

OHRNET

SHABBAT PARSHIOT MATOT-MASEI · 24 TAMMUZ-2 AV 5776 · JUL. 30-AUG. 6, 2016 · VOL. 23 NO. 44

EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS WEEK MATOT IS READ IN ISRAEL AND NEXT WEEK MASEI IS READ IN ISRAEL (SEPARATELY).
OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL PINCHAS IS READ THIS WEEK, AND MATOT AND MASEI ARE READ TOGETHER NEXT WEEK.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Matot

VENGEANCE IS WHOSE?

“And Moshe spoke to the nation saying...” (13:17)

G-d told Moshe (in 13:2), “Take vengeance for the Jewish People against the Midianites”, whereas when Moshe spoke to the people he said, “Take vengeance for G-d against the Midianites.”

Rashi comments: “Even though he (Moshe) heard that his death was dependent on this (the war with Midian), he did it happily and did not delay.”

How did Rashi see that implication in the words of the Torah?

In essence, the sin of the Midianites was both against G-d — for they ensnared the Jewish People in immorality — and also against the Jewish People — for they caused the death of 24,000 people.

Thus G-d said to Moshe, “I can forgo My honor, but I cannot forgive what they did to the Jewish People.” So when G-d spoke to Moshe, He told him to “avenge the vengeance of the Children of Israel.” However, once Moshe heard that after the battle against Moav he would “be gathered to his people”, that his death was contingent

on this battle, he was concerned that the Jewish People would say that they also would forgo their honor in order to lengthen Moshe’s life.

Thus Moshe said to them, “Avenge the vengeance of G-d...”, implying that the issue was purely a matter of G-d’s honor, and about which they had no right or ability to “look the other way.”

Therefore it says, “So they were delivered from the Children of Israel, a thousand from each tribe.” Rashi comments on the words “they were delivered” that it was against their will to go, and they went only once Moshe had told them that it was to avenge ‘the vengeance of G-d.’

Thus Rashi understood that Moshe commanded the war happily, for he could have easily delayed the battle by repeating G-d’s words verbatim to the Jewish People: that G-d had commanded them to avenge their own honor, in which case they would have demurred, preferring by far to spare Moshe.

• Source: *Kli Yakar*

Masei

JOURNEYS

“These are the journeys...” (13:17)

Every *ba'al teshuva* (a secular Jew who returns to observance) has a moment (or moments) of epiphany. A moment which seems to be sent directly from Heaven to help him on his journey.

At a reunion of a group of ex-secular Israelis organized by a leading outreach organization, one of the Rabbis happened to be passing by an older group. One member of the group

picked up a piece of watermelon, and before eating it said with great concentration, “*Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha’olam, shehakol nihiyeh bid’varo!*”

Said the Rabbi, “Ilan, *bidi’avad* (post facto) the *beracha* you made is sufficient, but the correct text of the *beracha* is “*Borei p’ri ha’adama*”.

“Listen Rabbi”, said Ilan, “I was on the Golan Heights in a

continued on page two

PARSHA OVERVIEW

Matot

Moshe teaches the rules and restrictions governing oaths and vows — especially the role of a husband or father in either upholding or annulling a vow. *Bnei Yisrael* wage war against Midian. They kill the five Midianite kings, all the males and Bilaam. Moshe is upset that women were taken captive. They were catalysts for the immoral behavior of the Jewish People. He rebukes the officers. The spoils of war are counted and apportioned. The commanding officers report to Moshe that there was not one casualty among *Bnei Yisrael*. They bring an offering that is taken by Moshe and Elazar and placed in the *Ohel Mo'ed* (Tent of Meeting). The Tribes of Gad and Reuven, who own large quantities of livestock, petition Moshe to allow them to remain east of the Jordan and not enter the Land of Israel. They explain that the land east of the Jordan is quite suitable grazing land for their livestock. Moshe's initial response is that this request will discourage the rest of *Bnei Yisrael*, and that it is akin to the sin of the spies. They assure Moshe that they will first help conquer Israel, and only then will they go back to their homes on the eastern side of the Jordan River. Moshe

grants their request on condition that they uphold their part of the deal.

