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Shabbos Parshas Matos-Masei • For the week ending 26 Tammuz 5756 • July 13, 1996 • Vol. 3 No. 37

SELF-MADE MAN

*"A thousand from a tribe,
a thousand from a tribe" (31:4)*

More elusive than the Loch Ness Monster or the Yeti is a species called the Self-Made Man. Reports of his existence are very frequent, but to date he has never been positively identified. All the thousands of reported sightings have turned out to be mistaken wishful thinking.

Let's take a look at a typical reported sighting:

Morris is one of the biggest corporate stock whizzes on Wall Street. He is the president of Huge and Wealthy International Inc. - one of the top Fortune 500 companies. But did Fortune really give him his success. Or did it come from elsewhere?

It's all too easy to pat ourselves on the back and congratulate ourselves on how clever we were. In order to keep a true perspective as to where our success really comes from we need constant reminders.

In this week's Parsha, the Torah tells us that for every thousand soldiers that went out to fight for the Jewish People, another thousand stayed in Eretz Yisrael and prayed for them. In other words, for each soldier at the front, there was another 'soldier' responsible to pray for his counterpart.

You might think that this was to give those at the front added protection. **The real reason, however, was that those who were fighting shouldn't be under any illusion as to where their success was coming from.** It was not by

INSIGHTS

the strength and the might of their own hand that they were victorious in battle, rather their success — like all success — comes from Hashem, the Maker of the 'Self-Made' Man.

• Based on Rabbi Chatzkel Levenstein heard from Rabbi Yehoshua Bertram

LONG NIGHT'S

JOURNEY INTO DAY

"These are the journeys of the Children of Israel, who went forth from the land of Egypt ...at the hand of Moshe and Aaron." (33:1)

Nothing that the hand of man creates can endure for eternity. Statues crumble; poetry is forgotten. Nothing lasts forever.

For this reason, the redemption from Egypt was not final, for it came 'at the hand of Moshe and Aaron' and for all their lofty spiritual height, they were no more than flesh and blood.

It was inevitable therefore, that the Jewish People would be subjected to other exiles, for their Exodus from Egypt was mortal and this-worldly - and thus incomplete.

"These are the journeys of the Children of Israel" - these are the journeys of exile that the Children of Israel will undergo throughout the long night of history because "they went forth from the land of Egypt...at the hand of Moshe and Aaron." However when Hashem redeems His people Himself, in His Glory and His

Majesty, there will be no human imperfection in the redemption, and thus it will be complete and eternal.

• Kesones Ohr in *Mayana shel Torah*

STATIC AND DYNAMIC

"Moshe spoke to the heads of the tribes of the Children of Israel..." (30:2)

Matos and Masei are two Parshios joined together - but their names are opposites...

The word "*Mateh*" (of which the plural is *Matos*) can mean a staff. A staff is something inert, cut off from the tree from which it sprouted. It has ceased to have the power of furthering itself, of bringing forth new life. It will always remain what it is now. Static and unchanging.

Masei (from the verb 'to journey') is the opposite. It is the essence of dynamism, of development and growth. For the journey is the paradigm of furtherance...

Really, this juxtaposition of *Matos* and *Masei* is symbolic of the Torah itself. The Torah has the power to take the lifeless and change it into life - to take Aaron's inert staff and cause it to flower and bloom. To change it into a serpent.

Nothing more than an inert staff becomes the instrument of the great signs and wonders wrought in Egypt, for splitting the sea asunder. Nothing more than an inert staff becomes the symbol of beginning of life itself for the Jewish People. The ultimate reversal of the lifeless staff - the *Mateh* - brings furtherance and an eternal future - the *Masei* - to the journeys of Children of Israel throughout history.

• Based on Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin

MATOS

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. The *Bnei Yisrael* go to war against *Midian*. They kill the five Midianite kings, all of the males, and *Bilaam*. Moshe is upset that women were taken as captives, because 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 the *Bnei Yisrael*. They bring an offering, which is taken from them 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 remain where they are and not traverse the Jordan river into Israel. They explain that the land where they are presently located is quite suitable as grazing land for their livestock. Moshe's initial response is that this request will discourage the rest of the *Bnei Yisrael*, and is akin to the sin of the spies. They assure Moshe that they will first help the *Bnei Yisrael* wage war and 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 forty-two encampments of the *Bnei Yisrael* on their forty-year journey from the Exodus to the crossing of the Jordan river into *Eretz Yisrael*. Hashem commands the *Bnei Yisrael* to drive out the *Canaanim* from *Eretz Yisrael* and to demolish all vestige of their idolatry. The *Bnei Yisrael* are warned that if they fail to rid the land completely of the *Canaanim*, 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 forty-eight cities for the *Leviim*, 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 Torah permits marriage between different tribes. The daughters of *Tzelofchad* 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.

