

## NEWS

## LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

*We pray every**week for the**Jewish Friendship**Ministry. I suggest**our partners pray**from September 1**through 7 for Luc**Desplanches and**his team in Paris,**the beginning of this**ministry in Paris is**very slow and needs**our prayers.*FIRST SUCCOTH CAMP MEETING  
IN GEORGIA

We have been told that the Jewish ministry has existed in the U.S. since the 19th century, and the Succoth Camp Meeting announced last week may not be the first in America, but is certainly the first in Georgia. That is why we invite all people who are involved in Jewish ministry to register for this unique and historic camp meeting. If you want to attend this camp meeting, contact Tina at [munson\\_tina@yahoo.com](mailto:munson_tina@yahoo.com) or on WhatsApp: 1 (706) 878-9112.

## MISSION CONFERENCE

The Department of World Mission at Andrews University is organizing a Mission conference on the topic of Death and Ancestors in a Global Missiological Perspective to be held September 12-14, 2019. Andrews University is a well-known Seventh-day Adventist university located in Berrien Springs, Michigan. This conference is open to everyone who is interested in this topic of "death and ancestors" in different cultures.

What does each of us believe about death and particularly the after-death state? Adventists believe that humans were created as an "indivisible unity of body, mind, and spirit, dependent upon God for life and breath and all else." Only God is immortal, meaning that no part of a human being is immortal and our future immortality is conditional. However, what do other Christians believe? What do other cultures and religions believe? A paper is being prepared by Dr. Reinaldo Siqueira on beliefs about death and ancestors in Judaism.

We are informed that the conference will meet in the Seminary Hall chapel. Attendees and presenters will make their own arrangements for transportation, room, and board.

The first meeting will be at 7:00 pm on Thursday, September 12, with the conclusion at 5:00 pm on Saturday, September 14.

For more information, contact Andrew Tompkins at [tompkina@andrews.edu](mailto:tompkina@andrews.edu) or (1)269-471-6505.

## SHALOM LEARNING TRAINING

It is with pleasure that we have received a report from Stephanie and Bryan from New Zealand who traveled to the United States to participate in the training organized by the NAD Shalom Learning Center, at Demorest/Cornelia, Georgia from July 31 through August 5th.

This training was international and included participants from the United States of America, Canada, New Zealand, and England. The teachers were mainly Alex Bolotnikov, Jennifer Betham-Lang, and Olaf Clausen. Here is their report:

"The first class Bryan and I attended was 'Rabbinical Literature' with Dr. Bolotnikov as the lecturer. We learned about the place of rabbinical literature within theology and practical application when using this literature for sermon preparation and to bring understanding to difficult texts around the time of Yeshua.

"The second class we attended was 'Jewish Adventist Life cycle Events' taught by Dr. Betham-Lang. This class looked at everything from the birth of a child, and if the child is a boy his *Brith Milah* (circumcision), through to death and sitting Shiva with someone. The class was very informative. Hopefully, a practical manual will be forthcoming in the near future.



"Our final class was 'Christian Mission—Jewish Witness (Anti Missionary Movement)' by Dr. Bolotnikov. This class was very informative about improving our Jewish sensitivity. The class also looked at various Jewish missionary movements seeking to convert people to a belief in Yeshua and the methods they have used.

"Overall the courses were very beneficial training for the leading of Bet Tikkun. There are another three courses next year to complete the training regarding the successful leadership of a Jewish Adventist congregation."