Masei

The Torah names all 42 encampments of *Bnei Yisrael* on their 40-year journey from the Exodus until the crossing of the Jordan River into *Eretz Yisrael*. G-d commands *Bnei Yisrael* to drive out the Canaanites from *Eretz Yisrael* and to demolish every vestige of their idolatry. *Bnei Yisrael* are warned that if they fail to rid the land completely of the Canaanites, those who remain will be "pins in their eyes and thorns in their sides." The boundaries of the Land of Israel are defined, and the tribes are commanded to set aside 48 cities for the *levi'im*, who do not receive a regular portion in the division of the Land. Cities of refuge are to be established: Someone who murders unintentionally may flee there. The daughters of Tzeloofchad marry members of their tribe so that their inheritance will stay in their own tribe. Thus ends the Book of *Bamidbar/Numbers*, the fourth of the Books of the Torah.

PARSHA INSIGHTS

Masei - Continued from page one

tank in '73. We were surrounded by Syrian tanks. No one was getting out of there alive. Someone came over the radio and said, 'Doesn't anyone know a prayer or something?' Silence. Then someone said, 'I once heard something, and it goes like this: *Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro!* So we all shouted in unison down the radio: *Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro!* And 'Boom!' — we took out one of the Syrian tanks. So I shouted again: *Baruch Atah Hashem, Elokeinu Melech ha'olam, shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro!* And

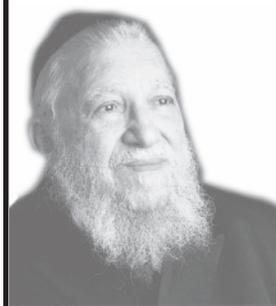
'Boom!' — another Syrian tank! *Baruch Atah Hashem... shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro!* — and another one. ...*shehakol nihiyeh bi'dvaro!* — another one; "...*shehakol nihiyeh bid'varo!* — and another one.

"So listen Rabbi, if it's good enough for the Syrians, it's good enough for watermelon."

(It's a wonderful story, but of course the proper beracha for watermelon is as the Rabbi had instructed.)

• Source: Heard from Rabbi Dovid Kaplan

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Rav Bulman *zt"l*
on the
Torah Portion of the Week

PARSHA Q&A ?

Matot

1. Who may annul a vow?
2. When may a father annul his widowed daughter's vows?
3. Why were the Jewish People not commanded to attack Moav, as they were to attack Midian?
4. Those selected to fight Midian went unwillingly. Why?
5. What holy vessels accompanied the Jewish People into battle?
6. Those who killed in the war against Midian were required to remain outside the "machane" (camp). Which machane?
7. Besides removing traces of forbidden food, what else is needed to make metal vessels obtained from a non-Jew fit for a Jewish owner?
8. "We will build sheep-pens here for our livestock and cities for our little ones." What was improper about this statement?
9. During the conquest of the Land, where did *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* position themselves?
10. What promise did *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* make beyond that which Moshe required?

Masei

1. Why does the Torah list the places where the Jewish People camped?
2. Why did the King of Arad feel at liberty to attack the Jewish People?
3. What length was the camp in the *midbar*?
4. Why does the Torah need to specify the boundaries that are to be inherited by the Jewish People?
5. What was the *nesi'im*'s role in dividing the Land?
6. When did the three cities east of the Jordan begin to function as refuge cities?
7. There were six refuge cities, three on each side of the Jordan. Yet, on the east side of the Jordan there were only two and a half tribes. Why did they need three cities?
8. To be judged as an intentional murderer, what type of weapon must the murderer use?
9. Why is the *kohen gadol* blamed for accidental deaths?
10. When an ancestral field moves by inheritance from one tribe to another, what happens to it in *Yovel*?

PARSHA Q&A!

Answers to Matot-Masei's Questions!

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary unless otherwise stated.

Matot

1. 30:2 - Preferably, an expert in the laws of *nedarim*. Otherwise, three ordinary people.
2. 30:10 - If she is under 12 1/2 years old and widowed before she was fully married.
3. 31:2 - Because Moav only acted out of fear against the Jewish People. Also, Ruth was destined to come from Moav.
4. 31:5 - They knew that Moshe's death would follow.
5. 31:6 - The *aron* and the *tzitz*.
6. 31:19 - The *Machane Shechina*.
7. 31:23 - Immersion in a *mikve*.
8. 32:16 - They showed more regard for their property than for their children.
9. 32:17 - At the head of the troops.
10. 32:24 - Moshe required them to remain west of the Jordan during the conquest of the Land. They promised to remain after the conquest until the Land was divided among the tribes.

