

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET  
ON PARSHAS MATOS MASAI - 5757

B'S'D'

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owner-weekly@jer1.co.il Highlights of the Weekly Torah Portion

Insights The Song Remains The Same "These are the journeys of the Bnei Yisrael..." (33:1) The Baal Shem Tov's carriage sped through the swirling mists of a Russian morning. Inside the carriage the Rebbe and his shamas (attendant) sat in silence. All that could be heard was the dull thud of hooves cantering on thin turf. The Baal Shem Tov's face was impassive. Suddenly he motioned to the shamas to stop the carriage. The shamas leant out of the window and shouted to the driver to stop. The carriage came quickly to rest. The horses snorted and whinnied, pawing the ground with their hooves. Silence. Apart from the horses. And the birds singing their dawn chorus to the Creator. Silence. Then, quite distinctly, there came from the field the most beautiful sound. The voice of a man singing a song that almost made the trees cry. It was the most beautiful song you could imagine. The Baal Shem Tov listened intently to the song for some time. His brow was creased as though he was trying to remember something. A memory that went so far back that it seemed to be beyond this incarnation. Suddenly, his eyes narrowed and his mouth widened with a smile of all-encompassing joy. "Please ask the man to come here!" he ordered his shamas. After a few moments the shamas returned with a Russian peasant to whom the voice belonged. "When I heard you singing," began the Rebbe, "I couldn't help thinking what a beautiful tune that is." "Yes, I like it" said the peasant. "I'm not sure I heard all of it. Would you mind singing it for me again?" the Baal Shem Tov said. "Why not?" said the peasant, and with that he began to sing the tune again. After he had finished, it seemed that even the birds had stopped to listen. "Beautiful" said the Rebbe. "I wonder, would you be so kind as to sing it again?" "All right" said the peasant, and he repeated the tune. After he had finished singing this time, the Rebbe said "Yes, I think I have it. Does it go like this?" And the Baal Shem Tov began to sing the tune. As beautiful as the peasant's rendition had been, the Rebbe infused into the tune a heart-breaking yearning like the re-uniting of a mother and child. "Yes. That's it exactly" said the peasant. "I wonder... would it be asking too much... if before I go, could I hear you sing it one more time?" "All right." said the peasant, and he opened his mouth to sing. Nothing came out. Not a note. Not a squeak. He closed his mouth and tried again. Nothing. The Baal Shem Tov looked at him with a strangely intense look, and then said to him slowly "Good Morning..." And with that, he climbed back into the carriage. The Rebbe and his shamas sat in silence for a good few minutes and then the shamas could no longer contain his curiosity. "What happened back there?" "When I heard that peasant singing, I realized that he was singing one of the songs that the Levi'im (Levites) sang in the Beis Hamikdash (Holy Temple). For two thousand years that tune has been in exile, passed from one stranger to the next, wandering from one country to another. That peasant was like a shell containing a precious spark of holiness. As soon as the spark had been returned to its owners -- the Jewish People -- there was no further need for him to remember the tune any longer, and therefore, he forgot it.

Gathering The Sparks At the beginning of Parshas Masei the Torah lists the forty-two places where the Jewish People encamped on their way to Eretz Yisrael. What is the reason for these forty-two stops in the desert? There is a mystical concept that the purpose of these encampments was for the Children of Israel to release and gather the sparks of holiness which are trapped in the desert's emptiness. Each of these stopping places corresponds to a letter of Hashem's Name, and so by gathering the sparks from each

place, a little more of Hashem's Name -- His recognition in the world -- is revealed. Three thousand years later, the Jewish People are still journeying. A hundred years here, two hundred there. On their journeys through Spain, England, China and America, etc., the Jewish People 'extract' and redeem the sparks of holiness which are trapped throughout the world. When this process is complete, the Mashiach, the anointed one, will gather all the Jewish People to the land of Israel and all the songs of holiness will be heard once again. Then it will be that Hashem will be revealed as the One True G-d. His Name will then be complete. "On that day, Hashem will be One, and His Name, One".

Static and Dynamic "Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the Children of Israel..." (30:2) Matos and Masei are two parshios joined together, but their names are opposites. The word "mateh" (of which the plural is "matos") means a staff. A staff is something inert, cut off from the tree from which it sprouted. It has ceased to have the power of furthering itself, of bringing forth new life. It will always remain what it is now. Static and unchanging. Masei (from the verb 'to journey') is the opposite. It is the essence of dynamism, of development and growth. For the journey is the paradigm of furtherance. Really, this juxtaposition of Matos and Masei is symbolic of the Torah itself. The Torah has the power to take the lifeless and change it into life. To take Aaron's inert staff and cause it to flower and bloom. To change it into a serpent. A simple, inert staff becomes the instrument of the great signs and wonders wrought in Egypt, for splitting the sea asunder. A simple, inert staff becomes the symbol of the beginning of life itself for the Jewish People. The ultimate reversal of the lifeless staff -- the mateh -- brings furtherance and an eternal future -- the masei -- to the journeys of the children of Israel throughout history.

Sources: o The Song Remains The Same - The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh; The Malbim; Rav Shmuel M'Ostropole; Rabbi Mordechai Perlman; Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb o Static and Dynamic - Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin

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Parshas Matos-Massei by Rabbi Henoch Plotnick

"They killed the kings of Midian . . . and Bilaam, the son of Beor, was killed by the sword." And so, the Torah relates the episode of B'nei Yisroel's (the children of Israel, or more commonly, the Jews) revenge against Midian. Rashi comments about the irony in the modus operandi B'nei Yisroel employed to exact their revenge against Bilaam, the evil prophet commissioned to curse B'nei Yisroel. Bilaam's was a descendant of Esav (Esau). Esav's father, Yitzchak (Issac), told him, "and you live by your sword." In fact, Bilaam himself had not utilized his own "craft" of fighting with B'nei Yisroel by sword, but rather by the power of speech. The power of speech was Yaakov's (Jacob's) weapon! How fitting it was that Bilaam's ultimate downfall arrived not through Yaakov's strength, (the word of mouth) but through Esav's, the power of the sword! Within our own practice of Torah and Mitzvos we also find two "crafts" that we utilize to beseech Hashem in times of need. One is the power of prayer, tefillah, our legacy, dating back to the times of the Avos (forefathers) -- and even Adam, the first man! We also know that learning Torah itself is a shmira (protection) as we recite in the Hadran at the conclusion of every Mesechta (tractate of Talmud): "When you lay down, it guards you." The Talmud says that the merit of Torah protects us even when we are not actually studying. These two powerful merits have always guarded and protected us throughout our long history.

??? A Paradox ???

An interesting paradox appears in Chazal. In Mesechta Shabbos the Talmud relates how King David, upon learning of his impending death, would not allow himself to stop learning for even one moment. He knew that as long as he was engaged in Torah learning, the Angel of Death could not

take his life. The Angel of Death was able to strike only after he orchestrated a trick to cause King David to interrupt his learning. On the other hand, we find in the Midrash that when Moshe Rabeinu (Moses) pleaded with Hashem to allow him entry into the Land of Israel he prayed with all his heart. As the Midrash implies, Moshe's prayers might have been accepted had he not taken to power of prayer for granted. The question arises: Kind David was the author of Sefer Tehillim (Psalms), the "Abible of prayer". Moshe merited having the Torah named after him. (As the verse says, "remember the Torah of my servant Moshe." Would it not have made more sense for King David to utilize his "craft" -- the power of tefillah, -- to keep that Angel of Death at bay, and for Moshe to use his "craft" -- the power of the Torah -- to persuade Hashem to let him enter the Land of Israel? How can this be reconciled?

