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In This Issue

[HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Matot-Masei](#)

[Kollel Dvar Torah by Rav Shimon Peretz](#)

[Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List](#)

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Parshat Matot-Masei 5769**

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Monday Night Chug at Camp Morasha!

There is a weekly "Netiv" chug with Chanan Bina, 10:00 PM at Camp Morasha. For more details please call Chanan 917-514-5438.

Rav Nebenzahl on Parshat Matot-Masei

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon

"THE DANGERS OF ACTING IN HASTE"

THE TRIBES OF GAD AND REUVEN ACTED IN HASTE

We read this week about the decision of the tribes of Gad and Reuven to remain on the other side of the Jordan and not to settle within the borders of *Eretz Yisrael*. Chazal ascribe the following *pasuk* to their decision: "a land which was taken hastily (*mevohelet*) at first, will not be blessed later" (*Mishle* 20:21). What reason did these tribes give for settling there? They claimed that it was more suitable for raising cattle. Such a decision can only be made out of haste and confusion. There is no doubt that the other side of the Jordan had much to offer, but can we compare it to *Eretz Yisrael*, does it even remotely approach the advantage of being in closer proximity to the *Beit HaMikdash* and the Sanhedrin? They had the golden opportunity to live near the source of Torah and *halachic* rulings.

Had they not acted in such haste, they would have realized that the advantages to be gained far outweighed any gains in the raising of their sheep. Moshe tried very hard to convince them of the error in their decision, with a long lecture as recorded not only in *Parshat Matot* but in *Parshat Devarim* and the beginning of *Vaetchanan* as well. It was only when Moshe realized that he would be unable to sway them that he provided them with three cities of refuge, as it says: "then Moshe set aside three cities on the bank of the Jordan" (*Devarim* 4:41).



THE DANGER OF BEING FAR FROM TORAH CENTERS

The act of designating cities of refuge on the other side of the Jordan also alluded to what could result from a decision made in such confusion and disarray. Chazal wonder why it was that in the Land of Israel three cities of refuge were designated for nine and a half tribes, while the same number was instituted for the remaining two and a half tribes who were destined to remain across the Jordan. Chazal explain (*Makkot* 9b) that in Gilad (across the Jordan) there were many murderers. Moshe was informing these two and a half tribes that he was providing them with a much greater area of refuge per capita because they were going to have many more murderers. We can assume that this was a result of their insistence on remaining a great distance from the Torah centers and the Sanhedrin. The people of Gad and Reuven are still not convinced and they therefore give preference to their sheep over settling near the *Beit Hamikdash* and the Sanhedrin.

Moshe did point out something in favor of the members of the tribe of Gad. Immediately preceding his death, Moshe praised them as having settled where they did: "he chose the first portion for himself for that is where the lawgiver's plot is hidden" (*Devarim* 33:21) - they chose to settle the lands of Sichon and Og for that was the beginning of the conquering of the land, and that was to be the ultimate burial place of Moshe Rabenu (Rashi *ibid.*). Presumably Moshe did not intend to justify their actions, only to find a point in their favor - unquestionably they should have opted for the sanctity of the Land and the center of Torah rather than worry about their sheep. The problem was that their decision was *mevohal* - made in a state of haste and confusion rather than with peace of mind.

WHICH COMES FIRST CHILDREN OR SHEEP?

The people of Reuven and Gad were certainly great people, among them many leaders and heads of Sanhedrin. We are only permitted to speak this way of them because this is how it appears in Chazal - given our limited ability to understand we are told that they gave preference to their livelihood over more important considerations. We can readily see their misplaced priorities in their statement to Moshe Rabenu "Pens for the flock shall we build here for our livestock and cities for our small children" (*Bamidbar* 32:16). Chazal point out (*Bamidbar Rabba* 22:9) that by mentioning their livestock before the children, they have taken a primary concern and made it secondary, and made a secondary concern primary. Moshe's response was in fact a rebuke: "build for yourselves cities for your small children and pens for your flock" (*ibid.* 24) - how can you place the flock above your children? Their promise should have been phrased beginning with the children and then mentioning the sheep. Had Gad and Reuven been asked whether the children are more important than the flock they certainly would have responded correctly.

