

INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON MATOS MASEI - 5759

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where Benei Yisrael journeyed and prove that they were barren areas devoid of any vegetation, and that without God's perpetual help there would have been absolutely no possibility of their surviving.

Rashi brings another explanation, which hints at another possible significance in the recording of all the journeys:

"Rabbi Tanchuma gave a different explanation for it - he compared God to a king who had a son who was ill. He took his son to a distant place in order to have him healed. When they returned, the father began recounting all the steps of the journey. He said to his son, 'Here we slept, here we gave thanks, here you laid down your head...' etc."

Why did the father point out to his son all the stations that they had passed up until his recovery? Because he wanted to show his son that not only is the result important - i.e. the fact that the son had in fact recovered - but the process, too, has significance: "Here we slept, here we gave thanks...."

This is what the Torah is teaching us in its enumeration of all the journeys. There is a philosophy which holds that the whole purpose and significance of today is that it leads us to tomorrow. This approach attaches no independent significance to the actual day itself; only to what it will bring in its wake, what it will lead to. This opposes and contradicts our belief. Such a philosophy leads to the idea that "the end justifies the means" - everything is permissible, everyone and everything may be trampled, so long as the aim is attained. This is the approach adopted by the Socialist movements and by the various messianic movements.

We await and hope for the ge'ula (redemption); we await the coming of messiah. But despite the importance of today as the harbinger of tomorrow, as bringing redemption nearer, the primary importance of today is its importance in its own right.

In Pirkei Avot (chapter 4) we learn, "Better one hour of teshuva (repentance) and good deeds in this world than all of eternal life in the world-to-come." The world-to-come is of tremendous importance, but one hour of Torah and good deeds in this world are better than all of eternal life in the world-to-come. And if one hour of Torah and good deeds in this world is better than all of eternal life in the world-to-come, then it is certainly better than all the future hours in this world.

Massekhet Shabbat (30a) records a conversation between King David and God: "David said to God, 'Master of the Universe - Tell me, O God, my end... and I shall know how I shall perish.' God replied, 'You will die on Shabbat.' [David said,] 'Let it be on the first day [Sunday]'. He replied, 'The time for the rule of Shlomo, your son, will already have come, and one rulership does not overlap another by even the shortest time.' [David said,] 'Let it be on Erev Shabbat [Friday]'. God replied, "'One day in your courtyards is better to me than a thousand...' - I prefer your sitting for one day involved in Torah study to the thousand sacrifices which your son Shlomo will bring to the altar."

Imagine the ceremony of a thousand sacrifices - imagine how long it takes to sacrifice a thousand offerings! A powerful spiritual experience indeed. In contrast, what is one day of study, regarding which God says, "One day in your courtyards is better to me..."? Will he be more of a talmid chakham (Torah scholar) after one day? What is the value of that learning? He cannot even pass it on to others, for either way he is going to die the very next day!

Nevertheless, God prefers this learning to a thousand sacrifices, because one hour of Torah and good deeds in this world is better than all of eternal life in the world-to-come. The value of the present in this world is very great, and the study of Torah has significance not only for the future, in order that one become a talmid chakham, but also for the present - for the sake of the learning itself, even if by tomorrow all will be forgotten.

A stranger who happened to enter a synagogue between Mincha and Ma'ariv would be amazed at the sight that met his eyes: a group of people sitting and studying a gemara or mishnayot on a topic far removed from any practical application - pertaining, say, to the sacrifices or to categories of ritual impurity - the details of which are unlikely to be remembered for long.

From: Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash [SMTP:yhe@vbm-torah.org] Yeshivat Har Etzion's Israel Koschitzky Virtual Beit Midrash Student Summaries of Sicha Delivered by the Roshei Yeshiva PARASHAT MAS'EI SICH'A OF HARAV LICHTENSTEIN SHLIT" A

The "Journey" Towards the Goal Summarized by Rav Yosef Tzvi Rimon

"These are the journeys of Bnei Yisrael, who went out of the land of Egypt... And Moshe wrote down their departures for their journeys by God's command... And they departed from Ra'amses... and they departed... and they camped..." (Bamidbar 33)

This parasha is extremely puzzling. Why does the Torah enumerate all the journeys of Benei Yisrael - what possible significance can these have? Why does the Torah not simply tell us where the original starting point and the eventual destination were? In any case we don't know what happened at each place that is enumerated, so why name each and every one?

Rashi explains: "Why were these journeys recorded? In order to show us God's mercy. Although it was decreed that Benei Yisrael would wander in the desert, one shouldn't think that they spent forty years on the move, one journey after the next, without rest. For... it works out that during the thirty-eight year period they journeyed only twenty times."

In other words, the journeys were recorded in order to show us God's mercy in that He moved them only twenty times during forty years.

Ramban cites a different reason, offered by Ramban in his Moreh Nevukhim (Guide for the Perplexed): "And our teacher has explained, in Moreh Nevukhim, that there is a great and important reason for mentioning the journeys. Because the miracles and wonders which were performed were clear to all who saw them, but in the future they would be conveyed by word of mouth, and the hearer might disbelieve the wonders described in the Torah... The hearers would not believe it, and would think that their location in the desert was somewhere near an inhabited area, a place where other people were to be found, like the deserts inhabited by the Arab peoples today... Therefore God removed the possibility of such thoughts, and specified all the wonders in the enumeration of the journeys, in order that future generations should appreciate them...."

In other words, if some heretic should claim that the places where Benei Yisrael journeyed in the desert were places where there was food, and that therefore there were no such miracles as the manna etc. since the food arrived in a perfectly natural manner, we can show him the places

Can we even imagine a group of people conscientiously studying pages of a medical or legal textbook, knowing full well that they will have no use for this information and that the information will be forgotten within a few days?

"It is not your obligation to finish the task", but at the same time "you are not free to desist from it". A Jew is obligated to study Torah because of the importance of that learning in the present, and not just in order to further his future status as a talmid chakham - and even if it is clear to him that he will in fact never become a talmid chakham. "You are not free to desist from it."

It is important for a person to plan his future, but not to the extent that he perceives the present as purely a means to that end. He must appreciate the special significance of the present itself, of each and every moment.

