You are to take care to do the whole *mitzvah* that I am commanding you today, so that you may live and multiply and go in and possess the land that *HASHEM* swore to your fathers” (Deuteronomy 8:1). *Eretz Yisrael* is promised to be a great land of milk of honey, but only if the people are faithful to *Hashem*. During the time of *Eliyahu Hanavi*, it did not rain in the land for more than three years. People were dying because the country became so parched that no food would grow and the stored food was depleted. In Deuteronomy 8, the land of Yisrael is described as a land of blessings: “For *HASHEM* your God is bringing you into a good land—a land of wadis with water, of springs and fountains flowing out in the valleys and hills, a land of wheat and barley, vines, figs and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land where you will eat bread with no poverty, where you will lack nothing, a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you can dig copper. So you will eat and be full, and you will bless *HASHEM* your God for the good land He has given you” (Deuteronomy 8:7-10). But this land will provide everything only if *Hashem*’s blessings are on it. In this text is listed the famous “7 Species” or

I had climbed the mountain to get the stone tablets - tablets of the covenant that G-d had made with you. I remained on the mountain forty days and forty nights without eating food or drinking water. (Deuteronomy 9:9)

fruits of the Promised Land: wheat, barley, vines (grapes), figs, pomegranates, olive, honey (translated by some as “dates”).

NOT TO BE HAUGHTY

The Torah states, “Take care that you do not forget *HASHEM* your God by not keeping His *mitzvot*, ordinances and statutes that I am commanding you today. . . . then your heart will be haughty and you will forget *HASHEM* your God. He brought you out from the land of Egypt, from the house of slavery” (Deuteronomy 8:11, 14). The Talmud says that there is a Commandment not to be haughty. Rebbe Ila’a explains: “Any time the Torah employs the phrase ‘guard yourself, lest...’ the Torah is warning us to not violate a Law—in this case, not to forget God. And when the Torah continues ‘... and you become haughty, and forget *Hashem* your God...’ God is telling us that the one inevitably leads to the other: if you become haughty, the end result will be that you will forget God.” (*Sotah* 5a)

Rabbi Hirsch takes this concept a step further, saying that arrogance is, in and of itself, the beginning of forgetfulness of God. The Talmud *Sotah* also understands that *Hashem* says concerning anyone with the trait of haughtiness, “he and I cannot coexist in this world.” Why? Because the arrogant individual is so full of himself that he loses his recognition of all higher authority—including The Higher Authority. (aish.com)

Moshe continues, “You may say in your heart, ‘My power and the might of my hand has made me this wealth.’ Rather you are to remember *HASHEM* your God, for it is He who gives you power to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant that He swore to your fathers—as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 8:17-18). During the 40 years in the desert, the Jewish people received their daily portion of *Manna*, “bread from heaven;” water flowed from a rock, and their clothing grew with them. Since *Hashem* took care of all their needs, they were constantly reminded they could not survive if it were not for *Hashem*. But when they entered the Promised Land, these miracles stopped. Instead, *Hashem*’s blessings were revealed through nature.

To keep the people from thinking they could credit themselves for their success, Moshe stressed that it is *Hashem* who deserves the credit just as before: “Rather you are to remember *HASHEM* your God, for it is He who gives you power to make wealth, in order to establish His covenant that He swore to your fathers—as it is this day” (Deuteronomy 8:18). *Hashem* wants His people to continuously remember that if they have such a blessing in their land, it is because God has blessed them. This is why it is customary to say, *Baruch HaShem* —“Blessed is God.”



APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

ROMANS 14:1-9

Rabbi Shaul who is the author of this letter to gives a lesson of tolerance and acceptance of others, those who are thinking differently of us within our community: "Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of disputes about opinions." (Romans 14:1). It is so easy to lose the purpose of our mission, spending time to discuss private opinions and not to share the good news of Yeshua.

