

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT MATOT-MASEI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

WHAT SHOULD WE REALLY BE DAVENING FOR?

These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael, who went forth from the land of Egypt. (33:1) We must keep on going forward - not lingering in the past. While we must never forget the past, it is incumbent upon us to look forward to the future. We have left Egypt; the pain, persecution and travail are behind us. We go forward towards new horizons. When we live in the past, we become depressed and stagnant. The Lomza Rosh Hayeshivah, Horav Yechiel Mordechai Gordon, zl, would walk through the streets of Petach Tikvah with an air of nobility and dignity which bespoke a person who seemed not to have a care in the world. He spoke and acted with serenity and refinement. There were only a few very close talmidim, students, and friends who knew how deeply troubled and anguished Rav Yechiel Mordechai really was. He had lost two wives, and two of his sons had been killed. Thousands of his students had perished in the fires of the Holocaust, and his precious yeshivah was destroyed by the Nazis. His face never evinced his pain; his mouth never uttered a depressed word. He consoled others, giving them hope amid their pain. He always kept on going forward. He left Egypt/the decimation of European Jewry. He was rebuilding a Torah renaissance in Eretz Yisrael. Once, he gave into his emotions. It was a slip - a painful reference to his overwhelming losses. It happened that a survivor, an

ember spared from the fires of the Holocaust, came to bemoan his fate and seek a blessing from the Rosh Hayeshivah. He had a son that had for a number of years been of marriageable age and was not succeeding in finding his barshert, designated mate. The father wept over the past, bemoaned the present, and feared what the future would bring. How does one console such a broken-hearted Jew? Rav Yechiel Mordechai shared his personal grief with him. He told him about his losses, the wonderful sons, the brilliant and precious students that he no longer had. Together, they wept - for one another and for themselves.

Another time, as he attended the funeral of a brilliant, budding Torah scholar, a student of Slabodka Yeshivah who had drowned in a lake near Tel Aviv, Rav Yechiel Mordechai also revealed his pent-up grief. As the funeral proceeded from the Lomza Yeshivah, the Rosh HaYeshivah suddenly began to cry uncontrollably with bitter sobs. They could not stop him. A Rav who was with him asked, "What is wrong?" Rav Yechiel Mordechai answered, "It is a terrible tragedy for a young person to be taken so suddenly in the prime of his life. Yet, there is some form of consolation in the fact that he merits a funeral and burial in Kever Yisrael, Jewish cemetery. I, regrettably, did not merit to accompany my sons to their burial."

How did the Rosh Hayeshivah do it? How was he able to suppress his emotions and control his feelings of pain and grief? What gave him the strength and fortitude to maintain his composure despite his overwhelming grief? He did not look back.

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KIDS ZONE
Quiz & Comic

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He looked toward tomorrow and the hope of the geulah, redemption, that accompanies it.

He shall dwell in it until the death of the Kohen Gadol. (35:25)

What connection is there between the unintentional murderer and the Kohen Gadol? Rashi explains that the Kohen Gadol should have prayed to Hashem that such a tragedy in which one Jew kills another Jew, albeit unintentionally, does not occur during his tenure as Kohen Gadol. It is interesting how the Torah emphasizes that davening is not enough. One must know what to daven for. The Kohen Gadol should have prayed for the spiritual welfare of the people of his generation. Had he done so, the tragedy that occurred would have been circumvented. The Chafetz Chaim, zl, draws a powerful analogy to demonstrate this idea.

The Kaiser decided one day to visit one of his infantry battalions. The soldiers all lined up at attention to present themselves before their commander-in-chief. Their shoes were shining brightly; their uniforms were in perfect

condition. They stood erect and marched in perfect cadence. They succeeded in impressing the Kaiser. As a show of gratitude, the Kaiser announced that he would grant each soldier one wish. One "astute" soldier jumped forward and declared that he had a favor to request of the Kaiser. "What would you like?" asked the Kaiser.

"My request is that the Kaiser grant me my daily meals," the soldier responded. The other soldiers were shocked at his request. Is this what you bother the Kaiser about? It goes without saying that a soldier in the Kaiser's army who performs his duties as ordered will certainly be fed three meals a day. Even his uniform is provided by the Kaiser. Once one is a soldier, his needs are addressed because he serves the king. The "brilliant" soldier should have had the common sense to ask for something special, something unique and out of the ordinary, something that he would not receive anyway. The mere fact that he wasted such an incredible opportunity is in itself the greatest loss. He could no longer have his request

granted by the king.

The Chafetz Chaim explains that this same idea applies to our daily Tefillos, prayers. Let us face it: What do we really daven for? We pray for material sustenance, material success - everything to enhance our material and physical status. Do we ever ask for Divine Assistance in performing teshuvah, repentance, or success in Torah study and yiraas Shomayim, fear of Heaven? Do we shed tears for our spiritual dimension, or are we so preoccupied with the mundane, the physical, the material components in our lives to focus on what is really important?