HaRav Eliach, Mashgiach of Yeshivas Itri Yerushalayim suggests the following fundamental answer. The Torah certainly is protection from the Angel of Death, as King David demonstrated. Moshe Rabeinu had a different agenda. He attempted to destroy a *gzar din* (a decree) Prohibition to enter the land of Israel was Moshe's punishment for "hitting" the rock. King David's time was simply up. His years ran out, yet he was rendered untouchable as long as he was shielded by the act of actively engaging in Torah. Destroying a *gzar din* requires the other craft, the ability to appeal to our Maker face to face and beg for an appeal. This idea is reinforced by the words of the Midrash that relate Mordechai's reaction to Haman's murderous decree against the Jews. Mordechai beseeched the heavens for merits to intercede on the Jews behalf. The Midrash relates that Torah rendered itself useless. The merit of the Avos was also deemed insufficient. Mordechai turned to Moshe Rabeinu for advice. Moshe responded: If there is a righteous Jew to daven on behalf of all Jews they still had a chance! As the Midrash relates, Moshe knew that in the face of a *g'zar din*, (which is etched in mortar and not blood,) the only recourse is tefillah. Nothing else will suffice. On a basic level, the reason for this is that only through tefillah do we address Hashem "face to face". Tefillah allows us to speak directly to Him in first person. The Sefer Baruch She'omer quotes the words of the Talmud Yerushalmi in Berachos. "The trait of Hashem is different than a human king . . . for when a person is befallen by a difficulty he need not scream and cry to any intermediary, only to Hashem himself, and he will be answered." We have been given the great *zechus* (merit) to approach Hashem in person, with all of our heart and soul. May we utilize this opportunity and warrant the annulment of any "*gzar din*," and be back in the glory of His presence.

-Rabbi Henoch Plotnik Rabbi Plotnick is the Rabbi of Adas Bnei Yisroel in Peterson park. He is also a former member of the Kollel.

<http://www.ohr.org.il/thisweek.htm>

Ohr Somayach PARSHA Q&A \* Parshas Matos/Masei

Parsha Questions Matos 1. Who may annul a vow? 2. The Jewish People were commanded to attack Midian. Why were they not commanded to attack Moav? 3. The people selected to fight Midian went unwillingly. Why? 4. What holy vessels accompanied the Jewish People into battle? 5. Why was Bilaam with the Midianites when the Jewish People attacked? 6. What portion of the spoils went to the soldiers who fought Midian? 7. How were Kalev ben Yefune and Osniel ben Kenaz related? 8. Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven said, "We will build sheep-pens here for our livestock and cities for our little ones." What was improper about this statement? 9. What promise did the Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven make beyond that which Moshe required of them? 10. Which part of the Tribe of Menashe inherited land on the eastern side of the Jordan?

Masei 1. Why does the Torah list the places where the Jewish People camped? 2. What happened in Ritmah? 3. Why does the Torah need to specify the boundaries that are to be inherited by the Jewish People? 4. How much land surrounded the cities of the Levi'im? 5. From whom did a city of refuge shelter a murderer? 6. Who separated the cities of refuge on the eastern side of the Jordan? 7. When did the cities of refuge begin to function as places of refuge for murderers? 8. In order to be judged as an

intentional murderer, what type of weapon must the murderer use? 9. Why does the murderer remain in the city of refuge until the death of the Kohen Gadol? 10. When an ancestral field moves through inheritance from one tribe to another, what happens to the field in Yovel?

Bonus QUESTION: "Aharon was 123 years old when he died on Hor-Hohar. The Canaanite king of Arad heard." (33:39-40) The Midrash states that this was actually the Amalekite king imitating the King of Arad in order to fool the Jewish people (see Rashi 21:1). The Talmud, however, proves from this verse that the King of Arad was still alive when Aharon died. How can the Talmud prove from this verse that the King of Arad was alive, if in fact the verse is referring to the King of Amalek?

I Did Not Know That! "Vast livestock was owned by Bnei Reuven and Bnei Gad, and mighty." (32:1). The sheep of Bnei Gad were extraordinarily fierce and 'mighty,' and were thus able to defend themselves again wolves and marauding bandits. Therefore, Bnei Gad's first priority was to build sheep-pens, which would serve as a first line of defense against enemy invasion. Kli Yakar

Recommended Reading List Matos Ramban 30:16 Responsibility 31:2,6 Vengeance 31:23 Cleansing Vessels 31:36 Miracle of the Spoils 31:49 Jewish Victory 32:33 Menashe's Inheritance 32:41 Yair's Ancestry Sforno 31:15 The Meaning of Silence Masei Ramban 33:53 The Land 35:14 Cities of Refuge 35:29 The Sanhedrin Kli Yakar 33:49 The Greater Loss 35:6 Temporary Dweller Sefer Hachinuch 408 Cities of the Levi'im 409 Capital Punishment 410 Exile Sforno 33:1 The Merit of the Journeys 36:4 The Inheritance of Daughters 36:12 The Husbands of the Daughters of Tzlofchad

Answers to this Week's Questions All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated Matos 1. 30:2 - Preferably, an individual who is an expert in the laws of *nedarim*. If such a person is not available then three ordinary people. 2. 31:2 - Because Moav only acted out of fear against the Jewish People. Also, Ruth was destined to come from Moav. 3. 31:5 - They knew that the death of Moshe would follow the execution of vengeance upon Midian. 4. 31:6 - The Aron and the Tzitz. 5. 31:8 - He went to claim his reward for the people who died in the plague as a result of his counsel. 6. 31:27 - Half. 7. 32:12 - They were half-brothers. Kalev's mother married Kenaz and gave birth to Osniel. (Osniel led the Jewish People after the death of Yehoshua.) 8. 32:16 - They showed more regard for their property than for their children. 9. 32:24 - Moshe required that they remain west of the Jordan during the conquest of the Land. They promised not to return home for an additional seven years while the Land was being divided. 10. 32:39-42 - Bnei Machir ben Menashe. They independently conquered part of the Amorite land, east of the Jordan. Moshe promised them that land.

Masei 1. 33:1 - To show Hashem's love of the Jewish People. Although it was decreed that they wander in the desert, they did not travel continuously. During the span of the 38 years they moved only 20 times. 2. 33:18 - The *meraglim* slandered the Land. 3. 34:2 - Because there are certain *mitzvos* that apply in the Land, but not outside of the Land. 4. 35:4 - 2,000 amos. The inner 1,000 was the "*migrash*" (an open area of land which served to beautify the city), and the outer 1,000 was for their fields and vineyards. 5. 35:12 - From the *go'el hadam* (avenger of blood), a close relative of the deceased who had the right to avenge the victim's death. 6. 35:13 - Moshe. 7. 35:13 - After Yehoshua separated three cities on the western side of the Jordan. 8. 35:16 - One which is capable of inflicting a lethal injury. 9. 35:25 - Because the Kohen Gadol causes the *Shechina* to dwell in Israel and prolongs life, and the murderer causes the *Shechina* to depart from Israel and shortens life. The murderer is not worthy to stand in the vicinity of the Kohen Gadol. 10. 36:4 - It remains in the possession of the new tribe.

Bonus ANSWER: If the King of Arad had not been alive, it would have served no purpose for the Amalekite King to imitate him. Tosafos, Rosh Hashana 3a

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Bar-Ilan University Faculty of Jewish Studies Office of the Campus Rabbi  
Daf Parashat Hashavua

Parashat Mattoth - Massey "Some Names Being Changed"-- Musabot  
Shem (Num. 32:38) Dr. Zvi Betzer The Department of Hebrew  
Language

The tribes of Gad and Reuven had promised that once their children, wives, and flocks were settled in the cities of the Gilad in the Transjordan, the men would go forward in the vanguard of the army to fight until the entire Land of Israel was conquered. Only then would they return to their homes. As a result of this arrangement the two tribes had to fortify their cities to the east of the Jordan with protected pens for the sheep, for it would have been inconceivable to leave the women and the multitude of sheep without suitable protection. The problem of the flocks, however, concerned only the tribes of Gad and Reuven. The tribe of Menashe did not participate at all in the negotiations with Moses and became party to the arrangement only in its final stages (see, for example, Nachmanides' commentary on verse 33). Immediately upon the completion of the negotiations, the tribe of Gad began to carry out its obligations: "The Gadites rebuilt Dibon, Ataroth ... as fortified towns or as enclosures for flocks" (32:34-36). However, in the description of the efforts of the sons of Reuven, all that we are told of their activities in their cities is that the towns were musabot shem: "The Reubenites rebuilt Heshbon, Elealeh... Ba'al - Me'on, musabot shem ..." (32:37-38). The accepted translation of "musabot shem" is "some names being changed", that is: the pagan names of these cities (some or all of them) were changed to other names (see the comments of Rashi and Nachmanides on these verses). This is a considerable surprise. Why didn't the sons of Reuven, like their brethren of Gad, see to it that their wives and flocks were settled in fortified, enclosed cities? As to changing the names of the cities, is it not sufficient that the Torah tells us "They gave [their own names] to towns that they rebuilt" (38), which can be taken as referring to both the cities of Reuven and the cities of Gad? Why was this idea doubled in the phrase musabot shem - "their names being changed"?