According to Rabbi Shaul, there are people who are eating only vegetables and who are considered in our text as "weak." It is written: "One person has faith to eat anything, but the weak eats only vegetables." (Romans 14:2). It is not an easy text, especially for vegetarians. Today to be vegetarian is a way to save the resources of the planet, it is an important role we received from God as steward of God's creation. However, there are always people who use this text to speak against vegetarians, or who say that vegetarianism is not what the Bible teaches and according to this text the vegetarians are "weak" in their faith.

It is clearly not the teaching of this text. To understand the meaning of what Rabbi Shaul said, we, as always, have to put this text in its context, and to check if our conclusion is in agreement with the other teaching of Rabbi Shaul. Rabbi Shaul was a Torah observant, he was a Jew and spoke according to his knowledge of the Jewish culture and traditions. Never he would advocate non kosher food, and he certainly, on many occasion ate only vegetables because he did not find kosher meat on the market.

The context of this text is not vegetarianism, because in this text we read: "One person esteems one day over another while another judges every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind." (5). Those who like to spend hours discussing opinions are using this text to teach that we don't need to keep the Shabbat in order to be faithful to Yeshua.

These texts are not about people who would like to respect the biblical principle of kosher food, or about people who would like to be faithful to the Ten commandments, observing the 4th commandments which requires worshiping on Shabbat. Reading the text further it is said: "The one who observes that day does so to the Lord. The one who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and the one who abstains, abstains to the Lord, and he gives thanks to God." (Romans 14:6). The context is clear, it is eating and not eating food in connection with days.

Let's remember the context, on the first century, when the majority of the believers came from a sort of rabbinical Judaism, and more and more new believers came from Gentiles, There was conflict between Observant Jews and Gentiles. Why? There were among these people, some who made distinction between days in connection with foods. That means, they were ready to accept to eat meat and on some other days they did not want to eat meat, but only vegetables.

Once again to understand the problematic of this chapter, we have to remember some Jewish practices of the first century. At that time, there were two special days each week; these days were Mondays and Thursdays. In fact, they are still special days for the Jewish people today. Jews pray at home or in synagogues three time a day, every day. But the morning prayer of Mondays and Thursdays are special in synagogues, on that day,

the Rabbi or worship leader open the Torah scrolls for a reading of a portion of the parashah. The reading of the parashah from the Torah scrolls is done on Mondays, Thursday, and Shabbat.

In the time of Yeshua and Rabbi Shaul, these two days were celebrated by observant Jews who wanted to be faithful to the rabbinical prescriptions. These people were fasting and added special prayers on their liturgy on these special days. Fasting on other days than Yom Kippur was eating only vegetables not any meat. We have an allusion of these two days in the *besorah*. Yeshua was giving a teaching to his disciples: "Then Yeshua spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, while holding others in contempt." (Luke 18:9) to illustrate his teaching, while he was in the temple, he gave the example of two different worshipers, one was a Pharisee and the second one was a taxes collector. The prayer of the Pharisee was the prayer of a self-righteous man, he said to God in order to increase his merits: "I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get." (Luke 18:12). These two days of fast were Mondays and Thursdays.

After the death and resurrection of Yeshua, when Jews and Gentiles accepted Yeshua, a new situation was created. They started to live together, while before, never a Jew would go to the house of a Gentile. In this context, Pharisees Jews who accepted Yeshua, as those mentioned in Acts 15:5, who thought that we should observe all the prescriptions of the Oral Law given by the Sanhedrin and other Rabbis, continued to fast on Mondays and Thursdays, they continued to practice their religion in the same way as before. On the other hand, Gentiles did not consider themselves subjected to these Jewish practices which were not written in the Torah. Thus, when a Gentile invited a Jew to eat in his home a Monday or a Thursday, the Gentile cooked normal biblical (Kosher) food, but the Jew was not comfortable eating meat (even Kosher meat) on that special days, and refused to eat them asking his host to eat only vegetables. We can understand that in the context of Middle East hospitality, refusing eating some food would raised some conflicts between Jews and Gentiles.