OVERVIEW



Insights into the Shabbos Zemiros

אליהו הנביא
"ELIYAHU HANAVI..."

"And he shall return the hearts of the fathers to the sons and the hearts of the sons to their fathers."

The simple meaning of this passage, the last prophecy of the last prophet (*Malachi* 3:24) is found in the words of Rashi: "He will return the hearts of the fathers to Hashem through the children by saying to them in a manner of love and good will: Go speak to your parents to adopt the ways of Hashem. In similar fashion will he return the hearts of the children to Hashem through their parents." Another explanation is that in the golden era at the end of days, Hashem will bless the young with the wisdom of heart which comes with age, and bless the elders with the enthusiasm of heart which is the quality of youth.



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We can't include all questions submitted in the column,

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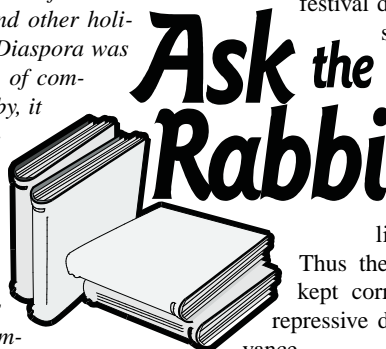
DUBIOUS DATES

M. Friedman

<friedmam@newtrier.k12.il.us> wrote:

Dear Rabbi,

As I understand it, the reason for celebrating Rosh Hashana and other holidays for two days in the Diaspora was that, given the slow pace of communication in days gone by, it was necessary to be certain that the holiday was celebrated on the correct day. But given the instantaneous communications of the present, what is the reason for continuing this practice instead of conforming the celebration to that done in Israel?



Sources:

• Tractate *Beitza* 4b

Dear M. Friedman,

Your question is not as new as you might think. In fact, it is a question asked by the Talmud!

Originally, the New Month (*Rosh Chodesh*) was declared monthly by Israel's Torah court. Many people lived far away and didn't hear about it until after the festivals. To ensure that they observed the festival on the correct day, they observed two days. With the progressive dispersal and persecution of the Jewish People, the Sages saw a need for a fixed calendar.

So your question was as valid 1,500 years ago as it is today: Since today we have a fixed calendar, the doubtful status of the second day no longer exists. Why, then, do we keep two-day festivals?

Speaking of the former Soviet Union: A man in Kiev in 1952 gets a letter from Moscow's CSBMV (Central Soviet Bureau of Motor Vehicles). At last, his request to buy a car has been approved.

Immediately, he calls Kiev's CDLDA (Central Department of Licensing and Distribution of Automobiles) and is given an appointment for Tuesday, October 3, 1963.

"Morning or Afternoon?" he asks.

"*Tavahrish!*" laughs the official. "That's ten years from now! What difference is it to you if you come in the morning or the afternoon?"

"Well," says the man, "the plumber's coming in the morning..."

Yiddle Riddle

Last week we asked: As the sun moves from east to west, Shabbat and Yom Tov occur first in Israel, and then in America. Which *mitzva* is observed first in New York, and then in Jerusalem?

Answer:

Reading Megillat Esther!

In New York (as in most places inside Israel and out) Purim is celebrated on *Adar* 14. But in Jerusalem, as in any city which had a wall around it in the days of Moses and Joshua, Purim is celebrated on *Adar* 15. This distinction commemorates the special miracles experienced in Persia's capital, the walled city of Shushan.

Sources:

• Tractate *Megilla* 2a

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THE TEMPLE MADE IN HEAVEN

Chadash – new grain – was forbidden to be eaten before the *Omer* Meal Offering was made in the Temple on the sixteenth day of the Month of Iyar. This was usually done no later than midday so even those who lived far from Jerusalem could assume by that hour that the *Omer* had been offered and it was safe to eat from the new grain.