This is what the Torah is teaching us by enumerating all the journeys of Benei Yisrael. Even if a person died during the last journey, just before reaching Jericho, and did not enter the Land of Israel - there is still considerable significance in the journeys which he completed. Each journey has its own importance, there is significance in each step of the process and not only in the final outcome. It is true that each day does bring the end closer, it takes us a step nearer to tomorrow, but each day has significance first and foremost in its own right. "One hour of teshuva and good deeds in this world is better than all of eternal life in the world-to-come."

(Originally delivered on Shabbat Parashat Mas'ei 5750. Translated by Kaeren Fish.)

From: Aish HaTorah[SMTP:aishlist@mail.netvision.net.il]
Subject: Shabbat Shalom! Matot-Masei
AISH HATORAH'S Shabbat Shalom Weekly
DVAR TORAH: based on Growth Through Torah by Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

The Torah states regarding koshering cooking implements brought back from war as booty, "And Elazar the Kohen said to the men of the army who were coming to the war, this is the statute of the Torah which the Almighty commanded Moshe: Only the gold and the silver, the copper, the iron, the tin, and the lead -- all things that (are used to cook) with fire shall be passed through fire (to kosher them)..." What lessons can we learn from koshering a pot in order to improve ourselves?

It is imperative to remove any non-kosher food that was absorbed in the vessel before using it for kosher food. First, it is necessary to clean out the vessel very well and to remove any rust. Then the vessel must be kashered in the same manner that it was previously used. If it were used directly on the fire, it needs to have direct contact with fire to render it fit to be used. If non-kosher food was cooked in it with boiling water, it now needs to be immersed in boiling water to remove what was absorbed.

The Chofetz Chaim, Rabbi Yisroel Meir Kagan, the leading rabbi of the Jewish people until his passing in 1933, commented that the same process applies to purifying people from their spiritual impurities and defects. First, a person must remove the "rust" of his transgressions by means of repentance; regretting what one has done wrong and accepting upon oneself not to continue doing those things in the future. Afterwards, one needs to be careful that the positive actions he does will replace the negative behavior on the same level. If one was enthusiastic and energetic in doing wrong, he should now have similar enthusiasm and energy when doing good. He should now use what he has erred with to make amends. For example, if one used his ability to speak to relate gossip, loshon hora, he should now utilize speech for fulfilling mitzvot, commandments.

Shabbat Shalom, Rabbi Kalman Packouz

Parashat Matot-Maasei - 5759
OU Torah Insights Project Parashat Matot-Maasei
Rabbi Pinchas Herman

In this week's parshah, Hashem commands Moshe Rabeinu to establish cities of refuge, safe-havens for those who kill unintentionally, or even intentionally if their cases are still being decided by the Supreme Court. The Talmud tells us that the Bnei Yisrael built wide, paved roads leading to these cities and had signposts marking the way so that these hunted people (they were fair game to the deceased's next-of-kin) could quickly and easily reach safety without having to stop and ask directions. Today, we have no actual cities of refuge. Nonetheless, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, zt"l, writes, that the Torah's message is eternal and the notion of these cities remains relevant. Many Jews are at a crossroads in their lives. One road is the path of Torah and mitzvos, which assures a fulfilled life both spiritually and materially. The other road, devoid of Torah and mitzvos, leads to assimilation, discontent and spiritual frustration. The job of rabbis and lay-people alike is to be like the signposts leading to these cities - clearly marking the Path of Life, showing people that this is their refuge, the way that will bring them toward fulfillment. If we have an obligation to help our brothers and sisters with their material needs through the mitzvah of tzedakah, how much more so do we have an obligation to help all Jews with their spiritual needs, regardless of their observance, knowledge, and affiliation. A Chassid of Rav Sholom Dov Ber, zt"l, of Lubavitch once inquired of the Rebbe why he spent so much of his time with simple, unlearned Jews. The Rebbe asked the Chassid a jeweler by trade if he had any gems with him. The Chassid emptied a bag of stones on the table. The Rebbe looked at them and picked out the largest one, "Is this the most precious stone you have," he asked. The Chassid shook his head. "Actually," he said, pointing out a small, uncut diamond, "This is the most precious. Once it is cut and polished properly its brilliance will be appreciated by all. With all due respect, Rebbe, when it comes to diamonds you have to be an expert." "Precisely," said the Rebbe. "When it comes to neshamos you also have to be an expert." As we observe the Three Weeks that lead up to Tisha B'Av, let us reflect on our obligation to provide this spiritual safe-haven for all Jews. The Gemara tells us that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because of sinas chinam, senseless hatred. By employing ahavas chinam, senseless love, instead, we will turn the day of Tisha B'Av to a day of rejoicing with the building of the final Beis Hamikdash. Rabbi Pinchas Herman Rabbi Herman is rabbi of Congregation Sharei Israel in Raleigh, NC. OU.ORG - Your Gateway to the Jewish Internet _ 1999 - 5759 All Rights Reserved. Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America - Please send comments to webmaster@ou.org

From: Kenneth Block[SMTP:kenblock@worldnet.att.net]
Subject: NCYI Weekly Divrei Torah - Maatot - Maas'ai
Parshat Mattot-Mass'ai Rabbi Michael Whitman Young Israel of New Haven
26 Tammuz 5759 Daf Yomi: Rosh Hashana 6

We can usually recognize a righteous person. But what is a righteous society? What does the Torah teach us about how society is to be organized to allow for individual development while caring for all its members? A careful examination of this week's Parshah can begin to lay the foundation for a Torah social policy.

(Bamidbar 35:11) "You must designate towns which shall serve as cities of refuge to which a murderer, one who kills through negligence, can flee." If a person kills B'Mazid - purposefully, in the presence of witnesses, after being warned - that person can receive capital punishment. If the death occurred through an ones, an accident with no carelessness or negligence, there is no culpability so no punishment is necessary. But if the death occurred b'shogeg, through negligence, the murderer is sentenced to stay in the ir miklat (city of refuge - there were a total of forty-eight such cities spread throughout Eretz Yisroel).

