

LAMPLIGHTER

1 Av
Parshas
Matos - Massei
1255
5 August
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

The Sabbaths during the "Three Weeks" (the time between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av), contain a unique dimension: They are within the period of lamentation over the destruction of the Temple and the exile of the Jewish people. Yet it is forbidden to mourn on Shabbat, and on the contrary, we are commanded to rejoice.

In truth, these special Sabbaths express the true good that is hidden within the exile. Seen superficially, the exile is only a negative phenomenon - painful and without merit. On a deeper level, however, the exile contains a higher purpose, one that is only goodness and light - the Final Redemption with Moshiach. In fact, in the era of Moshiach, those days that were marked by the Jewish people as days of mourning will be transformed into days of rejoicing.

This principle - that what we now perceive as cause for grief will ultimately be shown to be only good - is reflected in the dual nature of these three Sabbaths.

This duality is further expressed in this week's two Torah portions, Matot and Masei.

In the Torah, the Jewish people are sometimes referred to as "shevatim" and sometimes as "matot," both of which are generally translated as "tribes."

Literally "rods" or "staves," there is one important distinction between the two terms: although both signify a branch that has been cut from a tree, a "shevet" still retains its moisture and suppleness, whereas a "mateh" has already dried out and is therefore stronger and inflexible.

These two appellations allude to the Jewish soul's journey in this physical world.

Torn from its G-dly Source, the soul is "cut off" from its roots, as it were. Sometimes it manages to retain its original Divine "moisture," yet other times it is so estranged from its G-dly Source that it appears to have "dried out" completely. "Masei" ("Journeys") too, alludes to the soul's descent from the highest spiritual planes to this world, including the lowliest descent of all into the exile. And yet, the purpose of this descent is none other than ascent, thus the strong rod has a certain advantage over the flexible tree branch.

Matot and Masei remind us of the true essence of the exile, which is the great ascent and revelation of G-dliness that will be revealed precisely from within.

A Jew must always remember that the true purpose of the soul's sojourn in the physical world, as well as the Jewish people's travails in exile, is solely in order to reach the G-dliness of the Messianic era. This awareness in itself gives us the strength to overcome all difficulties and to fulfil G-d's will in the most trying of circumstances, leading all of Creation to its ultimate perfection with Moshiach.

Adapted from Likutei Sichot of the Rebbe, Vol. 28

Priorities and Price Tags

By Yossy Goldman

Is it the money or the man, the cash or the kids? Of course, no one would ever admit to putting money ahead of their children; but is it not an all too common phenomenon? Aren't most parents, even good parents, guilty of making that mistake now and then?

In this week's Parshah the Jewish People are preparing for the conquest of Canaan and the allotment of the Promised Land amongst the twelve tribes of Israel, when the tribes of Reuben and Gad make a special request of Moses.

They had abundant herds of livestock and the land east of the Jordan River was especially suitable for grazing. They asked Moses if they could receive this land rather than land west of the Jordan. In making this request they expressed themselves thus: "Pens for the flock we shall build here for our livestock, and cities for our small children."

Immediately, Moses chastises them and corrects their mistake. "Build for yourselves cities for your small children and pens for your flock." Moses turns around their sequence, putting the children ahead of the animals.

Rashi observes that these tribes were more concerned about their money, i.e. livestock, than they were about their sons and daughters. Moses needed to give them a lesson in values and priorities. Put family first. Possessions come later.

The veteran American spiritual leader, Rabbi David Hollander, once told me the story of a fellow who somehow managed to get himself locked in inside a big department store after they closed up for the day. To compound the problem, it was over a holiday weekend. When all his attempts to get out proved futile, he decided to give vent to his frustrations by taking revenge on the store management. He spent the time of his incarceration swapping price tags on the merchandise. The result? A mink coat was now priced at \$29.99, a necktie at \$999.00. Furniture was going for the price of peanuts, the latest hi-fi for a song, and a set of underwear was absolutely unaffordable! Imagine the chaos when the store reopened.

The question is, are our own price tags correctly marked? Do we value the things in our own lives correctly? Are our priorities in order? Or do we too put the cattle and the sheep -- the car and the office -- ahead of our children?

