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COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

MATOT-MASEI

1st Av 5776

Shabbat begins: 20:28

Shabbat ends: 21:35

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Leiluy Nishmat David ben Mesuda.
Tihyeh Nishmato Betsurat Hachaim.



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
DIRECTOR, TAL

Many Thoughts!

You're late for a very important business meeting. The Chazan finishes the Amida – and you wait for the potential good news – no Tachanun. But it doesn't come!

You check your watch and decide time out. Off go the Tefilin and before you know it you're in the car on the way to the meeting. Fate has it of course that every traffic light you seem to approach – turns *red*!

In an undertone you can hear yourself claiming – it wouldn't have made any difference if I would have stayed in Shul 5 extra minutes. (Of course it *would* have made all the difference as each extra minute with Tefilin and each Amen gains eternal reward!)

Shlomo Hamelech stated – Rabot Machshavot – "Many thoughts are in a man's

heart, but Hashem's advice will prevail (Mishlei 19:21).

We think we are gaining by leaving early, but Hashem sometimes has a different plan.

In this week's Parasha, Moshe, was commanded to avenge the attack on the Children of Israel by the Midianites before his death. Rashi comments that even though



Moshe knew that his death would follow, he did this with joy and did not procrastinate.

We can ask, how did Rashi know that Moshe acted joyfully? Perhaps he felt sadness and only did this because of G-d's command.

The "Kli Yakar" (Rabbi Shlomo Ephraim of Lunshitz) explains that the answer can be found in the changes Moshe made when repeating G-d's words. Whereas G-d said: "Avenge the children of Israel of the

Midianites; afterward you shall be gathered unto your people," Moshe changed his words and said: "...execute Hashem's vengeance on Midian". Moshe said to himself: If I repeat the words as they were spoken, that they should go to war with Midian for their own honour and afterwards I will be gathered up unto my people, the Children of Israel will say: We forego the vengeance and let Moshe not die! Therefore Moshe changed the wording and said: "... Hashem's vengeance on Midian." The vengeance is for the honour of the Almighty, and this you cannot forego.

This type of message can only result from joy, not sadness.

Our sages, who expressed Moshe's greatness, mention in that same Midrash that not everyone merits rising to such a high level. Even a spiritual giant like Yehoshua did not achieve that degree of selflessness demonstrated by Moshe.

Our sages taught: It is written in Yehoshua (1:5) "As I was with Moshe, so will I be with you."

Yehoshua should have lived 120 years like Moshe! Why was his life shorter by 10 years? When G-d told Moshe: "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites; afterward you shall be gathered unto your people," and even if this heralded Moshe's death, he acted quickly "and Moshe sent them". But when Yehoshua was about to fight against the 31 kings, he said "If I kill them immediately, I will die right away, just like Moshe our



Living with Mitzvos

1. How was the Jewish Army comprised?
2. The tribes of Gad and Reuven requested to take their portions of Eretz Yisroel from the part of Eiver Hayarden. Moshe then added half the tribe of Menashe. Why?
3. There is a contradiction in the *pesukim* as to the number of Jewish soldiers sent out to battle Midyan. On the one hand it says one thousand soldiers from each tribe that includes *Sheivet Levi*, making 13,000. Yet it then says explicitly that twelve thousand soldiers went?
4. Why were the number requested from each tribe specifically one thousand?
5. Why get the army comprised from all the tribes as opposed to simply picking the best 12,000 soldiers no matter from which tribe?
6. The *Midrash* says that there were 12,000 armed soldiers and paralleling them were 12,000 Jews selected to daven for their welfare. Why the need for two lots of 12,000 in these two forms?
7. This was Moshe's last fight as leader. Why did he not lead the fight himself? If not him, why was Pinchas chosen instead?

Answers On Page 3

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teacher. What did he do? He delayed the war with them, as it is written (Yehoshua 11): "Yehoshua made war a long time with all those kings."

G-d said to him: "Have you done everything? Behold, I will shorten your life by 10 years." (Bamidbar Rabba 22) Yehoshua thought that he would prolong the war and live longer. Hashem wasn't happy with this conduct and the opposite occurred. So said Shlomo "Many thoughts are in a man's heart, but G-d's counsel will prevail." (Mishlei 19:21):

In fact on a deeper level, throughout Jewish history these famous words have rung out, symbolising G-d's Guiding Hand in our eventful history.

