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Shabbat Mattot / Masei

שבת פ' מטות / מסעי

Sat. 17 - 18 Jul. 2020 - 26th of Tamuz, 5780

כ"ו בתמוז תש"פ

Issue Number 961

Baal Koreh *Yom Shabbat Kodesh*

Rabbi Asher Sebbag

(Page-798).

Mufteer & Haftarah

Mr Moshe Nahari

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Mevarchin Hahodesh

מברכין החודש

Rosh Hodesh Av on Wed. 22/07/2020.

ראש חודש תמוז ביום רביעי.

Mincha, Shir Hashirim, Kabalat Shabbat & Arbit.

19:15

Shabbat Candles.

20:53

Shabbat Shahrit - (Shema 09:02).

08:30

Mincha Shabbat - (Sunset - 21:08).

19:00

Arbit - Motzei Shabbat.

22:16

Shahrit Weekday - (Sunday - 7:30).

06:30

Daf Hayomi with Rabbi Asher Sebbag Shlit"a. (ON ZOOM)

18:00

Mincha & Arbit.

19:30

Next Friday: Mincha, Shir Hashirim, Kabalat Shabbat & Arbit.

18:45

Next Friday: Candles. **Shabbat. Devarim**

20:45

Matot/Masei 5780 (Numbers 30:2-32:42)

Jul 13, 2020 | by [Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig](#)

GOOD MORNING! By now you have surely heard of the dreaded COVID-19. No, not the disease, the 19 pounds (or so) that most people seem to have gained during the current coronavirus pandemic. This is the 2020 version of the well-known "freshman 15" – the presumed weight gain by college freshman who offset their stress by binge eating and consuming copious amounts of alcohol.

If you're unsure what I'm talking about, then maybe it's time to carefully analyze why, after four months of isolation, you prefer to only wear oversized t-shirts and "stretchy pants."

I began to reflect on this when I realized that the only time I remembered that I wanted to lose weight was after eating

a dozen cookies. I spoke to a nutritionist who told me, "You should begin by eating only about 1,500 calories a day." My response? "Okay, that's not too bad, and how many a night?"

A friend told me, "I tried eating healthier. This afternoon I choked on a carrot and the only thing that went through my mind was 'I bet a donut wouldn't have done this to me.'" He jokingly continued; "So I made a commitment to exercise, but unfortunately found I was allergic to it. As I began exercising my skin suddenly flushed and my heart started racing. I then got sweaty and short of breath. It seems very dangerous."

Achieving any goal, whether it's to exercise more or focus on weight loss, requires us to learn the meaning of commitment. Throughout our lives, we are

reminded of the crucial aspect that commitment plays. This is true in all areas of life, whether it's in regards to a personal relationship, a professional partnership, or achieving one's individual goals, we know that nothing can truly be achieved without committing to it.

Of course, Judaism has a meaningful life lesson related to this issue. In this week's Torah reading we find:

Moses spoke to the heads of the tribes of the Jewish people saying, "This is the matter that Hashem commanded: If a man takes a vow to Hashem or takes an oath imposing an obligation on himself, he shall not break his pledge; he must carry out all that has crossed his lips" (Numbers 30:2-3).

Judaism takes a very serious approach to making vows and commitments. Indeed, an entire tractate of the Talmud, *Nedarim*, deals with the laws of vows. If one vows to do something, or conversely to not do something, he must keep his word. Violation of vows and is considered a serious infraction in Jewish thought.

While there are examples in the Torah of individuals making vows, by the rabbinic period the practice was discouraged. The Talmud states that the punishment for breaking a vow is the death of one's children. The *Shulchan Aruch* explicitly warns people not to regularly make vows, and states that someone who does — even if they fulfill the vow — is called wicked and a sinner. Many observant Jews have the practice of saying *b'li neder* ("without a vow") whenever they promise to do something, in order make an explicit articulation that they are not making a vow.

Have you ever wondered why the somber day of Yom Kippur begins with *Kol Nidrei*? This opening prayer service on the holiest day of the year — the Day of

Atonement — begins with us asking for absolution from our vows and commitments. This seems rather odd. What is so essential about the laws of vows that it opens the service on what is arguably the most intense day on the Jewish calendar?

The Talmud (*Bava Basra* 88a) comments on the verse "speaks truth in his heart" (*Psalms* 15) as referring to someone who truly fears Hashem. Curiously, the Talmud found it necessary to give an example of such a person: Rav Safra. Rashi, the great Torah and Talmud commentator (ad loc) goes on to explain how Rav Safra came to be the paragon of this virtue:

Rav Safra, a well-known merchant, was in the middle of saying the *Shema* prayer when someone approached him to buy something that he was selling. The buyer proceeded to offer a sum of money for the item he wished to buy. Rav Safra, who was still in the midst of prayers, was silent. The buyer understood Rav Safra's silence as a reluctance to sell because the sum wasn't high enough, so he kept raising his offer until it was a very large sum of money.

Once Rav Safra finished his prayers, he turned to the buyer and told him that he would sell it to him for the original offer he made. The buyer, shocked because Rav Safra was accepting a much lower price than his final offer, asked him why. Rav Safra explained, "In my mind, I had already decided after hearing your first offer to accept the original amount offered."

Most people are raised valuing the concept of "keeping your word." Unfortunately, modern society seems to have all but forgotten this ideal; in fact, in some cultures a signed contract is only a basis for opening a new negotiation.

