

THE HARRY H. BEREN TORAH WEEKLY

A project of the Denver Community Kollel

Because Torah Is for Every Jew

Parshas Matos-Masei

July 21, 2017

A Taste of Torah

Getting the Point Across

by Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman

In this week's parsha we find a great, often-overlooked lesson. The Torah describes how the tribes of Gad and Reuven requested that instead of receiving a portion in Eretz Yisrael they receive *Ever Hayarden* (the other side of the Jordan River), as it contained ample land for their flocks to graze. Moshe granted them their request on condition that they assist in the conquering and division of *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel) along with the rest of their Jewish brethren.

Often overlooked in this episode is that Moshe stipulated that half of the tribe of Menashe would also settle in *Ever Hayarden*. The difficulty, of course, is that the tribe of Menashe never requested to settle in *Ever Hayarden*, so why did Moshe command them to live there?

The Ibn Ezra (Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra; 1089-1167) writes that half of Menashe did, in fact, ask to settle there. However, because only half the tribe wished to do so, the Torah didn't mention them. However, from the Jerusalem Talmud at the beginning of Tractate Bikkurim it seems clear that they never requested to live there. The question thus remains; why did Moshe command them to settle there?

There are two answers offered. The first is offered by the Netziv (Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehuda Berlin; 1816-1893), who writes that Moshe placed them there to be their spiritual leaders. The tribe of Menashe produced great Torah scholars, and Moshe wanted to ensure that there would be Torah leadership in *Ever Hayarden*.

The second approach is cited in the Shach on Torah (authored by Rabbi

Mordechai Hakohen of Safed, 1523-1598) in the name of his teacher (Rabbi Yisrael de Curiel). He says that Moshe was concerned that the tribes on the opposite sides of the Jordan River would lose contact with each other. To ensure they would remain connected and unified, he split the tribe of Menashe in half. Menashe was the son of Yosef. Yosef is the child of Rochel, who was Yaakov's primary wife; the tribe of Menashe is thus a major representative of the Jewish People as a whole and would help ensure the future unity of the entirety of the Jewish Nation.

Let us reanalyze Moshe's stipulation to the tribes of Gad and Reuven that they would receive *Ever Hayarden* if they would battle alongside their fellow Jews for Eretz Yisrael. At first glance, Moshe was simply being practical; the military might of these two tribes was vital to the success of the campaign.

Based on what has been said, though, we can suggest that Moshe was teaching the tribes of Gad and Reuven a powerful lesson. As much as it may make sense, from a practical standpoint, for their animals to settle outside Eretz Yisrael, spiritually, they must remain connected with their brethren in *Eretz Yisrael*.

These two concepts are vital in establishing a community: One, to establish proper spiritual leaders to guide the people. Second, to have unity and togetherness as a community, and to recognize that we must also connect, both in thought and in deed, with our brethren in other communities.

Stories For The Soul

Napoleon Complex

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Porush was in charge of disbursing the monies sent from Kollel Minsk in Russia to the poor of *Eretz Yisrael*. The funds usually arrived before Pesach so that the poor could purchase their necessities for the festival. One year, the money was late in arriving. As a result, Rabbi Porush borrowed 200 Napoleon gold coins from a distinguished layman, Reb Feivel Stoller, with the promise that he would repay the entire loan after Pesach.

Immediately following the festival, Rabbi Porush delivered 110 Napoleons to Reb Feivel with the promise that the remainder of the loan would soon follow. Two months later, Rabbi Porush brought the 90 Napoleons in full repayment of the loan. Unfortunately, Reb Feivel's memory failed him, and he did not remember receiving the first installment of 110 Napoleons.

The question was brought before the *bais din* (Rabbinical court) of Rabbi Shmuel Salant. The judges decided that Rabbi Porush was obligated to make an oath. Rabbi Porush refused, saying that he had never sworn in G-d's Name and was not going to do so now. He would rather pay the 110 Napoleons. Rabbi Salant would not hear of it. He felt that people might talk and claim that Rabbi Porush had originally attempted to cheat Reb Feivel, but when he saw it was not going his way, he relented and paid. No, he would have to prove his integrity by swearing in G-d's Name.

Rabbi Porush accepted upon himself the judgment, but asked for three days to prepare for this awesome undertaking. It is no small

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Kollel Happenings

GOOD MOURNING NEXT TWO SUNDAYS

The Kollel is offering a two-part series for women in two different locations titled *Good Mourning: Understanding & Utilizing the Period of the Three Weeks & Tisha B'Av*.