**Dutch Edition:**  
Hubert Paulleta  
**English Edition:**  
Richard-Amram Elofer  
**French Edition:**  
Sabine Baris  
**German Edition:**  
Yaw Heiser  
**Portuguese Edition:**  
Carlos Muniz  
**Russian Edition:**  
Alexandra Obrevko  
**Spanish Edition:**  
Claudia Masiero

## SHABBAT SHALOM

A weekly Journal of information and training

published by

the General Conference —

Office of Adventist Mission

World Jewish Adventist Friendship Center

<https://wjafc.globalmissioncenters.org>

## Emails:

**English:** richard@elofers.com**Dutch:** hpaulletta@hotmail.com**French:** sabinebaris@gmail.com**German:** heiseryaw@gmail.com**Portuguese:** cdmuniz@gmail.com**Russian:** sashok\_l@mail.ru**Spanish:** Masiero.ca@gmail.com



## PARASHA FOR THIS WEEK

### REEH

רֵאָה

#### PARASHA OVERVIEW: DEUTERONOMY 11:26 - 16:17

**M**oshe presents to the nation the blessing of a spiritually oriented life, and the curse of becoming disconnected from Hashem.

When the nation enters Eretz Yisrael they must burn down any trees that have been used for idol-worship, and destroy all idolatrous statues.

Hashem will choose only one place where the Divine Presence will dwell. Offerings may be brought only there; not to a private altar.

Moshe repeatedly warns against eating animal blood. In the desert, all meat was slaughtered in the *Mishkan*, but in *Eretz Yisrael* clean meat may be shechted (slaughtered according to kosher rules) anywhere.

Moshe lists the categories of food that may only be eaten at the place of the Sanctuary.

He warns the nation against copying the ways of the other nations.

Since the Torah is complete and perfect, nothing may be added to or subtracted from it.

If a “prophet” tells the people to permanently abandon a Torah law or indulge in idol worship, he is to be put to death. One who entices others

to worship idols is to be put to death. A city of idolatry must be razed.

It is prohibited to show excessive signs of mourning, such as marking the skin or making a bald spot.

Moshe reiterates the classifications of kosher and non-kosher food and the prohibition against cooking meat with milk.

Produce of the second tithe must be eaten at the place of the Sanctuary, and if the amount is too large to carry, it may be exchanged for money with which food is purchased at the place of the Sanctuary. Every third year this tithe is reserved for the Levites, the poor and the stranger.

Bnei Yisrael are instructed to always be open-hearted toward the poor, and in the seventh year any loans must be canceled -- Hashem will bless the generous person in all ways.

A Jewish bondsman is released after six years and must be sent away with generous provisions. If he refuses to leave, his ear is pierced with an awl at the doorposts and he remains a bondsman until the Jubilee year.

The Parasha ends with a description of the three pilgrimage festivals of *Pesach*, *Shavuot* and *Sucloth*.

#### REEH, PARASHA’S TITLE

**T**he first Hebrew word of our *parasha* is *Reeh*, which means “see”: “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse” (Deuteronomy 11:26). Torah commentaries explain this verse to mean that G-d gave the power of blessing to every individual. This applies not only on a personal level but also on a community level. We do not individually live in our own isolated world. As soon as we enter into the Covenant with G-d’s people, each of our actions, positive or negative, has an impact on the entire community.

#### FAITHFULNESS

**T**he *parasha* begins: “See, I am setting before you today a blessing and a curse—the blessing, if you listen to the *mitzvot* of Hashem your G-d that I am commanding you today; but the curse, if you do not listen to the *mitzvot* of Hashem your G-d, but turn from the way I am commanding you today, to go after other gods you have not known.” (Deuteronomy 11:26-28). How do we evaluate obedience among G-d’s people? We hear many times, mainly from Christians: “The people of Israel do not deserve G-d’s blessings because they were not and are not faithful to G-d.” Also: “The promises regarding the Land of Israel are conditional, and because Israel is not faithful, the gathering of Israel today into the Promised Land is not according to the will of G-d.” Then the question must be asked: “How do we evaluate the faithfulness of G-d’s people?”

Every individual is free to obey G-d or not. Knowing the Jewish people from the inside —being the child of a Jewish mother and a Jewish father—I know how the spiritual leaders of Israel invite their members to be faithful to G-d, to follow the *Mitsvot*, to be faithful to *Shabbat* and all the other commandments. That is why I ask: How do we evaluate the faithfulness of Israel?