Masei

1. 33:1 - To show G-d's love of the Jewish People. Although it was decreed that they wander in the desert, they did not travel continuously. During 38 years, they moved only 20 times.
2. 33:40 - When Aharon died, the clouds of glory protecting the Jewish People departed.
3. 33:49 - Twelve *mil* (one *mil* is 2,000 *amot*).
4. 34:2 - Because certain *mitzvot* apply only in the Land.
5. 34:17 - Each *nasi* represented his tribe. He also allocated the inheritance to each family in his tribe.
6. 35:13 - After Yehoshua separated three cities west of the Jordan.
7. 35:14 - Because murders were more common there.
8. 35:16 - One capable of inflicting lethal injury.
9. 35:25 - He should have prayed that such things not occur.
10. 36:4 - It remains with the new tribe.

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Love of the Land, written by Rav Mendel Weinbach, zt"l • Parsha Insights written by Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

General Editor and Talmud Tips: Rabbi Moshe Newman • Design: Rabbi Eliezer Shapiro

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BAVA KAMA 58 - 71

“Once ‘the destroyer’ is given permission to destroy, it does not distinguish between the righteous and the wicked.”

This statement by Rav Yosef is derived from a verse in Chumash that warns all of the Jewish People to remain indoors on the night of the final plague in Egypt — the smiting of the firstborn. The verse states, “and no person shall go out from the entrance of his house until morning”.

This concept of indiscriminate and collective punishment is one that is reserved for unique and special occasions. It is a concept that very much seems to be beyond our understanding. Besides it applying on the night of the Exodus, I have heard from my teachers that it also applied during the destruction of the Temples in Jerusalem, and also during the Holocaust.

Rav Yosef adds a caveat to this idea. He states that the destruction begins with the righteous, as the verse states, “and I shall cut off from you the righteous (i.e. first) and the wicked” (Yechezkel 21:8). Rav Yosef, when he taught this, cried, since it appears from the punishment of the righteous before the wicked shows that the righteousness is “worthless” (Rashi). Abayei comforted and explained that the punishment of the righteous first is actually a favor from Above, so that they should not see the terrible punishment that will follow (Rashi). Abayei cites his source as the verse, “The righteous man has perished, but no one takes it to heart, and men of kindness are taken away, with no one understanding that *because* of the evil the righteous man has been taken away.” (Yeshayahu 57:1) The word for “because” in the verse is “*mipnei*”, which also means “before” or “prior to”.

• *Bava Kama 60a*

Rabbi Akiva said, “Why does the Torah state that if a person (steals an ox or sheep and then) slaughters it or sells it he must pay the owner four or five times its value? Because the person became ‘rooted’ in sin.” As Rava said (later on the daf), “Because he ‘repeated’ the sin.”

These two statements are taught in the *sugya* of whether a thief attains full ownership of a stolen item if the person he stole the item from gives up hope (“*yi’ush*”) of recovering it. The *gemara* offers the statements of both Rabbi Akiva (in a *beraita*) and of Rava to give insight into the reason for the special penalty paid for stealing and then slaughtering or selling an ox or sheep, as taught in the Torah (Ex. 21:37) and the Mishna (62b).

The *gemara* understands that the words of Rabbi Akiva “Because the thief *became rooted* in sin” mean that his act of slaughter or sale “took roots, i.e. he became ‘strengthened’ in sin since his action *accomplished* something” (Rashi). The *gemara* questions this reason: If the penalty is for what the thief did before *yi’ush*, how can Rabbi Akiva say that his action “did something”? If he *sold* it before *yi’ush* everyone would agree that the sale is not valid! Rather, the *gemara* suggests, he is penalized for his action after *yi’ush*. But if this is the case, asks the *gemara*, he should not have to pay any penalty, since he is slaughtering or selling *his own item*! Therefore, the *gemara* instead offers the reason that Rava states: “Because he *repeated* the sin.” And the penalty is imposed only when the thief *repeated* the sin before *yi’ush*, while the item still belonged to the victim of the theft.

But what about Rabbi Akiva’s reason, and how we originally understood it? Even after this apparent conclusion it is still possible to accept the reason for the penalty as being that the thief’s second action “took root” and accomplished a real change. This can be so if Rabbi Akiva holds that *yi’ush* by itself does *not* result in a valid sale by the thief, but rather that the combination of *yi’ush* and change of domain (to the seller) effects a valid sale, just as slaughter effects a true change to the item. In both cases his “deed was effective”.