In post-Temple times daybreak of the sixteenth day marks the time that new grain is permitted by the Torah. The Torah teaches that when the *Omer* cannot be offered the ban on *Chadash* is in effect only until the beginning of the sixteenth. But Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai instituted a decree to prohibit *Chadash* the entire sixteenth day. His reasoning: We look forward to the Temple soon being rebuilt and the *Omer* being offered. If we permit eating *Chadash* this year from the beginning of the day, people will say that they can eat *Chadash* next year from daybreak as well, when in truth they must wait for the *Omer* to first be offered.

In *Mesechta Rosh Hashanah* (30a) this point is expanded upon. If the Temple will be built on the sixteenth no problem will exist, for daybreak already made *Chadash* permissible. If it will be

built before the sixteenth then the *Omer* will have been offered by noon. Why then was the decree for banning *Chadash* all day long? The answer is that Rabbi Yochanan was afraid lest the Temple be rebuilt just before sunset of the fifteenth (the first day of Pesach) or the night of the sixteenth, which would not allow enough time to reap the barley and process it into flour before the end of the sixteenth.

Rashi, however, raises the question as to how the Temple could be built on a

came down from Heaven a question arises as to whether it could be used for the Two Loaves offered on Shavuos.

Does the Torah's directive to use wheat which comes "from your dwelling place" only exclude lands outside of *Eretz Yisrael*, but not the clouds — or does this exclusion extend to clouds as well?

This question remains unresolved, but there is an interesting discussion in the commentaries as to how the grain came down from the clouds. Rashi explains that the clouds over the ocean swallowed a ship filled with grain which later came down from those clouds along with the rain.

Tosefos challenges this explanation. If the source of the grain was *Eretz Yisrael* why should it become disqualified by being absorbed into the clouds? And if the source was a field outside of *Eretz Yisrael* what reason is there to assume it might be eligible simply because it entered the clouds?

His own explanation is that the grain in question never grew on earth and came from the clouds in miraculous fashion, just as we find (*Sanhedrin* 59b) that Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta's prayer for meat to feed the hungry lions that roared at him was answered by two large slabs of meat descending from Heaven.

• *Menachos* 69b



Insights, explanations and comments for the seven pages of Talmud studied in the course of the worldwide Daf Yomi cycle.

holiday or at night when we know from *Mesechta Shavuos* (15b) that these are times when such construction may not take place? His answer is that only a Temple built by human effort has this restriction. The Temple of the future, however, will descend from Heaven.

• *Menachos* 68b

PLOWED IN THE CLOUD

If barley descended from the clouds it could be used for the *Omer* Meal Offering on Pesach because the Torah does not specify that it must be brought from *Eretz Yisrael*. But if wheat thus

Matos

1. What is a *neder*?
2. Can a person take a *neder* permitting something that the Torah forbids?
3. Hashem commanded the Jewish People to attack Midian. Why did He not command them to attack Moav?
4. Why did the men selected to fight against Midian not go willingly?
5. What holy vessels accompanied the Jewish People into battle?
6. What portion of the spoils went to the soldiers who went to war against Midian?
7. How were Kalev ben Yefune and Osniel ben Kenaz related?
8. In verse 32:16, *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* said, "We will build sheep pens here for our cattle, and cities for our little ones." What is improper about that statement?
9. What promise did the *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* make beyond that which Moshe required of them?
10. Which part of the Tribe of Menashe inherited land on the eastern side of the Jordan?

Masei

1. Why does the Torah list the places where the Jewish People camped in the *midbar*?
2. How did Aaron die?
3. Why does the Torah need to specify the boundaries that are to be inherited by the Jewish People?
4. How much land surrounded the cities of the *Levi'im*?
5. From whom did a city of refuge shelter a murderer?
6. Who separated the cities of refuge on the eastern side of the Jordan?
7. When did the cities of refuge begin to function as places of refuge for murderers?
8. Why does the murderer remain in the city of refuge until the death of the *Kohen Gadol*?
9. A woman who is married to a man from a different tribe inherits an ancestral field. What happens to that field?
10. When an ancestral field moves from the possession of one tribe to another, what happens to it in *Yovel*?



I Didn't Know That!