I am also living among Seventh-day Adventists. I know how the Seventh-day Adventist spiritual leaders are faithful and encourage their members to be faithful to G-d, to remember and to keep the *Shabbat* and other commandments. But do these leaders have any power to force their members to be faithful? It is the same with the Jewish people. The spiritual leaders are faithful to the Torah and help and encourage their members to be faithful to the Torah, but they cannot force anyone to be faithful.

We have read in a paper this statement: “Since no nation in the Middle East today fulfills the conditions that are prerequisite for the reception of the Promised Land, one can hardly conclude that any of the Old Testament promises of restoration are physically fulfilled or in the process of fulfillment in our time.” How can an author write that? How can someone claiming to be a scholar be so ignorant of Israel’s history?



© freebibleimages.com

Israel has been faithful to her revelation for the last 2,000 years. Israel has not been an idolatrous people. Israel and her *chachamim* and scholars put all their heart into studying the Torah and being obedient to it. Israel has been persecuted, especially by the Christian church, because they wanted to be faithful to their G-d, preferring to be killed, burned, expelled from their countries, losing all their possessions, because of their faithfulness to G-d. They continued to keep the *Shabbat* secretly, to practice circumcision—the sign of their covenant with G-d—and to observe many other *mitzvot* even under harsh persecutions.

Of course, most Jews do not believe that Yeshua is the *Mashiach*. Why? Not because they are unfaithful to G-d, but because they have not received the testimony they should have received from those (the church) who pretend to be disciples of Yeshua while they themselves are unfaithful to Yeshua and his Torah. Instead of preaching Yeshua with love, Christians have persecuted the Jews. Christians organized the Inquisition to persuade them—by force and torture—that Yeshua is the Messiah. Christians organized the Crusades and sent crusaders to kill the “unbelievers” – Jews and Muslims. These nasty and dreadful actions of the Christians were multiplied for centuries – all in the name of Jesus Christ. How do we expect Jews, therefore, to believe in a Messiah who is said to have ordered all these horrible things?

And in fact, if we want to be honest and look at the history, at the very beginning of Christian history multiplied thousands of Jews accepted Yeshua as the *Mashiach*. Acts 2 says that 3,000 Jews were immersed by Shim’on-Peter in Jerusalem. We can continue our reading of this book of Acts to discover that very soon there were 5,000 believers (Acts 4:4) in the very small city of Jerusalem. And even a “great number” of the Jewish religious leaders – the *Cohanim* (priests) – became obedient to Yeshua (Acts 6:7). Why did so many Jews of that time accept Yeshua while most Jews today do not? Because the disciples of Yeshua of the first century were faithful to the Torah. They preached Yeshua with great compassion and love, as did Rabbi Shaul in many synagogues. The result was that thousands of Jews, Pharisees, *Cohanim* and other leaders of the Jewish people accepted Yeshua. The refusal of Yeshua by the Jewish people began mainly after the second century when the church started to go astray from the Bible and from their Jewish roots. Accepting Yeshua in the Medieval period

“There will be a site that G-d will choose as the place dedicated to His name. It is there that you will have to bring all that I am prescribing to you as your burnt offerings, eaten sacrifices, [special] tithes, hand-delivered elevated gifts, and the choice general pledges that you may pledge to G-d.” (Deuteronomy 12:11)

meant that Jews must stop being faithful to G-d: they were told by the church that they must keep Sunday and desecrate *Shabbat*, they must publicly and privately eat pork and other unclean foods, and they must no longer observe anymore the *mitzvot* that G-d gave to Israel.

Thus, instead of seeing the Jewish people as an “unfaithful people,” we should commend them for their faithfulness and obedience to G-d even though this meant suffering persecution and even torture and death. We need to see them through G-d’s eyes who said to this people in the wilderness: “For you are a holy people to Hashem your G-d—from all the peoples on the face of the earth, Hashem your G-d has chosen you to be His treasured people.” (Deuteronomy 7:6).