• *Bava Kama 67b, 68a*

SEARCHING SOULMATES

From: Miriam

*Dear Rabbi,
I am single, have never been married, and am searching for what I believe to be the man who is my soulmate. My question is, from a Jewish perspective, is there anything I can do to help make that happen and how would I know when he comes along?*

Dear Miriam,

Kabalistic sources (Zohar, Lech Lecha 91b) describe that the souls of soulmates are actually comprised of male and female parts of one soul that were separated before being placed in bodies in this world. This parallels the way in which Mankind, the fusion of male and female, was initially created by G-d as one whole consisting of two parts, which were separated as Adam and Eve for the purpose of bringing about a greater union through re-union (Eruvin 18a).

The separated parts of the soul, which have been embodied, are nevertheless connected through the spiritual plane, and are thus drawn to each other. This explains the longing people have to find their soulmate, their missing part; and the feeling of emptiness and void people experience until they do.

Since these souls are connected in the spiritual realm, they not only pull on each other, but also affect one another. Therefore, the things that each person, in whom resides part of the shared soul, does separately, for good or for bad, toward progress or the opposite, can elevate or weigh down the other.

Being that the purpose of re-uniting these parts of soul is to enable each to attain perfection through their sharing and learning together on all levels — physical, emotional, verbal, intellectual and spiritual — which is the meaning of “opposing helpmates” (Yevamot 63b), the best way to catalyze this re-union is for each person to try their best to make themselves the most perfect part they can be.

For Jews, this means living the Torah in the greatest way possible. As each part is thereby perfected separately, it becomes more refined, and more prepared in G-d’s eyes to be joined. And this is the underlining idea of the teaching of our Sages (Yerushalmi, Kiddushin 3:12) that G-d brings together a man and a woman from distant parts of the earth in order to unite soulmates.

In contrast, moving in the opposite direction only distances the parts and makes it more difficult for them to be joined. However, because of the spiritual connection between soulmates, even if one part is perfecting itself and the other is not, the one still transfers beneficial influence to the other, can improve it, and draw the “wayward” part toward itself.

The more each person has perfected his or her part of their shared soul, the more these parts “fit” when they are brought together. This is kind of like a spiritual “his and her necklace”, where each wears half of a heart split in a special way, like grooves in a key, where his and her parts each uniquely fit with the other. When these perfected parts unite, each often “feels” the match, and this phenomenon is described by the Ramban (Emunah v’Bitachon ch. 24) as the special “click” soulmates sense when they are re-united.

PLEASE JOIN US...

...in saying Tehillim/Psalms and a special prayer to G-d for the safety and security of all of Klal Yisrael in these times of conflict and conclude with the following special prayer:

אחינו כל בית ישראל

“Our brothers, the entire family of Israel, who are delivered into distress and captivity, whether they are on sea or dry land – may G-d have mercy on them and remove them from stress to relief, from darkness to light, from subjugation to redemption now, speedily and soon.”

Matot

VENGEANCE AGAINST MIDIAN

In this Torah portion G-d commands Moshe to take vengeance for the Children of Israel against the Midianites. The commentators are all puzzled by the fact that Moshe is not commanded to take vengeance against the *Moabites*, since it was the Moabite women who seduced the Jewish men into intimate immorality and idolatry.

Abarbanel explains that the Midianites were actually the instigators. He explains that Bilaam, after having failed to curse the Children of Israel, passed through Midian and advised them that the only way to bring about the downfall of the Jewish nation was through seduction. Bilaam remained in Midian in order to work out a plan. The Midianites gave their daughters free rein to encourage the Jewish nation to transgress. Since the Jewish People had no quarrel with the Moabites, and had actually been instructed not to distress them or provoke war with them, the Midianite women were able to disguise themselves as Moabites and were able to circulate among the Jews, ostensibly selling them food and other supplies. Thus, when the Torah states in *Parshat Balak*, “Israel settled in Sheetim and the people began to commit harlotry with the daughters of Moab” — they were actually involved with *Midianite* women.

Abarbanel offers another possible explanation. When the

Torah states that “the people *began* to commit harlotry” it is referring to the idea that the Moabite women acted first, and when the Midianite women saw that the men were vulnerable they decided to use such seduction as a means to entice them to idolatry as well. This is why taking vengeance referred to Midian alone, as the Torah states in *Parshat Pinchas*, “Harass the Midianites and smite them, for they harassed you through their conspiracy that they conspired against you in the matter of Peor (the idol the Jews were enticed to worship).” The Moabite women caused the men to give in to their physical desires, but the Midianite women enticed them to commit idolatry, a much more serious and damaging transgression.

