

# Shabbat Yitro February 6, 2010 22 Shevat 5770

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## News

### Beth Shalom VeTorah Congregation in Walla Walla

It is with great pleasure that I received an email from Walla Walla in Washington State saying that the congregation I heard about was still working well. It is always good to know that a new congregation starts and much better to know that its members are perseverant and consistant in their meetings and worship. Jere and Pamela Rodmann sent me the following news. "Beth Shalom VeTorah—House of Peace and Torah, began holding monthly Erev Shabbat services in October 2006. The first three years our average attendance was between 12 and 16. We have held five Erev Shabbat services this school year and our average attendance has doubled to 30. In August 2008 we had the opportunity to network with others Jewish ministry leaders and we were given permission to use same liturgy found at Beth Tehillah Vetikva (House of Praise and Hope), located in Hollywood, Florida. We have modified the liturgy and siddur/program to fit our community. We thank God for the opportunity to network with other leaders because we have seen the impact of their counsel and support.

Last fall we had to opportunity to assist the Walla Walla University Drama Department (wwuDrama) with understanding their characters in the production of "A Shayna Maidel" by Barbara Lebow. We held a special Erev Shabbat for them and were able to help them understand some of the Jewish culture and family interactions portrayed in the play. We had positive feedback from the cast and some of them have attended services since.

In December we formed a leadership team

and have been blessed by their enthusiastic participation. They have taken over some of the logistical, teaching, and financial portions of the ministry. Their assistance has allowed us to expand the ministry of Bet Shalom VeTorah to include Erev Shabbat services twice a month, Torah Study on Shabbat afternoons, and Hebrew language class on Thursday evenings.

We are excited that three individuals in our congregation have decided they would like to experience a Bar or Bat Mitzvah and accept the commitment of following Torah more closely. The first Bat Mitzvah is scheduled for April 10, 2010. We are still working on scheduling the other two.

Upcoming events include a visit from Alexander Bolotnikov, May 13-16. During his visit he will speak at a School of Theology colloquium and assist with an Erev Shabbat service for the entire WWU campus."

### Circumcision of Sarkozy's Grand-Son

Solal Sarkozy, grand son of the French president has been circumcised this week on his 8th day according to the Jewish tradition. A rabbi and a mohel were present for the circumcision of Solal. The president could not be present because of his very busy schedule but his parents and his brother were present. Solal is the son of Jean Sarkozy and Jessica Sebaoun. (Guysen News)

### Facebook

One active member of the World Jewish Friendship Center, Santiago Cuellar helped us to open and operate a facebook website, if you are members of facebook and want to visit the site, just go to: <http://www.facebook.com/n/?group.php&gid=61418912603&mid=1d102c1G20705ae2G3ee1880G18>.

# Overview



## Yitro Exodus 18:1-20:23

**H**earing of the miracles G-d performed for Bnei Yisrael, Moshe's father-in-law Yitro arrives with Moshe's wife and sons, reuniting the family in the wilderness.

Yitro is so impressed by Moshe's detailing of the Exodus from Egypt that he converts to Judaism. Seeing that the only judicial authority for the entire Jewish nation is Moshe himself, Yitro suggests that subsidiary judges be appointed to adjudicate smaller matters, leaving Moshe free to attend to larger issues. Moshe accepts his advice. Bnei Yisrael arrive at Mt. Sinai where G-d offers them the Torah.

After they accept, G-d charges Moshe to instruct the people not to approach the mountain and to prepare for three days. On the third day, amidst thunder and lightning, G-d's voice emanates from the smoke-enshrouded mountain and He speaks to the Jewish People, giving them the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone.

### On the first table:

1. Believe in G-d
2. Don't worship other "gods" don't make idols
3. Don't use G-d's name in vain
4. Observe Shabbat

### On the second table:

5. Honor your parents
6. Don't murder
7. Don't commit adultery
8. Don't kidnap
9. Don't testify falsely
10. Don't covet.

After receiving the first two commandments, the Jewish People, overwhelmed by this experience of the Divine, request that Moshe relay G-d's word to them. G-d instructs Moshe to caution the Jewish People regarding their responsibility to be faithful to the One who spoke to them.