They know that one cannot violate the Shabbat to raise sheep, whereas to save the life of a child they are required to. The problem was that they acted in a state of confusion - the moment the prospect of wealth came up they had lost all sense of priorities.

THE TRIBES ACROSS THE JORDAN WERE THE FIRST TO BE EXILED

Chazal tell us that they were punished for this lack of priorities: "a land which was taken hastily at first, will not be blessed later". What eventually happened was that they were exiled a few years prior to Sanherib's exiling the remainder of the

ten tribes (see Rashi *Mishle* 20:21). This resulted from their having elected to reside near the other nations rather than close to the Sanhedrin, thus they were first to be negatively influenced by the outside culture. There certainly were prophets and *tzaddikim* among them, yet in a general sense they acted in confusion and disarray without a clear mind and thus they were the first to be exiled.

Chazal (*Bereishit Rabba* 58:9) describe, *lehavdil*, an evil person who acted in haste - Ephron. Chazal use him as the classic example of "the wicked say much and perform not even little" (Baba Metzia 87a). Ephron promised Avraham the field and the cave free of charge: "I have given you the field, and as for the cave that is in it, I have given it to you" (*Bereishit* 23:11), yet in the end he collected the exorbitant fee of four hundred silver shekels described by the Torah as *ovehr lasocher* (ibid. 16) - the most valuable shekels of the time (see Rashi ibid. and *Bechorot* 50a that each shekel was worth one hundred *selah*).

Chazal (*Bereishit Rabba* 58:9) describe Ephron in terms of "*Nivhal lahon ish ra ayin velo yeida ki cheser yevoenu*" "One overeager for wealth has an evil eye; he does not know that want may befall him" (*Mishle* 28:22) - "one overeager for wealth has an evil eye" refers to Ephron, and "he does not know that want may befall him" refers to his being punished by having his name recorded in the Torah with the letter *vav* missing. (There are those who point out that "evil eye" - "*ra ayin*" and the name Ephron spelled without the *vav* have the numerical value of four hundred corresponding to the four hundred shekel payment Ephron extracted from Avraham. It was due to the four hundred shekels taken from Avraham by this "*ra ayin*" (value four hundred) that the Torah recorded his name without a *vav* (value four hundred).

EPHRON ACTED IN HASTE

In addition to meaning "overeager", "*nivhal lahon*" implies acting in haste, in confusion. When Ephron heard of the potential profit to be made here, he acted in haste and his whole mindset became one of great confusion. Do I stand to make big money? That takes precedence over all considerations! Who knows what reward was awaiting Ephron had he truly acted with *chesed* towards Avraham and Sarah, and given them the field and the cave free of charge as he had initially promised? This act of *chesed* could have been his ticket to the next world. Even if he was not worthy of this, he would have earned far more than four hundred silver shekels in this world. When Ephron, however, heard the clink of money, he forgot all about the *chesed* he had intended to perform with Avraham. The end result was that not only did he not profit but he lost a letter of his name from the Torah.

SAVE US FROM ACTING IN HASTE

One of the *Hoshanot* recited by Ashkenazim on Hoshana Rabba begins with "*adama me-erer*" "ground from accursedness". The prayer lists in alphabetical order what we wish Hashem to save from what. For example "the ground from accursedness", "the grain from scorch", and "the vineyard from worms". One of the items enumerated is "save our soul from panic". My Rebbe HaRav Chaim Shmuelevitz zt"l explained that panic is something the soul needs to be saved from. The panic referred to here is acting in haste such that one's thoughts are now in disarray. Had Ephron's actions been well thought out, he would have realized that there was much more to be gained from acts of *chesed* with Avraham and Sarah, than the four hundred silver shekels he received, no matter how valuable. The sound of money caused Ephron to act in a state of confusion and

thus give up his soul for eternity.