According to both explanations, however, the Midianite women were clearly guilty of bringing about both immorality and idolatry. This is reflected in Moshe’s charge to the people after G-d had instructed him to “take vengeance for the *Jewish People* against the Midianites.” When he instructs the people, however, he tells them: “Arm men from among yourselves, that they may be against Midian to inflict G-d’s vengeance against Midian.” The vengeance for intimate immorality belongs to the people, but the vengeance for idolatry belongs to G-d.

Masei

40 YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS — REVIEWING THE ENCAMPMENTS

This Torah portion begins with a listing of the nation’s encampments during the forty-year sojourn in the Sinai desert. Since each of these encampments had already been mentioned previously, Abarbanel questions the necessity of mentioning them again in this *parsha*. Abarbanel cites several reasons for G-d’s commandment to Moshe to repeat the list of encampments.

Firstly, the listing is a demonstration of G-d’s kindness to the nation, since during the entire forty-year period there were only forty-two encampments. The nation was not required to be constantly on the move.

Secondly, G-d wanted to emphasize that the Sinai desert that they encountered in their travels was unlike other desert environments which can support human habitation either because they are close to settled areas or have sources of water which can also support agriculture. Later on, in *Sefer Devarim*, Moshe emphasizes this point, “...the L-rd, your G-d... Who leads you through the great and awesome wilderness of snake, fiery serpent and scorpion, and thirst where there was no water.” (*Devarim* 8:15).

Thirdly, since each and every one of these places was utterly barren and uninhabitable, it was only due to G-d’s miraculous Divine intervention that such a large population of men, women and children could be sustained for such a long period of time. The prophet Jeremiah succinctly describes this miraculous reality, “...G-d... Who brought us up from the land of Egypt, Who

led us into the wilderness, in a land of desert and pit, in a land of waste and a shadow of death, in a land through which no man passed and where no person settled.” (*Jeremiah* 2:6)

Finally, by repeating the list of the encampments the Torah is hinting at G-d’s presence throughout the various sojourns of the Jewish People in their future exiles. As the prophet Micah states, “As in the days you left the land of Egypt, I will show it wonders (*Micha* 7:15).” Furthermore, just as when they were taken out of Egypt they were brought into the wilderness, so too *Yechezkel* prophesies that in the final redemption from exile G-d says, “I will take you out from the nations and gather you from the lands to which you were scattered, with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath, and I will bring you to the ‘Wilderness of the Nations’, and I will contend with you there, face to face; just as I contended with your forefathers in the wilderness of Egypt.” (*Yechezkel* 20:35-36)

This may explain the repetitious phrase at the beginning of the *parsha*, “...and these were their journeys according to their goings forth” — i.e. “from their final exile.” Another interpretation is that the phrase “their goings forth” could refer to the generations to come in the exile. Sometimes they will follow the crooked path — symbolized by the encampment at Marah (bitterness) — and sometimes they will follow the straight path — symbolized by the encampment at Mitkah (sweetness). This summarizes the experience of the Jewish People while they are in the “Wilderness of the Nations.”

THE PARSHA DUAL DICHOTOMY 5776 - PART 3

Previous installments explained that the weekly *parsha* right now is not the same one outside of Israel as it is in Eretz Yisrael. This is due to the fact that in this year the 8th day of Pesach fell out on Shabbat. On that Shabbat/Yom Tov everyone outside of Israel read the Yom Tov reading of “Aser Te’Asser” from *Parshat Re’eh*, whereas in Eretz Yisrael, the next *parsha* in the cycle — Shemini — was read, as Pesach had already ended for them. Our question was why do we wait so long for the whole world to be realigned, more than three months later?

Not a new question, as several early *Acharonim*, including the *Mahari”t*, Rav Yosef Tirani, addressed this exact issue almost 500 years ago. One reason is to ensure that there is a “buffer week” after the “*Tochacha* – rebuke” detailed in *Parshat Bechukotai*, and before Shavuot.

An additional approach focuses on *Parshat Pinchas* — that it should be specifically read specifically during the Three Weeks, the mourning period when we commemorate the destructions of our *Batei Mikdash*.

The first reason brought by the *Bnei Yisaschar* elucidating this point is that *Parshat Pinchas*, as well as *Matot* and *Masei*, contain the reading of “*chalukat ha’aretz*”, the apportioning of Eretz Yisrael. The reason for these readings to be *leined* specifically then is to remind us of G-d’s promise that although we are currently in *golut*, exile, nevertheless, “*le’aileh techalek ha’aretz*”, we will still inherit Eretz Yisrael.