#### HAVE WE MADE A CHOICE?

**A**t the conclusion of the forty years in the wilderness, G-d gives a choice to Israel between blessings and curses. It might seem strange that this freedom of choice is given to Israel at this moment, but this is, in fact, the terms of the covenant G-d has made with human beings since the beginning, since the creation, since the *Gan Eden* (garden of Eden). In contrast to all despots and dictators who were and are living in this world, the kingdom of G-d is based on freedom: freedom to accept His kingship, freedom to accept Him as G-d, freedom to follow Him or not, freedom to accept His rules, freedom to worship Him or not, freedom to live a moral life. And all our choices that we make in these areas will make us suitable to live forever in eternity, or not. Our future destiny is not by an arbitrary decision of G-d, but it will be the consequence of our choices during this life. And as we learn from the Bible, there will be no second chance after our death, as it is written: “And just as it is appointed for men to die once, and after this, judgment” (Hebrews 9:27).

“Carefully listen to all these words that I prescribe to you, so that you and your descendants will have a good life forever, since you will be doing that which is good and morally right in the eyes of G-d your Lord.” (Deuteronomy 12:28)

#### SABBATICAL YEAR

**C**hapter 15 of our *parasha* is about the Sabbatical year, a special year which occurs every seventh year, just like the *Shabbat* occurs every seventh day.

G-d is clear about His intention and purpose: “However, there should be no poor among you,” (Deuteronomy 15:4). From the beginning of the installation of Israel in the Land, G-d has apportioned the land between the tribes and their families in order to avoid some people becoming too rich and some people becoming too poor. That is why the first *mitzvah* of the Sabbatical year is: “At the end of every seven years you are to cancel debts (Shmitah).” (Deuteronomy 15:1). The gangrene of modern society is debt: not only personal and individual debt but also national debt. The larger our debt, the more we lose our liberty and freedom of choice. G-d knew this and ordered His people to release all debts every seventh year. G-d also explained the process of this release: “This is how you are to cancel debts: every creditor is to release what he has loaned to his neighbor. He must not force his neighbor or his brother to repay, for Hashem’s debt cancellation has been proclaimed.” (Deuteronomy 15:2). This entire chapter is about the poor and helping them during the period between two Sabbatical years: “For there will never cease to be poor people in the land. Therefore I am commanding you, saying, ‘You must surely open your hand to your brother—to your needy and poor in your land.’” (Deuteronomy 15:11). G-d is realistic, and even though He is not happy when His people suffer, He knows that there will always be poor people in the land and on this earth. That is why he invites us to open our heart, our hand and our wallet. And knowing that because of the nearness of the Sabbatical year some people could refuse to help the poor, and refuse to grant to them a loan, Hashem says: “If there is a poor man among you . . . you are not to harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother. . . Watch yourself, so there is no unworthy thing in your heart saying, ‘The seventh year, the year of canceling debts, is near,’ and your eye is evil against your poor brother and you give him nothing. Then he may call out to Hashem against you, and it will be a sin upon you.” (Deuteronomy 15:7-9). This commandment should always be in our mind when we meet poor people along our way.



## APOSTOLIC WRITINGS

### MARK 6:53-7:8

In the *parasha*, G-d asks Yisrael to make a choice between following G-d and His commandments and be blessed, or not to follow His commandments and not be blessed (or in biblical language, be "cursed") (Deuteronomy 11:26). In the *Besorah* of Mark, many Jews made the good choice and followed Yeshua. "When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Yeshua. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was." (Mark 6:53-55). They came to Yeshua from everywhere: "And wherever he went — into villages, towns or countryside — they placed the sick in the marketplaces." (Mark 6:56a). They believed in his divine power: "They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed." (Mark 6:56b).