The Gemorah (Makkos, chapter 2) describes the ir miklat as a self sufficient town, a place that would provide a positive environment to foster rehabilitation. The majority of its inhabitants were permanent residents. Most of these cities were the cities of the Leviim, people of great spiritual depth who could exert a positive influence. A person sentenced to the ir

miklat could have their Rebbi (and consequently his Yeshiva) come with him, so the murderer could be positively influenced by limud haTorah. A person could live with his family in this city because any rehabilitation must include deeper attachment and commitment to one's family. Additionally, taking a mother or father away from their family would be counter-productive for the entire society by having children raised without their parent. The Torah recognizes that one who commits a sin b'shogeg has the potential for rehabilitation. When one acts negligently and causes the death of another, they have committed the sin of not taking sufficient care to recognize and guard the sanctity of human life. The system of ir miklat is designed by HaShem to rehabilitate that person, leading to a transformation of the rest of his personal life while becoming a positive addition to the society.

But how long was the sentence? The answer appears on the surface to be highly counter intuitive. There was no individual sentence. Everyone went free at the same time. (Bamidbar 35:25, V'Yashav Bah Ad Mos HaKohen HaGadol) "And he must live there until the death of the Kohen Gadol (High Priest)." In fact, the Mishneh says (Makkos 11A) that the mother of the current Kohen Gadol would bake cookies and knit sweaters for those living in the arei miklat. This was a kind of bribe to make life more pleasant for them in the ir miklat so they would not pray for the death of her son in order to go free. But the question is obvious - what does the Kohen Gadol have to do with anything? Why should the Kohen Gadol have any connection to an individual act of negligence by someone probably unknown to him? Says the Gemorah, "Shehaya Lahen LeVakesh Rachamim Al Doran V'Lo Bikshu" - "The Kohen Gadol did not sufficiently pray for the benefit of his generation." The Kohen Gadol was responsible, and was held accountable for the tear in the fabric of society caused by negligent homicide. His death (perhaps before his time?) completes the atonement for the negligent murder and allows those in the ir miklat to go free.

This is a Yesod, a fundamental truth of a Torah social policy; there are two parallel paths of responsibility for what happens in a society. First, there is personal responsibility. Bechirah Chofshis, freedom of choice, means that we are responsible for our actions and we must bear the consequences. And second, every member of society is also responsible for the shortcomings of that society. Represented by the Kohen Gadol, the spiritual head of the people, everyone in a society has the responsibility to see to it that the needs of all its members are met. Everyone in a society has the responsibility to see that there is positive parenting, quality education, access to meaningful employment and health care, and the instilling of basic values for all members of the society. And when those needs are not met, we are all responsible. But here is the key. The responsibility of society does not diminish the accountability of the individual - the murderer himself is sentenced to the Ir Miklat. At the same time, individual accountability does not diminish the responsibility of every member of society, represented by the Kohen Gadol, to do whatever they can, including but not limited to prayer, to address those societal needs.

Today, in the aftermath of terrible crimes we hear arguments from across the political spectrum. On the one hand we hear the criminal is to blame. He alone must take responsibility and pay for his crime. We must find stricter ways to police and punish those who commit crimes. On the other hand we hear society is to blame. Had this person had an education, had he not been abused as a child, had he been able to support himself legitimately, the crime would not have happened. We must focus our efforts on eradicating the underlying causes of crime. Both extremes are incomplete because both are true.

We see this Yesod in another Mitzvah of the Torah - Eglah Arufah. In Parshat Shoftim the Torah tells us what to do when a person is found to have been murdered but no murderer can be found. The Elders of the nearest city perform the Mitzvah of Eglah Arufah and they say (Devarim 21:7-8), "Yadeinu Lo Shafchu Es HaDam HaZeh...Kapper LeAmchah Yisrael." On the one hand we, the society, did not commit this crime. And if a murderer is caught he will be brought to justice (see Kesuvos 37B). But at the same time the leaders of society ask HaShem to forgive His people Israel.

Perhaps we did not show enough care when he came through our town to provide hospitality (see Sotah 48B). Perhaps we did not, as a society, provide sufficient social services for the needs of this individual and because of that, murder has befallen him. We are all responsible and we must ask HaShem for forgiveness.

Every night when I sit down to dinner with my children - and the same is most likely true for you - just a short distance away there are children who don't have enough to eat. And there are children who don't have anyone to care whether they eat. Regardless of their skin color or their language or their national origin, these children are created B'Tzelem Elokim (in HaShem's image) as much as my children. Every night when I go to sleep, just a short distance away there are children who go to sleep hungry, and there are elderly people who go to sleep lonely. How can I go to sleep if I haven't done anything to help them. Of course there are many needs and we have to prioritize our efforts. Many of us admirably extend ourselves for our brothers and sisters. But shouldn't we extend ourselves just a little bit for our cousins?

There are serious problems in our society - poverty, unemployment, addiction, violence. Part of our problem is the lack of personal accountability. It seems we are always trying to find someone else to blame for our troubles. Notice how the Torah calls the one who goes to the ir miklat a murderer. It was only b'shogeg, but he is still a murderer. The Torah makes sure he faces the enormity of the loss he has caused. But at the same time, far too many of us today who could help others don't see it as our problem. We are unwilling to focus on the systemic and institutional disadvantages others suffer which lead to so many of today's ills. Would the Kohen Gadol have done the same thing?

For the last eleven years we have operated the Young Israel Soup Kitchen which meets in New Haven every Sunday night. We are part of a larger organization called Downtown Evening Soup Kitchen (DESK). In addition to giving food, we provide access to health care and legal advice. We run a job-training program that has, so far, a 100% success rate in finding jobs for our graduates. We open the doors of the Young Israel House at Yale University (our soup kitchen site) and we say, "Kol Dichfin Yaisai v'Yaichal." Whoever is hungry - Black, White, Hispanic, whether Jewish or non-Jewish - come and eat. We do so not only because the Kosher Kitchen is not being used by students on Sunday nights. And we do so not only so others will see that Jews are kind and compassionate and maybe they will reciprocate. We do so to fulfill a Torah social policy, based on the lesson of ir miklat. Every one of us is responsible to alleviate the suffering of any of us, in any way we can.