Years ago Yehudah Kiel [a foremost educator who is one of the editors of the Daat Mikra Bible Commentary series] mentioned to me, that R. Moshe Zeidel (Remez) had an explanation for this. Remez used to note handwritten comments on the pages of his Bible, and on the words musabot shem he made reference to the "Targum Eretz Yisrael" [Palestinian Targum]. Indeed, in the Aramaic translation of the Bible known as Targum Neophyti\* we find a novel explanation of the phrase: musabot shem is translated (into Aramaic) as "mukafin shurin ramin", 'surrounded by high walls'. Musabot is to be understood as mesubavot, 'surrounded', and shem is taken to mean 'high walls' (This matter is not even hinted at in his books Chikrei Mikra and Chikrei Lashon). Diez Macho, the Spanish scholar who edited the Neophyti translation, notes in his textual apparatus another version: 'a city completely surrounded by towers, and the names of its great men and heroes are carved upon them'. Looking into the matter, I found that such translations were actually quite well-known. The Targum Yonatan ben Uziel (D. Reider edition, according to MS. Add. 27031, British Museum) translates in a manner equivalent to the second version of the Neophyti above. The Septuagint also translates "surrounded by walls". In light of these translations, I tend to think that the Targum Onkelos which translated "makfan shemahan" - 'surrounded by names'--meant "walls" and not "names", since the meaning of the word "makfan" almost rules out any connection with the word "names" in the sense we usually understand it. The commentary to the words "musabot shem" in the Da'at Mikra book of Numbers cites a reference to II Samuel 8:13, where, in the Da'at Mikra commentary, additional verses are brought to support the idea that in the Bible, the word shem also means a wall or a tower.

In II Sam. 8:13 we find: "And David made a name (Vaya'as David shem) when he returned from smiting Aram in the valley of salt". It is difficult to translate shem as 'name' or 'fame' since the Biblical combination "asah

shem," 'to make a name for oneself; become famous,' demands to be followed by the preposition le-"for". Rather, David erected a tower which would serve as a monument to commemorate his conquests. Further examples can be found in Da'at Mikra on Samuel (where Kiel, who wrote the commentary, mentions Remez). From the Tower of Babel narrative comes this verse: "Come, let us build us a city, and a tower with its top in the sky, to make a name for ourselves (vena'aseh lanu shem)" (Genesis 11:4). The suggested plan was to fortify themselves and erect a tower, otherwise "we will be scattered all over the face of the earth". Therefore "na'aseh lanu shem" does not describe the end result of their plans, to gain fame, but is parallel to the first half of the verse, and simply means, 'and let us construct a tower'. Similarly, in Isaiah 56:5 we have the famous phrase "yad vashem" which is generally translated as "an everlasting memorial". Here, too, shem is parallel to yad, 'monument' (as in Yad Avshalom). Compare also Genesis 25:13, "These are the names (shemot) of the sons of Ishmael by their names (bishmotam) according to their generations", which contains an obvious repetition, to verse 25:16, "And these are their names by their villages and encampments" (betirotam). Here too, bishmotam, parallel to the word tirotam, does not mean names but rather 'fortified towers' or encampments.

It is therefore possible to maintain that in Biblical Hebrew the word shem underwent a process of metonymy (the use of one word for another which it in some way suggests). The word shem came to signify not "name" alone, but also the object on which names were carved (a wall, tower, or memorial).

This year marks twenty-six years since the death of Remez, of blessed memory. May these few lines constitute an appropriate "shem" - name and memorial - to honor that worthy man.

Targum Neophyti (or Neofiti) is the Targum Yerushalmi (Palestinian Targum) to the Torah which was discovered by Diez Macho in 1956 and published by him in 1971. The manuscript of the Neofiti dates from the early 16th century.

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<http://www.intournet.co.il/mtv/parsha.html>

Shirurim by Rav Mordechai Elon MATOT-MASAI

PLEASE NOTE: BECAUSE RAV ELON DOES NOT GIVE SHIURIM FOR MUCH OF THE SUMMER, THIS WILL BE LAST SHIUR UNTIL PARSHAT SHOFTIM (4 ELUL, SEPTEMBER 6).

This Shiur was delivered in Bar Ilan in 5755.

A NEW CYCLE OF HAFTOROT Last week, we began a new cycle of Haftorot. Until now, the Haftorot paralleled, more or less, the Parsha of the week. But from now on, until the last Parsha in the Torah, Parshat Vezot Habracha, the Haftorot are not connected directly to the Parsha, but, rather, to events that transpired during this time period. There are now twelve Shabbatot that begin with what the Rabbis (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 428:8) refer to as the  $\delta$ TALTA DIPURANUTA-the Three (Haftorot) of Retribution $\delta$  read in the Three Weeks prior to Tisha B'Av. These are followed by the  $\delta$ SHIVA DINECHEMTA-the Seven Haftorot of Consolation $\delta$  (following Tisha B'Av until Rosh Hashana), followed by the  $\delta$ TARTAI DITIYUVTA-the two Haftorot of Teshuva $\delta$  of the fast of Gedalya ( $\delta$ DIRSHU HASHEM BEHIMATZO-Seek the Lord while he may be found $\delta$  (Isaiah 55:6]) and of Shabbat Shuva ( $\delta$ SHUVA YISRAEL-Return, O Israel, to the Lord your God $\delta$  [Hosea 14:2]) [see Tosafot on Megillah 31b, s.v.  $\delta$ Rosh Chodesh $\delta$ ].

THE HAFTORAH IS ACTUALLY CONNECTED TO THE PARSHA As we began discussing last week (see Digest to Parshat Pinchas), the first two of the Haftorot for the Three Weeks comes from the book of Yirmiyahu (the first two chapters), followed by the first chapter of Yishayahu. The themes of the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash do not, in general, relate to the Parsha. We will examine last week's Haftorah and this week's Haftorah, which are not connected to each other merely by the order of the chapters in Yirmiyahu, but also thematically. But before we examine texts, let us learn an interesting and simple comment of the Bnai Yissachar, who says that the Parshiot of Matot and Masai are always read during the  $\delta$ Three Weeks $\delta$  because these Parshiot speak about the promise of the division of the

land of Israel. Although we said that the Haftorot themes and the Parshiot during this time period are NOT connected, this comment signifies that they are connected. After Parshat Matot speaks about the laws of oaths and describes the war against Midian, the Parsha discusses the division of the land of Israel, beginning with the two and a half tribes of Reuvin, Gad and Menashe, to the ARAI MIKLAT-Cities of Refuge, which were part of the inheritance of the Leviim, to the final chapter of the Book of Bamidbar, which, once again, speaks of the daughters of Tzelafchad, who inherited the land without male heirs in ground-breaking Halacha. The comment of the Bnai Yissachar shows a very important idea that we will develop with the Haftorah that specifically speaks about the Churban-Destruction. The Torah reading wishes to show us the secret of Redemption and the secret of consolation. Specifically, as part of the retribution, punishment and time of mourning, we will see that the Parshiot intentionally discuss the promise of inheritance of the land of Israel. This great faith, demonstrated through the Haftorah of Parshat Matot, read during the first of the Three Weeks, will be discussed.

