

LAMPLIGHTER

27 Tamuz
Parshas Matos - Masei
Shabbos Chazak
Shabbos Mevorchim

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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week, we read two portions from the Torah, Matot and Masei. In the opening verses of Matot, we encounter the laws of making and annulling a vow. Whereas a person cannot release himself from his pledges, in certain cases, others can do it for him.

Masei begins with an account of the 42 journeys by which the Israelites left Egypt and came to the borders of the Chosen Land. The opening verse, however, suggests that all 42 of the journeys were an exodus from Egypt; whereas in fact only the first journey was, when the Jews literally left the land. To understand this seeming contradiction, we must recognize that Egypt is not only a place but also a state of mind. "Mitzrayim," the Hebrew word for Egypt, also means "confinement"; which is an obvious contrast with the land of Israel, which is called the "good and spacious land."

In fact, the entire time that the Israelites were not in their Land, they were in confinement; each journey was, in reality, leaving the "confinement" of Egypt. Yesterday's freedom can be confining today. A servant who is allowed to start work at 5:00 a.m. rather than 4:00 a.m. feels a sense of freedom. Tomorrow, however, or the next day, when he becomes used to the later hour, he will consider 5:00 a.m. to be early.

The Torah portions of Matot and Masei are always read during the period of the three weeks between the 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av. They are set in this time of bitter confinement, between the first breach in the walls of Jerusalem (the 17th of Tammuz) and the Temple's destruction (the 9th of Av, 70 CE).

The significance of this timing, especially that of Masei, is that these portions convey to us, at a time when we most need reminding of it, the concept of "destroying in order to rebuild." Destruction may be for the sake of replacing a building with a better and stronger one. The Baal Shem Tov taught that salvation is not something which simply follows trouble: it is an implicit component of it. Just as the portion of Masei combines two conflicting concepts; here, too, we find the fusion of two opposites - destroying and rebuilding, affliction and salvation - which comes only when we leave the confinements of human reasoning and journey towards the all-encompassing expanses of faith. At this level, everything is drawn into our faith.

Seen from the eyes of a son, punishment is an evil. In the eyes of his father, it is for his son's own good. Our goal is to see history through the eyes of G-d. And by so doing we are able to turn G-d's hidden mercy into open kindness, and change the darkness of exile into the light of the Time to Come.

Difficulties Strengthen

By Tali Lowenthal

An intriguing aspect of our history as Jews is that our people was originally divided into Tribes, each descended from one of the twelve sons of Jacob. Today, Jewish families carefully preserve the tradition that they are kohanim or Levites, and other are described simply as Yisrael (Israel), meaning they are from the other Tribes. Yet when we read the Torah the theme of the various Tribes is prominent. In fact this week's Torah reading is termed "Matot," which is one of the words meaning "Tribes." The singular is mateh. Another word used in the Torah for Tribe is "shevet."

Every detail of the Torah is precise and significant. What are the overtones of these two words for Tribe?

The English word "tribe" probably derives from the Latin term tribus used for the three political divisions of the ancient Roman state. The Hebrew word is quite different. Both terms shevet and mateh mean a branch of a tree or a staff.

The idea that that the different groups among the Jewish people are called "branches" makes sense. We are all branches on the same tree of the Jewish people, and are all unified together. But what about the difference between the two words mateh and shevet?

The Lubavitcher Rebbe explains this point in a way which is relevant not just regarding the ancient tribes of Israel but also for our lives today.

Chassidic teachings explain that shevet means the slim branch as it is when still joined to the tree. It is fresh, and also pliant and soft. Mateh means the same slim branch, but now detached from the tree. It is no longer attached to its source. Despite this, or because of this, the mateh becomes hard and strong, and can be used a staff to support someone, or as a symbol of leadership.

The first state, shevet, the branch attached to the tree, represents the soul before it enters the world, while it is still directly attached to and part of the Divine. It is fresh, vibrant, alive. This can also be seen as the pristine period of the history of the Jewish people, when the Temple stood in Jerusalem.