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From: Zomet Institute [SMTP:zomet@virtual.co.il]

Subject: Shabbat-B'Shabbato: Matot-Massei 5759

A MITZVA IN THE TORAH PORTION: Immersion of Utensils
by Rabbi Binyamin Tabory

After Bnei Yisrael captured the booty during the war against Midyan, Elazar taught them what to do with the eating utensils they had taken. The Ramban explains that no such commands were necessary after the wars with Sichon and Og, because during a war for Eretz Yisrael everything may be eaten, including the flesh of pigs. On the other hand, the fight against Midyan was a war of vengeance, and in this case booty which is not kosher must be avoided. Because of this, the Torah commanded, "Everything which can be passed through a fire should be passed through a flame and it will be purified, but let it also be purified by sprinkling water. And anything which cannot be passed through fire should be purified only by water." [Bamidbar 31:23].

According to the Sefer Mitzvot Katan, there are two separate mitzvot involved. The first is to scald utensils which are not kosher, and the second is to immerse utensils which were obtained from Gentiles. This implies that the

purpose of the immersion is not to remove unkosher food left by the Gentiles, since it is necessary even after scalding in hot water. In fact, in line with this, the Sefer Mitzvot Katan permits eating food from a dish which has not been immersed in a mikveh.

The Rambam writes that the immersion of utensils taken from Gentiles is not related to ritual purity or impurity but that it is a decree from the time of the prophets (Hilchot Ma'achalot Assurot 17:5). And other commentators are not sure whether this means that the Rambam feels it is a Torah command (Rashba) or a rabbinical decree (RAN).

The Noda B'Yehuda and the Chatam Sofer made the innovative suggestion that utensils contaminated with chametz should not be sold to Gentiles before Pesach because when they are repurchased after the holiday it would be necessary to immerse them even if the Gentile had not used them.

However, others were more lenient. Rashi explains that the purpose of the required immersion of utensils in the Torah is to cleanse them ["litaheir"] from forbidden foods, while other sages wrote that the immersion is to purify them ["lehachshir"]. The Rebbe of Chabad differentiated between the two terms, explaining that the first refers to kashrut, while the second does not (remember that even a utensil which has been scalded still must be immersed), but is necessary to make the utensil suitable for use by a Jew, "so that it will leave the tum'a of a Gentile and enter the holiness of a Jew" [Yerushalmi]. This would imply that the law is only relevant to a dish to be used regularly for meals, but there is no inherent Torah prohibition to use a utensil which has not been immersed. And this is how the Rebbe explained the ruling by earlier Chabad rabbis, that dishes sold during Pesach do not have to be immersed. The Gentiles never took nominal possession of the utensils, even though the sale was completely legal according to the halacha, and they never became impure because of the association with the Gentile.

[From 1997] <http://www.ucalgary.ca/~akiva/HOJMI/droscho.html>
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 worshippers to the Chosen People, committed to Torah and Mitzvot?

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.

From: Jeffrey Gross[SMTP:jgross@torah.org]
WEEKLY-HALACHA FOR 5759 SELECTED HALACHOS
RELATING TO PARSHAS MATOS-MAASEI

By Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

A discussion of Halachic topics related to the Parsha of the week. For final rulings, consult your Rav.

HAIRCUTTING AND SHAVING DURING THE THREE WEEKS

The Talmud(1) tells us that only one who has properly mourned the Temple's destruction will merit to see its rebuilding. Accordingly, the three-week period between the fast of the seventeenth of Tammuz and Tishah b'Av, known as Bein ha-Metzarim, was established by the Rabbis(2) as a period of mourning over the destruction of the two Batei Mikdash. To create an atmosphere of mourning, they restricted certain activities that are normally permitted. What are these restrictions? One of them(3) is the injunction against men, women and children taking a haircut or a shave. These are(4) the basic rules(5): It is permitted to trim a mustache that interferes with eating(6). It is permitted to pluck one's eyebrows or eyelashes(7). Married women may cut hair that is protruding from their head covering(8). It is permitted to comb one's hair even though some hair will get torn out while combing(9). Nail cutting is permitted(10). A mourner who completed his mourning period during the Three Weeks may take a haircut and a shave(11). The prohibition of hair-cutting applies even to small children under the age of chinuch(12). Thus if an upsheren falls during the Three Weeks, it should either be moved up or postponed(13). If absolutely necessary, it is permitted to take a haircut or a shave on the evening preceding the Fast of the Seventeenth of Tammuz(14). On the day of a baby's bris(15), the father, the sandek and the mohel may take a haircut(16).

QUESTION: In some communities it has become customary to shave or trim one's beard on erev Shabbos during the Three Weeks in honor of Shabbos. Is there an halachic source for this leniency? DISCUSSION: Yes, there is. It is based on the ruling of the Shulchan Aruch(17) which permits laundering [during the Nine Days] for Shabbos if one has no other garments to wear. Magen Avraham, quoted by all later authorities and the Mishnah Berurah, wonders why a similar leniency does not exist concerning haircutting as well. He answers that haircutting is not permitted for Shabbos since people do not take a haircut every week, while everyone needs clean clothing every week. Thus the Rabbis allowed laundering for Shabbos under certain circumstances but did not allow haircutting. Based on this Magen Avraham, it may be argued(18) that this restriction applies only to taking a haircut but not to shaving. Most men shave several times a week or even daily, so that shaving is comparable to laundering, not to haircutting.

Accordingly, it would be permitted to shave on Erev Shabbos, and possibly this is the source for those who do so(19). While those who have this custom are permitted to rely upon it(20), most communities did not accept this leniency(21). As in all established customs, one may not deviate from his traditional custom.

