

DAF TSAFON

26 July 2025
1 Av 5785

Rosh Chodesh Av
Parashat Mattot-Mas'ei
ArtScroll 900 Hertz 702



In this week's double portion of Mattot and Mas'ei, we conclude the Book of Bamidbar - Numbers.

The Book of Bamidbar – as its Hebrew name suggests – focuses on the journey of the Jewish People through the Sinai desert. Now, at the end of the fortieth year, the Torah presents a long list and narrative of the events that befell the Jewish People during their travels in the desert. On the whole, the events described in Bamidbar are fairly depressing. The great hopes of marching into the Land of Israel on a short three-day journey which appears at the beginning of the book were dashed by the acts of rebellion and foolishness committed against God and Moshe, recorded in the latter part of the book.

Moshe himself is also destined to die now, never to reach the Land of Israel. The list of all the stops and oases that marked the Jewish journey from Egypt to the Land of Israel gives us a sense of what might have been, of opportunities lost and mistakes made.

Why the need to list the places? What is the Torah teaching all future generations by listing the places our ancestors visited? The answer, as suggested by a number of scholars, is that it allows the people to recall the mistakes of the past, but it also points them towards the fulfilment of their goal of entry into the Land of Israel. As Rabbi Berel Wein famously quipped, “One should never operate an automobile without looking regularly into the rear view mirror, yet one's attention must constantly be riveted on looking through the front windshield to see the road and conditions ahead”.

Parashot Mattot and Mas'ei always falls during the three weeks of national mourning and I believe that the Torah is assisting us in how to use this time effectively and to mourn meaningfully.

Over the long exile of the Jewish People and our complete dispersion over the face of the globe we have had many stops. Sometimes the stop was a relatively short one but mostly it was for the duration of many centuries. Babylonia (present day Iraq) was a Jewish home for millennia, while Iberia, North Africa, Poland, Germany and many other European countries housed us for eight hundred years. But, somehow, no matter how long we stayed in a certain place and how productive and secure we may have felt regarding our situation, all of our stops along the way proved to be temporary. In fact, the Jews had a play on the name of Poland. In Hebrew it is Po-lin, here we will dwell (until the coming of the Messiah).

The journeys of the Jewish People proved to be, in a manner of speaking, an endless trek. But it always seemingly had a goal. The great Rabbi Nachman of Breslov, stated that “every step I take on this earth leads me towards Jerusalem”. All of the stops, no matter how long their duration in the Exile of Israel, were eventually nothing more than way stops. And today we have witnessed the miraculous return of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel and the ingathering of the exiles from all four corners of the world as stated in the words of the prophets.

However, there have been times when we have forgotten that we are on a journey back to Israel. Around ninety years ago the great Torah scholar, Rabbi Meir Simcha of Dvinsk stated: “Woe to the ones who imagine that Berlin is Jerusalem”.

We all know that Berlin was far from being Jerusalem but there are names of other current cities in the Jewish Diaspora that can easily be substituted for Berlin in his prescient statement.

This is, I believe, the underlying message of our Parasha and the message that these three weeks are teaching us.

Shabbat Shalom

Haftarah

ArtScroll 1193 Hertz 725

ISRAEL'S PERVERSITY

Jeremiah II, 4-28: III, 4; IV, 1, 2

Jeremiah censures the people for their unfaithfulness in worshipping idols and rejecting God, who delivered them from Egypt and the hazards of the wilderness, bringing them to a fruitful land which they had defiled. The priests, rulers and so-called prophets were equally guilty. Even heathen nations were loyal to their idols, yet Israel forsakes the true God and degrades itself by relying on such false allies as Egypt and Assyria. Time after time, when delivered from oppression, the people promised to be faithful, but their worship of Baal is sufficient evidence against them. They will come to realize that their idols are powerless to assist them in the hour of their distress. Were they only to return to God, their Father, and practise truth and righteousness, all humanity would share in their blessings.

מזל טוב
Bar Mitzvah anniversary
Jayden Brandon

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **Saturday, 2 August - Tisha B'Av**
6:30pm services commence – followed by a movie and discussion. Registration details below.
- **Sunday, 3 August – Tisha B'av**
8:15am – Shacharit
5:55pm – fast ends
- **Monday, 4 August – 85th AGM of The North Shore Synagogue**
7:45pm – Upper Victor Smith Hall
- **Sunday, 10 August – Songs for Heroes**
Featuring the Cantors and Choirs of the Central Synagogue, Great Synagogue, Kehillat Kadima, Kehillat Masada, The North Shore Synagogue and the Borowsky Chazanut Singers and more!

**Our congregation acknowledges the following
yahrzeit anniversaries and wishes long life to those
who are commemorating a yahrzeit
during the coming week.**

חיים ארוכים

Abraham Bensaul	father of Sheila Goodman
Elli Freiberg	mother of Silvia Kossard
Abe Gentin	father of Daphne Flax
Solomon Simon Green	father of Arnold Green
Josslyn Stanley Harris	husband of Gwenda Harris
John Hart	grandfather of Danny Dreyfus
Herta Klinger	mother of Ron Klinger, grandmother of Ari Klinger and Keri Klinger
Simon Soloman Lenthén	father-in-law of Ian Groden, grandfather of David Groden
Joseph Michael Levenston	father of Jonathon Levenston
Harry Lewin	uncle of Peter Nash
Hyman Ernest Marks	father of Barry Marks
Jimmy Bernard Neumegen	brother of Miriam Myers
Edith Lily Phillips	mother of Lindsay Phillips
Zelig Pines	uncle of Sandra Hepner
Esther Pniewski	grandmother of Sandra Hepner
Harvey A Roberts	father of John Roberts
Phyllis Rybak	mother of Leslie Stein
Irvin Smith	beloved long-life friend of Alan Aarons
Samuel Wiesen	father of Alicja Wiesen
Isaac Wittal	father of Frank Wittal, grandfather of Leah Somlai, Anne Sheinbar and Richard Wittal