

Rebbe's Quarterly Report: From Perpetual Crisis to Growing in the Truth

As we approach Chanukah, there are four things I want to say about the condition of our spiritual progress. **First of all**, I sense the positive impact of our growing congregational momentum, both in the turning of our weekly cycles and in the deepening of our experience of the corporate presence of the Spirit in our services. **Secondly**, I want to express satisfaction at the successful way many of us are dealing with the various crises that our congregational family is encountering. My father's aunt used to say that we have to learn how to go about the business of living and for us in the L-rd, that is a two edged sword.

First of all we have the protection/direction of the L-rd and **secondly** we have the attacks/distractions of the enemy (the world and the flesh). Everything which happens to us has a spiritual impact on, both as individuals and as a community. Not every flu and not every flat tire (or car theft) is an attack, but every reaction and every recovery process (attitudes and habits), will either help us to grow in grace, knowledge and perseverance, or the cares, pleasure, riches of this life will combine with the doubts and temptations to move our lives off the rock and onto the sinking sand. How do you (and how do we) handle the business of living (are you caught in perpetual crisis or are you being led by the still waters) and what are you focusing on (the gentle yoke of His Word in His Spirit or the lust of the eyes, the lust of flesh and the pride of life)?

Thirdly, I am grateful that we are learning to act and to think like a team, like a flock (heard). In other words we are learning to discern each other's strengths and weaknesses and we are pulling together so that the gaps and handicaps are covered so that both our abilities and our disabilities are becoming the bonds which are holding us together, and not the familiarity of contempt which could pull us apart. Newness always wears of to leave rootedness and integration behind, or the spiritual tumble weeds which sail through our midst will be tossed to and thro by the next wind and keep on rolling (instead of growing, resolving and flourishing).

Fourthly, Our vision is becoming more of a lived experience, rather than just being a theory, or a great idea which we will get around to, one of these days. I sense that we are having a prophetic impact where we work and live and that our congregational garden is being pruned for fresh growth as we learn to walk line upon line, precept upon precept here a little and there a little, until our faithful obedience becomes the most distinctive reality of the whatevers of our lives both as individuals and as a community. I also sense we are learning to discern and to celebrate His authentic presence in our midst, so that each Shabbat our taste of Him gives us enough light not to flicker and grow dark during the week.

And finally, we are learning what it means to heal, so that the heart and life metaphors (life issues, pictures, objectives – Phil. 2:13, Eph. 2:10 and Phil. 1:20, 21) are not bitter, angry frustrations where we go around and around the same brokenness and folly, but where the straight and narrow becomes the place of healing and of victorious struggling (Heb. 12:13; I Cor. 10:13; Rom. 5:3-5).

There is lots of room for growth, but as guardians of authentic Messianic Jewish space, we are building the spiritual/personal/communal context where sustained growth can occur, both in quality and in quantity.

Let me finish with four challenges: **(1) attendance**: let's move from an average of once or twice a month, to once or twice or even thrice a week. I know we all have lot's going on – from the rebbe first and also to the flock, but staying in spiritual shape requires all five disciplines, cause stragglers put themselves in a strategically weak position. **(2) Tithes and Offerings**: It will always be my prayer that we all prosper and are able to lay up stores for all the fiscal objectives we have set for ourselves and for our own lifestyles, but just as our taxes provide us with an amazing array of essential services (roads, schools, hospitals, utilities and police), so our tithes

and offerings allow our community to access all the resources we need for our worship, our shabbat school, our communications and for our beloved rebbe (Messianic Jewish spiritual police protection). Ten percent of a little is the same offering in the eyes of the L-rd as ten percent of a lot – we will not all make the same contribution, but we all need to be making the same sacrifice.

(3) Congregational bonding: We are a small community where all age groups (demographics) are not evenly represented yet. As we grow this dynamic will change at both ends and in the middle – others will be born, others will group up and others will pass on. If our particular demographic is under-represented we still need to make the life of our shul, in all its splendour, our primary social group (Hughenden).

(4) Messianic Enrichment: I want to teach Hebrew and cantoring and dance and I want to continue leadership training, and am actively looking into formal college level training in a Messianic Jewish context. I want our community reactor to be driven by our sevenfold outreach cycle: Shabbat (Prayer, Yeshiva, Havdallah) services, Passover (Pentecost), High Holy Days, Chanukah, Purim, Missionsfest and our presentations where we teach and promote both spiritual Zionism and Israel (the JNF, etc.).

How's your attendance doing? How are your tithes and offerings doing? How is your congregational bonding doing? Are you being enriched messianically?

