

LampLighter

25 Tammuz
Matot-Masei
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portions, are Matot & Masei. They contain a seemingly unusual request by the tribes of Reuben and Gad. Citing their "great multitude of cattle," the sons of Reuben and Gad asked Moses to grant their portion of the land of Israel on the other side of the Jordan. "The country...is a land for cattle; and your servants have cattle," they said. "If we have found grace in your eyes, let this land be given to your servants as a possession; do not compel us to go over the Jordan."

Even more surprising is the fact that Moses acceded to their request. How many verses in the Torah speak of G-d's promise to Moses to bring the Children of Israel into the Promised Land? Yet these verses mention only "the land of Canaan," an area west of the Jordan River. If so, why would the tribes of Reuben and Gad have even considered settling in the cities of "Atarot, Divon, Ya'zer and Nimrah" on the eastern shore of the Jordan, part of the land of Sichon and Og? Did these tribes intentionally seek to distance themselves from their brethren?

Furthermore, how valid was their claim that the territory east of the Jordan would provide superior grazing land for their cattle? Why would the tribes of Reuben and Gad have willingly forgone entering the Promised Land with their wives and children just to benefit their livestock?

In order to understand what really occurred we need to refer back to G-d's very first promise to Abraham concerning the land of Israel. At that time, G-d said to Abraham, "To your seed will I give this land...the [land of] the Keni, the Kenizi and the Kadmoni..." In all, G-d enumerated ten nations that the Jewish people would one day inhabit. Seven of these nations were defeated by the Children of Israel soon after they left Egypt; the other three will only be conquered by the Jewish people in the Messianic Era.

The true intent behind the request of Reuben and Gad to dwell east of the Jordan was in order to hasten this process. The portion of land they settled, formerly belonging to the kings Sichon and Og, was part of the territory of the three nations that still remained to be conquered. This is the reason Moses agreed to their request and granted them their inheritance east of the Jordan, for he saw their settlement of that territory as a "preparation" for the full and complete settlement of the land of Israel that would occur in the Messianic Era.

In truth, the actions of the tribes of Reuben and Gad lent an added dimension to the Jews' first conquest of the land, one that brought our ultimate conquest of the entire land of Israel in the Era of the Redemption much closer.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Priorities and Price Tags

By Yossy Goldman

Is it the money or the man, the cash or the kids? Of course, no one would ever admit to putting money ahead of their children; but is it not an all too common phenomenon? Aren't most parents, even good parents, guilty of making that mistake now and then?

In this week's Parshah the Jewish People are preparing for the conquest of Canaan and the allotment of the Promised Land amongst the twelve tribes of Israel, when the tribes of Reuben and Gad make a special request of Moses.

They had abundant herds of livestock and the land east of the Jordan River was especially suitable for grazing. They asked Moses if they could receive this land rather than land west of the Jordan. In making this request they expressed themselves thus: "Pens for the flock we shall build here for our livestock, and cities for our small children."

Immediately, Moses chastises them and corrects their mistake. "Build for yourselves cities for your small children and pens for your flock." Moses turns around their sequence, putting the children ahead of the animals.

Rashi observes that these tribes were more concerned about their money, i.e. livestock, than they were about their sons and daughters. Moses needed to give them a lesson in values and priorities. Put family first. Possessions come later.

The veteran American spiritual leader, Rabbi David Hollander, once told me the story of a fellow who somehow managed to get himself locked in inside a big department store after they closed up for the day. To compound the problem, it was over a holiday weekend. When all his attempts to get out proved futile, he decided to give vent to his frustrations by taking revenge on the store management. He spent the time of his incarceration swapping price tags on the merchandise. The result? A mink coat was now priced at \$29.99, a necktie at \$999.00. Furniture was going for the price of peanuts, the latest hi-fi for a song, and a set of underwear was absolutely unaffordable! Imagine the chaos when the store reopened.

The question is are our own price tags correctly marked? Do we value the things in our own lives correctly? Are our priorities in order? Or do we too put the cattle and the sheep — the car and the office — ahead of our children?

How many workaholic husbands have told their wives, "I'm doing it all for you and the kids?" But the businesses we are busy building for them actually take us away from them in the most important and formative years of their lives. Rightly has it been said, "The best thing you can spend on your kids is not money but time."