Some people were skeptics — they wanted to investigate Yeshua's teaching and his popularity. "The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus" (Mark 7:1) and the reproaches of these Pharisees echoed the text of the *parasha*. Indeed, the *parasha* describes in a long text what is clean and unclean, and rules about what we can eat and what we cannot, (Deut. 14:3-21).

In the *Besorah* of Mark, the conflict between the Pharisees and Yeshua is about clean and unclean traditions: "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?" (Mark 7:5). Yeshua answered them with a quotation from Isaiah 29:13: "You have let go of the commands of G-d and are holding on to the traditions of men" (Mark 7:1).

Let's remember that we are still in this special period called the "Seven weeks of comfort." In our text of the *Besorah*, Yeshua continues to comfort those who need to be comforted. After comforting Yisrael and his disciples, he crossed over to the other side of the sea of Galilee. The text states, "They came to land at Gennesaret" (Mark 6:53) — they had arrived in a non-Jewish land. Yeshua wanted to give the disciples the opportunity of seeing the large harvest among the Gentiles, and that they deserve G-d's mercy too. "When they got out of the boat, people at once recognized him, and rushed about that whole region and began to bring the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was" (Mark 6:54-55). However, Yeshua concentrated his ministry among Jews and would leave the ministry among non-Jews to the disciples after his ascension. Yeshua was the great comforter: "And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the marketplaces, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed" (Mark 6:56).

Some people were not happy to see Yeshua giving so much care to Gentiles, and so they began to complain: "Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them" (Mark 7:1-2). They could not accuse Yeshua of being unfaithful to G-d through his teaching because his teaching conformed to the Torah and to the tradition of Yisrael, but they were very surprised to see that his disciples were of the "common people" — not ultra-religious people, not scholars, not known as disciples of the great Rabbis called *Zugot* just before the *Tanaim*, such as Hillel, Shammai or Gamaliel — and not following some basic rules of Judaism such as the *Mitzvah* of *Netilat Yadayim* (washing hands). Mark knew that his *Besorah* would be read by non-Jews also, that is why he found it necessary to explain these traditions: "(For the Pharisees and

all Jewish people do not eat unless they wash their hands up to the elbow, keeping the tradition of the elders. And when they come from the marketplace, they do not eat unless they perform a ritual washing. There are many other traditions they have received and hold, such as the washing of cups, pitchers, and copper vessels.)" (Mark 7:3-4).

To make trouble, these Pharisees and scribes complained to Yeshua that his disciples were not following the traditions: "Why don't your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with 'unclean' hands?" (Mark 7:5). Yeshua answered these leaders with strong words: "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.'" (Mark 7:6). Some people have said that this gospel is an anti-Semitic book, but I say no. It cannot be, because this gospel is all about Jews, written by Jews. Mark was a Jew from Jerusalem who first followed Barnabas and Paul, and then became the disciple of Peter who was the apostle to the Jews. Most of the characters who speak in this gospel, and Yeshua himself, were Jews. Yeshua loved the leaders of Yisrael. That is why he was so strong in his words: to win them for heaven. It is nonsensical to say that the Gospels are anti-Semitic. Everyone has the right to criticize his own community without being accused of racism or anti-Semitism. Yeshua was 100% a Jew, he voluntarily assumed his Jewishness, and everywhere he went we see that he was full of compassion toward the Jewish people.

Then Yeshua continued his quotation of the prophet Isaiah: "And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men." Having left behind the commandment of G-d, you hold on to the tradition of men." (Mark 7:7-8). The *Besorah* is not against the Jewish people — the *Besorah* is in the same vein as the prophets. Must we rehearse all the exhortations of the prophets to Yisrael in order to understand that a prophet who is sent to G-d's people is not sent to rub Yisrael in a soothing way, but to tell the truth about the situation of G-d's people? If the prophets were not clear in their exhortations, there was no chance that the people of Yisrael would ever reform themselves and act rightly and according to G-d's will.

