



Carnegie Shul Chatter

July 11, 2023



Light candles 8:32pm Shabbat Services 9:30am

Shabbat Services

Join us in the sanctuary, providing you have been vaccinated for Covid 19, or attend virtually. Watch your email for a Zoom link or contact Rosalyn Hoffman at rjlynman@yahoo.com. The complete Torah reading, in Hebrew and English, can be found at https://www.chabad.org/parshah/torahreading_cdo/aid/2495903/jewish/Matot-Masei-Torah-Reading.htm

The Three Weeks

This week's Haftorah commentary begins, "This week's haftorah continues the theme of the three weeks..."

Sadly, many people outside of the Orthodox community are unaware of the three weeks, both what they are and what we are supposed to be restricted from doing during the three weeks. According to myjewishlearning.com, "The three-week period in summer that begins with the fast of the 17th of Tammuz and climaxes with Tisha B'Av is known simply as "The Three Weeks." It is a time of grieving for the destruction of both the First and Second Temples in Jerusalem. This mourning period was first mentioned in the biblical Book of Zechariah in the Prophets — and, since then, it has been observed as a period of sadness."

[My jewishlearning.com](http://myjewishlearning.com) further explains, "Traditionally, Jews take on several mourning customs during the Three Weeks. Similar to the period of the Omer, no weddings, parties, or public celebrations are held. Some people abstain from getting haircuts and shaving. Some people also refrain from going to concerts or listening to music during this period," and, "Even though the Three Weeks mark the time of the Temple's destruction, there are signs of hope throughout."

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The three haftarot read during this period, are full of admonitions and prophetic passages that warn about the consequences of sin. Yet each ends in a promise of eventual redemption.”

This is one of the things I love most about Judaism; no matter how badly we Jews mess up, and we certainly have messed up plenty of times over the years, Hashem is always anxious to forgive us and there is always the promise of redemption. As the commentary also says.

“So great is Hashem’s love for His people that even after all the atrocities they committed, rebelling against Hashem and intentionally spiting Him, one sincere gesture from the Jewish people was all that was needed.

Wouldn’t it be nice if we could finally get it right and not need to be forgiven for a change?

Matot-Masei in a Nutshell

From Chabad.org

Numbers 30:2–36:13

The name of the Parshah, “Matot,” means “Tribes,” and it is found in Numbers 30:2. The name of the Parshah, “Masei,” means “Journeys,” and it is found in Numbers 33:1.

Moses conveys the laws governing the annulment of vows to the heads of the tribes of Israel. War is waged against Midian for their role in plotting the moral destruction of Israel, and the Torah gives a detailed account of the war spoils and how they were allocated amongst the people, the warriors, the Levites and the high priest.

The tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Manasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan as their portion in the Promised Land, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, but subsequently agrees on the condition that they first join, and lead, in Israel’s conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

The forty-two journeys and encampments of Israel are listed, from the Exodus to their encampment on the plains of Moab across the river from the land of Canaan. The boundaries of the Promised Land are given, and cities of refuge are designated as havens and places of exile for inadvertent murderers. The daughters of Tzelafchad marry within their own tribe of Manasseh, so that the estate which they inherit from their father should not pass to the province of another tribe.



Haftorah in a Nutshell

Jeremiah 2:4–28; 4:1–2

This week's haftorah is the second of a series of three "haftarot of affliction." These three haftarot are read during the Three Weeks of mourning for Jerusalem, between the fasts of 17 Tammuz and 9 Av.

The prophet Jeremiah transmits G-d's message to the Jewish people, in strong tones chastising all the sectors of the people, including the leadership, for their abandonment of G-d. "What wrong did your forefathers find in Me, that they distanced themselves from Me, and they went after futility and themselves became futile?" He reminds them of the kindness G-d did for them, taking them out of Egypt and leading them through the desert and settling them in the Promised Land, yet they repaid kindness with disloyalty. "For My people have committed two evils; they have forsaken Me, the spring of living waters, [and furthermore, this was in order] to dig for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that do not hold water."

G-d asks them to view the actions of their neighboring nations, the Kittites and Kedarites, "and see whether there was any such thing, whether a nation exchanged a god, although they are not gods. Yet My nation exchanged their glory for what does not avail."

Jeremiah then goes on to foretell the suffering the Jewish people will suffer at the hands of their enemies, and also their erstwhile allies: "Your evil will chastise you, and you will be rebuked for your backslidings; and you shall know and see that your forsaking the L-rd your G-d is evil and bitter."

