

Congregation

◆◆◆"Beth Yosef"◆◆◆

*** 2108 Ocean Parkway Brooklyn, N.Y. 11223 ***

Rabbi Aharon Farhi

Parashat *Matot Masei*

2nd Av 5782

Maqam Nahwand

Issue #993

Mr. Eliyahu Levy, President

Haftarat *Shimu Devar*

July 30th 2022

*Candle Lighting 7:56pm * Shekiah 8:14pm * Shir Hashirim 7:00pm followed by Minha Friday Night
Shaharit Shabbat 8:15am * Minha Shabbat 7:35pm * Shabbat Ends 8:55pm & Rabbenu Tam 9:25pm
Time for Talit 4:28am * Seasonal Hour 83:00 * Alot Hashahar 4:11am * Netz Hachama 5:51am
Weekday Minha 7:30pm * Earliest Time for Arbit 7:06pm * Tzet Hacoachavim 8:50pm * Chatzot 1:02
Latest Time for Morning Keriat Shema 8:20am * Latest Time for Morning Amidah 9:43am*

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Please do not read this bulletin during Tefillah or Keriat Hatorah

This week we read two Parashiot, Matot and Masei. There are many different topics discussed in these two Parashiot. Let us discuss a few of the topics, each briefly. In *Parashat Matot* it is written: *Hashem spoke to Moshe – Take vengeance for Bnei Yisrael against the Midianites; afterwards you will be gathered unto your people.* Here begins the battle against Midian. This was the retribution that had been promised against the Midianites (25:17) because of their responsibility for the Jewish sins of immorality and idolatry. The sins committed in Shittim were enticed not only by the Midianites, but also by the daughters of Moab, as it says, *The people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab – to teach that the sins began with the daughters of Moab and then continued with the daughters of Midian.* Why then is vengeance only promised on Midian and not also on Moab? Hashem promised vengeance on Midian because they had caused Bnei Yisrael to commit idolatry as well, as it says, *They conspired against you in the matter of Peor (idol).* While Moab had only caused Bnei Yisrael to sin with their daughters, Midian also caused Bnei Yisrael to worship idols. Midian knew Bnei Yisrael would not serve idols unless they were tricked into it, so they formulated a plan to cause them to stumble.

This is why Midian deserved much worse of a punishment than Moab. In *Parashat Masei* it is written: *“These are the Journeys of Bnei Yisrael”* Twenty four journeys are recorded in summary in the beginning of this Parasha. Why has the Torah documented them? *“Moshe wrote their goings forth according to their journeys at the bidding of Hashem... and these were their journeys according to their goings forth”* Why was the order switched between the word meaning ‘their goings forth’ and the word meaning ‘their journeys’? First it writes *going forth* and then *journeys*, but then it writes *journeys* first and after *going forth*? Also, why was only the first time *“at the bidding of Hashem”*? The *Keli Yakar* explains: sometimes the journeys were an advancement forward, towards Israel, and sometimes Bnei Yisrael backtracked a little bit, towards Egypt or other parts of the desert. This is why the order was switched in the Pasuk. As well, it is understood that the journeys they embarked on which took them forward were *“at the bidding of Hashem”*, while the journeys that took them backward were not. The Pasuk says: *As for the men of the legion, each man looted for himself.* What can we learn from this Pasuk? Earlier, Moshe accepted offerings for Hashem from the people in the form of gold and jewelry,

intended as an atonement. This was from the loot that they captured during their battle against Midian. However, these men were the officers, while the offerings from the regular soldiers were not accepted. When the leaders of the thousands and the leaders of the hundreds saw this, they were inspired to donate to the Mishkan, not to the Cohanim and Leviim, as a thanks to Hashem for the success they achieved. This the Torah considers greater than all others. The Pasuk states that there should be six cities of refuge, in which three would be positioned in Israel in the Land of Canaan, and three would be positioned outside of Israel on the other side of the Jordan. How is this divided fairly? On the other side of the Jordan only two and half tribes lived, while in Israel the other nine and half tribes lived. Shouldn't the six cities be divided more fairly? There's more to this. Forty-two cities were given to Leviim for a refuge to escape to as well. This brings the total to 48 cities: $36+3=39$ in Israel and $6+3=9$ outside of Israel. Each tribe therefore had 4 cities for a refuge to run to for safety. Outside of Israel, there were two and a half tribes, however the half tribe of Menashe was in fact a minority total, while the majority lived in Israel, so their 4 cities weren't split in half, but rather 1 city was outside of Israel with the minority, while the other 3 cities were in Israel with the majority, bringing the total cities for the two and a half tribes to $4+4+1=9$ outside of Israel. Inside of Israel the nine and a half tribes had 39 cities: $9 \times 4 = 36 + 3$ for the majority half of Menashe, totaling 39 cities. The split was therefore exact and calculated proportionately accurate.