OUR PRAYERS MUST NOT BE IN HASTE

We all need to reflect on this - when we *daven*, do we realize that we are standing before the King of kings Who has the power of life and death in His hands? Today's situation certainly cries out for prayer, but the problem is that we are confused - so many other thoughts occupy our minds. R' Yehuda HaLevi said: "my heart is in the east (Israel) but I myself am at the end of the west". Many can fulfill this adage as: "I am at the WESTern Wall, but my heart is in the eastern bank (Bank Mizrahi)!" - confused by wealth. This attitude can only come from one whose thoughts are in a state of confusion causing harm to his soul. Ephron lost his entire world, while the tribes of Gad and Reuven were exiled. We must therefore do our utmost to insure that our inheritance not be one of confusion, that our prayers be orderly. We must pour our hearts out to Hashem and not *daven* out of haste and confusion. Haste to honor Hashem is fine, panic resulting from our current situation is also fine, but the prayer itself should be orderly.

People today are searching for *segulot* to aid us. One *segula* mentioned in Chazal is: "Whoever responds 'Amen: may His great Name be blessed' with all his might, the evil decree in judgment against him is torn up" (Shabbat 119b). There are two interpretations of "with all his might" - a) to shout it out loud, and b) to recite it with all the kavana and concentration one is able to muster. In practice, both interpretations are required - this is a sure *segula* for nullifying of the evil decrees against us.

The Kohen who was anointed for purposes of war would speak to the people: "*Shma Yisrael atem krevim hayom lamilchama*" "Hear O Israel, you are coming near to the battle against your enemies" (*Devarim* 20:3). Chazal ask why it is that he prefaced his remarks with the words "*Shma Yisrael*". They tell us that even if the only merit the Jewish people had is that they were strict about reciting the Shma then it is worthwhile to save them (see Rashi *ibid.*). Those who fight on the front lines must take great care to recite the Shma morning and evening. My Rebbe HaRav Gedaliah Eisenman once said that even if the soldiers do not recite the Shma, those of us remaining behind must. We may not be currently serving in the army, but our "*Shma Yisrael Hashem Elokenu Hahsem Echad*" can aid those on the battlefield.

Regarding our enemy we cannot say "some with chariots and some with horses, but we in the Name of Hashem our G-d call out" (*Tehillim* 20:8), for they also call out in the name of their god ("Allah Achbar"). We should at least not be less than them, we must and call out in the Name of Hashem - our G-d. May we merit that Hashem help us overcome our adversaries and peace should spread throughout the Land - not peace Camp David style but peace from our father in Heaven. This may explain why in the Kaddish it is not sufficient to say "*yehei shlama rabba*" "may there be an abundant peace, but also "*oseh shalom biMromva HU yaase shalom*" "He Who makes peace in His heights, may HE make peace". We are not looking for just any peace, but a peace from the One Who brings peace in the Heavens, so that if that happens we will truly merit life and salvation for the entire Jewish nation. Amen.

Kollel Dvar Torah
by Rav Shimon Peretz

The story is told of a king who had journeyed to a faraway land with his son who had taken ill, in an effort to find a cure for his illness. Along the way, they stopped in many different places, in some spending but a night, but in others, the son's weak condition required them to extend their stay for a longer period of time. They eventually found a cure and upon their return, the king said to his son: "remember when we slept in such and such a place and remember when we were in such and such a place and it was very cold, and remember when we were in such and such a place and you had terrible pain in your head?" So it was when *Klal Yisrael* completed their journey in the desert, Hashem said to Moshe "list for them all the places where I was angry", this is the meaning of the opening words of *Parshat Masei* "these were the journeys" (see Midrash Rabba 23:2).

