

WEEK OF

July 16 2017

22 Tamuz, 5777

WEEKLY PARSHA NEWSLETTER

BS"D



OHEL
SARA
THE FEMALE VOICE OF TORAH & SONG

Parshat Matot-Masei

By: Rabanit
K. Sarah Cohen

PARSHA

HALACHA

STORY

Q&A

SHIURIM

JOKE

RIDDLE

QUOTES

DAVEN FOR

PARSHAT MATOT

Moshe Rabeinu (a"h) had been a skilled mediator for the past 40 years. From the incident of Chet Ha'egel when he appeased Hashem through the many ordeals throughout the 40-year desert sojourn, he is constantly an advocate for the wishes of the nation.

This week, however, Moshe Rabeinu reacts completely different to what appears to be a simple demand.

The children of Gad and Reuven come to Moshe Rabeinu (a"h) with a simple request. They are shepherds and do not want to cross the Jordan River into the Land of Canaan. They claim that the land on the East bank of the river is better for grazing. Before they have a chance to fully present their request,

Moshe Rabeinu releases a virtual tirade at them. For eleven pesukim, more than any single rebuke in the entire Torah Hakedoshah, Moshe Rabeinu reprimands them. He says that their request is subversive and will dissuade others from crossing the Jordan. He relives the fateful episode of the meraglim and their slander of Eretz Yisrael. He recounts the anger of Hashem and details the suffering of Bnei Yisrael because of

that sin. He compares the representatives who requested to remain to those terrible men, and claims that Gad and Reuven "have risen in their place to add more burning wrath of Hashem against Israel" (Matot: 6-16).

It is extremely difficult to comprehend why Moshe Rabeinu, usually so patient, and understanding, even during the most difficult of times, became so sharply angered at this request. Obviously, Moshe Rabeinu's actions are a lesson to all of us. What is it? The answer can be explained with a story.

David Klein was driving to the Catskills for Shabat but set out from his Manhattan office with hardly enough time to make it before sundown. Traffic was backed up for miles it seemed and arriving on time was going to be an impossible task.

Mid-span, after sitting nearly an hour in stop-and-go traffic, he realized that sun was about to set below the horizon. He had never desecrated the Shabat before and traffic on the George Washington Bridge was not going to make him violate it now.

In a panic, he pulled his car as close as he could to the guard rail, left the

REFUAH SHLEIMAH
&
HATZLACHAH

Yonah bat Henya

Michael ben Yonah

Ro'ee ben Rachel

May bat Ilana

Ben Tzvi ben Ilana

Gidon ben Esther

Esther bat Mazal

Yosef ben Devorah

Yaffa bat Rivka

Baruch Chai ben Zoya

Rivkah bat Malkah

Nissan ben Liza

Gavriel ben Toviyo

David ben Liza

Baila Chava
bat
SorkaFreida Leah
bat
Pesha RachelYehoshuah Mordechai
ben
Leah GitaChaim Yehudah
ben
AidelEfrat
bat
Shifra Tanya

keys on the visor, removed his wallet and hid it together with his personal items and hoped for the best. At worst, the car would be stolen or maybe the police would get to it first and tow it.

Feeling a little guilty about adding to the traffic delays on the bridge, David left his car, flashers blinking, and walked back toward New York City where he decided to spend Shabat at a friend who lived in nearby.

Motzei Shabat he returned to the bridge and his car was nowhere to be seen. He went straight to the police station and asked for the desk officer. "Did anyone see the gray Honda that was on the George Washington Bridge on Friday night?"

The officers eyes widened. "You mean the car with the keys on the visor?"

David nodded.

"Franky, get over here," the cop yelled to his friend, by now a couple of officers moved closer to David. The sergeant raised his voice. "You mean the Honda with the flashers on?"

Again David nodded, this time more nervously.

"You mean the Honda with the wallet with close to \$500 dollars left under the front seat!" he shouted. Was that your car!?"