If we continue the text quoted by Yeshua from Isaiah we read: "so the wisdom of their wise will perish, and the discernment of their discerning will be concealed." (Isaiah 29:14). This is not the author of the book from the Apostolic Writings who is speaking here, nor is it Yeshua — this is Isaiah, one of the greatest prophets of Yisrael, and his words were so strong that the king rejected them and ordained that this prophet should be put to death. And Isaiah was killed because of his prophecy.

Yeshua was not the first prophet to be killed, but the great difference is that after their deaths the old prophets were recognized as prophets by the people of Yisrael, but Yeshua the Messiah was recognized after his death and resurrection only by a few people, not by the great majority who were deceived by the leaders who did not want to recognize their mistake in rejecting Yeshua. But even this rejection was predicted by the prophets: Daniel announced that he would be killed: "Then after the 62 weeks *Mashiach* will be cut off and have nothing." (Daniel 9:26).

Everything was announced by the prophets beforehand — that is why it is our duty today to believe what the prophets have written a long time in advance in order for us to have faith, and it is only through this faith that we will be saved: "Since G-d is One, He will set right the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith." (Romans 3:30). "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not from yourselves: it is the gift of G-d." (Ephesians 2:8).

## HAFTARAH

### ISAIAH 54:11 - 55:5

From the very beginning of Isaiah 54 a new consolation is given to Yisrael. G-d acknowledges that Yisrael has been unfaithful, and G-d may have seemed to give up on Yisrael, but this chapter says no: "For a brief moment I deserted you, but I will gather you with great compassion." (Isaiah 54:7). Hashem has chosen Yisrael as His people, G-d is not a man who might repent of his choice, and Bnei Israel will never be abandoned by G-d: "In a surge of anger I hid My face from you a moment, but with everlasting kindness I will have compassion on you," says Hashem your Redeemer" (Isaiah 54:8). Then verse 10 assures us that G-d's covenant with Yisrael will never be removed: "Though the mountains depart and the hills be shaken, My love will not depart from you, nor will My covenant of peace be shaken," says Hashem who has compassion on you." (Isaiah 54:10).

The Haftarah for this week gives one consistent message. In verse 11 we find: "Afflicted one, storm-tossed, unconsolated, behold, I set your stones in antimony, lay your foundations with sapphires." There follows a comparison of Yisrael with precious stones: antimony, sapphires, rubies, crystals, walls of precious stones — these remind us the Jerusalem from above: "The material of the city's wall was jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass." (Revelation 21:18). "Pure gold, clear as glass" seems to be crystal. Abarbanel's comment on Isaiah 54:11 is that "the precious stones and gems of this verse and the next are metaphors of greatness, wealth and honor" (Scherman 413). The redemption Hashem is promising to His people is not a small redemption but a great one, commensurate with the measure of the sufferings of Yisrael. That is why Yisrael is compared to so many precious stones. "[I] make your pinnacles of rubies, your gates of crystal, and all your walls of precious stones." (54:12). The Jewish translation as noted by Scherman, says: "I make the frames of your windows of rubies." G-d will never give up on His people. Both *Bnei Yisrael* and the *kehilah* of Yeshua are His people, His treasure — He will do the best for His people.

Not only will G-d take care of His people, their houses and land, but also their future generations: "All your children will be taught by Hashem. Your children will have great shalom" (54:13) — the children in this future world will be taught by Hashem, and this study will produce Shalom, "peace." It would be much better today if the nations would study G-d's Words. Instead of manufacturing weapons, they would then stop all their destruction and would begin to understand the meaning of the sixth commandment which says: "don't kill." That is a utopia today, for as long as Hashem and His *Mashiach* are not given complete power in this world, there will be no shalom.