The entire exile to Egypt was as a result of Yosef going out to look for his brothers. There were no GPS's in those days. He was not looking for a specific address. He was out in the field in the middle of nowhere. Yosef should have gone back to Yaakov and told him "I tried to find them but I was not successful. They were nowhere to be found." But the Almighty wanted Yosef to find his brothers and a man found him and behold he was blundering in the field..."(Bereishit 37:15) Yosef was 'found' by a man who helped guide him to his brothers. He went off to see them, they sold him to Egypt and the rest is history.



RABBI ALAN GARBER

Lessons In Love

After several attempts by the Midianites to attack and destroy the Jewish people, Hashem instructs Moshe near the beginning of our sedra "To take vengeance for the Children of Israel against the Midianites" (Numbers 31:2). However when Moshe instructs the people, he changes the command slightly. Instead of instructing them to take vengeance for the Children of Israel he instructs them "to take vengeance for Hashem" (Numbers 31:3).

The Ramban on this Pasuk " says four very important words.

HaGezeira Emet V'haCharitzut Sheker.

When G-d wants something to happen, He makes it happen!

HaGezeira Emet - what G-d has decreed is true (it will happen), V'haCharitzut Sheker and the diligence of man is false.

Man can plan and do this and that but in the final analysis, if G-d wants something to happen, it will happen and if He does not want it to happen, it will not happen.

This is Jewish history. This is the whole story of the exile to Egypt. It was all hanging on Yosef finding his brothers.

Once in the depth of servitude in Egypt, we see that Pharaoh wanted to get rid of the Jewish boys. He decreed that all male children be thrown into the Nile.

Pharaoh stated – Hava Nitchakma Lo Pen Yirbeh - Let's come up with a plan lest they increase in population... R Shlomo Zalman Auerbach Zts'l explained that the numeric value (Gematria) of this phrase is 918.

Pharaoh wanted to bring down our population;

G-d has a different plan: Vayomer Lahem Elokim Pru Urvu... - and G-d said to them: Be fruitful and multiply. This also has a numerical value of 918.

Rashi points out that someone who stands up against the Jewish people is as if he is standing up against Hashem. Another way of viewing the switch is a powerful lesson in love. Hashem's concern and focus is the honour of the Children of Israel and our concern, as expressed by Moshe, is the honour of Hashem.

To love another is to express concern for and to highlight the good of the other!

We see this expression of love between the Jewish people and Hashem in many places. In our tefillin we praise Hashem and express our love towards Him with the expressions; "Hear O'Israel, Hashem your G-d, Hashem is One . . . Love your G-d with all your heart, soul and might" (Deuteronomy 6:5). The Talmud in Brachot 6b teaches us that Hashem's "tefillin", as it were, contain the verse "Who is like Your People of Israel, a most unique nation in the world" (Chronicles 1:17:21).

In the Torah, G-d calls the festival of Passover 'Chag Hamatzot', the festival of unleavened bread, as an expression of praise to the Jewish people that they were willing to leave Egypt with such speed and enthusiasm to follow G-d into the desert. However, when we refer to the festival we call it 'Pesach', Passover which refers to our praise of G-d that he 'passed-over' the

And so it was that G-d's plan overrode Pharaoh's plan.

Similarly when it came to Moshe's birth – pharaoh was told by his astrologers that the saviour of the Jewish people would be born. He decreed that every male baby be thrown into the river. And it was – even Moshe Rabenu himself was thrown into the Nile as an infant.

Pharaoh decreed – Kol Haben Hayilod Hayora Tashlichu – numerical value of 1154. And Hashem had other plans – but G-d's counsel will prevail - Atsat Hashem Hi Takum – 1154.

Pharaoh's own daughter came down just then to bathe, saved Moshe, and he was raised in Pharaoh's own palace. It was as a result of his own plan that the future Jewish leader was raised not as a slave, but as a prince who learned the protocols of leadership.

It is only when we tap into and connect ourselves to Hashem, that we are able to attach to the infinite.

Hashem has been with us and will always be with us throughout history. If we make our will like the will of the creator – we cannot fault.

Many are the thoughts in the hearts of man, and G-d's plan is what emerges.

houses of the Children of Israel on the night of the plague of the first born.