How many workaholic husbands have told their wives, "Honey, I'm doing it all for you and the kids." But the businesses we are busy building for them actually take us away from them in the most important and formative years of their lives. Rightly has it been said, "the best thing you can spend on your kids is not money but time."

I've seen many people become "successes" over the years. They achieve professional success, career success, business success, growing their fame and fortunes. Too many in the process have become family failures. At the end of the day, our deepest satisfaction in life comes not from our professional achievements but from our family -- the growth, stability and togetherness that we have nurtured over the years -- what our Jewish parents and grandparents simply called nachas.

To paraphrase the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, "Jewish wealth is not measured in property portfolios or stocks and bonds; true Jewish wealth is being blessed with children who walk in the ways of G-d." For that, we need to be there for them and with them.

A congregant of mine once walked up to me and proclaimed, "Rabbi, I am a millionaire!" I knew the man to be of modest financial means but he immediately explained, "I'm a millionaire in nachas!"
Amen. I wish it upon all of us.

Slice of LIFE

About 26 years ago a Chabad Chassid called Rabbi Natan Barkhan was standing in line before the Lubavitcher Rebbe's headquarters in Brooklyn to get a dollar.

As every Sunday for several years, thousands of Jews came from all over the world for "dollars". They waited patiently, men in one line women in the other, for their turn to stand and face before this holy man for a few seconds, receive a dollar from his hand - and perhaps even a blessing and some advice as well.

Rabbi Barkhan would be back in his home in Israel soon. He just had finished several gruelling weeks of intensive 'outreach' work in his homeland Russia where he had been born and raised. His flight was to leave in just a few hours but he couldn't pass up the chance to get another dollar from the Rebbe.

Finally the line was moving...it was the men's turn again, he was getting closer. Suddenly he was there. He was standing before the Rebbe. It was as though the entire world became quiet and time stood still - he was stunned (as he was each time he stood in his presence).

The Rebbe handed him a dollar and said 'Bracha V'Hazlacha' (Blessing and Success) and he began to move on.

Suddenly the Rebbe called him back, "Are you going to Brazil?" Rabbi Natan certainly was not going to Brazil. "Yes!" He answered. "To Brazil... I'm going to Brazil!" The Rebbe smiled, gave him another dollar and said "Here

is something to add to your successful mission. Much blessing!"

He called his wife in Israel, told her of the sudden change in plans, paid the additional fee to have his plane ticket changed and that very evening was on his way to San Paulo. A Chassid does what he is told - with joy!

He checked into a hotel and immediately began calling the few people he knew in the city. It was his first time in Brazil but he had a few names and telephone numbers of people he had met in business or elsewhere. He wasn't going to leave until something happened.

Suddenly, on the third day after his arrival, he remembered a woman that had been a next door neighbour of his in Russia. He remembered her saying that she was going to move to Brazil, maybe he would try to locate her.

It took some searching but finally he found someone by that name that lived...in San Paulo! He called and, sure enough, it was her! Of course she remembered him! She was overjoyed and insisted that he come visit her. In fact she had been praying that someone would come and talk to her oldest son. It sounded like this could be the reason he had been sent!

When the Rabbi arrived her son received him with great excitement. He was obviously overwhelmed by the sight of a genuine Jew. (It reminded him of his father and grandfather). For many hours they sat and spoke on all sorts of Jewish topics until at one point Rabbi Natan noticed that tears began to form in the young man's eyes and it became hard for him to talk.

For many seconds there was silence until the young man broke

down and asked.

"Is it really so bad to marry a gentile woman?"

In tears he began to explain that he was in a terrible dilemma. He had been seeing a nice non-Jewish girl and a month ago they decided to marry. But his mother was anything but happy. In fact she kept crying and begging him not to do it which pained his conscience. But on the other hand he had his own life to live and could not allow his mother's tears to ruin it. He was confused.

That entire night Rabbi Barkhan sat and explained the uniqueness of the Jewish people and of how he remembered this young man's mother making so many sacrifices to keep a Jewish home in Communist Russia. And after all this, after Jews had suffered for thousands of years not to leave Judaism, he was throwing it all away for personal considerations.

His words had an effect and when the sun came up the young man called his mother and promised that he would break the engagement and look for a Jewish girl.