**THE FIRST OF THE LATTER PROPHETS** This first chapter of Yirmiyahu is not only the beginning of the Haftorot of Retribution, but is also the first chapter of the Latter Prophets (NEVIIM ACHARONIM). Normally, in the order of the Tanach, we see that it is Yishayahu that begins the Latter Prophets, followed by Yirmiyahu and Yichezkel. But this is not the order that appears in the view of the Rabbis. The Talmud says *“The order of the Prophets is, Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Isaiah”* (Bava Batra 14b). The reason for this is explained by Radak commentary. He quotes from the continuation of that Talmudic passage which says *“Because the Book of Kings ends with a record of destruction and Jeremiah speaks throughout of destruction and Ezekiel commences with destruction and ends with consolation and Isaiah is full of consolation; therefore we put destruction next to destruction and consolation next to consolation”* (Bava Batra 14b). Therefore, the Rabbis wished to connect Churban-Destruction with Churban-Destruction and Nechama-consolation with Nechama-consolation. Even so, says Radak, the books of Scripture were arranged that Yeshayahu-Isaiah precedes Yirmiyahu-Jeremiah, following a chronological order. But, truthfully, the correct order is that Yirmiyahu should come first. If that is the case, then the first chapter of Yirmiyahu and the first Haftorah of the Three Weeks is also the first chapter of the Latter Prophets. This has great significance, because in this first Haftorah of retribution and Churban-Destruction, we will already find contained within it the concept of consolation, as it says *“Thus said the Lord; I remember you, the devotion of your childhood, your love like a bride, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown”* (Jeremiah 2:2). In addition, without any apparent connection to the overall theme of Churban-Destruction, a very large section of the Haftorah discusses the establishment of Yirmiyahu as a Jewish leader and prophet. If this is the beginning of the Latter Prophets, then it is interesting to see the parallel to the establishment of Moshe as a leader and a prophet. Both individuals have similar fears and hesitations. Both do not want the burden of prophecy and object to God about their mission. Both claim they have a problem with the spoken word (albeit each with a different type of claim), and each receives a different response. For us, what is particularly interesting is to understand the connection, if any, between the establishment of Yirmiyahu as a prophet, and the choice of this particular chapter as the introduction to the prophecies of retribution and Churban-Destruction. We will try to learn about this through the chapter itself.

**THE CONCEPTS LEARNED THROUGH THE VERSES IN JEREMIAH 1** The chapter begins: *“Then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Before I formed you in the belly I knew you; and before you came forth out of the womb I sanctified you, and I ordained you a prophet to the nations. Then said I, Ah, Lord God! behold, I cannot speak; for I am a (NAAR) child”* (Jeremiah 1:4-6). We remember Moshe who also says that he is not fit to be a prophet. But his claim is that he has a permanent physical impediment related to speech. Yirmiyahu says that he is a NAAR-child. This can be understood that he is saying that he is too young and will not be taken

seriously. Sometimes, however, in the prophecies, the word Naar-child signifies that the person does not have the skills and personality, and, thus, Yirmiyahu may be saying that he is not suited to the job. This is not a function of age, but of temperament. This claim, then, requires a response from God. God does answer Yirmiyahu’s claim and says *“But the Lord said to me, Say not, I am a (NAAR) child; for you shall go to all to whom I shall send you, and whatever I command you shall speak. Be not afraid of their faces; for I am with you to save you, said the Lord. Then the Lord put forth his hand, and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, Behold, I have put my words in your mouth”* (Jeremiah 1:7-9). God offers a simple response: Do not say that you are a NAAR-child, because you will say only what God tells you to say. Therefore, since you are only saying the words of God, it makes no difference whether you are a NAAR-child or not. The difficulty here is in Yirmiyahu’s claim and in God’s response. If it a legitimate claim that Yirmiyahu is a NAAR-child (making him unfit for service), then God’s response is inappropriate: *“Say not, I am a (NAAR) child.”* God could have merely said the continuation of His response, that Yirmiyahu will only say the words God tells him. But this does not change the fact or answer the claim that Yirmiyahu is still a NAAR-child. Thus, God’s response of *“Say not, I am a (NAAR) child”* does not seem to make sense. We will deal with this difficulty shortly. We continue with the verses: *“See, I have this day set you over the nations and over the kingdoms, to root out, and to pull down, and to destroy, and to throw down, to build, and to plant”* (Jeremiah 1:10). This is the most powerful definition of a prophet. This verse contains not only four expressions of destruction (root out, pull down, destroy, throw down), but also contains afterwards two expressions of rebuilding (build, plant). Then, after Yirmiyahu interprets the symbol of the almond tree, it says: *“And the word of the Lord came to me the second time, saying, What do you see? And I said, I see a boiling pot; and its face is from the north. Then the Lord said to me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. For, behold, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, said the Lord; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entrance of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all its surrounding walls, and against all the cities of Judah. And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands”* (Jeremiah 1:13-16). This seems to be a very powerful description of what appears to be the prophecy of the Churban-Destruction of the Jerusalem and the surrounding hills. The prophet says that all the nations of the north will come to the walls of Jerusalem, as every nation wishes to put its throne at the entrance to the city of Jerusalem. This reminds us of the Jerusalem we pray for. We pray daily that *“may You (God) speedily establish the throne David within (the Beit Hamikdash)”*. The great question, then, is whose throne will be in the gates, i.e. who will rule Jerusalem. The vision of the entrance to the gates and the wall describes a tragic situation where everyone wants to rule. This is what Yirmiyahu sees. This will occur because *“all their wickedness, in that they have forsaken me, and have burned incense to other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands.”* Then, suddenly, the prophecy continues, in a statement which seems connected to the earlier verses in the chapter, and not with this vision. The text says: *“You therefore gird up your loins, and arise, and speak to them all that I command you; be not dismayed at their faces, lest I dismay you before them”* (Jeremiah 1:17). This is an individual charge to Yirmiyahu. Yirmiyahu should not be afraid, neither from the kings of Yehudah nor from the outside enemy. Then, God seems to address Yirmiyahu’s concern that he is a NAAR-child: *“For, behold, I have made you this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against its princes, against its priests, and against the people of the land”* (Jeremiah 1:18). God is telling Yirmiyahu that He will make Yirmiyahu strong against all the Jewish kings and forces that will oppose him.

**THE TWO PARTS OF CHAPTER ONE: ARE THEY CONNECTED?** Before we can continue analyzing the verses, we already see that there is a connection between the two separate parts of the chapter. The first section

deals with the establishment of the prophet, with his claim, in modesty, that he cannot speak to the people. God promises that He will give the prophet the power to speak. Then comes the prophecy of the Churban-Destruction, in which he describes the vanquished city, with a battle for the walls of Jerusalem, where everyone wants to put his throne. But then the prophet is again (personally) strengthened by God. This *ostrength*, however, is unusual. After describing the besieged city, the prophet HIMSELF becomes the besieged city, as it says *el* have made you this day a fortified city, and an iron pillar, and bronze walls against the whole land, against the kings of Judah... This is an unbelievable metaphor. A few minutes before, Yirmiyahu claimed he was a NAAR-child, and God said He want to tell Yirmiyahu what to say. Now, Yirmiyahu already has seen two visions and interprets them correctly, as he saw both the almond tree and the boiling pot and understood their meanings. Now God tells Yirmiyahu that he will be attacked and opposed in a ferocious manner. However, as the physical city will fall apart, Yirmiyahu himself will become a *fortified city*, and *iron pillar* and *bronzed walls*. This seemingly has nothing to do with the Churban-Destruction, but, rather, goes back to the first part of the chapter.

#### SUDDEN OPTIMISM AFTER THE PROPHECY OF DESTRUCTION

Then, after this terrible prophecy about Jerusalem's destruction, God says to Yirmiyahu: *el*Thus said the Lord; I remember you, the devotion of your youth, your love like a bride, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown (Jeremiah 2:2). This is how last week's Haftarah ended. This sudden change is also strange. After a horrible and terrible prophecy about the city's destruction, God then says such sweet and optimistic words. From where does Yirmiyahu, known as the prophet of all Churban-Destruction, get the strength to suddenly say these words immediately after prophesying about destruction? Rabbi Elon believes that these various parts of the Haftarah are indeed connected, and it is for this very reason that these words were selected as Haftarah beginning of the Three Weeks, and, possibly, why these words are the first verses of the Latter Prophets. Yirmiyahu contends that he is a NAAR-child, to which, apparently, he received no legitimate answer. Then comes the devastating prophecy of Churban-Destruction, followed by a very short, but very deep, prophecy of consolation. What does it all mean?