Similarly we find that miracle of the splitting of the Reed Sea is referred to differently by G-d and the Jewish people. We call it the 'keriyat yam' (splitting of the sea) which has the nuance of a split from the outside in, referring to G-d as the 'Outside Force' that caused the miracle. However, G-d in his Torah calls it 'bekiyat yam', which has the nuance that the split came from inside-out. G-d implies that it was the Jewish people that caused the splitting of the sea by their demonstration of faith by entering into the sea. Again this is the lesson that seeing the good in each other builds bonds of love.

We are now in the sad period of The Three Weeks which leads up to the fast of Av, the date when the two Temples were destroyed along with many other national tragedies. The Temple represents the manifestation of G-d's Presence in the World. The main concentration of G-d's Presence was between the two figures which faced each other on top of the Holy Ark. The symbolism is clear and powerful! When people face each other and look out for each other then we can feel G-d's Presence in this world.

There is a story told about why G-d chose the particular



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spot where the Temples were built: Once there were two brothers who inherited their father's land. The brothers divided the land in half and each one farmed his own section. Over time, the older brother married and had six children, while the younger brother never married.

One night, the younger brother lay awake. "It's not fair that each of us has half the land to farm," he thought. "My brother has six children to feed and I have none. He should have more grain than I do."

So that night the younger brother went to his silo, gathered a large bundle of wheat, and climbed the hill that separated the two farms and over to his brother's farm. Leaving the wheat in his brother's silo, the younger brother returned home, feeling pleased with himself.

Earlier that very same night, the older brother was also lying awake. "It's not fair that each of us has half the land to farm," he thought. "In my old age my wife and I will have our grown children to take care of us, not to mention grandchildren, while my brother will probably have none. He should at least sell more grain from the fields now so he can provide for himself with dignity in his old age."

So that night, too, he secretly gathered a large bundle of wheat, climbed the hill, left it in his brother's silo, and returned home,

The symbolism is clear and powerful! When people face other and look out for each other then we can feel G-d's Presence in this world.

feeling pleased with himself.

The next morning, the younger brother was surprised to see the amount of grain in his barn unchanged. "I must not have taken as much wheat as I thought," he said, bemused. "Tonight I'll be sure to take more."

That very same moment, his older brother was also standing in his barn, musing much the same thoughts.

After night fell, each brother gathered a greater amount of wheat from his barn and in the dark, secretly delivered it to his

brother's barn. The next morning, the brothers were again puzzled and perplexed. "How can I be mistaken?" each one scratched his head. "There's the same amount of grain here as there was before I cleared the pile for my brother. This is impossible! Tonight I'll make no mistake - I'll take the pile down to the very floor. That way I'll be sure the grain gets delivered to my brother."

The third night, more determined than ever, each brother gathered a large pile of wheat from his barn, loaded it onto a cart, and slowly pulled his haul through the fields and up the hill to his brother's barn. At the top of the hill, under the shadow of a moon, each brother noticed a figure in the distance.

Who could it be? When the two brothers recognized the form of the other brother and the load he was pulling behind, they realized what had happened and embraced. It was on this spot that G-d chose to build the Temple.

The Temple was destroyed and remains destroyed in our generation because of baseless hatred (Talmud Yoma 9b). To rebuild the Temple we must build bonds of love and concern for each other.

Shabbat Shalom.

