

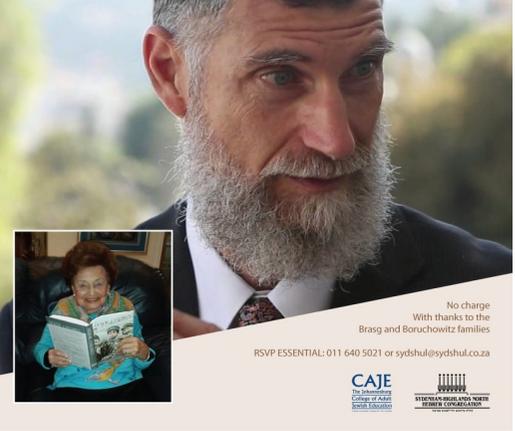
tate of the Talmud.

- Launder clothing (except for a baby's)—even if they will not be worn during the Nine Days.
- Swim or bathe for pleasure.
- Remodel or expand a home.
- Plant trees to be used for shade or fragrance (as opposed to fruit trees).
- Buy, sew, weave or knit new clothing—even if they will be worn only after the Nine Days. Exceptions to this rule: (a) If you will miss a major sale, or if the garment will be unavailable later. (b) For the purpose of a mitzvah, such as purchasing new clothing for a bride and groom.
- Cut nails during the actual week of the fast of Tisha B'Av—i.e., starting from the Saturday night before the fast until the conclusion of the Nine Days.
- There is no law forbidding traveling during the Nine Days; however, it is customary to refrain from traveling (or engaging in any potentially perilous activity) during these days, unless it is absolutely necessary.
- One may become engaged to be married during this period, but no celebration should be held until after Tisha B'Av.

Cecilia's Story: Our Mission
 Insights and inspiration from the life of Mrs Cecilia Boruchowitz A"H
 Holocaust Survivor and long-standing member of Sydenham Shul

Guest Speaker:
Rabbi Hanoach Teller, Israel
 Author, Speaker and the world's favourite storyteller

Tuesday 24 July, 7:45 pm



No charge
 With thanks to the
 Brag and Boruchowitz families

RSVP ESSENTIAL: 011 640 5021 or sydshul@sydshul.co.za



Live & Laugh

The clerk asked, "Are you a guest at the hotel?" Mr. Cohen snapped indignantly, "No, I am not a guest. I am paying \$300 a day!"

The guy next to me on the train pulled out a photo of his wife and said, "She is beautiful, isn't she!" I said, "if you think she is beautiful, you should see my girlfriend!" He said, "why? Is she beautiful too?"

I said, "no, she's an optician!"

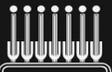
- ### Calendar
- ◆ Shacharis: 8:30 am; Shtibl 8:45 am
 - ◆ Brocha in the Seeff Hall.
 - ◆ **Ladies Shmooz with Rebbetzin Estee: 10am**
 - ◆ **Smorgasbord of Shiurim**
 - ◆ Mincha: 4:55 pm
 - ◆ Pirkei Avos: Chapter 2
 - ◆ Shabbos Ends: 6:06 pm
 - ◆ Mincha next week: 5:20 pm

- ◆ **Nathan Fine** of I.deal Furnishers at Midway Mall, Bramley Gardens wishes all congregants a Good Shabbos. Call 011-887-5456/082-854-5706. **Furniture, Bedding & Appliances.**
- ◆ **Vehicles wanted. Any make, any condition. Best prices. Phone ARNOLD ORKIN 082 823 7826**
- ◆ Acknowledgements: Chabad.org,
- ◆ Please take Good Shabbos Sydenham home if you will only carry it within the Eiruv.



Good Shabbos SYDENHAM!

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14 Jul 2018 Parshas Matos-Masai 2 Menachem Av 5778

Priorities and Price Tags by: Rabbi Yossy Goldman

Is it the money or the man, the cash or the kids? Of course, no one would ever admit to putting money ahead of their children; but is it not an all too common phenomenon? Aren't most parents, even good parents, guilty of making that mistake now and then? In this week's Parshah the Jewish People are preparing for the conquest of Canaan and the allotment of the Promised Land amongst the twelve tribes of Israel, when the tribes of Reuben and Gad make a special request of Moses.

They had abundant herds of livestock and the land east of the Jordan River was especially suitable for grazing. They asked Moses if they could receive this land rather than land west of the Jordan. In making this request they expressed themselves thus: "Pens for the flock we shall build here for our livestock, and cities for our small children."

Immediately, Moses chastises them and corrects their mistake. "Build for yourselves cities for your small children and pens for your flock." Moses turns around their sequence, putting the children ahead of the animals.

Rashi observes that these tribes were more concerned about their money, i.e. livestock, than they were about their sons and daughters. Moses needed to give them a lesson in values and priorities. Put family first. Possessions come later.

