

THE COMMUNITY PARSHA SHEET



PARSHAT MATOT-MASEI

London's Leading Young Professionals Platform and Jewish Communal Centre



RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL
TAL Founder & Director

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 your in the car on the way to the meeting. Fait 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 weeks 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 form 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 or 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)

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Many Thoughts!
By Rabbi Jonathan Tawil

DVAR TORAH
Parshat Matot-Masei
By Rabbi David Baadani

DVAR TORAH
Parshat Matot
By Rabbi Danny Fisher

HALACHOT
By Rabbi Eli Mansour

KIDS ZONE - QUIZ

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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 behind 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.

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.

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.



RABBI DAVID BAADANI
Director - TAL Chazanut Program

PARSHAT MATOT-MASEI

אלה מסעי בני ישראל... These were the journeys of the Israelites..

ויכתב משה את־מוצאיהם למסעיהם על־פי ה' :

Moses recorded the starting points of their various journeys as directed by ה'. The 'Degel Machane Efraim' writes in the name of his grandfather the 'Ba'al Shem Tov': "Know that everyone from the day of their birth until they return to the next world goes through 42 journeys. The day of the exodus from Egypt which corresponds to the day a person is born, until they reach the promised land, their own redemption and perfection. Life is full of tests and trials, journeys and upheavals, and all this is for one's benefit, because these are the trials one's needs to go through in order to

reach perfection, to receive the ultimate gift, the spiritual land of Israel, their personal redemption.

One of the 'places' in the journey is a place called 'Kivrot hattaavah', 'The Grave of Lust' which is a place where a person should bury all of their lust due to their closeness to G-d.

Another 'place' called 'Tabera' where one's heart should burn in love of G-d.

And this is אלה מסעי בני ישראל, This is the journey of the Israelites, the journey of each and every Jew. ויכתב משה את־מוצאיהם למסעיהם על־פי ה' : The 'Or HaChaim' explains that the Torah came to teach us that the journeys of the Israelites were written in the notebook of Moses during the forty years they stayed in the desert, after that G-d commanded him to write it in the Torah.

Rabbi David of Lelov says: 'Just as Moses wrote the journeys of the Israelites, so does Elijah the prophet

write all the journeys and adventures of each individual Jew, and at the time of redemption, soon in our days, it will be a book from which one will learn from and understand all that they have gained and corrected in what happened to them,' how they managed to bury their unwieldy lusts in the graves of lust, and how they got their hearts burn in the love of G-d. This is how each and every one goes through all the journeys throughout their life. This is the journey of the Israelites, אלה מסעי בני ישראל, this is your journey, a journey worthy of being written, a journey that will be remembered for generations, your personal journey with all its ups and downs, the pleasant times and the challenging hours, moments of happiness alongside thoughts of despair, all are steps, stops, journeys on your way to your own salvation and perfection, your promised land.



RABBI DANNY FISHER

Director - TAL Boys After School Programs

PARSHAT MATOT

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!



HALACHOT BY RABBI ELI MANSOUR

Situations When Listening to or Playing Music is Permissible During the Three Weeks

Halacha forbids listening to music – either live or from a radio, tape, disc player and the like – during the three weeks from Shiba Assar Be'Tammuz through Tisha B'Ab. This applies even to religious music, such as prayers and Pizmonim; even these songs may not be sung with musical accompaniment during the Three Weeks. Just as a mourner, Heaven forbid, may not listen to music due to his state of bereavement, similarly, during the Three Weeks, when we mourn the destruction of the Mikdash, we must refrain from listening to music. There are, however, a number of exceptions to this rule, situations in which listening to music would be permissible during this period.

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Israel, 1910-1995) ruled that a person who suffers from depression or anxiety, Heaven forbid, and depends upon music to relieve his emotional distress, may listen to music during the Three Weeks. A similar situation would be a person who lives alone and experiences loneliness and relies on music to lift his or her spirits. Rav Shlomo Zalman maintained

that situations such as these are treated no differently than medical disorders, and thus the prohibition against listening to music is waived in consideration of the serious health concerns involved. This is also the ruling of Hacham Ovadia Yosef. Of course, one must be honest with himself before applying this Halacha. A person cannot simply decide that he's in a "bad mood" so he can now listen to music. This ruling refers to people suffering considerably from depression, and not to anyone who happens to have had a difficult day.

Hacham Ovadia also addressed the question posed by a camp director concerning the music played during camp hours as part of the camp's routine. Would it be permissible to continue playing music in the camp during the Three Weeks? Hacham Ovadia allowed playing music in this framework, since the music is played not for enjoyment, but rather to help the counselors by keeping the children attentive and on schedule. This is comparable to the situation of oarsmen who often sing to keep them in rhythm as they row; the music is played not for enjoyment, but rather as part of the counselors' work routine. If a person earns a living as a musician, he

may play music for gentile audiences during the Three Weeks, but only until the week of Tisha B'Ab. He may not, however, play for fellow Jews already from Shiba Assar Be'Tammuz, even for Jews who are not halachically observant.

A musician who earns a livelihood from teaching music – such as piano teachers, violin teachers, and so on – may continue giving lessons during the Three Weeks, but not during the week of Tisha B'Ab. Since he would lose a substantial amount of money by refraining from teaching for three weeks, and in light of the fact that he is not playing music for enjoyment, he is allowed to continue teaching until and not including the week of Tisha B'Ab.

Summary: Although it is generally forbidden to listen to music during the Three Weeks, people suffering from depression or anxiety who need music to relieve their distress may listen to music. Music may also be played at summer camps when this is necessary to keep the young campers attentive and happy. It is permissible to play music for gentile audiences – but not Jewish audiences – until the week of Tisha B'Ab, and one may also teach music lessons until the week of Tisha B'Ab.



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 behaviour 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 Moed (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 is the kohen Gadol blamed for accidental deaths?
 5. What was the nesi'im's role in dividing the Land?

- A**
- 30:2 - Preferably, an expert in the laws of nedarim. Otherwise, three ordinary people.
- 30:10 - If she is under 12 1/2 years old and widowed before she was fully married.
- 31:2 - Because Moav only acted out of fear against the Jewish People. Also, Ruth was destined to come from Moav.
- 35:25 - He should have prayed that such things not occur.
- 34:17 - Each nasi represented his tribe. He also allocated the inheritance to each family in his tribe.

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