Living with Mitzvos

1. The *Midrash* (Yalkut Shemoini) says that the *possuk* doubles over the phrase of "*Eleph LeMatel*", one thousand from each tribe, implying two thousand from each tribe. This was because for every soldier there was another man from his tribe that was tasked with davening for his welfare.
2. *Ibn Ezra* says that they also asked for this land with the others, but since they were not a whole tribe, they are not mentioned until now. The *Shach* says that *Moshe* decided to split a tribe so that there would be more of a connection between the Jews on either side of the *Yarden*. *Chizkuni* explains why specifically was *Menashe* picked: he was the first born of *Yosef* who caused his brothers to tear their clothes when the cup was found with *Binyomin*. Therefore he was punished in that his descendants were split.
3. There are many suggested answers: 1) There were only 12,000. Although the tribe of *Levi* was included but this meant that the tribes of *Menashe* and *Efrayim*, both sons of *Yosef*, are counted only as one tribe of *Yosef*. (Maskil Lidovid). 2) There were really 13,000 including the tribe of *Levi*. The *possuk* that says 12,000 is speaking about the soldiers handed over unwillingly, while the 1,000 from the tribe of *Levi* went willingly. (Imrei Shefer) 3) There were only 12,000 and the although the tribe of *Levi* was included but the tribe of *Shimon* were excluded since they were the ones who had sinned with the daughters of *Midyan* and therefore it was not appropriate for them to join. (ibid) 4) 12,000 did not include the tribe of *Efrayim*. *Moshe's* death was to follow after this battle and his successor, *Yehoshua*, came from *Efrayim*. In order that people should not say that the tribe of *Efrayim* were eager to fight this battle in order to make the new leader from their tribe step in. Therefore the tribe of *Efrayim's* 1,000 soldiers were replaced by the tribe of *Levi*. (Abarbanel) 5) 12,000 were from all the tribes while from the tribe of *Levi* there were more soldiers but not the same number of 1,000 (Imrei Noiam). 6) 12,000 soldiers went armed while the 1,000 from the tribe of *Levi* were different going unarmed but escorted by the *Aron*. (Gur Aryeh)
4. Perhaps the idea here is that the *Midrash* (Yalkut Shemoini) says that there were 12,000 armed soldiers and 12,000 people selected to *daven*, one for each soldier. The total being 24,000. The number of Jews that died due to the daughters of *Midyan* was 24,000 (25:9). Thus, the number of 1,000 from each tribe doubled was to avenge the same number of Jews killed.
5. Perhaps the idea here is to express that there are no individuals amongst the Jews but that we are all one unit. When someone sins it negatively affects the whole nation. Therefore, the problem here was to be dealt with in a united fashion comprising all the tribes to show that it is a problem for the nation as a whole.
6. Perhaps the idea here is that in this fight against *Midyan* the Jews were deploying two different powers. The *possuk* says that the Jews natural strength lies in their power to *daven* - this explains the need for 12,000 people selected to *daven*. The power of the enemy was with the sword, with soldiers. Since *Bilom* reversed this by using his power of the mouth - in the fight against him and *Midyan*, the Jews also used their enemies' weapon of the sword seen in the 12,000 soldiers.
7. Perhaps *Moshe* did not want to fight *Midyan* since this was the place where he grew up (Rashi, 22:4). We see from here how far *hakoras hatov*, recognising one's benefactor goes. As to why *Pinchas* was then chosen see *Rashi* (31:6) who gives three reasons.

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Rabbi Haim Pinto the Great was born in Agadir, Morocco on Tammuz 15, 5509 (July 1, 1749), on the Hilloula of Rabbi Haim Ben Attar.

He was the son of the saintly and venerated Rabbi Shlomo Pinto Zatzal, the descendant of Rabbi Yoshiyahu Pinto, known by the name of the Rif of Ein Yaakov.

Rabbi Shlomo Pinto Zatzal instructed Torah to his son, Rabbi Haim Pinto, when he was very young. Unfortunately, Rabbi Shlomo Pinto passed away in 1761, leaving behind him an orphan barely 12 years old. That same year, an earthquake completely destroyed Agadir, and numerous Jews fled and settled in Mogador (Essaouira). Rabbi Haim Pinto was to be found among the refugees.

Rabbi Haim Pinto studied Torah along with Rabbi David Ben Hazan at the yeshiva of Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, the Dayan of the city. Rabbi Haim Pinto's reputation was so great that all Morocco resonated with accounts of his miracles and wonders, and this from his most early years.

His teacher, Rabbi Yaakov Bibas, died in 1769, and the community of the city turned to Rabbi Haim Pinto to accept the heavy responsibility of Dayan. Being but 20 years old, he finally accepted this responsibility in association with his friend, Rabbi David Ben Hazan. Rabbi Haim Pinto carried out his mandate as Head of the Rabbinic Court in an extremely firm manner, and when necessary he knew how to be very strict. Never did he allow someone to act incorrectly, exercising this function for more than 70 years. The greatest Chachamim of the generation esteemed him with fear and respect, and Jews and Muslims alike venerated him. His fame spread throughout Morocco, across the Middle East, and reached all the way to Europe. Eliyahu Hanavi revealed himself regularly to Rabbi Haim Pinto and studied with him, which explains why Rabbi Haim Pinto participated in all the Brit Milahs that took place in Mogador.