But Rabbi Natan's work had just begun. For the next few days he made a lot of inquiries, until he heard about a young Jewish girl just the right age, arranged a meeting between them, reported everything back to the office of the Rebbe (adding a few desperate requests for prayers and blessings) and returned to Israel.

Two years later Rabbi Barkhan received an envelope in the mail containing with an invitation to the wedding of the match he had made - with the 'help' of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and a round trip ticket to Brazil. His self-sacrifice paid off.

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ISSUE 1255

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Some Sages, including Maimonides, maintain that the era of Resurrection will eventually give way to an eternal era of spiritual reward for the soul, at which point it will be necessary to forever shed our bodies. Other Sages, including Nachmanides, insist that the eternal era of reward will be experienced in the physical world, in bodies, following the resurrection. Rabbi Shneur Zalman constantly and exclusively quotes the view of Nachmanides that the ultimate reward is post-resurrection and experienced in physical eternal life.

(Based on Ohr HaTorah/Yalkut Moshiah u'Geulah al HaTorah)



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

2 Menachem Av, 5734 (1974)

This is to acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 1st.

The reply in detail to the contents of your letter you will no doubt have received from your father, with whom I discussed it at some length. Nevertheless, I want to put down in writing some of the points and briefly at any rate.

First of all, I am grateful to note your concern, indeed profound concern, for your parents. This does not surprise me, of course, knowing your father and your upbringing. But it is nevertheless gratifying to see it expressed in a letter.

As for the subject matter of your letter, it is surely unnecessary to point out to you that when one thinks about the well-being of any person, including above all, his inner harmony and peace, one must obviously think not in terms of the immediate days and weeks, but also how it will be in the long run. This should be the consideration in regard to all affairs, but especially so when it is a question of where to settle down.

This is a very serious question even when one is at the crossroads, and much more so when one has already been settled in a place and contemplates changing it.

Now, with regard to your father, and knowing him, I have no doubt that he could feel in his element only in a place where he can fully utilize the knowledge which he has acquired and the qualities which G-d has bestowed upon him, that is, to utilize them in the fullest measure for the benefit of the many.

By comparison with this, personal amenities -- and I mean this also in a spiritual sense -- are not the decisive factor, and perhaps no factor at all.

All the above would be true even if it was a matter of conjecture. But in this case, after he has been so successful in his accomplishments in the past, there is no room for any doubt whatever as to the importance of this overriding consideration.

On the basis of what has been said above, supported by what you and all the other members of the family have seen of your father's Hatzlocho [success] not only in your city, but South Africa as a whole, you will surely realize without any shadow of a doubt that your father will feel in his element and be truly happy if he continues his present situation in your country.

Moreover, it is surely unnecessary to bring special proof that the trend of assimilation, even assimilation in its coarsest form, namely intermarriage, is still very strong in all of South Africa, and that the work and fight to turn back this trend will still be required for a long time.

Fortunately, experience has shown that where there is a suitable and determined person with courage and determination to guide the young generation, the response is gratifying, and often highly gratifying. This has also been the experience of your father, who has succeeded, with G-d's help, to literally save many Jewish men and women from complete assimilation and to lead them in the way of G-d within the Jewish fold.

To return to you, I of course inquired from your father about your activities, as well as about those of the other children, in the spreading of Yiddishkeit.

May G-d grant strength in accordance with the saying of our Sage, "He who has 100, desires 200, and having achieved 200, desires 400." If ambition grows with achievement, even in material things, how much more should this be the case in matters of the spirit, which are the essential aspect of Jewish life.

I trust that you have read about the Five Mitzvah Campaigns which I have been urging recently, also pointing out that Jewish daughters and women have their part in these activities, and a very important part. I am confident that you and your friends are taking an active part in them.

With blessing, M. Schneerson

P.S. Inasmuch as I understand that your letter was written with your father's knowledge, I am sending him a copy of my reply.

CUSTOMS CORNER

TRAGIC DEATH

It is customary not to name a child after someone who passed away tragically at a young age. In such a case, the parents should change the name slightly, or add another name that will be used as the first name. In cases where the person was martyred while sanctifying G-d's name (e.g., in the Holocaust), it is considered a merit to give a child that name. Rabbi Moshe Feinstein writes that if the deceased passed away at a young age from a natural cause and had children, it's possible that this rule doesn't apply. In addition, he writes that the rule may not apply if the person was a renowned tzaddik (righteous person).