When Rabbi Shaul heard about these conflicts, he clearly said that those who make distinction between days and eat only vegetables and not meat are the weak people, in the sense that they don't understand their freedom in Yeshua. Although we don't have to judge them until the *Ruach Hakodesh* will give them more light and they will understand that in Yeshua we don't need to follow these non biblical traditions.

Rabbi Shaul shows in this chapter, that Jews and Gentiles can live together, can eat together. Monday and Thursday are not special days about prayers and eating.

Let's remember that we are new creatures in Yeshua HaMashiach, and not subject anymore to human prescriptions: "For none of us lives for himself, and none dies for himself. For if we live, we live for the Lord; and if we die, we die for the Lord. So whether we live or die, we belong to the Lord. For this reason Messiah died and lived again, so that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living." (Romans 14:7-9).

HAFTARAH

ISAIAH 49:14 - 51:3

This Shabbat is the second Shabbat after *Tisha B'Av*. We are in the period called, *Shiva D'nechemta*—"Seven weeks of comfort." The seven Haftarat of the weeks between *Tisha B'Av* and *Rosh Hashana* are prophecies of comfort and hope for Yisrael and for G-d's people at large. The prophet Isaiah has prophesied in his book that because of the sins of Yisrael and their constant disobedience, G-d will allow the power of Babylon to deport His people from the Promised Land. However, G-d is the G-d of Yisrael and will be the G-d of Yisrael forever. That is why, reading Isaiah 40 last week, we have seen that Yisrael has not been rejected, that Hashem will comfort them and requests His end time people to comfort Yisrael, assuring them that G-d has forgiven their sins. In this week's Haftarah, prophetically and metaphorically Isaiah describes the Exile of Yisrael and their feeling of abandonment: "But Zion said: 'Hashem has forsaken me, Hashem has forgotten me.'" (Isaiah 49:14). Zion is the Temple Mount, and for the Jewish people this is a synonym of Jerusalem, the eternal city of G-d and the capital of Yisrael, the city to which all eyes of the Jews turn. It is on behalf of the people of Yisrael that Zion speaks, no matter where the people are: near or far, Zion speaks. We also find that the L-rd cannot forget Yisrael, as a woman cannot forget her children: "Can a woman forget her nursing baby or lack compassion for a child of her womb? Even if these forget, I will not forget you." (49:15). What great love! There is no stronger love than the love of a mother for her baby, and the prophet compares the love of G-d for His people to the love of a mother feeding her baby. Hashem loves His people with an unconditional and everlasting love: "Behold, I have engraved you on the palms of My hands. Your walls are continually before Me." (49:16a). We remember that G-d asked the High Priest to engrave the names of the tribes of Yisrael on stones fastened to his *ephod* as a memorial before Hashem. But when G-d engraves the names of Yisrael, it is not on an external material but on His own hands, on the palms of His hands. This means Yisrael is and will be constantly before His eyes to love and protect them. And even after the walls of Zion are destroyed and His people are in exile, G-d continues to keep an eye on them: "Your walls are continually before Me." (49:16b). We also find the promise of return from exile: "Your children will come quickly. Your destroyers and devastators will go away from you." (49:17).

From verse 18 and following, Isaiah envisions the gathering of Yisrael: "Lift up your eyes around and see: all of them will gather and come to you." (49:18). Here Hashem is speaking to the land: "to you" they are coming back, "to you" they will gather. A conversation ensues between G-d and the Land. The Land is afraid that with all the destruction it has suffered there will be not enough space to accommodate all of them, but G-d comforts the Land as He comforts His people: "As I live"—it is Hashem's declaration—"you will wear them all as jewelry and bind them on like a bride." For your waste and desolate places and your destroyed land will now be surely too small for the inhabitants, and those who swallowed you up will be far away. The children of your bereavement will yet say in your ears, "The place is too cramped for me! Make room for me to settle in." Then you will say in your heart, "Who has borne these for me? Wasn't I bereaved of my children—barren, an exile and wandering? So who has raised these? Behold, I was left alone—these, where were they?" (49:18-21).