Our text continues: "In righteousness you will be established." (54:14). This righteousness is not something that comes from human beings. The prophet Isaiah is the one who speaks the most about "righteousness": in the Tanach, of a total of 89 mentions, 45 — fully half of the total occurrences — are in the book of Isaiah. Rabbi Shaul says: "No human, on the basis of Torah observance, will be set right in His sight—for through the Torah comes awareness of sin." (Romans 3:20). It is clear that everyone who seeks righteousness through Torah observance will not find it — he will discover that he is struggling all his life against his evil inclination and his own nature without getting victory.

"But now G-d's righteousness apart from the Torah has been revealed, to which the Torah and the Prophets bear witness" (Romans 3:21). It is about such righteousness, G-d's righteousness, that Isaiah speaks all along in his book.

## STORIES AND TRADITIONS

### WE ALREADY SEE "THEM"

As mentioned, the name of the *parasha* Reeh means "see." The Torah implies that our conviction and faith that obedience brings blessings should be so strong it is as if we already see their fulfillment in our life. Our sages explain this with the following parable:

"A poor man bought a lottery ticket and won a huge sum of money. When he realized he had won, he ran home to tell his family. Their excitement and rejoicing was heard in the street for a distance away.

When people came and inquired about the celebration, the poor man told them of his good fortune. 'Now I am the wealthiest person in town!' he said.

'But you haven't collected the money yet! You have to travel to the big city to get it. In the meantime, you are still poor and do not have a penny more now than you had yesterday, so why are you joyous now?'

'You speak like fools,' responded the poor man. 'True, I do not have the money yet, but the very fact that I won the lottery and the money is waiting for me, makes me feel as if I already have it in my pocket!'

The same is true with the reward from G-d. Our belief that G-d will reward us with eternal life must be so strong that the blessings which G-d has promised us in the Torah should be fixed in our minds as if we already "see" them today in our life.

### HELPING THE POOR ELEVATES US

The Talmud relates sharp exchanges between the illustrious Jewish sage Rabbi Akiva and the Roman governor Turnus Rufus. On one occasion, Turnus Rufus asked him, "Why should you give charity to the

poor? If the Creator wanted the poor to have money, why didn't he provide for him?"

"It is for our own benefit," Rabbi Akiva replied. "Helping the poor elevates us."

### DID YOU THANK HIM?

A great sage was walking alongside a river. In the distance, he saw a poor man begging passersby for pennies. Presently, the poor man approached a very wealthy man, whom the sage knew well. The wealthy man reached into his pocket with a great show of magnanimity, pulled out a large wad of bills and handed it to the poor man. The poor man thanked him profusely and hurried off with a huge smile on his face.

The wealthy man continued on his way and saw the great sage coming toward him. "Good morning," he called out in greeting.

"Good morning," the sage replied. "I saw what you just did. Very commendable. But tell me, did you remember to thank him?"

The wealthy man was bewildered. "Surely, you meant to ask if he thanked me?"

"No, I meant exactly what I said," the sage replied. "You have much more to be thankful for than he does. That poor fellow had to swallow his pride to ask you for a handout. Before you know it, all that money you gave him will be gone, and he'll be back to begging on the street. You, however, have gotten yourself a wonderful deal, my friend. You have justified your wealth and shown yourself to be a fine gentleman. Who got the better of this deal my friend? Who should thank whom?"

Let us remember that by giving to the poor we are the ones who are most enriched.

**"You can therefore see that I am placing before you both a blessing and a curse. The blessing [will come] if you obey the commandments of G-d your Lord, which I am prescribing to you today. The curse [will come] if you do not obey the commandments of G-d your Lord, and you go astray from the path that I am prescribing for you today, following other gods to have a novel spiritual experience." (Deuteronomy 11:26-28)**



## Inspirational Corner

If we have prosperity in our secular business, it is because G-d blesses us. A part of this income is to be devoted to the poor, and a large portion to be applied to the cause of G-d. When that which G-d claims is rendered to Him, the remainder will be sanctified and blessed to our own use. But when a man robs G-d by withholding that which He requires, His curse rests upon the whole. (AH 369)