It is not necessary to follow this rule when naming after a parent or grandparent.

A WORD

from the Director

This week we read two Parshas with two which have names with very distinct and seemingly opposite connotations; Matos and Maasei.

The first parsha we read, Matos (literally "rod" or "staff") denotes strength and stability. A synonym, shevet (branch), refers to the staff while it still supple and connected to the tree. It is then subject to influences of the wind, swaying to and fro, while a mateh is firm and cannot be bent. In short, a mateh denotes invulnerable, unchanging stability.

Massai ("journeys") denotes quite the opposite — constant change from one place to the other, devoid of any stability. If the branch sways with the wind, at least it remains united at all times with its source. Massai, diametrically opposed to Matos indicates constant, total flux.

With such conflicting implications in seems preposterous to combine the two. Nevertheless, as everything in Torah, there are no mistakes. Every detail is precise, in order that we can make a practical application to our lives.

The joining of these two parshas together in particular is to introduce to our personal service of G-d the following:

Massai refers to the journey of man through life, constantly striving to reach new levels, until the ultimate goal — Yardein Yereicho — the peak of stability (Matos).

But he must always remember that the power that he has to undertake such an arduous journey comes from his readiness to be firm in his convictions. In the words of our Sages: "Be bold as a leopard — do not be affected by the scoffers."

This is why Matos is before Massai. Only with the fortitude of Matos (as a leopard) can one hope to ever reach one's final destination on the journey to Yardein Yereicho.

J. I. Gutnick

IT HAPPENED



Yeruchem was a dedicated Chossid of Reb Dov Ber Shneuri, the second Rebbe of Chabad-Lubavitch, also known as the Mittler Rebbe. This Chasid enjoyed an abundance of wealth. Each season, the Chossid's muddy brown soil reaped hundreds of kilos of fresh produce. The workers of the wealthy farmer were paid well and fed well. Huge heaping sacks of rust-coloured, brown potatoes stocked the shelves of the Chossid's cellar.

The produce was used to feed the poor of the town of Lubavitch. Over time, the skinny peasant workers grew into healthy strong labourers. Sixty percent of all profits on Yeruchem's farm went to charity. The farmer had enough out of his 40% to live quite comfortably. He'd stroll through the fields reciting Psalms each day. Each month, Yeruchem held a big Chasidic gathering, which the Mittler Rebbe would often attend. The songs and melodies made a profound effect on all present.

One winter, Yeruchem took ill. He felt it was time for him to pass on. After transferring all his wealth to his only son, Moshe, he passed away fulfilled. His death was mourned by the entire town.

Moshe, the next link in the chain, accepted the inheritance. His father's farm, his father's private cellar, and all of his father's businesses, transferred to Moshe's responsibility. Moshe, the incumbent benefactor of his father's wealth, went to the Mittler Rebbe for a blessing.

Upon arrival at the village, Moshe went directly to the Rebbe. The Rebbe said: "I wish you, Reb Moshe, much success in your financial endeavours. Money is given to us by G-d, not because of our efforts to obtain it. G-d has a special mission in mind for each of us. Your mission in having this money is to support people or institutions in need of money. Remember, you can lose this money as easily as you got it..."

Reb Moshe listened intently to the Rebbe. This was a hard mission, due to his miserly nature. But initially Reb Moshe gave charity generously. Pretty soon, though, Reb Moshe started to cut back on his charitable contributions. He was afraid of overspending. In a short while, he totally gave in to his miserly inclination, giving very little charity. He invested most of his money in businesses which he operated. He spent a little on himself. The rest of his money was stored in his cellar in a huge chest. The soft wads of paper bills sat snugly inside of their wrappers. The heaving wooden chest stood formidably in back of the rickety wooden staircase. No one would ever take it away...

The Rebbe sensed what was happening to Reb Moshe and sent a messenger to his Chossid.