Insights on the Parasha

1- The Midrash teaches us that there were 48 prophets for Bnei Yisrael, corresponding to the 48 cities of refuge. What is the connection? The original six cities corresponded to the first six prophets: Avraham, Yitzhak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yehoshua, and Pinehas. The Gemara teaches: had Bnei Yisrael not sinned, there would only have been the five books of the Torah, and Sefer Yehoshua in Neviim, which includes the first six prophets. However, since Bnei Yisrael sinned, they then needed 42 more prophets to rebuke them and warn them to repent, resulting in 48 prophets total, just as the six cities of refuge became 48 in total after 42 cities were added.

History in Brief

100 years after the first Hurban Hamikdash, 190AD. When the wife of Rebi Shimon Ben Chalafta heard where the money for all the Shabbat food had come from, a precious stone that came from heaven, she refused to partake in the food and requested that he return it to heaven Motzei Shabbat. Did he want their table in Gan Eden to be lacking, while the tables of others were filled? So, Rebi Shimon went to visit Rabbenu Hakadosh to ask for advice. Rabbenu Hakadosh told Rebi Shimon to return home and tell his wife that she should enjoy the Shabbat meal, and if their table is lacking anything in heaven from it, then he himself will make sure to replenish it for them. But his wife was not satisfied with this arrangement. She did not want the table to be completed by someone who learns Torah with wealth, as their test in life doesn't compare to their own test of learning Torah with poverty. Rabbenu Hakadosh did not have a response to her, so Rebi Shimon returned the precious stone back to heaven. As soon as he extended his hand upwards, an angel came and scooped it up out of his hand. Hearing of his poverty, Rebi Chiya gifted a field to Rebi Shimon Ben Chalafta for livelihood. Once, Rabi Shimon attended a Brit Milah in which the Seuda continued throughout the night. At midnight, Rebi Shimon left to go home. On the way home, he met up with the angel of death, who looked bothered while deep in thought. He asked him what was troubling his mind, and he answered that he was pained over the words of the people who are always saying that they plan to do this and that in the future, but they in fact have no idea when the angel of death is scheduled to take them away from this world.

Health and Recovery

Do not drink water for a little while before eating, so that the digestive system does not cool down and then not digest the food properly. Even while eating you should not drink, only wine, and after an hour and a half or two you should drink water. Do not drink after bathing, and especially while bathing. Do not delay for even a minute from going to the bathroom, and do not eat until one has examined himself well enough that he does not need the bathroom. A man should always strive to have his bowels loose all his life, and should be

closer to liquid than solid. This is a big rule in medicine. If not, bad sicknesses can come upon him. A person who wants to maintain his health needs to know and be careful of his movements, focusing on joy, worry, anger, and fear, which are mental actions. The educated person should be happy with his portion all the days of his life, and not care about a world that is not his own, nor seek benefits not his own, for then he will be well-hearted, with average joy, with reason to increase in natural warmth. People should not be too joyous or excited while eating, for such emotions can decrease the natural body temperature. In fact, people who are obese, their body temperature is lower due to their narrow arteries decreasing in blood flow speed, which is the source of body heat. This will then cool the body and decrease natural heat from the heart, bringing the person to danger.