The *Minchas Yitzchak* makes this point in a similar manner regarding *korbanot* (sacrifices), especially the *Korban Tamid*, which is also detailed in *Parshat Pinchas*. He explains that the *Korban Tamid* protected the Jewish People from sinning with *avodah zara* (idolatry). When the *Korban Tamid* was no longer offered, it enabled the *yetzer hara* of *avodah zara* to strengthen;

and it was due to this sinning that eventually led to the Beit Hamikdash’s destruction.

Since we no longer have *korbanot*, at least our *tefillot* are their current replacement. Therefore, the *leining* of the *korbanot* is specifically read during the Three Weeks, when we are mourning the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash. This serves to strengthen us enable us to fight the reasons and causes for its destruction, and allow its rebuilding.

An additional point the *Bnei Yisaschar* brings is that *Parshat Pinchas* contains the *Parshat HaMo’adim*, the reading detailing all the *Yamim Tovim* and their observances. He explains that this is also a proper reading for the Three Weeks, to comfort us in our time of mourning. This is as the Prophet Zechariah prophesized that when the redemption arrives this period will be turned into one of great rejoicing — “*I’sasson u’lismcha ul’Moadim tovim*”.

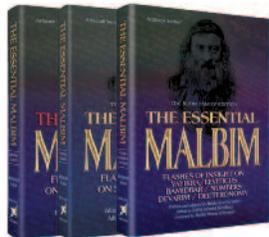
For all of the above-mentioned reasons, it is simply not worthwhile for *Chutz La’aretz* to make *Chukat* and *Balak* into a double *parsha* merely to catch up to Eretz Yisrael, since if it would, then *Parshat Pinchas* will not fall out in the Three Weeks. Therefore, it is proper for *Chutz La’aretz* to wait, and not catch up to Eretz Yisrael until *Matot/Masei*, and ensuring that *Parshat Pinchas* will be read during the Three Weeks, for us to be able to appreciate and tap into its significance and promises for the future.

In conclusion, although it may seem complicated and confusing, on the contrary, each “calendar calculation” is clearly consistent with the clarion call of our *Chazal* — *parsha* combination and separation synchronized to showcase hope and consolation when we need it most, as well as serve as a buffer from condemnation.

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AUDIBLE PRAYER

The Maharal asks a fundamental question in the beginning of Nesiv Avodah: Since G-d knows our thoughts, why do we need to make our prayers *audible*?

The Benefits of Speech

One advantage that speech has over thought is that it aids one's concentration and enhances comprehension. For this reason the Rabbis teach to praying aloud (See Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 101:1, where the *poskim* discuss raising one's voice during prayer to help the person concentrate better).

Change... In yet a deeper sense, prayer causes one to change:

Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch writes that the root word for "prayer" (פלל - *peh lamed lamed*) means "to judge". "To pray" ("*lehitpalel*" in Hebrew, a reflexive verb), thus means "self-judgment". Prayer requires a truthful self-analysis, and introduces the worshipper to a new perspective of his inner makeup and of his life situations. Encountering G-d in this way, one begins to see himself and the world around him from a perspective of truth, becoming truly G-d-fearing.

This process of self-judgment becomes much more powerful when expressing one's thoughts in words. By being forced to "confront" the audible, self-analysis brings one to ultimate change.

One reason for this is that the faculty of thought is not

used to communicate with others. Rather, it remains hidden from all. It was not created to be part of the physical realm. With respect to man's perspective of the self, hidden in one's mind, it is more likely for a person to perceive himself in a way that is not true. However, *listening* to those same thoughts made audible, even by the person himself, will be far less "tolerable". The spoken word will have a better chance of being rejected if it is not really true. Perhaps this is because audible speech is a real part of the physical realm, and meant to be communicated to someone else. Therefore, a person is more embarrassed by the things he actually says, and not (as much) by what he thinks.

Deeper Look

In connection to the above point, the Maharal of Prague explains why one must express his prayers specifically through speech, and not simply through contemplation or meditation. When one expresses himself through speech he invests his vitality and soul into his words. These words in turn ascend upon high (Zohar). As a result, when one prays it is considered as if he had given a portion of his very soul "above". In this respect one's prayers, which were instituted in place of the Temple service (Berachot 26b), resemble a sacrifice, which was offered to G-d on the *mizbe'ach*, the altar. Through the spoken word of prayer we offer up our soul to G-d.