The messenger arrived and told Reb Moshe that his fortunes would dwindle, unless he would take the Rebbe's advice. Reb Moshe's face instantly flushed with embarrassment. The men talked. By the time the messenger left, Reb Moshe was convinced. Reb Moshe checked his storage cellar that morning. He fished out three sacks of potatoes, and several stacks of bills. He ordered his son to send it to a needy family. Days went by. Weeks went by. Reb Moshe felt regret over the potatoes and money he had given away. He slowed down his tzedaka donations.

Again the Rebbe sent a messenger to warn Reb Moshe and again Reb Moshe started giving charity once more, but this time half-heartedly. Soon, he slowed down his charitable donations and even cut down his farmhands' salaries.

Weeks passed. Reb Moshe cut his workers' salaries once more and totally

stopped giving charity.

Over the next few weeks, Moshe suffered major financial setbacks. One by one, his businesses went bankrupt. Then Reb Moshe's plantation was swamped by torrents of heavy rains. By the end of the three-day deluge, Reb Moshe's plantations lay in desolation. Reb Moshe had only one hope left: his money chest. The worried Chossid lowered his shaking body down the cellar's stairwell. Moshe bent down slowly to inspect the chest. His fingers trembled. He held his breath. Then he looked.

The money was so soaked that it crumbled into paper flakes. Such an extreme and unexpected calamity can only be from heaven, he realized. The sobbing Chasid had lost all his crops, all his money, all his businesses, and he still owed money to his creditors. This time, Reb Moshe travelled to the Mittler Rebbe. He cried bitter tears of regret, admitting his wrongdoing, and begging for help.

The Rebbe gave Reb Moshe a blessing to rebuild all his businesses and to replant his crops. But in order for G-d to grant the blessing Reb Moshe would have to fulfil his pledge to share his profits by giving charity generously.

Through a contrite heart, Reb Moshe cured himself of his obsession with money. With the Rebbe's blessings he became wealthy again and now gave charity abundantly.

Thoughts THAT COUNT

If a man makes a vow to the L-rd (Num. 30:3)

The Torah teaches that vows are praiseworthy, terming them "a fence around abstinence," yet at the same time states that "the [existing] prohibitions of the Torah are sufficient." How do we reconcile these two statements? A person who conducts himself properly is not encouraged to abstain from worldly matters. On the contrary, he is obligated to work "within" the world, in order to elevate and sanctify the physical plane of existence. A person whose conduct is deficient, however, can sometimes prevent further deterioration by means of vows.

(Likutei Sichot)

He shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth (Num. 30:3)

The commandment to carry out one's verbal declarations was given primarily to the "heads of the tribes" - to the leaders of the Jewish people. As authority figures, they are responsible for setting the highest standards for the rest of the community. That is why the Talmud states in Berachot: "Concerning one who recites the Shema but [his words] do not reach his own ears, Rabbi Yosai opines that he has not fulfilled his obligation." A person must never chastise or reproach another unless he has first applied the same criticism to himself. (Mei'otzareinu HaYashan)

These are the journeys of the people of Israel (Num. 33:1) In the entire narrative of the Jewish people's journeys through the desert, the Hebrew letter "zayin" does not appear even once. This alludes to the fact that they did not journey on Shabbat ("zayin," with a numerical equivalent of seven, alludes to the seventh day), and that they did not need to resort to weapons ("zayin" also means weaponry or arms).

(Ahavat HaTorah)

CANDLE LIGHTING



BEGINS:	AUGUST 5, 2016	ENDS:
5:18	MELBOURNE	6:18
5:19	ADELAIDE	6:17
5:04	BRISBANE	5:58
6:23	DARWIN	7:14
5:01	GOLD COAST	5:56
5:25	PERTH	6:22
5:01	SYDNEY	5:58
5:06	CANBERRA	6:05
5:02	LAUNCESTON	6:04
5:21	AUCKLAND	6:20
5:12	WELLINGTON	6:14
4:58	HOBART	6:02
5:00	BYRON BAY	5:54

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI • 1 AV • 5 AUGUST

FRIDAY NIGHT	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.18 PM
	MINCHA:	5.25 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.50 PM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.55 AM
WEEKDAYS	MINCHA:	5.05 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.18 PM
	SHACHARIS	
	SUN-FRI:	8.00 AM/9.15 PM
	MINCHA:	5.25 PM
MAARIV:	6.15 AM	