

commitments to your family or your tribe have a certain unjustified mental flexibility attached to them that would allow me somehow to avoid my responsibilities.

Moshe expresses this lesson regarding the individual commitments of Jews to the heads of all of the different tribes to teach them that they are all equally bound to all commitments made, no matter to what tribe, family or individual. The nature of humans is to be tribal and the Torah allows for it. However, the Torah does not allow for slippery speech and broken vows and shattered commitments, simply because they were made to those of another tribe. *Rabbi Berel Wein and torah.org.*

Haftarah Summary Rabbi Aron Tendler

This week's Haftarah is the second Haftarah forewarning the impending destruction of Yerushalayim. In the 2nd chapter of Yirmiyahu, the Navi detailed the extent of the nations infidelity that led up to the Churban - destruction. The leaders, the Kohanim, and the common man had all betrayed G-d's love. Whereas last week the Prophet left us with a vision of G-d's love for His children, this week his words relentlessly assault our consciousness.

"As the thief is ashamed when he is found, so is the house of Israel ashamed; they, their kings, their priests, and their prophets, who say to a piece of wood: "you are my father," and to a stone: "You gave birth to me." But in the time

Minyan Schedule

Erev Shabbat Parashat Matot Masei
Mincha (Mizrachi) 4.50 pm
Candle lighting 5/08/16 5.00 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat 5.45 pm

Shabbat Parashat Matot Masei
Shacharit 6/08/16 9.15 am
Children's Service 10.00 am
Mincha (Mizrachi) 4.47 pm
Shabbat ends 5.57 pm

Erev Shabbat Parashat Devarim
Mincha (Mizrachi) 4.50 pm
Candle lighting 12/08/16 5.05 pm
Kabbalat Shabbat 5.45 pm

Announcements

**Kiddush is sponsored
The Synagogue**

**'An expanding universe?
Orthodoxy in the 21st
century' see email for
programme details**

of their trouble they will say: Arise and save us. Where are your g-ds that you made for yourselves? Let them arise, if they can save you in the time of your trouble." (Yirmi. 2:26) *Rabbi Aron Tendler and torah.org.*

Or Chadash

קהילת אור חדש

WEEKLY BULLETIN

Shabbat Parashat Matot/Masei

2 Av 5776; 6 August, 2016

Shabbat Torah reading: Stone Chumash
page 900, Haftarah page 1193.

President Jonathan Erlich

Rabbi-in-residence

D'var Torah Rabbi Franklin

The Long Journey Rabbi Marc D. Angel

It is said that when Alexander the Great reached the peak of his career by conquering the entire known world, he broke down and cried. One explanation for his crying is that he realized that there were no more battles for him to undertake. His best achievements were in the past. He had climbed to the top and had nowhere else to go. He cried in frustration.

Another explanation is that he realized that his tremendous accomplishment really amounted to very little. Earth is a speck in the universe; even if one were to rule the entire earth, there was a vast universe over which he did not rule. Moreover, humans are mortal;

whatever we accomplish, however impressive, is short lived. In a thousand years or a million years, who will know or care what we've done? What difference will it have made? Thus, Alexander cried at the sheer vanity of life, the ultimate emptiness of his life's deeds.

How can we live happy and productive lives, and not break down crying like Alexander did? This week's Torah portion offers some guidance. Parashat Masei records each of the stopping places of the Israelites during their 40 year trek in the wilderness. The Midrash explains that this detailed account reflects God's loving concern for the children of Israel. It is compared

to a king who had taken his ailing child to a distant place in order to be cured. On the return journey, the king would stop at each resting place



and remind his child: this is where we found shelter; this is where we cooled off at an oasis; this is where you had a head ache. Each place evoked memories and created a deeper bond between the king and his child. But the recounting of past stopping places was not a mere experience of nostalgia. Rather, it was coupled with the knowledge that we are now going home, that we are looking forward to a bright future with new challenges and opportunities.

The Israelites, in meticulously reviewing their past travels, were also anticipating their entry into the Promised Land. Jewish tradition teaches us to review our past and to recount our historical achievements: but it teaches us to do so without breaking down and crying as did Alexander the Great. Judaism imbues us with a sense that every day has meaning, that we can grow and attain something new and better. Life is not a rut or a routine; we are not trapped or locked in one place. No matter how much we have accomplished, we have not reached the end of our possibilities. There is a Promised Land ahead.

We do not succumb to the frustration or despair that confronted Alexander the Great, because we have a different orientation to the

meaning of life. We are not here to achieve egotistical goals such as fame and power, but to serve God and humanity. Greatness is not measured by the number of lines one receives in history books, but by the myriad small deeds of kindness and charity and goodness that we have performed, by our positive impact on family, friends, and society.

The detailed description of the Israelites' travels in the wilderness reminds us of the importance of the past stages of our lives. It also serves to call our attention to the future, to the Promised Land, to the goals not yet attained. Just as we are strengthened by our past, we are energized by the hopes for our future. *Rabbi Marc. D. Angel and the Institute of Jewish Ideas and Ideals.*

Tribal Responsibility Rabbi Berel Wein

The subject matter that begins this week's parsha concerns itself with vows and commitments that one undertakes to perform or to abstain from. There is an entire tractate in the Talmud "Nedarim" that discusses this subject almost exclusively. In Jewish life, even an oral commitment in many cases

can be considered to be binding. The Torah expressly teaches us that one should live up to and perform "everything that emanates from one's mouth." As such, it is completely understandable why this matter of vows and commitments should merit the attention that it does receive in the Talmud and in Jewish law generally. Man is elevated from the animal kingdom by the gift and ability to speak and communicate to others, even to later generations.

Words, whether spoken or written, are almost sacred in the view of Jewish tradition and society. The great sage and saint of Eastern European Jewry of the last century, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Hakohen Kagan "Chafetz Chaim" devoted much of his scholarly career to explaining and teaching the Torah laws regarding speech. We are taught that "life and death itself are dependent upon the utterances of our tongue."

In a society such as ours, where instant communication is the expected norm and silence is treated as a social and political aberration and not as a virtue of wisdom or patience, the sanctity of speech and its binding effect has unfortunately lost resonance amongst us. Nevertheless, it certainly would behoove us to study this parsha's message regarding our spoken words and the commitments that they carry with them.

The question arises and is discussed by many biblical commentators as to why this particular subject was initially taught by Moshe to the leaders of

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We have operated since 1995. During the year we arrange special activities including: learning, shiur/lecture series and social events.

the tribes of Israel, and certainly why the Torah makes mention of this in the opening verse of the parsha itself. The question also subtly raises the issue of why the Torah allows, if not even demands, the continuation of the Jewish people as being divided into separate tribes and not treated as being one whole unit.

We see throughout the Bible that this division into tribes occasioned much social disunity and sometimes even civil war. I think that one insight into these matters is that people find it difficult to operate within a large and general group, with one perspective. Our nature is to remain familial and tribal. Part of that nature unfortunately breeds a disdain for others not like us. This disdain is usually reflected in our speech and comments about others and also in the fact that somehow we feel that we are not really bound by our verbal and written commitments made to those 'others.'

My commitments to my family and my tribe are certainly sacred in my eyes and I will do all in my power to fulfill them. But my

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