I've seen many people become "successes" over the years. They achieve professional success, career success, business success, growing their fame and fortune. Too many in the process have become family failures. At the end of the day, our deepest satisfaction in life comes not from our professional achievements but from our family — the growth, stability and togetherness that we have nurtured over the years — what our Jewish parents and grandparents simply called *nachas*.

To paraphrase the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, "Jewish wealth is not measured in property portfolios or stocks and bonds; true Jewish wealth is being blessed with children who walk in the ways of G-d." For that, we need to be there for them and with them.

A congregant of mine once walked up to me and proclaimed, "Rabbi, I am a millionaire!" I knew the man to be of modest financial means but he immediately explained, "I'm a millionaire in *nachas*!"

Amen. I wish it upon all of us.



Above Down-Under

by Yehudis Cohen

The following article about Rabbi Groner appeared in the first issue of the L'Chaim Monthly newspaper, January, 1989.

The list of Lubavitch programs and institutions in Melbourne, Australia, seems endless. Every item flows easily from Rabbi Yitzchok Groner's lips. He speaks of each with the same pride one would hear from a grandfather whose grandchildren have given him much nachas (pleasure).

One might wonder what Rabbi Groner's goals were when he stepped foot on Australian soil. "When I came to Australia, 30 years ago, I had no goals, no aim, except," he states with a serious, sincere tone of voice, "to spread Yiddishkeit (Judaism) and help as many people as possible. My first visit to Australia was in 1947. I came as a shaliach (emissary) of the Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe. Rabbi Groner's main objective was to raise funds for various Lubavitch projects. In 1954, Rabbi Groner again visited Australia; but it was only in 1958 that he actually settled in Melbourne with his wife and six children.

"A shaliach of the Rebbe has a certain responsibility, and is like the Rebbe, himself." A shaliach's goals," continues Rabbi Groner, "are to do what the Rebbe wants, and the Rebbe wants what G-d wants - to bring Judaism to every Jew. A shaliach must effuse a love of every Jew which is in a manner of 'shtus d'kedush' - beyond all limitations. In

addition, a shaliach cannot be passive. He must work beyond his strength and ability. Then, and only then, will the Rebbe's blessing for success come into actuality."

Although this interview is supposed to be about Rabbi Groner and his accomplishments in helping build the Jewish community in Melbourne in general and the Lubavitch community in particular, time and again, Rabbi Groner goes back to the subject of the personality of a shaliach and the fact that a shaliach is truly a conduit for the work of the Rebbe.

Rabbi Groner is described by former students and relatives as someone totally butel (nullified) to the Rebbe. However, when Rabbi Groner enters a room, his presence is felt. He is a large man, and his voice booms when he speaks to a crowd, especially when he speaks passionately, which is often. People have said that, when hearing him "at his best" - gesturing, his voice thundering to emphasize his point - one could almost picture Moses on Mount Sinai, rebuking the Jewish people.

One might think that such a person would make a formidable and intimidating boss. Yet Rabbi Groner makes sure to allow all those who work under him to express themselves in their own way. Whether a Chabad House director in Perth or a teacher at Ohel Chana, he encourages them to grow in the most appropriate way for their situation.

Rabbi Groner remembers that when he came to Australia in 1947 there was a group of Jews who said that Lubavitch would never be able to attract the Australian youth. "Not until hair grows on your palm," was the expression they used. They have been proven wrong. Lubavitch has attracted the "youth" and turned them into caring, responsive and committed Jews.

Time and again, in the course of conversation, Rabbi Groner veers

back to his favourite subject - the responsibility of a shaliach. It is as if he wants to ensure that a story about Rabbi Yitzchok Groner will not be about himself. It will be the story of any shaliach who is truly dedicated to the Rebbe and his work.

He begins, "The mazel, the zodiac sign of the month of Shevat [the month this interview took place] is a bucket, (d'lee). A bucket symbolizes the essence of the Jewish people. A Jew goes down, draws substance, and gives to others. About Abraham's servant and disciple it says in the Talmud, 'Doleh u' mashke mitoraso shel rabo - (He draws and is quenched by the teaching of his master) - Abraham.'