LOVE OF THE LAND

Selections from classical Torah sources which express the special relationship between the People of Israel and Eretz Yisrael

SHAZUR — TOMB OF A TANA

Many of the Talmudic Sages were identified by the place from which they originated. One such example is the Tana Rabbi Shimon Shazuri, who lived and died in Shazur.



His tomb is located at the edge of what is today the Druze village of Sajur, about three miles northeast of Karmiel. Tradition has it that his son Eliezer, about whom little is known, is buried next to him.

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NOSON TZVI WOLTERMANN

Age: 35 - Bokah, Germany

University of Hanover-Hamlin, BA in Accounting and Business Administration
Calw University, MA Tax and Accounting
Center Program Alumnus

Growing up in the rolling green farmlands of North Western Germany near Hamilin, the fabled city of the Pied Piper, was an idyllic childhood for a small boy. Noson Tzvi's ancestors had lived and farmed the land for generations. While his parents grew up in farming families, his father chose to become an accountant, and he opened an accounting office in nearby Essen-Oldenburg. People in that part of Germany are either Catholics or Protestants, and until the present day there is very little intermarriage. The local counties (Landkreis) are divided by religion. Catholics do not live in the same Landkreis as Protestants and vice versa. Noson Tzvi's parents eschewed tradition and married. His father is a Catholic and his mother a Protestant. They decided to raise their children in neither tradition. Bokah is a hamlet on the border between two Landkreisen, but just inside of a Catholic one. When it came time to go to primary school Noson Tzvi went to Catholic school, since that was the public school in his Landkreis. Being the only non-Catholic in the school was strange for Noson Tzvi. While he was exempted from worship, he nevertheless learned about the religion. He questioned much of what he learned, and his questions were reinforced by his father, who is an agnostic.

Growing up in post-Holocaust Germany can have a powerful effect on the psyche of a young German. In school the history curriculum includes large sections on the Holocaust, with textbooks showing horrific photographs of the camps. Noson Tzvi's history teacher, a morose man who was obviously depressed by the subject of the war, communicated that "angst" to at least one student. Noson Tzvi wanted to find out about his own family's involvement in the war and he asked his grandparents. Both grandfathers had been in the Wehrmacht — one a proud, and most likely, an unrepentant Nazi, the other a reluctant soldier who had felt very guilty about his country's history. Delving deeper into his maternal grandfather's participation in the role, he heard the following story:



His grandfather had been sent to the Russian Front towards the end of the war. He was captured by the Russians, and when the war ended he was still in a Russian prisoner of war/slave labor camp, toiling in the mines. A heavy load of material fell from its container onto his leg. He was taken to the prison hospital. His Russian doctor was a Jewish woman. She tended to his wounds and wrote a letter to the prison authorities asking that he be discharged from the camp because he was too infirm to work. Her request was granted. However, repatriation was not yet possible. Without a job and without family or money, Noson's Tzvi's grandfather had no chance to survive a Russian winter. His Jewish doctor found him a place to stay and supported him until he was returned to Germany. The kindness shown to a soldier in of the army of the country which exterminated her people had a profound effect on the grandfather. He felt deep shame and guilt for his country's role in the Holocaust and his own role as a soldier. This story also had a profound effect on Noson Tzvi. He too felt the shame and guilt.

After finishing high school he went off to university and started thinking more deeply about the meaning of life, its purpose and his role in creation. He decided to look into religion — not to Christianity which he had rejected, but to the mother of all religions, Judaism.

He learned on the Internet that you didn't have to be Jewish to be a righteous person. This recognition of "good in all men" appealed to Noson Tzvi. The other religions he had studied demanded that you join them or else you would be condemned to perdition. He also learned that a gentile must keep the seven *mitzvot*. He started to observe them, but felt he needed to do more. He started keeping kosher and then Shabbat. By the time he had received his Master's degree he was ready to convert. At this time he was working in the Frankfurt office of Clifford Chance, a large international law firm based in London. In 2009 he underwent conversion with an Israeli *beit din* which travels to different cities in Europe, and started wearing a *kippa* in the office. The firm

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A CROWN IS A CROWN

The Bible uses three different words to mean “crown”: *keter*, *atarah*, and *nezer*. Some explain that the word *keter* is a general term, which refers to crowns, while the other two are specific types of crowns. However, most commentators assume that the three words represent three different types of crowns.