Discerning the End Times: Acts 1:6-11 and Matt. 24:4 (seduced), 24 (lots of false prophets and false prophecy), 36 (In G-d's time only), 42 (watch and be about the King's business), 44 (it will come when you least expect it) and 24:27 (2 Peter 3:9, 10, 11) – when He comes the cosmos will melt and time will be no more and all the generations, cultures and nations of mankind shall stand before our Messiah to be judged.

So, how do we discern the end times? Briefly, there are **seven signs** which must be in place.

- (1) The destruction of the temple and the second dispersal of Israel (Matt. 24:2 & Luke 21:20-24).
- (2) The days of Noah (global spiritual unawareness) (Matt. 24:37)
- (3) Worldwide Iniquity and false religion/apostasy (Matt. 24:11, 12 and 2 Thess. 2:3)
- (4) Worldwide anti-Semitism against Jews and believers in Yeshua (Matt. 24:8)
- (5) The Gospel must be preached worldwide, as a testimony to the nations (Matt. 24:14)
- (6) Israel must be re-grafted into the Gospel (Rom. 11:25, 26; Matt. 23:39)
- (7) The Final Antichrist must be manifest (and, by association, take control by lying signs and the seduction of iniquity and a powerful delusion sent by G-d) (2 Thess. 2:3-12).

Let me conclude with one passage: 2 Peter 3:3-17. The Study of the End Times is often the domain of fools and fanatics who twist the Scriptures, and add their own revelations to whip up excitement and panic among the flock, just like chicken little (the sky is falling, the sky is falling) and like the little shepherd boy who cried wolf until no-one believed him.

At B'nai Chayim, we will patiently and biblically occupy ourselves, keeping our lamps well oiled until the Groom calls us to His Glorious Marriage Supper, the Cosmic Pesach of the resurrected Bride. We live in the End Times, but until ALL seven are in place, it is not the end of the world.

Torah Meditation: G-d is in Charge of History – is He in charge of yours?

CHAYE SARA

THE LIFE OF SARAH

TORAH:

Gen. 23:1-25-18

(1): 24:2 generational sacred oath – Isaac has to be in the right place for G-d to bless Him. Are you in the right place (space/condition), so G-d can bless you?

(2); 24:8 Putting G-d to the test is not the same as testing G-d. If we are doing what we know is from Him, He still wants us to step out on a limb and regularly take calculated spiritual risks. How many calculated spiritual risks are you taking?

(3) 24:47: The Servant recognized Rebekka, not by her great beauty, but by her character and leadership. Do we recognize the Rebecca's in our midst, or are measuring people by the wrong criteria?

(4) 25:9: There was closure between the brothers, because each accepted the blessing which they had received from G-d. Do you accept your blessing/destiny? Is your life choked by unresolved conflict, or have you come together and buried your brokenness and ambition and pain?

HAFTARAH:

I Ki. 1:1-31

(5) 1:1: We will all grow old and cease to be able to function. The joy or the sadness of this time of our lives will be determined by our legacy. What legacy are you leaving? Not all of David's life was pretty or successful, but he fixed what he broke and took responsibility, so that at the end of his life, he was not leaving a mess, but a huge treasury and a spiritual inheritance which comes down to us today. How about you young people? How about your old codgers, to the rebbe first and also to the flock?

(6) 1:30: David kept his word and only the descendents of Bath-Sheba constituted the royal line. David did not cave in to pressure for peace in his last days. He took a calculated spiritual/political risk. Let us cling to what we know we should do, even when it is unpopular and when we don't feel like it.

BRIT CHADASHAH: Matt. 1:1-17

(7) vs. 17. Fourteen by fourteen by fourteen. G-d kept the house of Abraham until David. He kept the House of David until the captivity. He kept the line of David until the Messiah.

Two things and I'll finish. Verse 16 calls Joseph the spouse of Mary, so it is his lineage and not hers. It is given; I believe to show the four gentile ladies who were significant in keeping the line intact through some pretty strange circumstances. Luke 3, which is Mary's genealogy (see verse 23), shows that she was also a descendent of the royal line, but through Nathan, Solomon's brother.

Rabbinic detractors of Yeshua pointed out that if Joseph were his father, He could not be the Messiah, since the line of Solomon was cursed (because the King of Judah broke his covenant oath to the Babylonians). Our L-rd inherits the throne of David through his mother and also fulfills the promise of G-d that an Aaronite should always stand before Him, because Mary was also of the House of Aaron (Luke 1:36).

The genetic link never unravelled until Messiah and it shall never be broken, because Abraham shall always be the father of a great nation and the one in whom all nations are blessed. May the generations of B'nai Chayim carry on this spiritual imperative until the return of our blessed King, the son of Adam, the son of Abraham, the son of David and, from Eternity G-d the Son. Amen.