Sunday, July 23rd will feature *A Tale of Two Temples: Their Differences & the Sins That Destroyed Them* with Rabbi Avraham Dovid Karnowsky and *A Golden Ticket: Women, the Golden Calf and Rosh Chodesh* with Rabbi Chaim Yeshia Freeman at the Fine home, 1664 Wolff St., 9:45-10:45 am and at the Sommers home, 4902 S. Xenia St., 7:45-8:45 pm.

Sunday, July 30th will feature *Nobody's Home: The Purpose of Exile* with Rabbi Mordechai Fleisher at the Polter home, 5100 W. 17th Ave., 9:45 am-10:45 and at the Sommers home, 4902 S. Xenia St., 7:45-8:45 pm.

MOTZOEI SHABBOS NACHAMU KUMZITZ

Join the Kollel for an evening of inspirational singing on Motzoei Shabbos Nachamu, August 5th. The event will feature live music, refreshments and divrei Torah. The kumzitz will be held at approximately 9:45 pm. For more information, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

SUMMER NIGHT SEDER FOR BACHURIM

Attention bachurim in Denver! The Kollel is once again holding its Summer Night Seder for Bachurim at the Kollel West Side Bais Medrash. Sunday-Thursday. Night seder begins at 8 pm, with ma'ariv at 9:10 pm. Stipends available for boys who maintain the sedorim. For further details, info or sponsorship opportunities, please contact rmf@denverkollel.org.

Increase Your Jewish IQ

By Rabbi Yaakov Zions

Last week we asked: Only one person's date of death (*yahrtzeit*) is mentioned unambiguously in the Chumash (five Books of Torah). Who is it, and what day was it?

A: The death of Aharon Hakohen on the 1st day of Av is recorded in Parshas Masei (33:38). It is interesting to note

that Parshas Masei is always read within a couple of days, and sometimes even on, the 1st of Av!

This week's question: There a custom to fast on a parent's *yahrtzeit*. What is the reason for this custom?

To submit an answer to Rabbi Zions, email ryz@denverkollel.org.

Lives of Our Torah Leaders Rabbi Shlomo Luria, the Maharsha Part IX

Left without a Torah leader, Lublin's lay leadership dispatched a letter to the great Maharsha (Rabbi Shmuel Eidels; 1555-1631), then rabbi in Ostroh, offering him the rabbinate of their city. When the messenger presented the Maharsha with the letter, he told him, "I am coming to Lublin this Shabbos to deliver a *drasha* (lecture)." With this statement, everyone believed that the Maharsha had agreed to become the next rabbi of Lublin.

Ostroh's Jews were surprised by the turn of events. Their community was much larger than Lublin's, and the Maharsha's yeshiva in Ostroh was also very prestigious. Why, they wondered, had the Maharsha opted to leave their city in favor of Lublin? And why had he

accepted a rabbinical position that also involved heading two yeshivos at the same time?

That Shabbos afternoon, all of Lublin's Jews assembled in the main shul to hear what they thought would be the Maharsha's acceptance speech. The two former deans, the Maharam and Rabbi Auerbach, were also in attendance, demonstrating their total submission to the city's new rabbi. The Maharsha ascended to the lectern and began, "I have two questions. One pertains to me, the other to you. I have resolved the one pertaining to me. But the one pertaining to you - Lublin's residents - still troubles me."

Stories For The Soul

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endeavor to swear using G-d's Name. On the appointed day, he came to *bais din* accompanied by his family. They were all weeping profusely, worried and anxious at what their father was about to do. Rabbi Porush came dressed in his white *kittel*.

After the oath was administered, Rabbi Porush still insisted on repaying the 110 Napoleons from which he had exonerated himself. He sold his home for 50 Napoleons and borrowed another 60 Napoleons. He explained that he wished to go beyond the letter of the law and repay the claim. Nonetheless, he had first sworn, as Rabbi Salant had insisted, so that people not suspect his guilt.

The next year, as Reb Feivel was cleaning his house before Pesach, he discovered the missing 110 Napoleons. He immediately begged forgiveness from Rabbi Porush for all of the trouble he had caused him. Rabbi Porush, of course, refused to take back the extra money, and the money was used to establish the synagogue Bais Yaakov in the Bais Yisrael neighborhood of Jerusalem.

Our Sages infer from this week's parsha that one is obligated to do what is necessary to remain above suspicion. Being innocent is not enough; one must not engage in activities or actions that would cast a shadow upon his integrity.

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Denver Community Kollel | 1395 Wolff Street, Denver, CO 80204 | 303-820-2855
info@denverkollel.org | www.denverkollel.org

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