"And they traveled from Yam Suf and they camped in Midbar Sin." (33:11) In the beginning it was called *Sin*. Later it was called *Sinai*. The word *Sin* has a numerical value of 120 corresponding to the 120 days Moshe was on *Har Sinai*. A "yud" was added to its name to change its name to *Sinai*. This "yud" (numerical value = 10) corresponded to The Ten Commandments.

• *Ba'al Haturim*

Bonus Question ?

Why did the daughters of Tzlofchad marry their cousins?

Answers on back page

MATOS

1. 30:3 - A restriction a person takes upon himself as a sacred obligation.
2. 30:3 - No.
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 the death of Moshe would follow the execution of vengeance upon Midian.
5. 31:6 - The Aron and the Tzitz.
6. 31:27 - Half.
7. 32:12 - They were half-brothers. Kalev's mother married Kenaz and gave birth to Osniel. (Osniel led the Jewish People after the death of Yehoshua.)
8. 32:16 - They showed more regard for their property than for their children.
9. 32:24 - Moshe required them to remain west of the Jordan during the conquest of the Land. They promised not to return home for an additional 7 years while the Land was being divid-

- ed.
10. 32:39-42 - *Bnei Machir* ben Menashe. They independently conquered part of the Amorite land, east of the Jordan. Moshe promised them that land.

MASEI

1. 33:1 - To show the love of Hashem for the Jewish People. Although it was decreed that



- they wander in the desert, they did not travel continuously. During the span of the 38 years they moved only 20 times.
2. 33:38 - By "Divine kiss."
3. 34:2 - Because there are certain *mitzvos* that apply in the Land, but not outside of the Land.

4. 35:4 - 2,000 *amos*. The inner 1,000 was the "*migrash*" (an open area of land which served to beautify the city), and the outer 1,000 was for their fields and vineyards.
5. 35:12 - From the *go'el hadam* (avenger of blood), a close relative of the deceased who had the right to avenge the victim's death.
6. 35:13 - Moshe.
7. 35:13 - After Yehoshua separated three cities on the western side of the Jordan.
8. 35:25 - Because the *Kohen Gadol* causes the *shechina* to dwell in Israel and prolongs life, and the murderer causes the *shechina* to be removed from Israel and shortened life. The murderer is not worthy to stand in the vicinity of the *Kohen Gadol*.
9. 36:3 - When she has a son, the son will inherit the field and the field will move from the possession of one tribe to another.
10. 36:4 - It remains in the possession of the new tribe.

Recommended Reading List

MATOS

- Ramban*
- 30:16 Responsibility
 - 31:2,6 Vengeance
 - 31:23 Cleansing Vessels
 - 31:36 Miracle of the Spoils
 - 31:49 Jewish Victory
 - 32:33 Menashe's Inheritance
 - 32:41 Yair's Ancestry
- Sforno*
- 31:15 The Meaning of Silence

MASEI

- Ramban*
- 33:53 The Land
 - 35:14 Cities of Refuge
 - 35:29 The *Sanhedrin*
- Kli Yakar*
- 33:49 The Greater Loss
 - 35:6 Temporary Dweller
- Sefer Hachinuch*
- 408 Cities of the *Levi'im*
 - 409 Capital Judgment

410 Exile

- Sforno*
- 33:1 The Merit of the Journeys
 - 36:4 The Inheritance of Daughters
 - 36:12 The Husbands of the Daughters of Tzlofchad

Bonus Answer!

Once they saw that Hashem wanted their inheritance to stay within the tribe, they chose to marry their cousins. Of all the men of the tribe, they were the closest to being the father's heirs.

• *Sforno*

HAFTORAH: Yirmiyahu 2:4-28 & 3:4

MUDDY WATERS

"For my people have perpetrated two evils: Me have they forsaken, the source of living waters; to dig themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water." (2:13)

In this, the second Haftorah of the "three (Haftorahs) of affliction," the prophet speaks out not only against Israel's disloyalty to Hashem who saved them from slavery, but also against the disloyalty to the Torah which has been exchanged for the empty vanities of foreign culture. Our Sages teach us that Hashem lamented: "If they had forsaken only Me, but had kept the

Torah, its spiritual light would have influenced them to return to the path of righteousness." However the Jewish People, seduced by the superficial glitter of the foreign ideologies, abandon the Torah, their only lifeline, and imbibe the brackish water of false ideas which constantly change and contradict themselves. From this only tragedy and exile can ensue.

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