David shook his head meekly. "Yes, officer, that's my car. Where is it?"

"Where is it?" mocked the officer, "You're kidding right? Do you know how many divers we have looking for your body in the Hudson!?"

Moshe Rabeinu understood that the worst of all sins is not what one does privately in his heart or in his home but rather when his actions affect the spirit of others.

Often, one's self-interest swamps any thought of how his conduct will affect other people deeply. The children of Gad and Reuven had a personal issue. They did not want to cross the Jordan River because they wanted to graze in greener pastures. Yet they did not consider what effect their request might have on an entire nation.

They did not take into account the severe ramifications their actions may have on the morale of hundreds of thousands of enthusiastic people wanting to enter Eretz Yisrael.

In our lives, at home and at work, not everything that we do, say or act upon may be interpreted with the intent that motivated the action. And sometimes those misinterpretations can have devastating effects on the spirit, attitude and feelings of those we hold dear.

We may refuse to cross a river for a matter of convenience. Others, however, may see it as a calamity. Our job is to be conscious that everything we do or do not do - say or do not say, convey or not convey - affects not only ourselves, but it is a bridge to many other people.

We can create harmony, inner peace and understanding or we can create confusion, sadness and dejection. The choice is ours. The bridge can lead to connections or to nowhere.

THE SAME G-D

One of the kinot we recite on Tisha B'Av is "Esh tukad b'kirbi - a fire of [elation] burns within me..." This kinah contrasts our joyous redemption from Egypt with our tragic exodus from Yerushalayim. When we left Egypt, our hearts were on fire and filled with anticipation as we waited for the receiving of the Torah. When we left Yerushalayim, we were in great pain, with kinot on our lips.

This is a common theme throughout our history. Sometimes we witness the benevolence of Hashem - his "he'arat panim," (shining of His face) - and at times we experience "hester panim," (concealment). No matter what we go through in life, we must know that is coming from the same Hashem.

The pasuk in Megilat Eicha states: "Hisbiani vamerorim hirvani laanah - He filled me with bitterness, sated me with wormwood" (3:15).

The Midrash Rabah notes that the term "hisbiani vamerorim" is referring to the maror we eat on the first night of Pesach - while the term "hirvani lanaah," refers to the bitterness of Tisha B'Av night. Interestingly, the night of Pesach always falls on the same day of the week as the night of Tisha B'Av. The message in similarity can be explained with the following story.



RIDDLE

For some I go fast, for others I'm slow.
To most people, I'm an obsession
relying on me is a well-practiced lesson.

WHAT AM I?

(Answer on Page 5)



Two beggars sat on a bench, lamenting their faith. Neither of them had money and both had to beg for food. There was one major difference between them. One had always been poor and the other had once been wealthy.

The bitterness and pain of the once wealthy man was much greater than that of the man who was always poor and had no idea what he was missing.

As Jews, sadly enough, we do know what we are missing. The Yafei Anaf (a"h) explains, that there was once a time when we were kings. We tasted the sweetness of freedom and redemption. And now that has been replaced with "wormwood." It is for this reason that the night of Tisha B'Av falls out on the same day as Pesach. We are reminded, that just a few months before, we tasted freedom and we were so close to G-d - and that Hashem was so happy with us. But here we are a few months later, lamenting what we no longer have.

POSITIVELY!

Communication is a way to connect with others. By speaking, people not only convey ideas but also impart feelings and affect the emotions of their listeners. A continuous torrent of negative comments can build a negative self-image in the mind of the listener. Positive encouragement however, can build a successful human being.

A parent, teacher, employer, spouse, or friend may be well intentioned when correcting another's behavior, but the wrong choice of words may produce a result far from the mark.

One parent may say, "Go to bed! You are going to be exhausted tomorrow and you will fail your test!" while another may express the same thought differently: "I suggest you get some rest and when you do I'm sure you will be sharp for your exam tomorrow."