## Lecha Dodi

**I**t's an almost universal Jewish custom to welcome Shabbat with the beautiful liturgical poem *Lecha Dodi* written by Rabbi Shlomo Halevi

Alkabetz. It is a poem to welcome the shabbat. In the chorus of Lecha Dodi it says, "Let us welcome the face of Shabbat." It is also a messianic poem in the verse 4 we read *Shake yourself free, rise from the dust,*

*Dress in your garments of splendor, my people,  
By the hand of Jesse's son, of Bethlehem,  
Redemption draws near to my soul.*

Redemption will come from the son of Jesse, and he will be born in Bethlehem (Is 11:10; Mic 5:1).

In the Bible Yeshua is the son of Jesse, and he was born in Bethlehem (Mat 1:5; Luke 2:4-7).

The end of the verse 9 says:

*By the hand of a child of Perez,  
We will rejoice and sing happily.*

The "child of Perez" is also the Mashiach, in the Tanach Perez is the son of Judah, one of the ancestor of King David (Ruth 4:18) and he is mentioned in the Genealogy of Yeshua (Mat 1:33; Luke 3:33).

## Shabbat a Taste of the World-to-Come

**O**ne of the songs we sing on Shabbat calls Shabbat an experience that is *m'ayn olam haba*, "like the World-to-Come." The shabbat is perceived as a gift from G-d, a treasure which remains us the Eden experience. The Shabbat was given to Adam and Eve in Eden (Genesis 1:31-2:3), that's why G-d wanted his people to experience a small taste of the first Eden, in order to desire the second Eden, which will be the 'Olam haba' the world-to-come. In the Jewish tradition it is said that the proportion of the Shabbat experience to the experience of the next world is 1:59. That proportion is the threshold of taste. At 1:60 one can no longer discern the taste of the one part in the mixture. Shabbat is such a special gift because some of its reward can be experienced here even while we are on the earth. As Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair put it "Even while we are still here in this world, restricted by our bodies and living a physical existence, Shabbat allows us to experience something beyond this world."

## Ten Commandments, Sign of God's Love For Us

**I**n this weekly parasha we read the famous text of Exodus 20, where G-d pronounces and gives to Israel the universal and moral law, called the Ten Commandments. "Universal" because in fact most of the modern communities and nations have accepted

them and based their own legislation on the Ten Commandments. I like very much how Rabbi Boruch Leff introduces them, he says “If you were given only 5 minutes to speak to an audience about G-d and religion, and these 5 minutes would be the only opportunity for this audience to hear about G-d in the entire lives, what would be the most important topic to discuss? It would probably be the fact that G-d loves and cares for each and every one of us. Through hearing such words, people would begin to discover G-d’s love and concern and want to relate to G-d. If I hear that someone loves me, I usually try to find out who he is and in most cases attempt to love him back. In G-d’s case, my quest to discover His love for me will lead me to perceive the love through His Instructions for Living, which is the Torah.”

G-d tells us in these verses: “You saw what I did to Egypt. You know why I destroyed and punished them. It was not due to my anger for their evil sins and immorality. They were deserving of punishment long before they met the people of Israel. I was waiting, thinking perhaps they might repent. But as soon as they began making life difficult for you, I started striking against them. This could only be because I love you. I was even willing to protect you like an eagle defends his young.” (Paraphrased based on Rashi.) God continues to relate: “If you keep my Commandments, you will be my treasure. I only want the best for you and I want you to be my holy nation and kingdom of important ministers.” This love of G-d is very well said in Deuteronomy 7 “**The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. “Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His loving kindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments. (Deut 7:7-9).** This love is so big and unconditional that in the chapter, after the 40 years in the desert and all Israel murmurs and rebellion G-d says to Israel “**For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.” (Deut 7:6).** I

am sure that a G-d such as the G-d of the Bible wants the best for me, that’s why I trust him and follow his commandment even though from time to time I don’t understand them.