The second state, mateh, is when the branch has been detached from the tree. The soul has entered the chaotic pressures of human life; or in a further image, the Jewish people have entered a further stage of history. The Temple is in ruins and they are scattered round the world.

The paradox of life is that it is in the second state, that of being cut away from the tree, that the soul and the Jewish people as a whole achieve their strength. We long to be joined to the source, and ultimately the Temple will be rebuilt and even in this world our bond with the Divine will become tangible. Yet the sense of being "cut off" from the trunk of the tree is the very fact which strengthens us, and makes us into a staff which can support and can lead. That is the message of this week's Torah portion: difficulties strengthen us, and help us move forward towards the future.

Slice of LIFE

Zaidy Pinchas' Torah

by Chana Wiesberb

This is the story of a very special Sefer Torah (Torah Scroll), purchased shortly after the Second World War by my maternal zaidy (grandfather), Rabbi Pinchas Sudak, when he and his family were on their dangerous trek escaping Communist Russia.

Unlike most Jews living under the Communist Soviet regime, Zaidy Pinchas did not really lack for anything. He had an underground knitting factory and was a relatively wealthy man. He also managed to sustain a Jewish, Torah-observant life for himself and his family. When he escaped from Russia in the summer of 1946, at the age of thirty-eight, it was not because of any material or even spiritual need. On the contrary, Zaidy Pinchas risked being shot at the border for trying to escape. Nor did he do it for the spiritual future of his children. He did it for his grandchildren.

My mother, Batsheva - the oldest of Zaidy Pinchas' three children - grew up in a home where commitment to Judaism was a way of life. As a young girl she would ride alone on a donkey for several miles through the desert to bring home the necessary wheat to be later ground and prepared under exacting supervision for the Passover matza. That was her task because, as a child, she was not as subject to questioning by the authorities.

Nor was it an unusual sight in my mother's home for music books to be swiftly spread over the piano as soon as a stranger entered their home, hiding the religious books nesting beneath. In this way, my mother was able to pursue her Jewish studies with her "piano teacher."

Zaidy Pinchas recognized that his

children, raised to fight for the preservation of their faith, would gain inordinate strength and faith to persevere in following the path of their tradition -- no matter what the circumstances. "I am not leaving Russia for my own children," he said. "They will always know that they are Jews and will remain loyal to their faith. But what will become of my children's children? That I do not know. It is for them that I must leave the clutches of this regime."

Fortunate to have crossed the Russian border alive, the Sudak family found themselves in Cracow with a group of forty-six other Lubavitcher Chassidim escaping the Stalinist dictatorship, with their final destination unknown. Included in this group was the Lubavitcher Rebbe's mother, Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson.

There, in Cracow, Zaidy Pinchas met a Polish Jew who was offering a Torah scroll for sale, and resolved immediately to purchase the Torah. He then had a heavy wooden box fashioned to carry and protect it.

"Wherever this journey may lead us," said Zaidy Pinchas, "how can so large a group of Jews travel without a Sefer Torah in their midst?"

It was time for the group to move onwards, walking through Steczen, to cross the Czechoslovakian border on their way to Prague. They left late at night. Each could carry only their most basic necessities; all other worldly possessions were abandoned. Zaidy Pinchas had diamonds sewn into the soles of his family's shoes.

In the blackness of the night, Zaidy Pinchas and Batya Sudak and their three children, each grasping a coarse rope to keep them together, trekked silently through a dense forest. Zaidy Pinchas clutched his beloved Sefer Torah as he marched behind Bubby Batya, who carried their youngest child, Bracha. As time progressed, Bubby Batya grew weary and motioned to her husband that she could no longer carry Bracha.

With tears in his eyes, Zaidy Pinchas took his Sefer Torah out of its wooden case, and silently mouthed an apology. "My priceless Torah, you know that it is for you that I have left Russia. I would not have left to an unknown future for myself. Nor for my children. I am fleeing to ensure that my children's children will know you and live with you. Forgive me, dear Torah,

for betraying you now. It is either you or my child. I part with you now, so that my children and children's children should live a life where you are a real and meaningful part."