#### BEING A NAAR-CHILD IS YIRMIYAHU'S GREATEST QUALITY

We return to the very first idea. Yirmiyahu says *el*for I am a (NAAR) child and God responds *el*Say not, I am a (NAAR) child. Simply understood, this signifies that Yirmiyahu's words were improper. Yirmiyahu's claim that he is a NAAR-child apparently will hurt his ability to be prophet, and therefore, God says, he should not say that he is a NAAR-child. However, the Rabbis understand it differently. And in this very point, Rabbi Elon believes, is the essence of understanding the underlying concepts of the entire chapter. In the Midrash (Pesikta Rabbati 21:13), the Rabbis say that Yirmiyahu was one of the four people in the world called YITZURIM-Creations, as the verse says *el*Before I (YITZIRCHA) FORMED you in the belly I knew you (Jeremiah 1:4). The others were Adam, Yaakov and Yishayahu, and for each, like Yirmiyahu, there is a corresponding verse. This Midrash then explains the phrase *el* cannot speak; for I am a (NAAR) child. Yirmiyahu came to God and said *el* cannot prophesy to the people, since the people wished to kill every prophet, as they wanted to kill Aaron and Moshe. Therefore, I cannot prophesy for I am a (NAAR) child. (This claim seems connected to what God later says *el*do not fear, as the connotation of NAAR-child here is somehow connected to fear, which, based on what later actually happened to Yirmiyahu, is totally legitimate.) God responds to this claim with the essential idea of understanding our chapter. Until now, we understood that being a NAAR-child is a hindrance to Yirmiyahu's prophecy. BUT GOD IS ACTUALLY SAYING THAT HE LOVES THIS NAAR-CHILD. The response of *el*Say not, I am a (NAAR) child actually means *el*do not say that being a NAAR-child is a hindrance. It is true that Yirmiyahu is a NAAR-child. But there is no response to Yirmiyahu's claim that he is a NAAR-child because it is GOOD that he is a NAAR-child. This quality helps him fulfill his mission. Why? A NAAR-child is innocent and never sinned. This concept need to be analyzed

further. The Midrash continues. When Yirmiyahu heard the horror of the destruction of Jerusalem, he cursed his very existence -- the day that he was born. (The Rabbis say [Midrash Batei Midrashot Bet 17:21] that Yirmiyahu was born on Tisha B'Av!). Yirmiyahu compares himself to the Kohen Gadol who has to give the bitter waters to the Sotah (suspected adulteress), and when they bring in this woman, the Kohen Gadol sees that she is his own mother. The Kohen Gadol cries out: *el*the mother who I tried to honor I now shame. Yirmiyahu is equally pained regarding Zion. He hoped to prophesy about its consolation and optimistic future, but he is forced to prophesy about retribution and destruction. This final part of the Midrash is connected to the concept of NAAR-child. Yirmiyahu describes himself as a young boy who must give the bitter waters to his mother. His relationship to the land and its people is the relationship of a NAAR-child and his mother suspected of adultery. He wants to prophesy great things because he thinks highly of the land and the people. And God says that this quality of *el* cannot prophesy for I am a (NAAR) child is very good. Why? Because *el*I, God, love the NAAR-child, who never tasted sin. What is the underlying idea of this Midrash? We encounter Yirmiyahu during the most difficult period of Jewish history, amidst the prophecy of the Churban-Destruction. In the Haftarah to Parshat Behar, there appears a story about Yirmiyahu and Chanamel (found in Chapter 32), where Yirmiyahu has been thrown in jail under that rule of King Tzidkiyahu. He receives word that Chanamel his cousin is about to visit him. From the jail, through the difficult times, and from the prophecy that the Jewish people will be exiled from the land for a long period, Yirmiyahu does an action. He redeems a field in the land of Israel, and buys the field from his cousin. He makes a big ceremony. The field is in the territory of Binyamin, and through this field's redemption, Yirmiyahu is showing that while the Churban-Destruction is emerging in these most pessimistic times, Yirmiyahu buys a field and establishes that the land of Israel will once again be redeemed and bought. He is stating that this acquisition of land will have meaning. It will take time, but it will happen. From where does Yirmiyahu get such great strength and optimism? Rabbi Elon believes that the answer can be derived from our chapter, which describes the role of the prophet of the Churban-Destruction, and, moreover, the prophet in general. The feeling of Yirmiyahu is that he is unworthy of his mission because he is missing the outward talents. The challenge is so immense; the walls of Jerusalem are about to collapse and be destroyed, and Yirmiyahu's feeling about the terrible situation is the secret to the entire Parsha: the feeling of lack of control and *el*what can I possibly do? Yirmiyahu hears himself asking this question, and he feels inadequate to face the great challenge, because he cannot do anything. It is then that he receives this Godly idea. When the fortified city is broken into, when the walls of stone cannot sustain, when the gateways of Jerusalem are occupied by non-Jewish thrones, then the true response comes only from the person who thinks of himself as a NAAR-child, inadequate, but also a man only of spirit, who now must transform himself to become the fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall. This is the great uniqueness of Yirmiyahu, with which he can now become a prophet and prophesy future woes. It is the simple knowledge that specifically when the situation is so difficult, the spiritual man can THEN be transformed into an iron wall in place of the actual wall. God says *el*Say not, I am a (NAAR) child NOT because Yirmiyahu is a NAAR-child, but because *el*I, God, love the NAAR-child. This quality of NAAR-child is precisely what is needed at this time. When everything around is depressing, from the kings to the Kohanim to the people, and there is a breach in the walls of all the establishment, Yirmiyahu says he has no experience in speaking, in military matters or in politics. He is only a NAAR-child. God then says that THIS IS EXACTLY THE QUALITY THAT IS NEEDED AT THIS MOMENT. This quality can help cope with the present situation. Spirituality is generally a very difficult quality to extinguish, and because the prophet is the man of spirit, he can become the fortified city. When everything is falling apart, and there is a feeling of helplessness, a feeling of being a NAAR-child, then this is turned into Yirmiyahu's greatest strength. God is telling Yirmiyahu that because you are NOT a king, you can stand up to the kings of Yehudah. Because you are

NOT a Kohen, you can stand up to the Kohanim. It will not be easy, and all will fight you, but God promises Yirmiyahu that they shall fight against you; but they shall not prevail against you; for I am with you, said the Lord, to save you (Jeremiah 1:19). There is an expression that appears in Hoshea: (KI) When Israel was a (NAAR) child, then I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt (Hosea 11:1). Most commentaries explain that when the Jews were young, God loved them and brought them out of Egypt. Some commentaries explain that the verse actually signifies that God loved Israel BECAUSE it is a NAAR-child. (the word KI then is understood not as when but, rather, as because). How powerful it is, then, that the prophecy which began for I am a (NAAR) child is completed with the words I remember you, the devotion of your (NE-URAYICH) childhood, your love like a bride, when you went after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown. Yirmiyahu suddenly develops great strength. We asked where does it come from. The answer is that it is the very concept with which Yirmiyahu began the chapter. The same fear of being a NAAR-child as a hindrance to prophecy, is finally understood by Yirmiyahu to be his strength. It is true that he is like the NAAR-child who gives his mother the bitter waters of the Sotah. But when he feels that pain, it is then that he is ready to prophesy to the people. It is then that he has the strength that goes beyond the walls that are breached.