## Acceptance of the Ten Commandments

**T**he Torah states, “**Moses came and summoned the elders of the people, and put before them all these words that God had commanded him. The entire people responded together and said, ‘Everything that God has spoken we shall do!’ ” (Exodus 19:7-8)** This verse describes Israel’s acceptance of God’s offer.

According to Rabbi Noson Weisz Moses presented the proposition to the elders so that they might circulate among the people, obtain their reactions and deliberate their response, but the people preempted this deliberation process by enthusiastically declaring their immediate unanimous acceptance with a single voice. Obviously Israel thought this was a great offer. They immediately accepted it without prior deliberation. But there must be some heavy strings attached.

Indeed there are—the strings are the commandments themselves. To enter the covenant we must accept the Ten Commandments. But what is so difficult about these commandments? A surface reading shows nothing controversial or difficult to observe.

Logic directs us to take a closer look at these commandments for the answer. It is immediately apparent that they are divided into two parts. Indeed Jewish tradition teaches that there are two tablets: 1)

One corresponding to obligations toward God, and 2) the other consisting of obligations towards one’s fellow man. However, the Jewish tradition has put the fifth commandment on the first tablet, that means toward G-d. and it is interesting that Rabbi Noson Weisz sees a parallel between commandments toward G-d and man: for example the first commandment I AM THE LORD could be in parallel with the sixth commandment, DON’T MURDER. The prohibition against murder is based on the fact that man is God’s image. When you take a human life you are destroying God’s image. And the Talmud says that to murder a human being is akin to murdering God’s twin. No greater violation of the spirit of the first commandment on God’s tablet is imaginable. (Sanhedrin 46b).

## SPICE OF SHABBAT

Shabbat is a day when body and soul meet. Even the food we eat on Shabbat has a special “Shabbat flavor.”

A Roman Emperor once asked the Talmudic sage Rabbi Yehoshua, “Why does the food you eat on Saturday have such a wonderful aroma and taste so delicious?”

Rabbi Yehoshua replied, “We have a special spice called Shabbat which gives our Saturday food its wonderful taste.

The Emperor asked Rabbi Yehoshua, “Give me some of that spice.” Rabbi Yehoshua replied, “This spice works only for those who observe Shabbat, for those who don’t observe the Shabbat it will be of no benefit!”

## SHAMAI AND SHABBAT

The Talmud tells that Shamai the Elder had a unique way of remembering Shabbat all week long. From the beginning of the week, he would look out for things to buy for Shabbat. If he found a nice piece of meat, he would save it for Shabbat. If he found something better later in the week, he would eat what he already had and save the better piece for Shabbat. Thus, it was said about Shamai, “All week long he ate for the sake of Shabbat!”

## ANGELS OF SHABBAT

Our sages in the Talmud say that two angels, one good and one bad accompany a person when returning home from synagogue Friday night. If, upon entering the home, the angels find the candles lit, the table set and the home properly prepared as befitting the Shabbat queen, the good angel gives his blessings and the bad angel is forced to agree and say Amen. If however, the home is not prepared as befitting the honor of Shabbat the bad angel then says, may next week again be the same and the good angel is forced to agree and answer Amen. We greet the two angels who enter our home with the song Shalom Aleichem..

## HOW THE TORAH WAS GIVEN TO ISRAEL

Before G-d gave the Torah to the Jewish people He attempted to give the Torah to other nations, but they all refused. Here is how the Midrash tells this story:

First G-d went to the children of Esau. He asked them if they will accept the Torah? They asked, “What is written in it?” G-d said, “You shall not murder.” They replied: “Master of the universe, this goes against our grain. Our father about whom it says ‘The hands are the hands of Esau’, told us to rely on the sword, as his father told him, ‘By the sword you shall live.’ We cannot accept the Torah.”

