

Parshas Matos-Masai in a Nutshell
(Numbers 30:2–36:13)

Moshe conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel. War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Manasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

(continued next column)



The goal of this period of mourning is not merely to shed tears over the past, but primarily to focus on the future, to realize the spiritual faults that led to the exile, and to correct them so that the Redemption will come.

Our Sages teach that the Temple was destroyed because of unfounded hatred, the kind of bickering and strife that is associated with Midian. It follows that by ridding ourselves of this friction and conflict through self-sacrificing love, we can eradicate the cause of the exile.

-- The Rebbe

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The forty-two journeys and encampments of Israel are listed, from the Exodus to their encampment on the plains of Moab across the river from the land of Canaan. The boundaries of the Promised Land are given, and cities of refuge are designated as havens and places of exile for inadvertent murderers. The daughters of Tzelafchad marry within their own tribe of Manasseh, so that the estate which they inherit from their father should not pass to the province of another tribe. ❖

"For this commandment which I command you this day, it is not hidden from you, neither is it far off."

**Join us
each weekday morning
Mon-Fri
as we delve into
the mysteries of
Chassidic concepts.
5:55 am
followed immediately
by Shacharis.**

**Thank You to:
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The Security Volunteers**

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, July 10, 2021
Daylight Savings Time
Earliest Tallis 4:24 AM
Latest Morning Shema..... 9:15 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) . 1:40 PM
Plag Hamincha..... 7:00 PM
Earliest Evening Shema.... 9:03 PM

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

**Shabbos/Rosh Chodesh
Schedule**

Erev Shabbos – July 9 / Tammuz 29

Candle Lighting.....8:12 pm

Mincha7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – July 10 / Av 1

Shacharis..... 10:00 am*

Torah Reading 10:50 am

Rabbi Drasha 11:15 am

Mincha8:15 pm

Rabbi's Drasha.....8:45 pm

Shabbos Ends9:19 pm

**Latest morning Shema is now 9:15 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis (Mon-Fri)6:15 am

Shacharis (Sunday) 9:00 am

Mincha (Sun-Thurs)1:45 pm

Maariv (Sun-Thurs)9:15 pm

Bulletin

*This week's Bulletin
is sponsored by
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Chassidic Masters

Signpost

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe.
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

The court is obligated to straighten the roads to the cities of refuge, to repair them and broaden them. They must remove all impediments and obstacles. . . . Bridges should be built (over all natural barriers) so as not to delay one who is fleeing to [the city of refuge]. The width of a road to a city of refuge should not be less than thirty-two cubits. "Refuge, Refuge" was written at all crossroads, so that the murderers should recognize the way and turn there. (Mishneh Torah, Laws Regarding Murder and the Preservation of Life 8:5)

The "cities of refuge" were six cities in the Land of Israel designated as havens for murderers. A person who killed would flee to the nearest city of refuge, where he would be safe from the vengeance of his victim's closest relative (the "avenger of the blood") until he was brought to trial before the Sanhedrin, a tribunal of twenty-three judges that tried capital cases. It was the court's responsibility to ensure the accessibility of the cities of refuge by improving the roads leading to them and posting signs with the words miklat, miklat ("refuge, refuge") to show the way.

On the spiritual plane, there also exist six "cities of refuge" for the spiritual "murderer." Life, in the true and ultimate sense, is connection with the divine source of being

and vitality; an act of transgression against the divine will is a subtle form of "murder," as it hinders the flow of vitality from G-d to creation. The words of the Torah, say our sages, are the "cities of refuge" for the destroyer of spiritual life: if he flees into the Torah and immerses himself in it, the Torah will protect him from the adverse results of his deed.

The Torah contains 613 mitzvot, or commandments. However, the great majority of them require certain circumstances to obligate and enable their fulfillment: there are mitzvot that can be observed only at certain hours of the day, or only on certain days of the year; mitzvot that can be observed only in the Land of Israel, or only in the Holy Temple; mitzvot that pertain only to men, only to kohanim ("priests"), only to employers, or only to farmers; and so on. But there are six mitzvot—to believe in G-d, to avow His oneness, to renounce idolatry, to love G-d, to fear Him, and to avoid temptation to sin—that pertain to all times, to all indivi-

duals, to all places and in all circumstances, so that they are readily accessible to one who seeks refuge from his faults and failings, whomever he might be and wherever and whenever the desire to rectify his life might strike him. These are the six readily accessible spiritual "cities of refuge" for the errant soul.

But a haven is of little use if it is inaccessible or its location is unknown. As is the case with the physical cities of refuge, it is the community's responsibility to "straighten the roads . . . to repair them and broaden them . . . remove all impediments and obstacles" and post signs at all crossroads.

This imperative has special meaning to us today, when the roads of life are teeming with spiritual refugees. It is our sacred duty to station ourselves at all the crossroads and serve as living signposts, calling out "Refuge! Refuge!" and pointing the way to the haven of Torah. ❖



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The Nine Days

The first nine days of the month of Av, and also the morning of the tenth, are days of acute mourning for the destruction of the first and second Holy Temples.