When at work, co-workers may not see eye-to eye and one may blurt out, "How can anyone believe that silly idea will work?"



"That's the craziest thing I've ever heard!" while another might say, "Perhaps we should take another look at this problem before deciding what to do."

It is all a matter of perspective and the attitude we take in order to communicate well.

There are times that you may become frustrated when you make an innocent statement and the listener responds in a negative manner. Remember that the same holds true for the listener not only the speaker. He who listens should use his ears to hear the sounds of positive energy resonating from the speaker.

"Sof maaseh be'machashavah techilah - the end action begins with a thought."

This can be applied to he who is the listener. If the listener fills his mind with positive thoughts concerning the words he is hearing - then the END result will produce a positive communication. When the TWO come together, the speaker who is careful with his words and the listener who hears them in a positive manner - only good can come from this.

In Sefer Mishlei it states: "Death and life depend on the tongue" (18:21).

Today you may spend your waking hours using the gift of speech. Consider the effect of the words that leave your lips. Will they be weapons of destruction or tools of construction?

What is mankind's unique advantage over the animal kingdom? Man is certainly not the fastest or strongest creature. Yet man possesses something that no other creature in the universe has - the ability to creatively communicate.

While other animals can communicate as a survival mechanism, none but mankind can express a philosophical query.



The Torah says that when Hashem blew a neshamah into Adam, he became a "speaking being." The driving force of humanity is verbal interaction.

Remember that words, when used incorrectly, can create pain and anguish while wiping out a person's self-esteem. It can destroy ambitions and dreams. We have all seen the power of speech tear apart relationships, families, and even entire communities.

On the other hand, words can be used for tremendous good: cheering up someone who is having a hard day; bolstering someone's self-esteem; instilling a sick person with a sense of hope. Never underestimate the power of words to make a difference in someone's life.

THOUGHT OF THE DAY

"Just as a father likes to see his children getting along well with each other - Hashem likes to see His children - the Jewish people - get along with one another."

(Tanna D'vai Eliyahu: Perek 5)

A CUTE STORY

A new teacher tried to make use of her psychology courses. The first day of class, she started by saying, "Boys and girls, anyone who thinks they're stupid, please stand up!"

After a few seconds, Little Johnny stands up. The teacher asked, "Do you think you're stupid, Johnny?"

"No, ma'am, but I hate to see you standing there all by yourself."

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ANSWER TO RIDDLE

Time

QUOTES

** "It is better to keep your mouth closed and let people think you are a fool than to open it and remove all doubt." **

** "The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to shed some happiness for someone else who is sad." **

PARSHAT MASEI

In this week's parshah, a man who kills someone accidentally is exiled to an Ir Miklat, a city of refuge. The very distinguished group of Leviim, also lived in those cities. Their job was to travel throughout Eretz Yisrael, teaching and preaching. The Leviim then returned to their homes and neighbors, to the people who killed through carelessness. They played an integral role in the killer's rehabilitation.

The sentence imposed on the killers was also very unique. It was not defined by time, but rather by circumstance. The killers were set free only when the Kohen Gadol died. The Gemara of Makot states that the Kohen Gadol's family members were concerned that there would be an assassination plot against the Kohen Gadol's life. They were worried that the convicts would pray for the death of the Kohen Gadol, thereby ensuring their early release.

In order to dissuade them, the Kohen Gadol's mother distributed food and clothing to the inmates to deter them from praying for her son's death. It is hard to understand. Are there no loved ones that can provide these outcasts with provisions? Were the cookies of the Kohen Gadol's mother worth exile in the city of refuge? How did these gifts work as bribes? The answer can be explained with a story.

Reb Aryeh Levine (a"h) was known to visit Jewish inmates, held under British rule prior to Israel's statehood. He became like a father to the prisoners, bringing them food, clothes and love. For years, despite the weather conditions, he never missed a Shabat visit, with one exception.