Rishon LeSion:

R' Yaakov Shaul Elyashar 1817-1906

The wife of R' Eliezer took their son Yaakov and her mother and escaped to Jerusalem to reunite with her husband. During the hard journey, traveling by night and hiding away by day, one night she noticed three men dressed as Arab Bedouins coming towards them. She felt her stomach drop, but was relieved when she learned that her husband had sent them to guide her through the rest of the journey. Without delay, they continued on their way in a hurry. By nightfall the next day they arrived in Jerusalem, exhausted but safe. The leader, Abdullah Pasha, who had been searching for her husband, was infuriated when he learned that R' Eliezer's wife had also escaped from under his nose. He sent officers to neighboring towns to harass without mercy all those who might have any information about their current location. When they couldn't provide any information, they were beaten and the search continued elsewhere, always leaving empty handed. The Pasha stewed in his anger.

Mussar: Imperfection

Nobody is perfect. Everyone makes mistakes and has their own personal package of flaws. Only Hashem is complete and perfect. Unfortunately, man has the custom to see the flaws of others and often does not see his own. Perhaps his flaws may even be greater than that of his friends. Seek out

the truth and develop yourself properly. Go to the Rabbanim and ask for critical advice. Fear heaven and do the right thing, even if you may not fully understand it. Change for the better a little bit each day and declare, *'When will my actions reach the level of my forefathers Avraham, Yitzchak, and Yaakov?'* Pray for success and truth. Once, a Jewish man in Bagdad came before the great Rav Yosef Chaim (Ben Ish Hai) and explained that his neighbor was a sinner. He asked if he must sell his house and move, as the Mishnah states *'Distance from a neighbor that is bad'*. The Rav explained that he must read the Mishnah *'Distance a neighbor from bad'* – he must pray and work with wisdom to show his neighbor the truth. One mustn't abandon his neighbor just because he is at fault, rather he must find a way to rid his neighbor of the fault, thereby eliminating the need to move altogether. He listened to the Rav and was successful.

Story

The upcoming winter in Zolote, Ukraine was promising to be very cold that year. All the residents of the town were preparing by cutting firewood to use for warmth. There was a large home in that small neighborhood of Zolote that belonged to Nissan and his wife Bella, where they lived with their eight children. The large, wide home that had many, many rooms was deceiving to anyone who saw it and thought Nissan was wealthy. He had inherited the home, when in truth he failed terribly in any business he ventured into. He was not lazy or irresponsible, rather success just didn't come to him. As such, they were poor and did not have firewood for the winter months ahead. Generous philanthropists would visit them and bring firewood and some vegetables to help ease their situation. His friends and relatives all told him to go visit the Maggid Hakadosh R' Mordechai and ask for a blessing for his family. The holy Maggid was known for helping and supporting the righteous in the generation. But Nissan was stubborn and his heart did not accept this advice. He believed in going to work and doing his best on his own, not going to the holy Maggid for help. He would continue to try his hand in business until he succeeded, and refused to go within the 4 Amot of the generation's righteous leaders for help.

Laws: *The Nine Days*

1 – The laws for the week of Tisha B'Av do not apply this year, as the 9th of Av begins on Saturday. Haircuts and shaving are allowed the entire previous week. However, some are strict not to shave or take a haircut Erev Shabbat Chazon.

2 – Laundry and wearing freshly laundered clothing is allowed as well, and one may take normal hot and full showers, even on Erev Shabbat Chazon in honor of Shabbat.

3 – Meat and poultry are prohibited to consume after Rosh Chodesh until and including the tenth of Av (however, this year the fast is pushed off to the 10th of Av since the 9th of Av is Shabbat, therefore Monday is the 11th of Av and meat is permitted). On Rosh Chodesh and on Shabbat you are permitted. Fish is always permitted.

4 – You are not allowed to eat a dish cooked with meat, even if the meat is no longer there. If you used a meat pot to cook the dish, now cooked without meat, even if you may have used the pot on that day, you may eat the dish that was cooked without the meat.

5 – One may taste on Erev Shabbat a dish cooked with meat for Shabbat Chazon, in honor of Shabbat. Those who are strict will be blessed. As well, it is advisable to taste the dish without swallowing.

6 – There are those who permit meat that was left over from Shabbat to be eaten for the fourth meal, Melave Malka. However, this Melave Malka is only permitted as long as extra food was not prepared for this purpose. Young children who cannot grasp the ideas behind the destruction of the temple are allowed to eat meat.

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