Among the many stories about Rabbi Haim Pinto z"l, the following account has been gathered from the book on him entitled The Light of the Righteous.

Rabbi Haim Pinto awoke every night to recite prayers and to make "requests of G-d". Afterwards, he would study Torah until dawn. One day his daughter Mazal entered into his room in the middle of the night and saw him studying with a man. In the morning, he scolded her and said, "Why did you come into my room without knocking?" She was not in a position to see Eliyahu Hanavi. "Now you deserve a punishment, meaning that on the day of your marriage you will become blind." His daughter, who was a great saint, accepted the decree.

A few years later, the grandson of Rabbi Khalifa Malka came from Agadir to Mogador and went directly to Rabbi Haim Pinto's home. When he saw Mazal, she found grace in his eyes, and so he asked Rabbi Haim Pinto to give his daughter to him in marriage, but the Rabbi refused. He insisted, but Rabbi Haim Pinto absolutely refused.

suddenly he heard two voices coming from his room. He then went and prepared an additional cup for the unexpected guest. In the morning, Rabbi Haim Pinto asked his Shamash, "Why did you prepare two cups of coffee during the night?" The Shamash responded, "I heard two voices and I thought to prepare a second cup for the guest." The Rabbi told him, "Happy are you my son, you who had the merit to hear the voice of Eliyahu Hanavi."

The grandson of Rabbi Khalifa Malka returned to Agadir saddened and hurt because the Rabbi had refused to give him his daughter as a wife.

Later, Rabbi Haim Pinto had a dream in which he saw Rabbi Khalifa Malka, who told him, "I sent you my grandson happy, and you sent him back to me sad." Rabbi Haim Pinto responded, "Your honor knows that my daughter Mazal saw Eliyahu Hanavi and a decree has been given: On the day of her marriage, she will become blind. This is why I refused her to your grandson."

Rabbi Khalifa replied that his grandson would accept this decree as is. All of this occurred during the dream.

The next day, Rabbi Haim Pinto sent a special messenger to Agadir to bring the grandson of Rabbi Khalifa Malka to him. When Rabbi Haim Pinto saw him, he explained what would happen to his daughter on the day of her wedding, and he agreed. However, thanks to their merit and uprightness, this cruel decree was annulled and they had children and lived a great many years. They passed away in the same week.

When Rabbi Haim Pinto would arise every night to study Torah, his Shamash (assistant) Rabbi Aaron Ben Haim, would also arise and prepare him a cup of coffee. Once, the Shamash awoke a little late and therefore hurried to prepare a cup of coffee for the Rabbi, when suddenly he heard two voices coming from his room. He then went and prepared an additional cup for the unexpected guest. In the morning, Rabbi Haim Pinto asked his Shamash, "Why did you prepare two cups of coffee during the night?" The Shamash responded, "I heard two voices and I thought to prepare a second cup for the guest." The Rabbi told him, "Happy are you, my son, you who had the merit to hear the voice of Eliyahu Hanavi. However I decree that you repeat this secret to no one." After the death of Rabbi Haim Pinto, the Shamash recounted this incident to the inhabitants of the city.

Rabbi Makluf Ben Lisha came to the home of Rabbi Haim Pinto concerning matters of importance for the community of Mogador. Because of the fact that this was a serious matter, he went directly to Rabbi Haim Pinto in the middle of the night. He entered into his room and saw the Rabbi, whose face was "illuminated", and someone else who resembled an angel. He wanted to come a little closer, but he was seized with such great fear and fright that he fled to his home. The next day the Rabbi told him, "Very happy are you, my son, who had the merit of seeing the face of Eliyahu Hanavi." Rabbi Makluf lived a long time, to the age of 110, and he described this incident in his prayer book.

Rabbi Haim Pinto of blessed memory had four sons: Rabbi Yehudah (known as Rabbi Hadane), Rabbi Yossef, Rabbi Yoshiyahu, and Rabbi Yaakov. All were great Tzaddikim, devoted to Torah and to Klal Israel.

Rabbi Haim Pinto of blessed memory left this world on Elul 26, 5605 (September 28, 1845) at the age of 96. On the day of his passing, he promised his disciples that those who would invoke his name on the day of his Hilloula would see their prayers answered. May his merit protect us. Amen.



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