Then G-d went to the children of Aamon and Moab and said to them, “Will you accept the Torah?” They said, “What is written in it?” G-d replied, “You shall not commit adultery.” They said, “Master of the Universe, our very origin is in adultery, as the Torah says that Aamon and Moab were the children of Lot’s daughter who gave birth to them from her father, Lot. We cannot accept the Torah.”

He then went to the children of Ishmael. He asked them, “Will you accept the Torah?” They replied, “What is written in the Torah?” G-d said, “You shall not steal.” They replied, “Master of the Universe, it is our very nature to live off what is stolen and what is gotten by assault. We cannot accept the Torah.”

G-d went from nation to nation and not a single nation was willing to accept the Torah. Then G-d asked the Jewish people if they will accept the Torah. They didn’t even ask what the Torah contains and said, “We will do and we will hear.”

## EDITOR

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## Haftara

### Isaiah 6:1 - 7:6; 9:5-6

**HAFTARAH:** The text of the Haftara is a revelation of God to the prophet Isaiah and his calling for the ministry: “Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” And I said, “Here am I; send me!” (Isaiah 6:8).

**PARASHA:** In the parasha God revealed himself to the people of Israel: Then the LORD said to Moses, “I am going to come to you in a dense cloud, in order that the people may hear when I speak with you and so trust you ever after.” (Exodus 19:9). Miriam was the first prophetess of Israel. God uses men and women to reveal his will to the humanity.

**HAFTARAH:** The vision of Isaiah was extraordinary with wonderful and great manifestation of the Lord “I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lofty; and the hem of his robe filled the temple. Seraphs were in attendance above him; each had six wings: with two they covered their faces, and with two they covered their feet, and with two they flew.

And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the LORD of hosts;  
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

The pivots on the thresholds shook at the voices of those who called, and the house filled with smoke.” (Isaiah 6:1-4).

**PARASHA:** When the Lord appeared to Israel on the Mount Sinai it was also an extraordinary appearance and with wonderful manifestation: On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, as well as a thick cloud on the mountain, and a blast of a trumpet so loud that all the people who were in the camp trembled. ... Now Mount Sinai was wrapped in smoke, because the LORD had descended upon it in fire; the smoke went up like the smoke of a kiln, while the whole mountain shook violently. As the blast of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses would speak and God would answer him in thunder. (Exodus 19:16; 18, 19)

## Besorat Yeshua

### Mark 14:60-72

**BESORAH:** It is the time of Yeshua’s trial, the Cohen Hagadol asked him a crucial question: “Again the high priest asked him, “Are you the Messiah, the Son of the Blessed One?” (Mark 14:61)

The Cohen Hagadol or High Priest was not anymore at that time a descendant of Aaron, he was a man from the political party of the Sadducees, and paid Rome to receive the charge of High Priest, then he was worried about his future and his destiny. If really Yeshua is the Messiah, then he will have to give up all his privilege:

Yeshua gives an clear and unambiguous answer: “I am; and ‘you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power,’ and ‘coming with the clouds of heaven.’” (Mark 14:62).

Yeshua is quoting Daniel 7:13, which gives a description of the coming of the Mashiach, he is coming from heaven: “Dan. 7:13 As I watched in the night visions, I saw one like a human being coming with the clouds of heaven. And he came to the Ancient One and was presented before him. To him was given dominion and glory and kingship, that all peoples, nations, and languages should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion that shall not pass away, and his kingship is one that shall never be destroyed.” (Daniel 7:13-14).

**BESORAH:** Then we have the denying of Peter, he did not agree that he was a disciple of Yeshua. He denying is in parallel with the people of Israel refuse to hear the voice of God in the Sinai.

“You also were with Jesus, the man from Nazareth.” But he denied it, saying, “I do not know or understand what you are talking about.” (Mark 14:67-68)

**PARASHA:** When all the people witnessed the thunder and lightning, the sound of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking, they were afraid and trembled and stood at a distance, and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, or we will die.” (Exodus 20:18-19)