"A shaliach is a d'lee. He is nothing but an empty vessel. He has to go down to the dark recesses of the well, where it is cold and damp. His main objective is to draw the water - the teachings of the Rebbe - up and use it to quench the thirst of others. And then, what happens to the d'lee?" Rabbi Groner asks with a smile. "It is hung up and forgotten. That," he says decisively, "is a shaliach."

Bringing an example from his surroundings to further illustrate his point, Rabbi Groner motions out the window, toward Brooklyn's Eastern Parkway where major construction on the city's pipes is underway. "Do you see the pipes?" he asks. "When they're put underground, they will be put as deep as possible. They will be hidden from sight. A shaliach is like a pipe. The more hidden, the more butel he [his ego] is, the more he accomplishes."

Rabbi Groner concludes with one last thought on what a shaliach is. "The old Chasidim in Lubavitch used to say, 'it's 100% guaranteed that what the Rebbe wants to accomplish, he will accomplish. Hashem should help that a little of what needs to be accomplished will come through me.'"

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INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE



Noahide Laws

5th of Tammuz, 5744

Greeting and Blessing:

I received your letter of June 28th, in which you write about your desire to convert and become a Jew.

It has often been explained that, actually, a gentile does not have to become a Jew in order to attain fulfilment through the Torah and Mitzvos, because He, Who gave the Torah with all its 613 mitzvos to the Jewish people at the Revelation at Mt. Sinai, gave, at the same time, the Seven Basic Religious and Moral Laws for all humanity.

These are the so-called Seven Noahide Laws, with all their ramifications, which were originally given to the children of Noah, i.e., all humanity, and which are quite sufficient to ensure a truly humane society, and fulfilment of every human being. Thus, there is no obligation on the part of any gentile to assume the responsibility of observing the whole Torah with all its 613 Mitzvos, except those specific basic laws with their ramifications, as mentioned above.

By way of illustration from the physical human body, where each limb and organ has its own particular function within the harmonious growth and development of the entire body, and this function is its actual fulfilment. There is no point in a leg, for example, desiring to become a hand and the like. Only in extreme exceptional cases are there situations when certain gentiles have a special relevance to conversion, but this is very exceptional from the viewpoint of the Torah.

At the same time, it is to be remembered that conversion is an irrevocable act. For once it is carried out in accordance with the prescribed laws of the Torah and one becomes a Jew, the person cannot change his mind afterwards. Therefore, one should approach this whole subject very seriously and earnestly, and be quite sure that this is his real desire. But, since a person cannot be absolutely objective where one is personally involved, it would be advisable for you to talk the matter over personally and in detail with a competent Orthodox Rabbi, who could further explain to you all that is involved.

At any rate, inasmuch as everything is by Divine Providence, and you have written to me on the subject, it is my duty and privilege to call your attention to the importance of the observance at this time of the said Seven Noahide Laws, one of which is also the matter of being kind and charitable to others - not only materially but also spiritually. This means to promote the said Seven Basic Laws with all their ramifications among the gentiles, both by precept and example, for we are assured that, "Words coming from the heart enter the heart and are eventually effective," especially when accompanied by a living example.

Wishing you Hatzlocho [success] in all the above.

With blessing,

A MITZVA A DAY

Positive Commandment 4: Fearing G-d

Because HaShem is the creator of our world, therefore he is also the greatest power in the world. The more we delve into the laws of the Torah, the more we become aware of HaShem and His greatness. In so doing we realize how important it is to fulfill His will. This Positive Mitzvah teaches us to fear HaShem and know that if we keep the Mitzvot in the Torah, we will be rewarded. If we choose to disobey the Mitzvot, we will bring on ourselves undesirable consequences. This is learned out from the Torah's words: "You shall fear the L-rd, your G-d". (Deuteronomy 6:13)

A WORD from the Director

This week, once again, we will be studying the first chapter of Ethics of the Fathers. As the Rebbe encouraged that we not only read the chapter, but actually study at least one Mishna on Shabbat afternoon, I would like to share with you one of the Rebbe's explanations of a teaching in this first chapter.

After the first chapter describes the chain of receiving and transmitting the Torah, it emphasizes the importance of Torah study, counselling, "Raise up many students."