The Malbim defines these three words by explaining the differences in their physical properties. He explains that an *atarah* is the type of crown which completely surrounds the circumference of one's head, and rises about the head's height, while the *keter* is a crown which circles around one's head, but does not rise above the head's height (i.e. a coronet). A *nezer* is a type of crown which only encircles half of the wearer's head (i.e. a tiara). Others explain that an *atarah* refers specifically to the type of crown which is covered on top, while the others refer to crowns which are not necessarily so.

The conceptualization of the physical aspects of *keter* and *atarah* — which surround the wearer's head — are used metaphorically in the Bible to refer to any type of surrounding (similar to the English word “circling” — a type of crown — which conjures the word circle). Similarly, the Aramaic word for “crown”, *kil*, also refers to something which encompasses another. Rabbi Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenburg (1785-1865) reveals that *kallah*, the Hebrew word for bride, is derived from the Aramaic word for crown. He explains that just as a crown wholly surrounds the head of the one who wears it, a *kallah* is wholly surrounded with adornments and jewelry.

In addition to the physical characteristics which set apart these types of crowns from one another, the Malbim explains that they also differ on a more abstract, thematic level. He explains that a *keter* specifically denotes a royal crown, while an *atarah* may denote any type of crown. In fact, all three times that the word *keter* appears in the Bible

(Esther 2:17, 6:8, 1:11), it appears in the construct phrase *keter-malchut*, royal crown.

The word *nezer* is related to the word *zer* (diadem), which appears ten times in the Book of Exodus, when describing the golden ornamental “crowns” which adorned some vessels in the Mishkan (Tabernacle). But, the word *nezer* connotes much more than that. For example, it serves as the root of the word *nazir*, Nazirite. The Torah explains that a Nazirite — one who has foresworn drinking wine, cutting his hair, and ritual impurity — is considered especially holy “because the *nezer* of G-d is upon his head” (Numbers 6:7). The physical manifestation of this “crown” is the Nazirite's long hair, but the spiritual manifestation of the Nazirite's uniqueness is the way that he separates himself from the common folk. The same expression is used when explaining the reason for the special laws concerning the Kohen Gadol (High Priest). About those laws the Torah says, “Because the *nezer* — anointing oil — of his G-d is upon him...” (Leviticus 21:12). The Kohen Gadol is also separated from the rest of the nation in both physical (e.g., the priestly vestments) and spiritual ways. From this we see that the word *nezer* connotes a crown specifically used as a means of demarcation or separation, which shows one's significance and sets him above the rest.

In addition to the three Hebrew words and the one Aramaic word mentioned above, there is a fifth word for crown used in rabbinic idiom: *tag/taga*. This word is commonly used when referring to the “crowns” drawn on top of certain letters in a Torah Scroll (known as *tagin*). Linguists claim that *tag* is a Persian loanword that was later adopted by Aramaic. Interestingly, in light of our understanding of the role of a crown in marking its wearer as special, we can easily see how the Aramaic word *tag* became the English word “tag”, which also serves as a marker of sorts.

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objected to outward displays of religion and asked him to stop. He didn't and was then eased out of his job. He took the opportunity to move to London, a large and vibrant Jewish community, where he looked for work and continued his Torah learning. Rav Dunner of the London Beis Din suggested that he do another *geirut* (conversion) under their supervision, one which would be universally accepted. He did so. After a few more months he decided that he needed

to spend time in Yeshiva in Israel. He came in 2011 and found his way to the Center Program at Ohr Somayach. He is still in the Yeshiva learning in the Beit Midrash most of the day, and then working from 5 pm in his profession. He has many international clients and his practice is expanding. Noson Tzvi has reconnected with his *neshama*, which heard the *Aseret Hadibrot* on *Har Sinai*, and is now living in his true home — Eretz Yisrael.

כנס התעוררות

במשמעות של צום החמישי תשעה באב תשע"ו

TISHA B'AV SEMINAR

Rebuilding with Tears

Will take place on Tisha B'Av afternoon, Sunday, Aug. 14
in the main Beis Medrish of

Yeshiva Ohr Somayach

22 Shimon Hatzadik Street, Maalot Daphna, Jerusalem

After Shacharit and Kinot there will be lectures by the
Ohr Somayach Rabbis beginning at approximately 11:30 am.

Mincha will be at 7:00 pm and Maariv
will be shortly before the end of the Fast.

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בביאת משיח צדקנו ובנין בית המקדש במהרה בימינו



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