Yirmiyahu understands that the future will once again bring the feeling that was once felt, I remember you, the devotion of your (NE-URAYICH) childhood. This knowledge, that Israel is holy to the Lord, and the first fruits of His produce (Jeremiah 2:3) can exist ONLY because Yirmiyahu is NOT a realist, and is not trained to understand the practical. He is all spirit. Thus, during the most difficult times spiritually (which Yirmiyahu will outline in the next chapter), it is then that Yirmiyahu knows that in its depth, the Jewish people are holy to God. From where did he get this strength to see, at this moment, this internal strength of the people? Only BECAUSE this is a NAAR-child, he is not too realistic and does not look outside to see strategically what the situation is. As the Midrash said, Say not, I am a (NAAR) child because God loves the NAAR-child who did not yet sin. This prophet of the Churban-Destruction is also the prophet who turns to Rachel and asks her to look at the Jewish people, but see its depth. And when she does, she will be able to say And there is hope for your future, says the Lord, that your children shall come again to their own border (Jeremiah 31:16). This same prophet who lacks experience, has the strength to reprove the people with great difficulty, who is, at the same time, the Kohen Gadol and also a NAAR-child with his mother, to whom he must now give bitter waters. The power and strength to look at the land and its people as a NAAR-child, is the power and strength to look inward and not outward. The feeling of I am powerless is the most helpful feeling of all. God says to Yirmiyahu that THIS FEELING IS PRECISELY WHAT GOD LOVES. The feeling of helplessness and naivete will give you that strength.

THESE CONCEPTS CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN OUR PARSHIOT We can see that very same idea in this week's Parshiot themselves. But this idea does not only exist in the Parshiot of Matot and Masai, but also at the beginning of the road (and redemption) in Egypt, and at the end of the road in our Parsha. In Parshat Matot, the two and a half tribes turn to Moshe and request to remain on the Jordan River to inherit that land. This is an exceptional request. Another exceptional request begins in Parshat Pinchas and ends in the final chapter of Parshat Masai: the daughters of Tzelafchad. Both requests are unusual. Moshe gets angry at the 2 1/2 tribes and suspects ulterior motives (Shall your brothers go to war, and shall you sit here? (Numbers 32:6)). And even when Moshe is convinced and they agree to all of Moshe's conditions, Moshe still requires these individuals to take a two-sided oath. Opposing this story is the incident of the daughters of Tzelafchad. They surprise Moshe and request to inherit the land (usually reserved only for men). God tells Moshe to honor their request. At the end of Masai (chapter 36), the tribe of Yosef ask Moshe to actualize his promise to the daughters of Tzelafchad. Moshe agrees and turns to God to receive the same answer once again. He who investigates further will realize that the daughters of Tzelafchad do not only complete the Parsha of Masai, but also

are part of a larger phenomenon.

THE WOMEN AT THE BEGINNING AND AT THE END OF THE JOURNEY If the Book of Beraishit is the introduction of Jewish history and the antecedents of the Jewish people, and the Book of Devarim is essentially a summary by Moshe and his reproving of the people, then the Books of Shemot, Vayikra and Devarim are the central focus of the Jewish people and of the Torah itself. It is very interesting that the beginning of the journey is through women who are in Moshe's world even before Moshe is born. In opposition to the realism of Amram, who did not want to bring another child into a world where Pharaoh decrees that he will kill all male children, his daughter Miriam comes to her father and says that he is worse than Pharaoh who only decreed against the males. By not having any children, Amram is also preventing females from entering the world (see Rashi, Exodus 2:1). This is the same Miriam who, after Moshe's birth, takes great risk by standing from afar to see what will happen to the infant Moshe (Exodus 2:4). And many Jewish babies are saved by the midwives Shifra and Puah (Yocheved and Miriam) who fight the realism of the Jews who wish to give up and do not want to continue. These women have that inner strength and deeper vision of the Jewish people that allow them to defy Pharaoh. Rabbis describe (Midrash Shemot Rabbah 1:12) the women in Egypt who convince their husbands to have children, as I awakened you up under the apple tree; there your mother was in labor with you; there she who bore you was in labor (Song of Songs 8:5). The husbands, the realists, were afraid to bring children into this world, where everything was being destroyed, and there was no hope. The entire concept that Israel was redeemed from Egypt on account of the righteous women of that generation (Midrash, Shemot Rabbah 1:12) signifies that it is the women who helped create the miracle and the opportunities. Before Moshe is born, the internal feeling of the women knew that the Jewish people are eternal, even when it appears that there is no hope, no future. This is how the book of Shemot begins with they saved the male children alive (Exodus 1:17). And the book of Bamidbar is complete with the daughter of Tzelafchad, the women, according to the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 21:10) who did not participate in the sin of the MERAGLIM-Spies. That Midrash says that these women closed up the fence opened up by the men, and brings two opposing examples. When Aaron asked the people for jewelry by the Golden Calf, the women refused to participate. Similarly, in the episode of the MERAGLIM-spies, the men participated, but not the women, as it says They shall surely die in the wilderness. And there was not left a man of them, save Caleb the son of Yefuneh, and Joshua the son of Nun (Numbers 26:65). No MAN was left from that generation, but women did survive since they did not sin. These women wanted to inherit the land, as the Parsha of the daughters of Tzelafchad is specifically written next to the verses describing the people who died in the desert. The men were realists, afraid of the conditions and of the giants in the land of Israel. But the women were not fazed by this reality and wanted to enter the land nonetheless. These men and women represent two separate approaches to life. One is the realistic approach, taking into account demographics, strategic considerations, and organization. The second approach is the faith approach, the internal approach, which understands that there are difficulties, but if God says to enter the land, we must enter, despite the objective facts. The same two approaches taken at the end of the path in our Parsha, represented by men and women, is identical to the approaches taken by the men and women at the beginning of the journey in Parshat Shemot. The 120 years of Moshe are connected by these two groups of women. At the beginning of the path is says they saved the male children alive, representing the faith approach, without which Moshe would never have been born, and the Jewish redemption from Egypt would have never come about! From the other side, the faith approach of the women is represented by Then came the daughters of Tzelafchad. Moshe ends the Book of Bamidbar and this week's Parshiot of the division of the land with the women who represent the simple, internal faith that the land must be inherited, even if technically the situation looks bleak. The prophet Yirmiyahu also represents this faith approach, which is deep and internal. Just as the walls of Jerusalem are collapsing and all seems

lost, it is then that the internal faith turns Yirmiyahu into the fortified city, an iron pillar, and a bronze wall. When the prophet takes his inner strength and recognizes that the same inner strength exists in the Jewish people (even when they themselves seem to have the opposite approach), he not only sees redemption amidst the destruction, but also realizes that the inner faith of the people is also eternal, and that  $\delta$ Israel is holy to the Lord, and the first fruits of His produce.  $\delta$  It is for that reason, possibly, that the Haftorot of Retribution are not connected to Yirmiyahu's appointment as a prophet purely by chance, because it happens to be the first chapter of his book. The appointment of the prophet of the Churban -Destruction and the consolation of the Churban-Destruction come together in a promise that the end of the retribution is consolation. Only this idea, that retribution by itself is meaningless without total consolation, sustains the prophet and the people with this faith.