In general, this notion of being "a man (or woman) of your word" is seen as being

morally binding because, once you give your word, someone else has ownership over your expected performance. In other words, based on your commitments they make decisions and commitments of their own.

However, we see from the Talmud that there is really a much more profound reason for keeping your word. The story that Rashi cites has seemingly nothing at all to do with keeping your word. After all, Rav Safra was silent the entire time, he never committed to a price. Why was Rav Safra bound to fulfill the price that he had only agreed to in his mind?

The answer is that there is a much higher truth that we are ALL bound to – we are obligated to be truthful to ourselves. We don't have to live up to our word because someone else has relied on it and made decisions based upon it. We have to fulfill our word because we said it and we have an obligation to **ourselves** to make it a reality.

This is why the verse says, “speaks truth in his heart” (*Psalms* 15). It has nothing to do with our commitments to other people; the basis for keeping our word is that we owe it to ourselves. That is what the whole discussion in this week's *parsha* regarding vows is about: making a promise that you will do something.

We often feel like we own the rights to ourselves. Therefore, even if we make commitments to ourselves (I will stop smoking, I will lose weight, etc.), we often have no compunction at all, or perhaps only a fleeting sense of guilt, about breaking promises to ourselves.

This is wrong. We don't own ourselves. We are in this world as a gift of kindness from the Almighty. Our responsibility to ourselves lies in the obligation to Hashem; that's why the

Talmud calls those like Rav Safra “those that truly fear Hashem.”

This is why the subject of vows is so central to the Yom Kippur service. We begin a day dedicated to prayer by acknowledging that our words are a powerful way of committing ourselves. Furthermore, we understand that even within the commitments we make to ourselves we have an obligation to Hashem. Only when we internalize the severity of the obligation that comes with giving our word can we commit to fulfilling our word. This is the very essence of Yom Kippur, a day that we spend committing ourselves to being better people, and this why we begin with *Kol Nidrei*.

We must acknowledge that the highest obligation of keeping one's word is being truthful and faithful to oneself. We mustn't let our petty physical desires and wants abrogate the obligation that we owe ourselves to become better people; morally, physically, and as someone whom can be counted on by others. Once we take this to heart, we will begin to live up to our word and we can go on to achieve wondrous things.



TORAH PORTION OF THE WEEK

Mattos-Masei, Numbers 30:2 - 36:13

Mattos includes the laws of making and annulling vows, the surprise attack on Midian (the '67 War wasn't the Jewish people's first surprise attack!) in retribution for the devastation the Midianites wreaked upon the Jewish people, the purification after the war of people and vessels, dedicating a portion of the spoils to the communal good (perhaps the first Federation campaign), the request of the tribes of Reuben and Gad for their portion of land to be east of the Jordan river (yes,

Trans-Jordan/Jordan is also part of the Biblical land of Israel). Moses objects to the request because he thinks the tribes will not take part in the conquering of the land of Israel; the tribes clarify that they will be the advance troops in the attack and thus receive permission.

Masei includes the complete list of journeys in the desert (the name of each stop hints at a deeper meaning, a lesson learned there). God commands to drive out the land's inhabitants, to destroy their idols, and to divide the land by a lottery system. God establishes the borders of the Land of Israel. New leadership is appointed, cities of the Levites and Cities of Refuge (where

an accidental murderer may seek asylum) are designated. Lastly, the laws are set forth regarding accidental and willful murder as well as inheritance laws only for that generation regarding property of a couple where each came from a different tribe.

“ Quote of the Week ”

Commitment is an act, not a word.



In loving memory of
Rabbi Kalman Packouz
Kalman Moshe ben
Reuven Avigdor
1950-2019
Shabbat Shalom,
Rabbi Yitzchak Zweig

Security Alert: Please be very vigilant when you leave the Synagogue. Do not stand in groups and chat, go home without gathering on the main road. Be safe and alert.

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים "LONG LIFE" TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE YAHRZEIT

1 Tammuz Mr Sami Shemie	17 Tammuz Dr Y. Kelly Saltoun
7 Tammuz Mr Raphael Mansour	19 Tammuz Mr Moshe Moses
8 Tammuz Mr Fred Dalah	23 Tammuz Mr Charlie Morris
8 Tammuz Mr Andrew Dalah	27 Tammuz Mr Cesar Sassoon
12 Tammuz Mrs Mozel Gubbay	

FOLLOW THESE 10 SECRETS IN THE CODES OF LIFE EMBEDDED IN TORAH KABBALAH BOOKS BY ADAM, ABRAHAM, BAHIR, SHIMON BAR YOCHAI 1000's MOR YOU ARE GUARANTEED TO FIND A REAL SOULMATE IN 40 DAYS (PART 2)

SMOOTH LOVING RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT RESOLUTION HIDDEN SECRETS IN THE CODE OF LIFE BOOKS GOING BACK 1000'S OF YEARS

SUNDAY 19TH JULY. 7 PM

(Israel 9 pm Spain Portugal 8 pm).

JOIN PROF ELIYAHU KELMAN OHEL DAVID TALK SOCIAL MEDIA YOUTUBE ZOOM CLICK LINK

IN LOVING MEMORY OF ALICE KELMAN

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84560124465?pwd=Z2piRXdZdENZNEVhQW16bzg0bVBSQT09>