It also contains the teaching: "The world stands on three things - Torah, the service of G-d (prayer), and deeds of kindness."

At first glance, it would seem that the order in which these services are listed is problematic. For, each day, they are carried out in a different order. We are enjoined by our Sages to first give a coin to a poor person and then, only afterward, to pray. Similarly, it is only after prayer that we are taught to "proceed from the synagogue to the house of study."

Another example: in the history of the Jewish people, the order of the patriarchs was Abraham, Isaac and then Jacob. Abraham is identified with the service of deeds of kindness - receiving guests. Isaac is identified with the service of G-d (as he was prepared as a sacrifice and prayer was instituted in the place of sacrifices). Jacob is identified with Torah study.

It is Jacob, however, who was referred to as, "the chosen of the Patriarch." Our Sages made this distinction to teach us of the importance of Torah study. Similarly, in regard to the above teaching from Ethics of the Fathers, Torah study is mentioned first because it is the service of primary importance "maintaining the world" in establishing a dwelling for G-d in the lower worlds, as explained above.

May we immediately merit the time when we are able to study the "new Torah" that will be revealed by Moshiach, together with all the greatest Sages and Scholars of our generation and previous generations in the Messianic Era

MOSHIACH MATTERS

Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi, the founder of Chabad Chasidus, was once asked: "Who is greater, Moses or Moshiach?" He answered, "Moshiach. Moses is compared to a physician without experience, whereas Moshiach is compared to a veteran and experienced physician."

J.I. Gutnick

It Happened Once...



Once, Rebbe Michel of Zlotchov sent one of his Chasidim to another town to learn from a simple, unlearned Jew, the attribute of trust in G-d. The Chasid was a good student, and remained in the town for many weeks, observing that individual and learning how to perfect his trust in the Creator.

Finally, when the time came to leave, the Chasid made his way home, pondering the lessons he had learned. He was walking down the road lost in thought, when he was shaken by the cries and screams of women and children.

The Chasid looked up to see two Jewish women, bound in chains, being dragged down the road by two muscular gentile guards. He ran after the party and asked the women, "What happened to you?"

The weeping women replied, "Our husbands lease the inn which belongs to the master of the village and they owe him a lot of rent. When they couldn't pay the rent, the master took us and says he will kill us!"

The Chasid told the guards, "I will go to your master and I will pay the entire debt." They all went to the house of the master of the village, but found only the manager of the estate. When the Chasid explained his intention to repay the debt, the manager was very willing to negotiate with him.

"Here are 150 rubbles and I will sign a note for the balance," the Chasid said. "You don't know my master," said the manager. "He's not the type to settle for less than the whole amount. He's waited a long time for these Jews to pay up! Either you produce the whole amount, or the deal is off!"

The Chasid had no choice but to comply, for the fate of two Jewish families was at stake. He laid all his money on the table, but was still short. Then he went and pawned whatever possessions he had to amass the entire sum of money. The manager took the money and released the women.

The Chasid continued on his journey home, giving thanks to the Creator for having given him the privilege of performing the mitzvah of redeeming captives.

Before dark, the Chasid stopped at an inn to rest for the night. He soon fell into conversation with another Jewish traveller, who, by the look of his clothing, was a wealthy merchant.

The wealthy Jew asked him many questions. It so happened that the two men came from the same town. They passed the entire evening in pleasant conversation, until the dawn broke and it was time to recite the morning prayer.

The Chasid mentioned to his new acquaintance the names of the towns he intended to pass through on his trip home. The wealthy Jew said to the Chosid, "You know, I have a relative living in the town of R—, not far from the road you will be taking. For some time I have been looking for a trustworthy messenger with whom I could send him inheritance money. Perhaps you would agree to perform this favour for me?"

The Chasid agreed at once. He wouldn't have to go far out of his way, and he was happy to be able to do yet another favour for a fellow Jew. He took the money and carefully sewed it into the lining of his jacket. The wealthy merchant thanked him warmly and offered to compensate him for his trouble, but the Chasid refused, saying, "It is really no trouble for me to make a short detour, and I'm glad to be able to help you out."

But the merchant persisted, saying, "I promise you that your mitzvah will stand intact, even though you accept this small gift from me." At last the Chasid agreed to take the money; the two men shook hands and went their separate ways.

