



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on Maatot / Maase

Year 25

by Dayan Abraham David

The Twelve Tribes were given the command and made the preparation to conquer Eretz Canaan; they were told how to divide it and who should be in charge to do this. Levi was excluded in this inheritance, but the Bnei Yisrael were commanded to give them 42 cities besides the six. 'Arey miklat', cities of refuge. They also had to give them some land around the cities, one thousand 'arnot' about 500 metres, which could not be used for sowing or planting for food but just as gardens, to graze their animals and for their personal use. According to Rashi a further 1000 'arnot', about 500 metres, for fields and trees, altogether 2000 'arnot;' but, according to the Rambam, another 2000 'arnot' for planting and sewing besides the first 1000 'arnot' for gardens and personal use. We see the importance of having gardens and open fields and trees for fresh fruit and vegetables, even though the main sustenance would have to come from further a field. What we need to understand is why did they not inherit their cities directly from G-d, the same as other Tribes, but had to be given by the other Tribes of Yisrael, from their inheritance, like some sort of charity. Granted they were not given a full inheritance of fields and land, like the

other Tribes their inheritance was to do the service of G-d in the Temple and be the teachers of the Jewish people. For this they were supported through the 'Maaserot and Matanot Kehunah' But why were their dwellings at least not given directly to them by G-d as a 'nachalah', an inheritance but through the Tribes.

The Dubna Magid gives a beautiful insight with a parable: A father who had 12 sons had to go on a long journey with them but there was only one son who could cook. He felt he could not approach this son to cook for everyone and even if his son agreed he would not do it happily. So the father bought large cooking vessels to take with him on the journey so that the brother who knew how to cook would have to cook a lot of food and not just a little for himself. You cannot cook a little food in a very large pot and so in this way his other children would also have cooked food. The Tribe of Levi had dedicated their lives to the service of Hashem in the Beth Hamikdash and as teachers, 'Sifte Cohen Yisimeru daat', they were close to Hashem and would have their prayers and beseeching answered easier and quicker than the other Tribes. Hence if they had a portion in the Land like the other Tribes i.e. their own little pot, then they would be praying for themselves and receiving all the 'Berachot'. Hashem in his mercy and love for the Tribes of Yisrael made the portion of Levi dependant on all the

Tribes. They would be given a living receiving their sustenance from the Maaserot of the Bnei Yisrael i.e. their portion from the big pot. They would have to cook for all in that pot, the Levites would have to pray for the success of all the Tribes for their livelihood, for their portion would be dependant on the blessings given to the others. Even their dwelling places had to be given by the Tribes in their Midst so they should pray for the success of the Bnei Yisrael in their battles to inherit the land and so the Levites should appreciate their brethren and be bonded with them, they should feel a part of the Tribe they lived with. On the other hand the Tribes should realize that it was a chesed to them, that *'nachalah'* was taken away from the Levites who were the army of Hashem so that they should teach, pray and bring blessing on their brethren, they were the benefactors for the other Tribes. The Rambam in end of Shemitta and Yovel explains why *'Shevet Levi'* did not get an inheritance in the Land like the other Tribes. It was because they had separated themselves to become the army of G-d to serve Him and to teach His laws to the Jewish people. They should not have to work physically to support themselves but would be given their needs to be free to do the spiritual service on behalf of the Jewish people.

The Rambam concludes *'ve lo Shevet Levi bilvad ele kol ish veish mikol baye Haolam asher Nidva libo La amod lefne Hashem Lesharto vulavdo Ledat Hashem, Yitkadesh Kodesh Kodashim, ve zocho lo Baloam Haze davar Hamaspeek lo kemo she zicha la Kohanim ve Leviim'*; Not only the Tribes of Levi but any person in the world who gives of himself to the service of Hashem is called Holy and will be given sustenance as was given to the Kohanim and Leviim. This is really the

great sacrifice that those who discard the vanities of this world and its comforts, to dedicate their lives to study and teach Torah in full time service to G-d, they are called Kodesh Kodashim and should be supported as the Kohanim and Leviim were. For they bring *'Beracha'* and blessing to our people as did the Kohanim and Leviim with their service in the Beth Hamikdash. Today the yeshivah world is being hounded by those who do not take any heed of the Torah. They do not understand the truth that helping the Yeshivat and Kollelim is really helping themselves as above.