Once, in the midst of Shabat services, a nervous messenger called him out of the prison. Reb Aryeh's daughter became paralyzed and the doctors were helpless. He was needed at home, immediately.

Following Shabat, another messenger was sent by the concerned inmates to inquire what tragedy interrupted the weekly visit.

The following Shabat, despite the enduring tragedy at home, the Rav went to the prison as usual.

Normally during the Torah reading, prisoners would pledge a few coins to tzedakah. This week the donations were far different.

"I will give up a week of my life for the sake of Reb Aryeh's daughter," the first convict pledged. Another prisoner announced that he would give a month from his. Each one who was called to the Torah upped the previous pledge until the last prisoner cried out, "what is our life compared to Reb Aryeh's anguish? I will give all my remaining days for the sake of the Rabbi's daughter."

At this unbelievable display of love and affection, Reb Aryeh broke down and wept. Miraculous as it may sound, that Motzei Shabat Reb Aryeh's daughter began to move and within days was fully recovered.

The cities of refuge were not jails, or detention camps. They were environments in which reckless people became aware that careless actions have serious ramifications. They were constantly under the influence of their neighbors, the Leviim. They would observe them pray, learn, and teach others. They would see the epitome of awareness and the caring for fellow human beings.

The mission of the Kohen Gadol's mother was not only to distribute food. It was to develop a bond with those people whose carelessness spurred a death. They saw the love a parent had for her son as she subconsciously pleaded with the inmates to spare her him. They saw how a total stranger, despite her great esteem, would make sure that their needs in the city of refuge were tended to.

After developing an awareness of life, they would never be able to pray for the death of anyone, even if it meant their own freedom. In fact, they, like Reb Aryeh's prisoners, may have offered their years for the merit of the Kohen Gadol.

The Torah Hakedoshah cannot punish without teaching and rehabilitating. It infuses a love for life and spirituality into former careless killers. Its goal is to mold a new person whose attitudes will cause him to be kinder, gentler, and a lot more careful.

**ATTENTION LADIES**

Call us to host a learning group in your community.

(347) 430-5700

Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen will be speaking on the following dates:

Date: July 22, 2017 - Shabat

Time: 5:00pm

Place: 1309 Ave N - Bklyn, NY

Date: July 24, 2017

Time: 10:00am

Place: 6 Antoinette Court - Suffern, NY

**SPECIAL ROSH CHODESH PROGRAM
SINGING OF THE HALLEL & SHIUR**

Date: July 26, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: Aug 09, 2017

Time: 8:15pm

Place: 902 Ocean Pkwy #6D - Bklyn, NY

Date: August 26, 2017 - Shabat

Time: 5:00pm

Place: 1364 E7th - Bklyn, NY

Date: August ?? - To Be Announced

Time: 7:45pm

Place: 115 Addison Rd.
Bergenfield, NJ 07621

ANNOUNCEMENT

Audio-visual shiurim of

Rabanit

Kíneret Sarah Cohen

Are Now Available For Viewing At

www.torahanytime.com

Instructions: Register for free and click on the "Ladies" tab at the top of the Home Page. Scroll down and look for Rabanit K. Sarah Cohen. Underneath the image for the Rabanit, click on the "**follow**" tab if you want to be notified via email or text about a shiur that has become available for viewing.

Shiur To Post Monday, July 24

The 9 Days

When Darkness Leads To Light

Log on and enjoy the live lectures and be inspired.



Newsletter Dedication

Sara Bat Mimon Ha'Kohen (A"H)

Ohel Sara is named after this tzadikah (my grandmother). May the inspiration that women draw from this weekly newsletter benefit her neshamah in Gan Eden and may we all be redeemed as a result.



Ohel Sara wishes all it's readers a Shabbat Shalom u'Mevorach!



Candlelighting Time

8:03PM
NY TIME



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