During this time, **we don't**:

- * Eat meat (including poultry) or drink wine, for during this period the sacrifices and wine libations in the Holy Temple ceased. The exceptions to this rule are meat and wine consumed on Shabbat or as part of a meal that celebrates a mitzvah, such as a circumcision, bar mitzvah, or the completion of a tractate of the Talmud.
- * Launder clothing (except for a baby's)—even if they will not be worn during the Nine Days—or wear freshly laundered outer clothing. Those who wish to change their clothing daily should prepare a number of garments and briefly don each of them before the onset of the Nine Days. Then it is permitted to wear these “non-freshly laundered” garments during the Nine Days.
- * Swim or bathe for pleasure.
- * Remodel or expand a home.
- * Plant trees to be used for shade or fragrance (as opposed to fruit trees).
- * Buy, sew, weave or knit new clothing—even if they will be worn only after the Nine Days. Exceptions to this rule: (a) If you will miss a major sale, or if the garment will be unavailable later. (b) For the purpose of a mitzvah, such as purchasing new clothing for a bride and groom.
- * Cut nails during the actual week of the fast of Tisha B'Av—i.e., starting from the Saturday night before the fast until the conclusion of the Nine Days.
- * The Sephardic custom is to observe the stringencies regarding bathing only in the week of Tisha B'Av.

Some more observances:

The Sanctification of the Moon is postponed until after Tisha B'Av.

- * There is no law forbidding traveling during the Nine Days; however, it is customary to refrain from traveling (or engaging in any potentially perilous activity) during these days, unless it is absolutely necessary.
- * One may become engaged to be married during this period, but no celebration should be held until after Tisha B'Av.

Note: All these restrictions are in addition to the restrictions that apply during all of the Three Weeks. There is no mourning on Shabbat

“When the month of Av enters, we reduce our joy . . .” —Talmud, Taanit 26b ❖

From Our Sages

Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel, saying: This is the thing which G-d has commanded (Numbers 30:2)

This verse can also be interpreted as follows: Moses spoke to the children of Israel regarding the heads of the tribes, that they must follow their instructions as one follows the word of G-d.

(El, “to,” can also mean “about”; li, which in this context translates as “of,” usually means “to”; thus el rashei hamatot livnei yisrael (“to the heads of the tribes of the children of Israel”) can also read, “[And Moses spoke] about the heads of the tribes to the children of Israel, [saying: This is the thing that G-d has commanded] . . .”)

-- (Alshich)

Avenge the vengeance of the children of Israel upon the Midianites (Numbers 31:2)

Why only upon the Midianites, but not the Moabites (who also sent their daughters to cause Israel to sin)? Because the Moabites got involved because they feared Israel (cf. Numbers 22:2–6); but the Midianites entered a fight that was not theirs.

Another explanation: G-d said to spare the Moabites because of “two fine creatures which I shall extract from them”—Ruth the Moabite and Naamah the Ammonite (wife of King Solomon).

-- (Rashi)

Avenge the vengeance (Numbers 31:2)

The Hebrew word midian means “strife.” Midian is the essence of divisiveness, which is the root of all evil.

Thus our sages speak of “groundless hatred” as the greatest of evils. In truth, all strife is groundless hatred: the so-called “grounds” that people and nations have for hating and destroying each other are but the various façades of the divisive “I” of Midian—the ego that belies the common source and goal of humanity, and views the very existence of others as an encroachment upon the self.

On the cosmic level, G-d is the ultimate oneness, and everything G-dly in our world bears the stamp of His unity. All evil derives from the distortion of this oneness by the veil of divisiveness in which G-d shrouds His creation.

So before the people of Israel could conquer the “seven nations” that inhabited the land of Canaan—which represent the seven negative traits of the heart—they first had to destroy Midian, which is their source and cause. This is also why the destruction of Midian could be achieved only under the leadership of Moses, who embodied the traits of utter self-abnegation, (and thus) harmony and truth.

-- (Maamar Heichaltzu 5659)

Moses spoke to the people: “Arm yourselves . . . to take G-d’s vengeance on Midian” (31:3)

G-d sees the war on Midian as avenging Israel, for G-d’s foremost concern is for His people. The people of Israel see the war as avenging G-d, for they are concerned only with the honor of G-d.

-- (The Chassidic Masters)

Haftorah for 2nd Shabbos of the Three Weeks in a Nutshell

Jeremiah 2:4–28; 4:1–2

This week's haftorah is the second of a series of three "haftarot of affliction." These three haftarot are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

The prophet Jeremiah transmits G-d's message to the Jewish people, in strong tones chastising all the sectors of the people, including the leadership, for their abandonment of G-d. "What wrong did your forefathers find in Me, that they distanced themselves from Me, and they went after futility and themselves became futile?" He reminds them of the kindness G-d did for them, taking them out of Egypt and leading them through the desert and settling them in the Promised Land, yet they repaid kindness with disloyalty. "For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living waters, [and furthermore, this was in order] to dig for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that do not hold water."

G-d asks them to view the actions of their neighboring nations, the Kittites and Kedarites, "and see whether there was any such thing, whether a nation exchanged a god, although they are not gods. Yet My nation exchanged their glory for what does not avail."

Jeremiah then goes on to foretell the suffering the Jewish people will suffer at the hands of their enemies, and also their erstwhile allies: "Your evil will chastise you, and you will be rebuked for your backslidings; and you shall know and see that your forsaking the L-rd your G-d is evil and bitter."

The haftorah ends on an encouraging note, assuring the people that if they return to G-d with sincerity, they will be restored to their full glory. ❖

"It would be desirable that you establish the custom of reciting Tehillim — at least a few chapters — in shul during the weekdays as well. Convey to the congregants the words that my revered father-in-law, the Rebbe, related: that reciting Tehillim protects [a person] from many undesirable matters and draws down abundant good for the needs of every single individual."

-- Lubavitcher Rebbe

16 Iyar, 5711

Good Shabbos to all!

שבת שלום גוט שבת!