**THE SEVEN HAFTOROT ARE ACTUALLY A THREE WAY DIALOGUE** This reminds us of the Abudraham commentary who speaks about the Haftorot of the seven Shabbatot immediately following Tisha B'Av until Rosh Hashana. Unlike the three Haftorot of Retribution which are not chronological, but go in the order of the book, the seven Haftorot all come from the book of Yishayahu, but do not go in the order of the book. The first Haftorah comes from the fortieth chapter, and says  $\delta$ (NACHAMU NACHAMU AMI) Comfort my people, comfort them, says your God  $\delta$  (Isaiah 40:1). In the second Haftorah, the Jews turn to God and say  $\delta$ (VATOMER ZION) But Zion says, The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me  $\delta$  (Isaiah 49:14). In the third Haftorah, it says  $\delta$ (ANIYA SOARAH) O you afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted...  $\delta$  (Isaiah 54:11). Afterwards, the fourth Haftorah is  $\delta$ (ANOCHI ANOCHI) I, I myself, am he who comforts you...  $\delta$  (Isaiah 51:12). Abudraham shows an order to these Haftorot and says that in these verses, there is a three way conversation between the prophet, the Jewish people and God Himself. The beginning of the discussion is the first Haftorah (and that is why these Haftorot do not follow the order of the book of Yishayahu). First God speaks to the prophet and says  $\delta$ Comfort my people, comfort them, says your God.  $\delta$  The Jewish people answer these words in the next Haftorah, and say  $\delta$ But Zion says, The Lord has forsaken me, and my Lord has forgotten me.  $\delta$  The people are very hurt because God wants to comfort them, but only through intermediaries (prophets). In the next Haftorah, the prophet returns to God and says  $\delta$ O you afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted...  $\delta$  I tried to comfort the people as You said in  $\delta$ Comfort my people, comfort them,  $\delta$  but the people are not comforted. Then, in the fourth Haftorah, God answers: if that is the case, then  $\delta$ I, I myself, am he who comforts you...  $\delta$  How does God comfort the people directly? Through the next (fifth) Haftorah:  $\delta$ Sing, O barren, you who did not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, you who did not labor with child; for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, says the Lord  $\delta$  (Isaiah 54:1). And then, in the sixth Haftorah, the questions is asked: what does God really want of the people? The prophet answers:  $\delta$ Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you  $\delta$  (Isaiah 60:1). It is no longer the prophet comforting, but God Himself. Then, in the seventh and final Haftorah, the people answer: if so, then  $\delta$ I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation, he has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with a garland, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels  $\delta$  (Isaiah 61:10). Without intermediaries, say the Jewish people, we are like a bride and groom. This description of the seven Haftorot are indeed the same concept we described. The idea internalized deep within the Jewish people is that **WITHIN THE DEPTH OF DESTRUCTION, THE CONSOLATION CAN ALREADY BE FOUND.** Within the Churban-Destruction lies the seeds of redemption. And God, the Destroyer, is also God the Healer. The God of the end is also the God of the beginning. Therefore, there is this dialogue, this battle, that the people want God Himself to do the comforting. The prophet Yirmiyahu teaches this idea at the very beginning of his reign, in his first prophecy of the Churban-Destruction. The prophet learns that the fundamental principle, that

the greatest sin of the man of spirit, is that when all seems lost, he feels depressed and helpless. The strength of the spiritual man is the knowledge that specifically when the walls of stone are falling, it is he who has to become that wall for the people.

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**SELECTED HALACHOS RELATING TO PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI**  
 By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt  
 ..Everything that will not come in fire you shall pass through water (31:23)

**TEVILAS KEILIM - IMMERSING NEW UTENSILS** From the verse quoted above, the Talmud(1) derives that utensils which are bought from a non-Jew, even if they are brand new, require immersion in a kosher mikveh. Just as a convert requires an immersion, symbolizing his conversion from non-Jew to Jew, so too, utensils require immersion when being transferred from the ownership of a non-Jew to a Jew(2). The vast majority of the Rishonim hold that this is a Biblical command(3). What follows is a basic review of which types of utensils require immersion.

The final rulings on whether a utensil requires immersion or not can be grouped into three categories: a) Utensils that definitely require immersion and the blessing of Al tevilas keilim(4); b) utensils which - for one reason or another - may require immersion and the blessing is not recited; c) Utensils which do not require immersion at all.

The halachos concerning which type of utensils require immersion are based on two criteria: 1. The material from which the utensil is made; 2. The purpose for which the utensil is made and how it is used. Let us review each of these criteria by itself:

**1. THE MATERIAL FROM WHICH THE UTENSIL IS MADE -** There is one basic rule to follow: The Torah itself mentions only six types of metal utensils(5) as requiring immersion. The Talmud, however, says that all utensils made out of material which "when broken can be melted down and reformulated(6)" are considered like metal utensils and require immersion. The Talmud specifically mentions glass as being the type of dish that can be "reformulated" upon breaking(7).

**UTENSILS WHICH DEFINITELY REQUIRE IMMERSION - WITH A BLESSING:** Any type of metal, including brass, steel and aluminum. Disposable aluminum pans which are used and thrown away do not require immersion. If they are going to be used more than once, most poskim require them to be immersed [even before using it the first time](8), while others allow them to be used two or three times and then discarded(9). Any type of glass(10). Pyrex, Duralux and Corelle are all considered a form of glass(11).

**UTENSILS WHICH DO NOT REQUIRE IMMERSION AT ALL:** Wood(12). Stoneware(13). Boneware, ivory(14). Plastic, melmac, rubber, nylon(15). Non-glazed earthenware (flower-pot dull finish)(16). Paper, styrofoam. **UTENSILS WHICH MAY REQUIRE IMMERSION - WITHOUT A BLESSING:** Earthenware which has been lined or coated with lead(17). Heavily glazed earthenware(18). Porcelain or porcelain enamel. Most of today's china dishes are included in this category. There are some poskim who maintain that these dishes do not require immersion at all(19). One may conduct himself in accordance with this view and many people have such a custom(20). Other poskim disagree and hold that china should be immersed without a blessing(21). In many places, this has become customary(22). Corningware(23) - follows the same rule as porcelain.

**2. THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH THE UTENSIL IS MADE.** The basic rule to follow: The Talmud states that only klei seudah, utensils used for a meal, are obligated in immersion. This includes all utensils which have direct contact with food - either during its preparation(24) or at meal time. Since the status of some items as klei seudah may be undetermined or in dispute, we will list different kinds of utensils - some that definitely require immersion, others which clearly do not, and those whose status is questionable and thus require immersion without reciting a blessing. Bottle or can openers do not need immersion(25). Stove racks [and a blech] on which pots are normally placed do not need immersion. If it is common that



food is directly placed on it, like a grill or a toaster oven rack, then the rack is required to be immersed and a blessing recited(26). Vegetable bins and refrigerator racks, even if the food touches them directly, do not need immersion(27). A serving tray used to bring plates to the table is exempt from immersion. If food is placed directly on the tray, it requires immersion with a blessing(28). A nut cracker requires immersion. Some poskim require a blessing as well(29), while others rule that a blessing should not be made(30). A fruit and vegetable peeler requires immersion(31). If the peeler is used exclusively for raw, non-edible food, like a potato peeler which is used for nothing else, many poskim hold that no immersion is required(32). An arts and crafts knife does not need immersion, even if the knife is occasionally utilized for food preparation(33). Jars, bottles or metal boxes which are used to store food but are never brought to the table, require immersion without a blessing. If they are brought to the table, then they require immersion with a blessing(34). Any utensil which is normally used for wrapped food only, does not require immersion. If its normal usage is without any wrapping, it must be immersed even if the food placed into it is wrapped(35). Some poskim do not require immersion for a toaster(36). Many others require immersion with a blessing(37).