QUESTION: Many people involved in the business, academic or professional world shave or trim their beards throughout the Three-Weeks. Is that allowed? **DISCUSSION:** While Shulchan Aruch and Mishnah Berurah do not mention such a leniency, it is mentioned by several contemporary poskim(22). Harav M. Feinstein(23) rules that the custom not to shave during the Three Weeks does not apply to situations where a monetary loss would result. Accordingly, if one would incur a loss by not shaving, he may shave. Harav Feinstein writes that this leniency does not apply to the week of Tishah b'Av itself, where it would be prohibited to shave even if a monetary loss would be sustained. Harav Feinstein further explains(24) that shaving is permitted only if otherwise a loss would be incurred. If appearing unshaven would merely engender ridicule [or would cause one to suffer embarrassment], the leniency does not apply. Based on Harav Feinstein's rulings, the following rules apply: Before one relies on the leniency of shaving during the Three Weeks, he must ascertain whether or not doing so would actually cause him a financial loss. With the relaxed standards of dress prevalent in today's world, it is difficult to find situations where one would actually lose his job or suffer monetary loss if he did not shave. When in doubt, one should discuss his case with a Rav. The leniency applies only to those days or those times when one must attend business meetings or discharge professional obligations, etc. It is not a blanket permit which allows any businessman, academician or professional to shave any time during the Three Weeks. Nowhere is it suggested that since it is permitted for a businessman to shave under extenuating circumstances, he may therefore dispense with the prohibition altogether. The prohibition remains in full force; it is lifted only when there is no other choice. Accordingly, a businessman who goes on vacation or is away from his office for several days over the weekend or a legal holiday, is not permitted to shave during that time. Some people who became accustomed to shaving during their years of employment continue to do so even upon retirement. This is not permitted.

FOOTNOTES: 1 Ta'anis 31b, quoted in Shulchan Aruch O.C. 554:25. 2 This is the custom of the Ashkenazic community, as recorded by Rama O.C. 551:4. Sephardic communities have different customs. 3 The others are: 1. Getting married or participating in a wedding; 2. Listening to music and dancing; 3. Reciting shehecheyanu. See The Weekly Halachah Discussion, pg. 423-428 for the details. 4 These rules apply to the days of Sefiras ha-Omer as well. 5 Note: The Three Weeks period includes another period of more intensive mourning, called the Nine Days. The halachos of those days -?from Rosh Chodesh Av through midday of the tenth of Av -?are more restrictive in several areas. We are discussing the laws of the Three Weeks only, not the special, more stringent, halachos of the Nine Days. 6 O.C. 551:13. 7 Bein Pesach l'Shavuot, pg. 241, quoting an oral ruling from Harav S.Z. Auerbach and Harav S. Wosner. 8 Mishnah Berurah 551:79. When necessary, women may shave their legs; Harav M. Feinstein (Ohalei Yeshurun, pg. 9). See also Igros Moshe Y.D. 2:137 where he allows women to take haircuts when necessary during the Three Weeks. When necessary, a girl of marriageable age may take a haircut; Harav S.Z. Auerbach (Halichos Beisah, pg. 371). 9 Mishnah Berurah 551:20. 10 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 122:5. 11 Mishnah Berurah 551:87. 12 Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 551:91. Aruch ha-Shulchan 551:31, however, seems to hold that only children above the age of chinuch are prohibited to take a haircut. See also Igros Moshe Y.D. 1:224 who agrees with this opinion. 13 Mishnas Ya'akov O.C. 551 quoting Harav Y.Y. Teitelbaum (Satmar Rav). 14 She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 122:1, based on Igros Moshe O.C. 1:168. 15 Or the evening before, Mishnah Berurah 493:13. If the bris is on Shabbos, it is permitted to take a haircut on Friday, *ibid*. If the bris is on Sunday, most poskim do not permit taking a haircut on Friday; see Kaf ha-Chayim 493:36. 16 Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 122:15; Sha'ar ha-Tziyun 551:4, quoting Chasam Sofer; Kaf ha-Chayim 551:10; Pischei Teshuvah 551:1; She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 122:16. See, however, Be'er Heitev 551:3, who rules stringently. 17 Rama O.C. 551:3. 18 See Teshuvos Chasam Sofer (Y.D. 348) who advances this argument. 19 She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 122:5. See also R' Akiva Eiger and Beir Halachah (551:3) who quote the view of Tosfos which even allows haircutting in honor of Shabbos, just as laundering is permitted. 20 Kaf ha-Chayim 551:66. 21 Shemiras Shabbos K'hilchasa 42:52. One of the reasons suggested is that most people who rely on this leniency are not really doing so for the sake of honoring the Shabbos but rather for their own sake... (Teshuvos Sha'ar ha-Zkeinim, quoted by Pischei Teshuvah and Kaf ha-Chayim, *ibid*). 22 A possible source is Chasam Sofer (O.C. 158) who discusses permitting a mourner who had to attend an important business meeting to take a haircut during shivah and shloshim. 23 Igros Moshe O.C. 4:102. See also She'arim Metzuyanim b'Halachah 122:5. 24 Igros Moshe C.M. 1:93.

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From: Rabbi Pinchas Winston [SMTP: winston@torah.org]
Subject: Perceptions - Parashas Mattos-Massey Parashas Mattos:
Not Very Promising Massey: The Beginning and End of the Journey
Rabbi Pinchas Winston