STORIES AND TRADITIONS

WHAT I SHOULD SPEAK ABOUT

There is a story of a rabbi who is asked to give a guest lecture in a synagogue. The synagogue's rabbi cautions him, "Don't speak about Shabbat. Many of the congregants are not Shabbat observant. And don't speak about Kashruth. Many of the congregants don't keep Kosher. Also, don't speak about learning Torah. Many congregants don't make time to learn Torah. The visiting rabbi asked, "Then, please tell me, what should I speak about?" "Why," says the synagogue rabbi, "speak about Judaism!"

LET US NOT BE YENEMITES

Rabbi was asked to speak as a guest lecturer in a synagogue. He asked the local Rabbi, "Is there anything that I shouldn't speak about that might be too sensitive?" The rabbi replied, "No. Speak about whatever you want. My congregants are Yenemites." My friend was puzzled by the rabbi's words. Yenemites? He had heard of Yemenites, but surely the congregants didn't come from Yemen. The visitor Rabbi gave his talk with great vim and vigor urging the listeners to higher levels of observance and learning. After the services, he and the local rabbi greeted the congregants as they left synagogue. One man congratulated the speaker on his talk, "It was just what the guy sitting next to me needed to hear!" Said the local rabbi to the speaker, "See. I told you they were Yenemites—from the Yiddish word 'yemem,' meaning 'others.' They don't take messages to heart, they always think you are speaking to the other guy." Let us strive to NOT be Yenemites and to take what we learn to heart and to action!"

BAAL SHEM TOV AND HIS DISCIPLES

The Baal Shem Tov used to spend many hours in prayer. His disciples would finish their prayer earlier and then wait for their Rebbe. Only then would they go home and have their Shabbat meal.

One Shabbat, the disciples decided to go home, have their meal and return to synagogue before their Rebbe finished his

prayers. However, to their amazement, when they returned, the Baal Shem Tov had already finished his prayers and was waiting for them.

They asked the Baal Shem Tov, "Why did the Rebbe finish his prayers so much earlier this Shabbat?"

The Baal Shem Tov replied, "I will explain this with the following parable. Many people were standing near a tree, on the top of which there was a beautiful bird. In order to catch the bird, they decided that each person will stand on the other's shoulder, until the one on top will reach the bird and catch it."

"The same is with us," said the Baal Shem Tov. "The only way I can reach to the higher spiritual spheres is when I place each one of you one on top of the other (in a spiritual sense) and thus, with your help, I could get to where I want to reach. However, when you all left, I lost your support and thus the ability to reach the spiritual heights."

THE GOLDEN COIN

A man walking on a dark street lost a bag of small change. He knew that if he asked people to provide light and help him search for his small change, they would decline. They would consider it a waste of their time. What did he do? He took a golden coin and placed it on the floor. He then begged the people around him for light to help him find his lost golden coin. When the passers by heard that he lost a golden coin they stopped with their lanterns to help. Now, as the street was lit, in addition to the golden coin, he also collected the smaller coins.

This, according to our sages, was the case with Moshe and the people of Israel whom he took out of Egypt. The generation who left Egypt had committed many sins (Golden Calf, rebelling against G-d, sending the spies etc.). As a result, they may not have merited to be resurrected at the time of Mashiach."

INSPIRATIONAL CORNER

Parents can and should interest their children in the varied knowledge found in the sacred pages. But if they would interest their sons and daughters in the Word of God, they must be interested in it themselves. They must be familiar with its teachings and, as God commanded Israel, speak of it "when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up." Deuteronomy 11:19. Those who desire their children to love and reverence God must talk of His goodness, His majesty, and His power, as revealed in His Word and in the works of creation. (PP 504)

He will love you, bless you and make you numerous. He will bless the fruit of your womb, the fruit of your land, your grain, your wine, your oil, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks, in the land that He promised your fathers that He would give to you. (Deuteronomy 7:13)