The haftorah ends on an encouraging note, assuring the people that if they return to G-d with sincerity, they will be restored to their full glory.



Haftorah Commentary

By Rabbi Dovid Siegel

Yirmiyahu 2:4

This week's haftorah continues the theme of the three weeks and introduces the month of Av. The prophet Yirmiyahu reprimands the Jewish people and reminds them, in the name of Hashem, of all of the favors they have received over the years. Hashem asks, "What wrong did your fathers find in Me that distanced them from Me and resulted in their following the empty practices of idolatry diminishing the Jews to nothingness? They didn't turn to Hashem who brought them up from Egypt and led them through the desolate dangerous desert." Hashem continues, "And I brought them to the fertile land of Israel to partake of its fruits and goodness. But they defiled My land and disgraced My inheritance." (Yirmiyahu 2:5) Hashem faults the Jewish nation for presently rejecting Him and resorting to the shameful ways of idolatry.

Hashem says, "They forsook Me, the source of the waters of life; to dig empty cisterns." But the blame wasn't limited to the common folk, it even extended to their leaders and prophets. Hashem describes their spiritual decline in the following terms, "The Kohanim didn't revere Me and the upholders of Torah didn't publicize My name, the kings rebelled against Me and the prophets delivered false prophecy." (2: 8) This bleak picture of the Jewish people was certainly not a comforting one and almost promised immediate retribution and destruction.

Yet, we discover that Hashem's response to all the above was one of concern and compassion. Hashem surprisingly responded, "Therefore I will continue to quarrel with you and even with your grandchildren." Hashem vowed to send more prophets and continue showing them and their descendents the proper path. Although every attempt thus far had been unsuccessful Hashem remained determined to help His people. Hashem refused to reject them even after the numerous rejections they showed him. The present leaders were not loyal to Hashem and didn't inspire the nation to repent and follow the proper path. Perhaps the next group of leaders would be more loyal and could successfully leave their imprint on the Jewish people. Although the Jews had reduced themselves to the point of emptiness and nothingness Hashem still cared about them with deep compassion. He wouldn't leave His people until every last avenue had been exhausted and it had been determined that there was literally no more hope for them.

This unbelievable degree of compassion is explained in the verses immediately preceding this week's haftora. Hashem says, "I remember you for the kindness of your youth, the love of our initial relationship when you blindly followed Me in the desert." Even after all the offenses the Jewish people committed against Him, Hashem still remembered His initial relationship with His people. Hashem never forgets those precious years wherein He enjoyed a perfect relationship with His people. Hashem actually longs for the opportunity of returning to that relationship and will do virtually anything to restore things to their original perfection. This explains Hashem's persistence in sending prophets to the Jewish people attempting to persuade them to return. In truth, Hashem views the Jewish people from an entirely different

perspective than their present rebellious state. Hashem sees them through the visions of the past. True, they have presently gone totally astray but Hashem sees in them their perfect past as the devout people whose intimate relationship with Him directed them to follow blindly wherever they were led. Hashem therefore expresses His sincere desire that the present Jewish nation live up to His perfect vision of them, the glorious vision of the past. Through this perspective the Jewish people deserve every last chance they can to return to their glorious era.



With this insight in mind we can truly appreciate the words of Chazal in Midrash Tehilim (137) which reveal Hashem's indescribable love and compassion for His people. The Midrash relates that the Prophet Yirmiyahu accompanied the Jewish people into their exile until the Euphrates River, the doorstep of Bablyonia. He then informed them that he would be leaving and returning to the segment of Jewish people left behind in the land of Israel. Suddenly there was an outburst of uncontrollable weeping from the Jewish people who realized that they were being abandoned by Yirmiyahu. He responded with the following words, "I testify in the name of Hashem that if this sincere cry would have transpired moments ago, when we were still in our homeland, the exile would never have come about," Even one emotional outburst, sensing Hashem's rejection would have sufficed to hold back the terrible calamity they now faced. Hashem loves His people so deeply that even at the last moments He still awaited their return to Him and was prepared to call off their imminent exile. In Hashem's eyes we will always be seen through the perspective of our past, a perfect devout people ready to serve Him unconditionally. And Hashem is therefore always prepared to do anything He can to restore us to that glorious position, His perfect nation.

Yahrtzeits

This week the Carnegie Shul acknowledges the yahrtzeits of:

Tillie Mallinger
Jacob Liberman
Henry C. Bales

Joel Kruman
Bob Roteman
Sam Bales

May their memories be for a blessing.