Mattos: Not Very Promising Moshe spoke to the leaders of the tribes to tell the Children of Israel. "This is what G-d commanded. If a man makes a vow to G-d, or swears an oath to bind himself, he must not violate his word; he must do all that he said." (Bamidbar 30:2-3) Having discussed the sacrifices of the holidays and vows in last week's parshah, the Torah continues in this week's parshah with a discussion about nedarim (oaths), since many included promises to bring a sacrifice to G-d, which were often fulfilled on the holidays. In the past, we have discussed various different aspects of this section, and for a good reason: Rebi Elazar said: Do not let the section of nedarim be light in your eyes, for, it was through them that the [members of the] Great Sanhedrin (High Court) of Tzidkiyahu were killed ... (Eichah Rabbah 2:14) The Midrash explains itself in detail. At the time of the First Temple, when Nebuchadnetzar had virtually reduced Israel to a vassal state, Tzidkiyahu, the king of Yehudah (the ten tribes had long ago been exiled to Assyria), paid an unexpected visit on Nebuchadnetzar, who was preparing to go to war against other nations. Apparently, part of the preparation included the gruesome ritual of eating flesh from a living animal (a rabbit), because somehow this made a warrior fearless. Still, it was not something done in public, and Nebuchadnetzar had no intention of revealing his barbaric act to anyone. Thus, when Tzidkiyahu entered unexpectedly and caught Nebuchadnetzar in the act, the latter made him take an oath that he would not reveal his secret. Tzidkiyahu did anyhow. Therefore, says the Midrash, Nebuchadnetzar, " ... sent for the Sanhedrin and said to them, "Explain Torah to me ..." They immediately read from parshah to parshah, and when they arrived at the section of, "If a man makes a vow ..." he said to them, "If one wants to cancel [his vow], may he?" they answered him, "He should go to a wise man and have him annul it." Upon hearing this, Nebuchadnetzar informed them that he considered them to have annulled Tzidkiyahu's vow, and promptly had them tortured to death. It is to this, concludes the Midrash, the Yirmiyahu refers in Eichah ... "The elders of the daughter of Tzion sit on the ground in silence; they have strewed ashes on their heads, and wear sackcloth. The maidens of Jerusalem have bowed their heads to the ground." (a good connection to the Three Weeks, which we now find ourselves in). (Eichah 2:10) And all because of a vow, or at least, an annulled vow. Hence, Rebi Elazar's warning, and also why the rabbis teach: The annulment of vows "hangs in the air." (Chagigah 10a) "The annulment of vows of which the Chachamim say can be performed by a wise man, though hinted to in the Torah has very little support. Rather, it is a law that was handed down as part of the Oral Law." (Tosfos) Which is probably why Nebuchadnetzar also held the leaders of the Sanhedrin responsible for Tzidkiyahu's breach of trust. All-in-all, one has to be very careful in the first place not to make promises. Certainly, if a promise is made, one should avoid annulling it unless halachah demands that they do, for, the Torah and the Talmud are very, very strict about one who does not stick to his word. ... Project Genesis: Torah on the Information Superhighway learn@torah.org 17 Warren Road, Suite 2B <http://www.torah.org/> Baltimore, MD 21208 (410) 602-1350 FAX: 602-1351

From: Aish HaTorah [SMTP: aishlist@mail.netvision.net.il]
Aish HaTorah's BRAINSTORMING WITH BAARS
PARSHAT MATOT-MASAY Numbers 30:2 - 36:13
by Rabbi Stephen Baars Aish HaTorah Washington DC
"LYING" "The tongue is the pen of the heart." - Bachya Ibn Pekudah (11th

century Spanish rabbi)

Tom Gilbert stepped up to the docket. Muffled gasps arose from the court as the startled onlookers held the edge of their seats. His hands and feet shackled, Gilbert was flanked by two armed guards - standard procedure for dangerous criminals. Gilbert stood accused of the famous Hillbridge massacres that shocked America in the early '90s. The court bailiff walked up to Gilbert, and with a slight hesitation in his voice asked: "Do you swear to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth?" Gilbert shot back with a contemptuous laugh. "Fool! Do you seriously expect me, a mass murderer, to tell the truth?!" Should we expect that an accused murderer - or even a petty thief - would have any qualms about lying to save himself? Do we really think lying is worse than murder?? Why do we cling to the ideal of "swearing to tell the truth?" Is this a relic of some bygone time, an illogical ritual? What are the origins of the judicial practice of "swearing in?" Was there a time when the judicial system stood for something more... something that escapes us today?

"It would be a mistake to ascribe to Roman legal conceptions undivided sway over the development of law and institutions during the Middle Ages. The laws of Moses, as well as the laws of Rome, contributed suggestions and impulse to the men and institutions which were to prepare the modern world, and if we could but have the eyes to see the subtle elements of thought which constitute the gross substance of our present habit, both as regards the sphere of private life and as regards the action of the State, we should easily discover how very much besides religion we owe to the Jew." - Woodrow Wilson, President of the United States

THE SPIRITUALITY OF SPEECH This week's parsha states: "If a man makes a vow to G-d, or makes an oath to obligate himself, he must not break his word. He must do all that he expressed verbally." (Numbers 30:3). Actually, the Torah does not say, "He must not break his word." The literal translation is, "He must not profane his word." This injunction is not merely an echoing of the secular maxim: "A man's word is his bond." The Torah is implying much more. There is something special about that which proceeds from your mouth. Not fulfilling what you say is not just a question of breaking your word, but it profanes the very essence of who you are. We've all heard the expression, "I think, therefore I am." Judaism has a stronger version: "I speak, therefore I am." More than the realm of "thought," the spoken word changes the type of person you are. Thoughts are ideas in potential; we bring them into reality through the modicum of speech. Articulating your most noble dream moves you a significant step closer to making it a reality. Judaism says that words are not merely sounds or vibrations in the wind. They are reality. Words take an idea out of potential and make it real. If you lie, then you lose the ability to express your ideas into a stable-secure medium, and so, you lose your connection to reality. Speech is at the very core of our being. Therefore, it is of utmost significance to habituate your mouth to always tell the truth, for through this one becomes a truthful person.

THE PAIN OF THE LIE "When everything depends on just one tiny lie, we forget that in order to correct one lie, seven others have to be told." (-Shevat Yehudah) Words are the medium by which we connect our inside world with the outside one, and alternatively, by which we absorb the outside world into our inside one. The liar says words without any comprehension of what they mean to him; he can say ridiculous and obvious untruths. The liar has broken a vital link with the world around him. Lying creates a panoply of problems. People can no longer trust you, and more tragically, you can no longer trust yourself. The liar will find it increasingly difficult to articulate what he means and what he is feeling - both to others and to himself. Everything he says loses its value. Eventually he will drown in the confusion of who he is and what life means. Shakespeare noted, "Above all else, to thy own self be true." The Jewish concept is different. Being true to oneself is possible... only if to others you are also true.