GEMS

Parashat Masse begins with the journeys of the Bnei Yisrael from when they left Egypt on the 15th of Nisan until they camped in Arbot Moav in the 40th year just before crossing the Jordan. Rashi tells us that this is to show the mercy of G-d that even when he had decreed upon them the wanderings in the desert for 40 years he had not moved them about continuously from place to place. Rashi works out that in those 38 years they had made only 20 journeys since the decree. Even when we are being punished G-d has mercy upon us and limits it to the minimum necessary. The Midrash explains the summing up of their journeys with a parable of a father who takes his ill son to seek a cure for his critical illness. On the way back, he shows his son all the places on their journey where he had problems and had to be helped, where he had to carry him etc. so he should appreciate how much his father had done for him. The lesson for us is if G-d would take us back on a journey in our lives we would see how at every step of the way, He saved us from dangers and

unfortunate happenings and how many things could have been much worse were it not for His intervention. We too should look back for ourselves and appreciate what he has done for us.

The Rambam explains the reason for Moshe enumerating all the journeys is so that we should be able to appreciate the miracles G-d did for our fathers. When we check upon these places and see how desolate they were, places in the midst of a desert, without water or trees or any kind of sustenance. Places where no man ever dwelt and with no traces of civilisation, in which G-d led a nation of many millions for 40 years until He brought us to the Promised Land of Israel. The Jewish people in their many journeys in the exile today, as then, must never give up hope however inhospitable and hopeless the situation seems to be G-d provides for us and will provide until we reach our destination with the coming of the Mashiah. Looking back in our history we see the journeys of our people. Even in the most inhospitable of countries and unlikely places we have been blessed to make a success of adversity, for G-d is with us.

During these 3 weeks we should reflect on the causes of our exile, which is like a journey to cure us. G-d has not abandoned us but in fact carried us on this journey protecting us all the way, giving us all we need to cure us, just waiting for the fever to break, yearning for the smallest improvement.

TORAH INSIGHTS

We May Be Carrying His Sin

Towards the end of the Parashat 'Nedarim', vows, the Pasuk says: '*Ve-im HaferYafer otam achrei shamo ve nasa et avona*'; and if the husband annuls his wife's 'Nedarim' after he had heard it (before), then

he will carry her sin. The case speaks about a husband who had accepted his wife's vow previously and now was annulling it in front of her giving her the impression there was no vow left. And, if she goes ahead and transgresses the vow, he is responsible and it is his sin, '*ve nasa et avona*'. Rashi says we learn from here that a person who causes another to sin will be punished as if he did it. A person who causes another to stumble transgresses an '*issur lefne ever lo, teten mikshall*', one should not put a stumbling block before a blind man and as we see here this would apply to a stumbling block in a spiritual sense as well, i.e. a sin. We must be most careful in our actions not only for ourselves, but for those who might learn from our actions, to be *more 'mekel'* to allow themselves to transgress or to fall off from '*Avodat Hashem*' G-d's service. We should not give advice without thinking through the future consequences for the person concerned.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

On a recent visit with the Rishon Le Zion to the tunnels by the Kotel HaMaaravi, we noticed a well dressed man who seemed to be doing very menial tasks of collecting some of the rubbish and tidying up, guiding and helping the many visitors,. When the man approached the Rabbi for a beracha we found out that he had dedicated himself on his retirement to doing this daily from morning till late in the

afternoon. He told us his story: He had been in the concentration camps when he was a boy and when he was once caught by a Nazi guard saying a prayer for returning to Zion, the guard made fun of him saying: "The only way you Jews will go back is from under the earth". He said this was his way of showing gratitude to G-d. "I have been merited to be under the tunnels of Zion and it is my oppressors who have gone under".

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

The Three Weeks: continued

11) Some have the minhag not to eat meat or to drink wine during the week of Tisha B'Ab but others refrain from Rosh Hodesh Ab and others from the 17th of Tammuz. The minhag Baghdad we follow is to refrain from the 2nd of Ab (the day after Rosh Chodesh).

12) This restriction would apply to children as well but not babies. We also refrain from food cooked with meat.

13) There are no restrictions on meat or wine on Shabbat. According to the Shulhan Aruch we make havdala on wine and drink it ourselves. We avoid Birchat Hamazon on wine on a weekday.

14) For someone who is weak or ill and needs to eat meat then it

is preferable to serve him with chicken.

15) If meaty food is left over from Shabbat and it cannot be frozen or kept away then many poskim allow it to be eaten preferable for Melava Malka on Motzei Shabbat.

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences	8:53 pm
<u>We should not light candles before 7:29 pm</u>	
Shabbat terminates	10:16 pm

Mincha Erev Shabbat	7:15 pm
Followed by Kabbalat Shabbat	

Shacharit	8:30 am
Shabbat :Latest Shema	
Magen Avraham	8:29 am
Shabbat Latest Shema Gra	9:05 am

Mincha pn Shabbat	7:30 pm
Arvit	10:25pm

WEEKDAY TIMES

Shacharit	7:00 am
Sundays	8.00 am
Mincha	7:30 pm
followed by Arbit	

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE GUIDELINES
AND WARNINGS CONCERNING COVID-19**

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