Are we different from the "foolish" soldier who asked for the food he would receive anyway as long as he served with dignity and fidelity? Should we not understand that our prayers should focus on our spiritual health and our ability to serve Hashem properly and to carry out His mitzvos correctly? Is there any doubt that if we perform properly in the spiritual arena that Hashem will provide our material needs? I guess for some people that is not enough.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

**PARSHAT
MATOT-MASEI**

We're already deep into Bein HaMetzarim — these Three Weeks when we don't just mourn what was destroyed, but ask ourselves why it fell. And more importantly: what can I do so history doesn't repeat itself?

There are two ways to live. One is like talking. We all know what that feels like. You're sharing an idea and someone cuts in. It feels like an attack. You want to push back, to finish your thought louder. Life becomes a clash of voices, each trying to drown out the other.

But there's another way: life as singing. Think of those moments when someone starts a Niggun, and slowly others join. One person harmonizes

above, someone else adds a low hum, and even someone who isn't fully sure of the tune lends their quiet voice. It stops being about who leads. It becomes about what we create together.

Some people speak, but even their speaking feels like a song — soft, curious, inviting. And some people sing, but it's really shouting dressed up as song — needing the spotlight, drowning out everyone else. It's not what we do, but how we do it. Am I offering my words as a gift to the circle, or using them as walls to protect my ego?

Living like a song means seeing those around me not as interruptions, but as part of the melody G-d is writing. In a family, it means I don't need my spouse or children to echo my views to feel whole. Their different notes make the music richer.

In a community, it means we can disagree — about perspectives, hashkafa, even what time to start davening — without turning difference into division. To feel, deep inside, that another person's voice doesn't weaken mine; it completes it.

Chazal teach the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed because of שנאת חנם — baseless hatred. But maybe it began when we stopped truly listening, when someone else's tune felt like noise instead of harmony.

Midway through Bein HaMetzarim, the invitation isn't only to mourn, but to ask: do I live like I'm always talking over others — needing to win? Or do I live like I'm singing — making space for voices I didn't choose, but that G-d placed in my life?

Then, perhaps, we won't only mourn what was destroyed. We'll start building a harmony strong enough to last forever.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

PARSHAT MATOT-MASEI

In analysing the division of the שבט of Menashe, the מושב זקנים raises an intriguing question: Why did Moshe allocate part of the land on the eastern side of the ירדן to half of the שבט of Menashe, even though they did not request it like the שבט of Reuven and Gad who did? The מושב זקנים explains that the territory on the eastern side of the ירדן was extensive, and it was unnecessary for Reuven and Gad to inherit the entire area. Therefore, a portion was given to the שבט of Menashe. Furthermore, he elucidates that this allocation was specifically for Menashe because of an event that occurred years earlier involving their ancestor, Yosef

HaTzaddik. When Binyamin was falsely accused of stealing Yosef's silver goblet, Yosef's brothers tore their clothes in anguish. Although Yosef's actions were justified, they still caused his brothers pain. As a form of rectification his descendants through the שבט of Menashe, were divided into two portions one on either side of the ירדן symbolically uniting both sides of the ירדן. Harav Moshe Shternbuch Shlita extends this interpretation, teaching a profound lesson about the consequences of causing pain to others, even if one's actions are justified. Yosef's actions, although correct, resulted in future generations facing a form of punishment— the division of the שבט of Menashe. Harav Shternbuch further emphasizes that the split of the שבט of Menashe into two

parts facilitated a natural bond between the two sides of the ירדן. This connection fostered broader unity and friendship among all of Klal Yisrael. The division, therefore, was not merely a punitive measure but a catalyst for greater harmony and solidarity within the nation. From this analysis, we derive a fundamental idea: even actions taken with the best intentions, if they cause pain, may necessitate future rectification. This rectification can, lead however to positive outcomes, such as increased unity and connection. As we reflect on this lesson, we should strive for peace and unity within Klal Yisrael and daven for the swift rebuilding of the Third Beis HaMikdash bez'H. Have a wonderful Shabbos!



RABBI BENJI STONE, TAL Chavruta Program

Tehillim for Our Times; Chapter 11

KIND OR TRUE - PART 1

Based on the commentary of the Malbim למנצח לךוד בד' חסייתי איד תאמרו לנפשי (נודו) [נודין] הרכם צפור: "Hashem I trust in You. Why do they say I have been abandoned?" Have you ever felt isolated, alone and – well – conscious of the fact that you are suffering? How do those feelings sit with your Emunah? A friend recently told me that a member of his close family struggled for some time with a terrible disease until she eventually went into remission. He asked me "Is Hashem kind?" I answered in the affirmative; we have been taught that "mercy and kindness" are on the list of the 13 thirteen divine attributes through which we perceive Hashem. He continued "Was it kind to allow a young mother to writhe in agony for many months?" We both considered this difficult question. After some time the discussion concluded with a compromise idea; whilst Hashem is kind, He is also "true" - given that the trait of "truth" is also one of the thirteen attributes. The attribute of "Truth"