KEEP YOUR MOUTH CLEAN "Rabbi Gamliel told his servant to buy the best meat in the market. The servant brought home a tongue. The next day Rabbi Gamliel asked him to buy the worst thing in the market; again the servant bought a tongue. This incident teaches us that there is nothing better

than a good tongue, and nothing worse than an evil one." - Midrash, Vayikra Rabba 33 Our Sages tell us that it is important to teach your mouth to say "I don't know." Just as saying "please" and "thank you" trains a person to be grateful, similarly, "I don't know" conditions a person to be humble. Just as there are certain foods we would find abhorrent to eat, so too, we should be repulsed at the possibility of swallowing a lie. Similarly there are some words we should be repulsed to say. "I want to do evil;" "I don't care about other people;" "I want to be miserable." These phrases are hard to pass by our lips. If there's a phrase you can't bring yourself to say, then realize how significant that concept is in your life and in the essential makeup of your being. Make an effort to live with the fundamental ideas that make up who you are. At the very least say, "I want, above all else, to be good, to do the right thing; I want to have purpose and meaning in life." By saying it, you have moved yourself closer to achieving it.

<http://www.aish.edu/learning/maillists/lists.htm> The author, Rabbi Stephen Baars was born and bred in London. He is the only rabbi to perform at the Improv Comedy Club in Los Angeles, and is now the Educational Director of Aish HaTorah in Washington DC. (C) 1999 Aish HaTorah International - All rights reserved. Email: sbaars@aish.edu Home Page: <http://www.aish.edu> <http://www.thewall.org>

From:Ohr Somayach[SMTP:ohr@virtual.co.il] Issue # 282 Rosh Hashana 2 - 8 Matot - Masei

The Hidden King Standing before the Persian king whom he served, Nechemia realized that the fate of Jerusalem's beleaguered Jewish community, desperately trying to rebuild the city following the Babylonian Exile, depended on his gaining royal permission to take temporary leave from his post and assuming leadership of that effort. The presentation of his plea is thus described: "The king said to me 'What is your request?' and I prayed to the Heavenly G-d. I said to the king: 'If it please the king, and your servant finds favor with you, let me be sent to Judea, to the city where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.'" (Nechemia 2:45) The prayer for heavenly assistance appears, on the surface, to be a parenthetical pause between the king's question and Nechemia's response. Maharsha suggests, however, that Nechemia's recording of what he said to the king is not a reference to his response to the Persian ruler but rather constitutes the text of his prayer to Heaven. The king to whom he addressed these words was the King of Kings whom he implored to grant him favor in the eyes of the earthly king. The source for such an approach is found in the words of another great Jewish leader of that period between the first and second Beit Hamikdash. When Daniel interpreted the dream of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, he thus described the heavenly gift of power which had been granted him: "You, King of Kings, Lord of the heavens, a mighty and powerful kingdom has been granted to you." (Daniel 2:36) Wherever the word "king" is used in the Book of Daniel, say our Sages (mesechta Shavuos 35b), it refers to an earthly ruler except in this passage. Daniel was explaining to the vainglorious world conqueror that it was the Divine king of Kings, Lord of the Heavens, Who had granted him his mighty and powerful kingdom and Who had sent him a message in his dream that this kingdom, the first of Jewry's four exiles, would eventually give way to others until the Kingdom of Heaven was finally established on earth. * Rosh Hashana 3b

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Beitzah 36b

IS MARRIAGE A MITZVAH? QUESTIONS: The Mishnah mentions the act of Kidushin in its list of voluntary ("Reshus") acts that are prohibited on Shabbos and on Yom Tov. The Gemara asks why the Mishnah calls Kidushin a "Reshus" if getting married is a Mitzvah. The Gemara answers that the Mishnah is referring to case where one is already married and has children.

RASHI explains that the Mitzvah that one fulfills by getting married is the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivyah -- having children. Other than the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivyah, there is no inherent Mitzvah in the act of getting married. That is why the Gemara mentions not only that he already has a wife, but he already has children as well. (We might ask, though, that if the Mitzvah depends on having children, then why does the Gemara add that he already has a wife? It should suffice to say that he has children, even if he does not have a wife.)

The ROSH in Kesuvos (1:12) says that the reason why no blessing (Birkas haMitzvah) is recited on the act of Kidushin is because there is no inherent Mitzvah of Kidushin; the only reason why one must get married is in order to fulfill the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivyah. This is consistent with our Gemara and with Rashi. However, the Rosh adds that if one wants, one may fulfill the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivyah without getting married at all, but merely by taking a Pilegsh (concubine).

(a) According to the Rosh, why does the Gemara here say that the reason why the Mishnah does not count Kidushin as a Mitzvah is because it is talking about a case where one already has a wife

and children? It should have answered that there is no Mitzvah to marry a wife, since one could always fulfill his obligation of Piryah v'Rivayah by taking a Pilegish! Why does the Gemara have to set up the Mishnah as referring to such an unlikely case?

(b) Second, the RAMBAM (Hilchos Ishus 1:2) writes that it is a Mitzvas Aseh to get married. What does the Rambam do with our Gemara? The Rambam seems to say that every time one marries a woman, he fulfills a Mitzvah! If so, what difference does it make if he already has a wife or children?

ANSWERS: (a) It must be that since it is uncommon for a woman to agree to a man to become his Pilegish (since she has no guarantee that the man will take care of her and her children, as she receives no Kesuvah and there is no Kidushin), the Gemara considers Kidushin a Mitzvah, because in practice one will not be able to fulfill Piryah v'Rivayah by taking a Pilegish, and he will have no choice but to get married with Kidushin.

The Rosh in Kesuvos writes that no blessing is recited on the act of Kidushin because it is not a Mitzvah, since one could theoretically fulfill the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivayah by taking a Pilegish. Even though it is unlikely that one will find a woman to be a Pilegish, nevertheless since there exists the possibility of fulfilling Piryah v'Rivayah without Kidushin, no blessing is recited on Kidushin because it is not considered an intrinsic part of the Mitzvah of Piryah v'Rivayah.

(b) The MAGID MISHNAH cites RAV AVRAHAM BEN HA'RAMBAM who was asked a similar question concerning the opinion of the Rambam. He answered that the Rambam did not mean that the act of Kidushin is a Mitzvah, but rather that the act of *Nisu'in* is a Mitzvah (which is expressed in the wording of the Rambam in his list of Mitzvos at the beginning of Hilchos Ishus). Therefore, when the Rambam writes that Kidushin is a Mitzvah, he means that it is the beginning of the fulfillment of the Mitzvah of Nisu'in. In our Sugya, too, the Gemara does not consider Kidushin a Mitzvah because without the Nisu'in, one has not completed the Mitzvah.