Zaidy embraced the Torah for the last time and gently laid it, in its case, under a tree. He lifted his young child in his arms and journeyed forward.

Eventually, Zaidy Pinchas and his family reached the free shores of Israel. His children, Batsheva, Nachman and Bracha, each grew up to become Rabbis or Rebbetzins serving their respective communities and promulgating faith in Torah.

A few years ago, my mother, Rebbetzin Batsheva Schochet, was visiting in California where she was invited to the home of Mrs. Faigy Estulin, a friend of my sister's. Faigy was describing her own father's exodus from Russia - several weeks after my grandparents' escape - and attributed his longevity and robust health to an incident that happened over more than 50 years ago.

He and his wife were escaping Russia on a dark night. Along the way, their five year old daughter wandered away from them and was momentarily lost. Frantically, the parents searched for her, crawling on their hands and knees through the forest.

Suddenly Rabbi Gurevitch felt a hard surface. Upon further investigation, he opened a wooden box to discover a Sefer Torah. Next to the wooden box sat his young child. Kissing both passionately, he took the Torah from its box, unraveled it and wrapped it around his body, tying it with his gartel (prayer belt). Eventually, that Torah scroll made its way to its current home, in a shul in New York City.

Mrs. Estulin ended by crediting her grandfather's long and healthy life to the merit of this significant act.

Concluding her story, she looked up at my mother and couldn't fathom why my mother's face had gone completely ashen and tears were streaming from her eyes.

The legacy of Zaidy's precious Sefer Torah had come full circle.

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

Glue

... I was distressed to hear of the disharmony in the marriage of your daughter and son-in-law. My feeling is that all that is needed here is a bit of "glue."

What is glue? Since two hard surfaces do not bond, one introduces a drop or two, or a thin veneer, of a fluid and flexible substance, by which the two hard surfaces are fused together. Employing this analogy, When two people have hardened themselves to the point of inflexibility vis-à-vis each other, what is needed is for a third party to privately speak to each of them individually of how all their disagreements might be lessened and ultimately resolved through a show of goodwill on both sides. In this way, they can begin moving towards a reconciliation without feeling that they have compromised their dignity and pride.

May the Almighty grant that all the pain and heartache they experienced in the past should suffice, and that the above approach should yield positive results speedily and without further difficulty; I hope to hear good news from you concerning this matter as well...

How to Rebuild the Beis Hamikdash

As we are now commemorating the sad events which led to the Destruction of the Beth Hamikdash and the beginning of the present Exile, it should be remembered that the purpose of this commemoration is not just to inflict a sad period upon ourselves, but rather that we should be reminded and inspired to do all we can to lessen, and eventually remove altogether, the cause which brought about the sad events which we are now commemorating.

For, as we declare in our prayers, "Because of our sins we have been exiled from our land." It was the neglect of the Torah and Mitzvoth, in the daily life and practice, which resulted in the Destruction and Exile. Therefore, efforts to strengthen and spread the observance of the Torah and Mitzvoth in the daily life will hasten the complete Redemption through our righteous Moshiach and, as promised, those sad days will be transformed into days of Joy.

QUESTIONS FOR THE RABBI

Question: Why Do We Smell Aromatic Spices (Besamim) at Havdalah?

Answer: The sages instituted that we smell fragrant spices (besamim) every motzaei Shabbat, the evening after Shabbat (unless Sunday is a holiday), in order to comfort the soul, which is saddened by the departure of the "extra soul" that it received on Shabbat.

What exactly is this "extra soul"?

On a basic level, this refers to the fact that on Shabbat a person is more disposed toward relaxation, joy, and celebrating the holy day with extra food and drink.

According to the Zohar, however, this "extra soul" is not simply a state of mind or greater disposition toward relaxation, but in fact every person literally receives an extra soul on Shabbat. With the conclusion of Shabbat this extra soul departs, and the remaining soul mourns the loss of the extra soul.