A person suffering hardship will feel his pain at every event. The king's son took ill and all they are interested in is reaching this faraway land where there exists a cure, but every delay fills them with anxiety and fear. While in mid-journey not knowing when they will reach their destination or if there is even a cure to be found there, any stop along the way is time to contemplate and their feelings of doubt surface: "what will be? How will I ever get out of this mess?" However, if all ends well, the perspective of the sufferer changes completely. On the way home, after finding the long sought-after cure, the father and son reminisce about their stops along the way without feeling any pain, even able to laugh about them - all fears and uncertainties have disappeared. The journey is coming to a happy ending and the joy which it brings allows them to even laugh as they recall the painful portion of their journey.

Rav Tzaddok of Lublin explains that *Klal Yisrael* was going through a healing process as they journeyed through the desert. Each stop along the way prepared them for their final destination - *Eretz Yisrael*. The journey was a difficult one and it appeared as if they would wander forever, their feeling of despair caused them to rebel against Hashem from time to time. Finally, as they approached the borders of *Eretz Yisrael* and were about to enter the Promised Land, Hashem informed Moshe that he will finally be able to look back at all of the journeys and hardships with joy and happiness and understand how it was all geared towards their ultimate destination.

In our own lives as well, when hardship occurs, we can take solace in the knowledge that Hashem is guiding our lives, and that all that befalls us is designed to enable us to fulfil the specific role that Hashem created us for.

**Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List
Announcements from the Yeshiva**

There is a weekly "Netiv" chug with Chanan Bina, 10:00 PM at Camp Morasha. For more details please call Chanan 917-514-5438.

Mazal Tov:

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

- Evan (5763) and Jamie Scharaga on the birth of a baby boy.
- Rabbi Sam Kadish (5763-5764, 5766) on his marriage to Malka Bromberg.

- Tzvi (5763-64) and Gali Goodman on the birth of twins, a baby boy and a baby girl.
- Phillip (5763-64) and Sharona Vedol on the birth of a baby girl, Ilana Henya.
- Adam (5763-64) and Elisheva Salomon on making Aliyah.

Visitors:

The following people have visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Eliyahu Rosen (5763-64)
- Chaim Fedida (5757-68)

Baruch Dayan Emet:

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you of the passing of:

- Dena Yammer, the Grandmother of Joshua Joseph Yammer (5770).

Hamakom Yenachem Otam B'toch Sha'ar Aveilei Tzion V'Yerushalayaim.

Tehillim List

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

- Taube Yehudit bat Temma Gasia
- Yitzchak ben Shayna Ita
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shayndel
- Rueven ben Tova Chaya
- Fruma bat Eeta
- Moshe Zanvel ben Breindel
- Sima Rivkah bat Eidel
- Leah bat Eidel
- Chaim Shmuel Moshe ben Golda
- Aryeh Rephael ben Sarah
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Yitzchak ben Tova
- Fraida Rachel bat Sarah Milcha
- Lea bat Bracha
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Dina Sarah bat Shaindel Mira
- Tali bat D'vorah Bina
- Tobah Pessal bat Esther
- Lottie Adina bat Claudia
- Orly bat Yaerah
- Miriam Naomi bat Sarah
- Yehudis Sara bas Esther
- Dov Eliyahu ben Mindel Hudis
- Rahamim ben Miriam
- Hinda bat Sara Leah
- Rivka Zelda bat Bracha
- Dovid Ben Miriam
- Yaackov Chaim Meir ben Miriam
- Avraham ben Leah
- Chaim Naftali Yaakov ben Shifra Shaulah
- Michael Yosef ben Tzipora
- Gidon Shlommo ben Esther

- Haya Rebecca Rivka bat Jeanne Yaffa
- Temima Adina bat Keren Ronit
- Avraham ben Meela
- Bracha Sara bat Rivka Zelda
- Ita Blima bat Malka Fraidel

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. Are you visiting Israel? - [let us know!](#) We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,

HaRav Aharon Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh

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