Another possibility is that the Rambam does not mean that it is a Mitzvas Aseh to marry a wife with Kidushin. Rather, he means that there is an *Isur Aseh* to take a woman *without* Kidushin (the Rambam holds that taking a Pilegish is Asur, as he writes in Hilchos Melachim 4:4). The Magid Mishnah mentions this possibility later in Hilchos Ishus (1:4). Accordingly, there is no actual Mitzvah in the act of Kidushin.

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The Torah tells us to recite the "Shema" prayer twice each day. The Shema says: "And you shall love the Lord your G-d, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your resources." Typically the Torah presents a series as a progression from easiest to hardest: Love G-d emotionally ("heart"), and even be willing to give up your life if necessary ("soul"), and even be willing to spend your money, too! Yet if this is a progression, are there really people who consider money more important than life itself?! And the answer is yes. The Talmud speaks about a person who is walking across a thorny field, picks up his pants in order to avoid getting them ripped. Of course, the person's legs get all cut up and scratched - but at least the pants are saved! One time I had to stay overnight in Nevada, where gambling is legal and every hotel has a casino. I went up to my hotel room and wanted to open the window to get some fresh air. But the window wouldn't open more than a crack. I thought it was stuck. So I pushed harder and harder. Finally I asked: "What is the problem with this window?" I was told that the windows in this hotel are specially designed not to open more than a crack. This way, people who have lost money gambling won't be tempted to jump out the window and kill themselves.

Priorities. The lesson from our parsha is clear. After travelling through the desert for 40 years, and enduring countless trials and tribulations, the Jewish people are now standing across the Jordan, ready to enter the Promised Land. It is one of the defining moments in all of Jewish history. But Reuven and Gad say they'd rather take good grazing land than enter Israel! They had come so far, but they only went halfway. They became distracted by material goals and it hurt them when it really counted. The Talmud says that when Reuven and Gad later saw the rich life in the Land of Israel, they regretted their decision. But the story has an even sadder ending: When Assyrian King Sencherib exiled the Jewish people during the time of the First Temple, the first tribes to be conquered and sent away were, you guessed it, Reuven and Gad. The lesson for us is clear. We know what our priorities should be; sometime we just get distracted. May we have the strength and clarity to connect our heart to our mind - and to act upon that which we intellectually know to be right.

SHABBAT SHALOM, RABBI SHRAGA SIMMONS This Devar Torah is dedicated to the memory of Rabbi Shmuel Yaakov Weinberg zt"l, Dean of the Ner Israel Rabbinical College in Baltimore, MD, who passed away last week.

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From: Aish HaTorah[SMTPT:aishlist@mail.netvision.net.il]

Aish HaTorah: SHRAGA'S WEEKLY
PARSHAT MATOT-MASAY Numbers 30:2 - 36:13
"PRIORITIES"

In this week's parsha, the Jewish People are in their final preparations for entering the Land of Israel. Two of the tribes, Reuven and Gad have been blessed with such an abundance of flocks and herds, that they anticipate not having enough grazing land in Israel. So they propose the following: Instead of taking our regular portion of land within Israel proper, we'll instead stay here on the Eastern side of the Jordan River. Moses' reaction to this request? He lambastes them! Why? Not because they were choosing to stay outside Israel. As commentators explain, this had deep kabbalistic implications of gathering sparks of holiness from around the world. Rather, Moses was upset because when making their request (Numbers 32:4), Reuven and Gad blatantly disregard the needs of their children - and mention their cattle only. The leaders of Reuven and Gad get the hint. Somewhat. In 32:16, they approach Moses again and restate their request. This time they mention their cattle - and then their children. Moses again is not happy; they demonstrated a lack of priority for putting career ahead of family. Finally, they seem get the idea. In 32:26, they put everything in the proper order.

We've all met people who are working overtime to "give their kids something extra" - while ruining that very relationship by not spending enough time with their kids!! Imagine the case of Mr. Schwartz, an investment banker in a major Wall Street financial firm. He spends most of his days trying to reach his lifelong goal of earning \$10 million. He and his wife have three kids. One day, a wealthy philanthropist named Mr. Cohen, who unfortunately has no children, decides to make Mr. Schwartz a very generous offer. Cohen says, "You're spending your whole life to make \$10 million dollars, right? But your kids are growing up without a father. You're off to work before they get up and home long after they've gone to sleep. On weekends, you're at the club entertaining business clients from out of town. But a child needs a father. I'll give you the biggest shortcut of your financial career. I'm willing to offer you \$10 million dollars in exchange for the rights to adopt one of your children. Your child will have the best of everything. The only condition is that you will never be able to see or hear from your child again." What does Schwartz say? Ten million dollars certainly gets his attention! But even he realizes that there are things in life that you can't put a price tag on. Schwartz stares Cohen right between the eyes and announces: "No deal." Ten million dollars. But "money can't buy you love." (Somebody should write a song about that.)

Now imagine the scene. Schwartz has just shut the door on \$10 million dollars. He walks back into his living room where his kids are playing on the living room floor. What do you think he does when he sees them? With tears in his eyes, he gives them each a big hug and kiss. "You darling creatures are worth more than all the money in the universe!" Then he stops and realizes: "Where have I been all their lives? I have something at home that's worth more to me than all the money in the world - and I'm working so hard I barely spend one hour a week with them!" So what does Schwartz do? He calls the office, announces he's taking a two-week vacation, and sends the maids, nannies and babysitters away. He's going to spend two blissful weeks with his kids. After struggling for an hour to get the stroller open, Schwartz finally makes it to the park. He and the kids are having a grand time. But then comes dinner, bath and story time. After enduring food fights, floods in the bathtub and endless readings of "Babar Goes to the Circus," Schwartz flops down on the couch, turns to his wife and says, "Perhaps I was a bit hasty about that two week vacation. You know I have a lot of responsibilities at work..." Schwartz is making a big mistake. More than presents, children need your presence.