Why, of all things, is fragrance used to ease the soul's pain? One reason for this is that when Adam and Eve sinned with the Tree of Knowledge, they used all their senses except for smell to sin. The verse states: "the woman **saw** . . . and she **took** . . . and he **ate** . . . they **heard** . . ." Nowhere does it say that the sense of smell was used. Therefore, smell is the most refined of all the five senses, and is the one most enjoyed by the soul.

Although the loss of the extra soul is the main reason given for smelling the fragrance on motzaei Shabbat, there are other reasons given as well.

At the onset of Shabbat, the fires of hell are extinguished, and the souls that are there get a bit of rest. At the conclusion of Shabbat the fires are reignited, and the soul can sometimes feel a weakness or depression come over it as it catches a whiff of the stench emanating from hell. We therefore smell the besamim to give the soul strength. Some explain that this reason really comes together with the loss of the extra soul, for the reason why the soul is more susceptible to depression is because it is already suffering a loss.

A WORD

from the Director

One of the special haftorahs of the "Three Weeks" is an excerpt from the Book of Jeremiah in which the prophet relates how G-d instructed him to foretell of the destruction of the Holy Temple.

Jeremiah lived in a time when many Jews were attracted to paganism; his function as a prophet was to arouse them to repentance. Fearful of undertaking such a responsibility, G-d encouraged Jeremiah with the following words: "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations." When Jeremiah countered that he was only a "child," G-d replied, "Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to save you."

In essence, Jeremiah's mission is the mission of every Jewish soul, which is forced to abandon its G-dly Source and descend into the physical world. The soul becomes frightened at the prospect; how can it possibly contend with all the difficulties it will encounter?

G-d immediately reassures the soul and tells her not to be afraid: "Before I formed you in the belly I knew you." Every Jew has a Divine soul, "a veritable part of G-d Above" that transcends the physical world and the difficulties of the exile. Moreover, "before you came out of the womb I sanctified you": every Jew is prepared ahead of time by having been taught the entire Torah before he was born.

This, however, is not enough to assuage the soul's fears. "But I am only a child!" it counters. "From where will I get the strength to be a prophet to the nations?" i.e., to refine and elevate the physical plane of reality?

"Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you to save you," G-d promises. In addition to the innate powers you acquired in the womb, I will give you special strengths and abilities to be able to fulfill your mission successfully.

J. I. Gutnick

Here's my Story

Personal Encounters
With The Rebbe. Culled From JEM's
'My Encounter' Project



In the 1950s, when I was a young man, I befriended Rabbi Moses Rosen, who was the chief rabbi of Romania. Whenever he came to New York, he prayed in my shul, which was the Fifth Avenue Synagogue, and when we discovered that we

both spoke French, it brought us together. We became good friends, our wives became friends, and it was a great friendship for friendship's sake, as the saying goes.

On one visit to the US, Rabbi Rosen said to me, "I'm going to see the Lubavitcher Rebbe, would you mind coming along with me?" I said, "Mind? I'd love to!"

His appointment was for one o'clock in the morning, but nevertheless, when we arrived at the Lubavitch Headquarters at 770 Eastern Parkway, the street outside was crowded with people – dozens of chasidim were waiting there. When they saw Rabbi Rosen, they recognized him because he was famous – an Orthodox rabbi holding the position of chief rabbi in a Communist country was something very unusual – and they immediately made room for him.

Although we were early for our appointment, we were invited right in, and the Rebbe came out of his office and hugged Rabbi Rosen, whom he had known from before. Rabbi Rosen introduced me as a young rabbi from Belgium, a student of Rav Amiel, the spiritual leader of the Shomre Hadas Jewish Community of Antwerp. And the Rebbe started talking French to me, telling me that he had read Rav Amiel's books, and he mentioned the Darchei Moshe in particular. He also asked me specific questions about the Jewish community in Antwerp, which he knew about very well.