The Chasid finally came to the little town and asked around for the man, but no one recognized the name or the description. He was puzzled, for the merchant had

entrusted him with a lot of money. He certainly must have known that his relative lived in that town. Perhaps he was a recluse, or lived on the outskirts of town. The Chasid decided to spend a few days in town in the hope that he would discover the whereabouts of this relative, but all his searching was in vain.

It was a very downhearted man who returned to the court of Reb Michel. The Chasid went into the room of his Rebbe and related to him all he had learned about his service to the Al-mighty. He also told the Rebbe about his encounter with the two women and how he had ransomed them from their cruel captors.

Finally, he told the tzadik about his meeting with the wealthy merchant who had entrusted him to deliver the inheritance to the relative who could not be found.

"Rebbe," said the man, sadly, "In this last mission I regret that I have failed, and now, I have a great sum of money which I cannot deliver to its rightful owner."

Reb Michel smiled and replied, "Let me offer an explanation for what you experienced. In the merit of the great mitzvah of redeeming the two Jewish women, angels were created as your advocates in the Heavenly Court. The man you took for a wealthy merchant was really an angel and the money he gave you is for you to make use of with a peaceful heart."

THOUGHTS THAT COUNT

If a man makes a vow to the L-rd (Num. 30:3)

The Torah teaches that vows are praiseworthy, terming them "a fence around abstinence," yet at the same time states that "the [existing] prohibitions of the Torah are sufficient." How do we reconcile these two statements? A person who conducts himself properly is not encouraged to abstain from worldly matters. On the contrary, he is obligated to work "within" the world, in order to elevate and sanctify the physical plane of existence. A person whose conduct is deficient, however, can sometimes prevent further deterioration by means of vows. (*Likutei Sichot*)

He shall not break his word; he shall do according to all that proceeds out of his mouth (Num. 30:3)

The commandment to carry out one's verbal declarations was given primarily to the "heads of the tribes" - to the leaders of the Jewish people. As authority figures, they are responsible for setting the highest standards for the rest of the community. That is why the Talmud states in Berachot: "Concerning one who recites the Shema but [his words] do not reach his own ears; Rabbi Yosai opines that he has not fulfilled his obligation." A person must never chastise or reproach another unless he has first applied the same criticism to himself. (*Mei'otzareinu HaYashan*)

You shall be guiltless before the L-rd, and before Israel (Num. 32:22)

A person who is innocent before G-d and at peace with his conscience will ultimately be found guiltless by his fellow man; if he does experience occasional difficulties, they will only be temporary. By contrast, a person who strives to be innocent only in the eyes of man will eventually end up being a hypocrite. (*Bina La'itim*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

PARSHAS MATOT-MASEI

26 TAMMUZ • 18 JULY

FRIDAY NIGHT:	CANDLE LIGHTING:	5:02 PM
	MINCHA:	5:10 PM
	KABBOLAS SHABBOS:	5:45 PM
SHABBOS MORNING:	TEHILLIM:	8:30 AM
	SHACHARIS:	10:00 AM
	BLESSING THE NEW MONTH OF AV –	
	NEW MOON: Wednesday, July 22, 2009 -	
	Av 1, 5769: 9:19:16 (5 <i>chalakim</i>) AM	
	MINCHA:	5:00 PM
	SHABBOS ENDS:	6:03 PM
WEEKDAYS:	SHACHARIS SUN – FRI:	9:15 AM
	MINCHA:	5:15 PM
	MAARIV:	6:10 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING: 17 JULY 2009



BEGINS		ENDS
5:02	MELBOURNE	6:03
5:05	ADELAIDE	6:04
4:53	BRISBANE	5:49
6:19	DARWIN	7:10
4:51	GOLD COAST	5:50
5:13	PERTH	6:10
4:47	SYDNEY	5:45
4:45	LAUNCESTON	5:50
5:05	AUCKLAND	6:06
4:54	WELLINGTON	5:57

Dedicated to the beloved, revered leader of World Jewry

The Lubavitcher Rebbe

זצוקללה"ה נב"מ זי"ע

May he succeed in imploring the Almighty to redeem His people speedily in our days.