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** Many people mistakenly believe that utensils may be used one time before being immersed. This is wrong, and it has absolutely no basis in Halachah.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Avodah Zarah 75b. 2 Ritva ibid. quoting the Ramban, based on Yerushalmi. 3 See Tevilas Keilim, pg. 34 for a complete list. 4 Our custom is to recite this text whether immersing one utensil or many - Aruch ha-Shulchan Y.D. 120:22; Teharas Yisroel 9; Kochavei Yitzchak 1:10-6; Mibeis Levi (Nissan 5753, pg. 49). 5 Gold, silver, copper, iron, tin, lead. 6 Based on the interpretation of Rashi. 7 For a more detailed explanation see Aruch ha -Shulchan Y.D. 120:25 and Emes l'Ya'akov al ha-Torah and to Shabbos 15b. 8 Chelkas Yaakov 3:115; Minchas Yitzchak 5:32; Mibeis Levi (Nissan 5753, pg. 47). 9 Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:23. 10 Y.D. 120:1. The poskim agree that glass utensils are only Rabbinically obligated. A blessing is nevertheless recited - as in all Rabbinical mitzvos - see Chochmas Adam 73:1. 11 Harav M. Heinemann (Kashrus Kurrents vol. XV #3). There is also some metal mixed in them - Tzitz Eliezer 8:26. 12 Y.D. 120:6. 13 Rambam Hilchos Ma'acholos Asuros 17:6. 14 Several poskim quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 232. A minority opinion requires them to be immersed - see Darkei Teshuvah 14. 15 This is the view of most poskim, see Chelkas Ya'akov 2:163; Kisvei Harav Henkin 2:60; Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in l'Torah v'Horah'ah, vol. 1, pg. 11, vol. 2, pg. 20 and pg. 42); Tzitz Eliezer 7:37; Be'er Moshe 2:52; Yabia Omer 4:8. A minority opinion holds that plastic dishes should be immersed without a blessing - see Minchas Yitzchak 3:76-78; Sheorim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 37:4 This is the custom in German congregations. See (Kol ha-Torah, vol. 42, pg. 14) where Harav Y.Y. Weiss rules that at a yeshiva may be lenient with this stringency. 16 Chochmas Adam 73:1. 17 Rama Y.D. 120:1. See Darkei Teshuvah 28 that even if they are lined with lead on both the outside and inside, no blessing is said. 18 See Darkei Teshuvah 19 who quotes several views on this issue. 19 Pischei Teshuvah Y.D. 120:2; Shalmas Chaim 1:13; Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in l'Torah v'Horah'ah, vol. 2, pg. 20). 20 Yabia Omer 4:8. 21 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 37:3 and Masgros ha -Shulchan. 22 Melamed Le'ohel Y.D. 47; Aruch ha-Shulchan 120:29; Darkei Teshuvah 12. 23 Harav M. Heinemann (Kashrus Kurrents vol. XV #3). 24 Some poskim hold that only utensils which are used in the final stage of food preparation require immersion, e.g., a pot, but not utensils which are used in the earlier stages, e.g., a cookie cutter. 25 Shach Y.D. 120:11. Even if the can opener touches the food it does not require immersion - Harav S. Wosner (quoted in Tevilas Keilim pg. 233). 26 Y.D. 120:4 and Pri Chodosh 12. 27 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 196). See also Be'er Moshe 4:99. 28 Tevilas Keilim, pg. 213. 29 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim, pg. 220). 30 Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in Ohalei Yeshurun, pg. 46). Shevet ha -Levi 6:245-4 questions if a can opener requires immersion altogether. 31 Tevilas Keilim, pg. 221. 32 Avnei Yashfei 1:146 based on Aruch ha-Shulchan 35-36. Same halachah applies to a pocket knife, etc. 33 Darkei Teshuvah 45 quoting Pri Chodosh; Aruch ha-Shulchan 40-45. See Tevilas Keilim, pg. 52. 34 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim pg. 197); Harav M. Feinstein (quoted in Ohalei Yeshurun pg. 45). 35 Harav S.Z. Auerbach (quoted in Tevilas Keilim pg. 55). 36 Igros Moshe Y.D. 3:24. 37 See Tevilas Keilim pg. 208.

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Dvar Torah: Matot-Masei 5757

Rabbi Moshe Shulman

Judaism One Step at a Time

37 verses in the Torah wasted!! What a crime! 37 verses in the Torah are dedicated to where the Jews camped in the desert, where they rested, and how many times they changed venues! "These are the journeys of the children of Israel... from Ra'amses to Succot... from Chazterot to Ritma.. from Rissa to Keheleta..." (Num. 33) The truth is, however, that behind this list of places there is a very profound message to the people. Moses was saying to Israel: look back and see how far you've come! After forty years, it was time for national introspection: who were we when we started, and who or what had we become? What had it taken to transform us from scared, weak, enslaved tribesmen into strong, warring soldiers? What journey had to be traveled to change us from idol worshipers to the Chosen People, committed to Torah and Mitzvoh?

It certainly didn't happen overnight. We didn't wake up one morning, see a vision, and cry out: "I believe!" Yes, Jews saw many miracles, including the greatest of them all, the Revelation of G'd at Mt. Sinai. But even that great miracle lasted only 40 days, after which we were back to our old tricks. We learnt the hard way that you can't take slaves and turn them into free people with Revelation. People don't change their entire lifestyles because of one inspirational speech, even if the speaker is the Almighty Himself! In the desert it took forty years of hard work, following G-d from place to place. "Look back", said Moses, "to where and what we were in Ra'amses, what types of things concerned us at Succot, and Eilim. Remember the stories of the Golden Calf, the complaints about water, the spies, the rebellion of Korach. Remember the forty years. With each new place we encamped in, , with each new step, we came closer to achieving our goal.

Today, everyone is concerned with Jewish continuity, and Jewish commitment. How do people develop commitment to Judaism? The answer lies in these 37 obscure verses. Commitment comes one step at a time. Too many people misunderstand Judaism to be an "all or nothing" package. They learn about 613 Commandments, about Shabbat, Kashrut, Torah study, or any other Jewish value - and say to themselves, "It's all too overwhelming". Nothing could be further from the truth. If G'd would have demanded from us "all or nothing" He would have left us at the foot of Mt. Sinai!

What the Torah demands is that we grow in Judaism, that tomorrow we are better Jews than we were yesterday, one Mitzvah at a time, one Jewish value at a time! Shabbat begins with Shabbat candles, a Shabbat meal, perhaps Shabbat songs, and grows from there. One can grow in Yiddishkeit one day at a time, one Mitzvah at a time, one step at a time.

That's the Torah's message. Look at what we have accomplished, where we have come from, how much we've achieved, and how we did it one step at a time. It didn't happen in one giant leap. It happened because we went from place to place. And in each new place we learnt a new lesson, a new concept, a new mitzvah, and grew that much more. Moses showed us the way. Each of us must continue to learn, and grow. But we must not be frightened by what we see as the DISTANCE between where we are and where we are going. The distance is only the length between where we stand today and where we stand tomorrow! One small step at a time, slowly, we can journey great distances, and conquer great horizons.

Shabbat Shalom.

<http://www.aish.edu/shabbat-shalom/ssf.htm>

Aish HaTorah's Shabbat Shalom Weekly by Rabbi Kalman Packouz Matot Masai GOOD DAY!

Mark Twain wrote a fascinating article, "Concerning the Jews," in the Harper's Magazine in 1897. In the epilogue he concludes: "The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of



his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal, but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality?"

I thought it might be interesting to note what answer Mr. Twain might have found had he looked in the Torah and the Prophets: "And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout their generations, an eternal covenant, to be your G-d and the G-d of the descendants after you." (Genesis 17:7) "Thus, even while they are in the land of their enemies, I will neither reject nor obliterate them, lest I break My covenant with them by destroying them, for I am the Lord their G-d. I will remember them because of the covenant I made with their original ancestors, whom I brought out of the land of Egypt in the sight of the nations, so that I might be their G-d." (Leviticus 26:44-45) "Because the mountains may move and the hills may be shaken, but My love shall never move from you, nor My covenant of peace be shaken, said G-d, Who has compassion on you." (Isaiah 54:10) "As for Me, this is My covenant with them, says G-d. My spirit, which rests upon you, and My words which I have put in your mouth shall not depart from your mouth, nor from the mouths of your children's children, says G-d, from now and forever." (Isaiah 59:21) "Thus says G-d, Who establishes the sun to light the day, the laws of the moon and stars to light the night, Who stirs up the sea into roaring waves, Whose name is the Lord of Hosts: 'If these laws of nature would ever give way before Me,' says G-d, 'only then shall the offspring of Israel cease to be a nation before Me for all time.'" (Jeremiah 31:34-35) "But fear not, O Jacob My servant, neither be dismayed, O Israel, because I shall redeem you from afar, and your children form the land of their captivity; and Jacob will again be quiet and at ease and none shall make him afraid. Fear not, O Jacob My servant, says G-d, for I am with you. For I will topple all the nations to which I have driven you. But of you I will not make a full end. I will correct you in just measure, but I will not utterly destroy you." (Jeremiah 46:27-28)

The story is told of King Louis XIV asking the philosopher Pascal for some proof of a supernatural force in the world. "Why, the Jews, your majesty," replied Pascal, "The Jews." ...

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