When the Rebbe spoke with Rabbi Rosen, he also knew all the Romanian communities by name. Romania is a large country, with many towns with Jewish populations. I can't remember their names, but the Rebbe remembered everything. He not only knew the names of the communities, but also exactly how many Jews lived where. And he wanted to know more. He asked Rabbi Rosen if there's kosher food, if there are Jewish schools, whether the Jews want to leave Romania to go to Israel, or if they want to immigrate to America. He was very involved in this and interested in every aspect

of Jewish life in Romania. Now Rabbi Rosen had come to ask the Rebbe's advice concerning a particular problem. At the time, Romania had only one shochet – I remember his name was Rabbi Pinchas Wasserman. This man wanted to leave Romania to visit his children in Israel. But if he left, Rabbi Rosen said, there will be no kosher meat in all of Romania. Should he be permitted to go? Although the Communist government of Romania gave out such permissions, Rabbi Rosen had a great deal of influence with the Romanian dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, so the matter of the permit was basically in his hands.

I remember the Rebbe's response. He said, "This is not a matter of halacha, Jewish law, this is an issue of *mentshlichkeit*, human compassion. On the one hand, the man wants to see his children, and it is a very humane thing to let him. On the other hand, thousands of Jews will be left kosher without meat because he is the only shochet available."

Then the Rebbe thought for a moment and said, "My advice is to tell him that he can leave for six months to see his children, but under the condition that after six months he comes back."

Before we knew it, two-and-a-half hours had passed; it was almost three o'clock in the morning. Outside, dozens of chasidim were waiting, and they couldn't believe this. Usually when somebody went into the Rebbe's office, he stayed for five minutes, ten minutes, fifteen minutes, but this was highly unusual.

Rabbi Rosen became concerned that maybe we had stayed too long, and he said, "Maybe I overstayed, I'm sorry for taking up so much of the Rebbe's time."

But the Rebbe responded, "Rabbi Rosen, you represent a large Jewish community of many Jews, and this is their time. If anything, I am taking up their time by keeping you."

Rabbi Solomon Trau was a member of many prominent Jewish organizations, including the RCA, American Israel Club, the Joint and the United Jewish Appeal. He was interviewed at his home in New York City in December, 2010.

PARSHAH IN A NUTSHELL

Moses conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel.

War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Manasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

The forty-two journeys and encampments of Israel are listed, from the Exodus to their encampment on the plains of Moab across the river from the land of Canaan.

Also in Massei: The boundaries of the Promised Land are given, and cities of refuge are designated as havens and places of exile for inadvertent murderers. The daughters of Tzelafchad marry within their own tribe of Manasseh, so that the estate which they inherit from their father should not pass to the province of another tribe.

CANDLE LIGHTING



	Shabbos 21 - 22 July	
	Begins	Ends
Melbourne	5:06	6:07
Adelaide	5:08	6:07
Brisbane	4:56	5:51
Darwin	6:20	7:12
Gold Coast	4:53	5:49
Perth	5:16	6:13
Sydney	4:50	5:48
Canberra	4:55	5:54
Launceston	4:48	5:52
Auckland	5:09	6:09
Wellington	4:58	6:01
Hobart	4:43	5:48
Byron Bay	4:51	5:47

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMAN STREET, CAULFIELD

PARSHAS MATOS - MASEI SHABBOS CHAZAK SHABBOS MEVORCHIM • 27 TAMUZ • 21 JULY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5.06 PM
	MINCHA:	5.15 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5.40 PM
SHABBOS DAY:	LATEST TIME TO SAY SHEMA:	9.55 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10.00 AM
	MOLAD FOR AV IS SUNDAY 10.00 (14 chalakim) PM	
	FARBRENGEN	
	MINCHA:	5.05 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHABBOS ENDS:	6.07 PM
	SHACHARIS:	8.00/9.15/10.00 AM
	MINCHA:	5.15 PM
	MAARIV:	6.00 PM