occasionally requires a different outcome to the one which might be considered "kind". In this chapter King David considers the perplexing question as to why good people suffer while those of questionable character appear to prosper. King David is stranded on a mountain, hiding from his enemies. He declares that he continues to have Emunah (faith) despite his troubles. However his enemies do not share his view. They see the supposedly righteous king in flight for his life and they conclude that Hashem has abandoned him. King David sets out two reasons why Hashem might choose to "sit back" as a person suffers, whilst allowing the rasha (wicked person) to prosper. ד' בהיכל קדשו דבשמים כסאו עתיו עפעפיו יבחנו בני אדם Hashem is in His holy sanctuary, Hashem is in the heavens on His throne. His eyes see, His eyelids – they test mankind (11;4) Yossi owns a spacious apartment which houses his bustling family. He prays every morning in the shul which was set up as a result of his financial support. He goes to the office for a couple of hours a day to take a some phone calls and see how his

assistant is doing in managing his multi-million pound business. After a round of golf and a pleasant learning session with his rabbi, Yossi returns home to his immaculate home, maintained by an army of cleaners. Yossi has no Emunah questions. Hashem has been really kind to Him. He must be a generous, people-loving and benevolent G-d. How can anyone ever question Him! Fast forward two years. Yossi's apartment needs serious refurbishment and he has fallen behind on his mortgage payments. The product around which he built his business is now outdated and he is fumbling around for an idea which might save his dream from collapsing into a state of bankruptcy. Instead of being the financial mainstay of the community he may soon need to call on charitable institutions for their help. "Why did you do this Hashem?" says Yossi "How could you let this happen?" We see how easy it is to trust in Hashem, to maintain one's Emunah when things are going well. When one faces, pressure, challenges or suffering in any form, his Emunah is tested. Will you still accept the sovereignty of Hakadosh Baruch Hu or instead feel angry and hard-done-by? Are you going to give up or instead pray with renewed intensity?



WEEKLY PARSHA OVERVIEW

Parshat Matot-Masei

MATOT

Moshe teaches the rules and restrictions governing oaths and vows, especially the role of a husband or father in either upholding or annulling a vow. The Bnei Yisrael wage war against Midian. They kill the five Midianite kings, all the males and Bilaam. Moshe is upset that women were taken captive. They were catalysts for the immoral behavior of the Jewish People. He rebukes the officers. The spoils of war are counted and apportioned. The commanding officers report to Moshe that there was not even one casualty among the Bnei Yisrael. They bring an offering that is taken by Moshe and Elazar and placed in the Ohel Mo'ed (Tent of Meeting). The Tribes of Gad and Reuven, who own large quantities of livestock, petition Moshe to

allow them to remain on the eastern side of the Jordan River and not enter the western Land of Israel. They explain that the land east of the Jordan is quite suitable grazing land for their livestock. Moshe's initial response is that this request will discourage the rest of the Bnei Yisrael, and that it is akin to the sin of the spies. They assure Moshe that they will first help conquer the Land of Israel, and only then will they go back to their homes on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Moshe grants their request on condition that they uphold their part of the deal.

MASEI

The Torah names all 42 encampments of the Bnei Yisrael on their 40-year journey from the Exodus to the crossing of the Jordan River into Eretz Yisrael. Hashem

commands the Bnei Yisrael to drive out the Canaanites from the Land of Israel and to demolish every vestige of their idolatry. The Bnei Yisrael are warned that if they fail to completely rid the Land of the Canaanites, those who remain will be "pins in their eyes and thorns in their sides." The boundaries of the Land of Israel are defined, and the tribes are commanded to set aside 48 cities for the Levites, who do not receive a regular portion in the division of the Land. Cities of refuge are to be established so that someone who unintentionally kills another person may flee there. The daughters of Tzlofchad marry members of their own tribe so that their inheritance will stay in their own tribe. Thus ends the Book of Bamidbar/Numbers, the fourth of the Books of the Torah.

Rabbi Sinclair, Seasonsofthemoon.com

Q

1. Who may annul a vow?
2. When may a father annul his widowed daughter's vows?
3. Why were the Jewish People not commanded to attack Moav, as they were to attack Midian?
4. Why does the Torah list the places where the Jewish People camped?
5. Why did the King of Arad feel at liberty to attack the Jewish People?

A

1. 30:2 - Preferably, an expert in the laws of nedarim. Otherwise, three ordinary people.
2. 30:10 - If she is under 12 1/2 years old and widowed before she was fully married.
3. 31:2 - Because Moav only acted out of fear against the Jewish People. Also, Ruth was destined to come from Moav.
4. 33:1 - To show G-d's love of the Jewish People. Although it was decreed that they wander in the desert, they did not travel continuously. During 38 years, they moved only 20 times.
5. 33:40 - When Aharon died, the clouds of glory protecting the Jewish People departed.



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