The veteran American spiritual leader, Rabbi David Hollander, once told me the story

of a fellow who somehow managed to get himself locked in inside a big department store after they closed up for the day. To compound the problem, it was over a holiday weekend. When all his attempts to get out proved futile, he decided to give vent to his frustrations by taking revenge on the store management. He spent the time of his incarceration swapping price tags on the merchandise. The result? A mink coat was now priced at \$29.99, a necktie at \$999.00. Furniture was going for the price of peanuts, the latest hi-fi for a song, and a set of underwear was absolutely unaffordable! Imagine the chaos when the store reopened.

The question is, are our own price tags correctly marked? Do we value the things in our own lives correctly? Are our priorities in order? Or do we too put the cattle and the sheep — the car and the office — ahead of our children?

How many workaholic husbands have told their wives, "Honey, I'm doing it all for you and the kids." But the businesses we are busy building for them actually take us away from them in the most important and formative years of their lives. Rightly has it been said, "the best thing you can spend on your kids is not money but time."

I've seen many people become "successes" over the years. They achieve professional success, career success, business success, growing their fame and fortunes. Too many in the process have become family failures. At the end of the day, our deepest satisfaction in life comes not from our professional achievements but from our family — the growth, stability and togetherness that we have nurtured over the years — what our Jewish

parents and grandparents simply called *nachas*.

To paraphrase the sixth Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, "Jewish wealth is not measured in property portfolios or stocks and bonds; true Jewish wealth is being blessed with children who walk in the ways of G-d." For that, we need to be there for them and with them.

A congregant of mine once walked up to me and proclaimed, "Rabbi, I am a millionaire!" I knew the man to be of modest financial means but he immediately explained, "I'm a millionaire in nachas!"

Amen. I wish it upon all of us.

Parsha Pointers

*Matos-Masai: Artscroll pg 900;
Living Torah pg 823*

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 Menasseh) 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 Menasseh, so that the estate which they inherit from their father should not pass to the province of another tribe.

First Things First

By Rabbi Shlomo Yaffe

In this week's Torah portion we read that the tribes of Reuben and Gad (later joined by half of the tribe of Manasseh) ask for the lands east of the Jordan River, these being prime pastureland for their cattle. Moses is initially angered by the request, concerned that they are not willing to help their brethren in the battle to conquer the Land of Israel. In response, Reuben and Gad propose that they first join, and be the advance troops in, Israel's conquest of the lands west of the Jordan.

We will build sheepfolds for our livestock here, and cities for our children. We will then arm ourselves quickly [and go] before the children of Israel. . . We shall not return to our homes until each of the children of Israel has taken possession of his inheritance. (Numbers 32:16–18)

Moses then responds in agreement, but changes the order of their projected construction project:

Build yourselves cities for your children and enclosures for your sheep, and what has proceeded from your mouth you shall do. (Ibid. 32:24)

They were more concerned about their possessions than about their sons and daughters, since they mentioned their livestock before their children. Moses said to them, "Not so! Treat the fundamental as a fundamental, and the secondary as secondary. First build cities for your children, and afterwards enclosures for your sheep." (Rashi's commentary on this verse)

The tribes had put sheep first, then children. But can it then be that that they actually loved their sheep more than their children?

Rather, it seems to me that they made the assumption that their ability to care for their children was predicated on how many sheep they owned—their financial situation. Hence they were always putting their economic involvement first. To this Moses responded: "Worry about your children first; the 'sheep' come last." Ultimately it is G-d who provides sustenance. We

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have to work, and work hard, but we are only creating a vessel, and then G-d fills the vessel we create with our toil.

The implication is obvious. Very often, there are so many things we do not do with our children because of the scheduling demands of our professions and businesses. To this Moses responds: "First things first! Devote yourself to the needs of your children—in particular, their spiritual needs—and the 'sheep' will happen. To bring children into the world and care for them—that is *your* mission. For your work to bear fruit, that's *G-d's* job." (This after we actually toil and make the "vessel"; no "thumb-twiddling" is being advocated here.)

We must first—in the sense of priority—as mothers and fathers, see what our children need of us physically and spiritually, and only then we turn to our "sheep"—our economic lives.

Higher and Higher

By Rabbi Yitschak Meir Kagan

"These are the journeys of the Children of Israel by which they went out of the land of Egypt" (Numbers 33:1).

Why the plural expression "journeys"? It took 42 journeys for the Israelites to reach the Holy Land, but 41 of those stages were not going "out of the land of Egypt." Leaving Egypt took only one journey, from the Egyptian city of Rameses to the place called Sukos, outside of Egypt's borders.

The Hebrew word *Mitzrayim*, "Egypt" is derived from the Hebrew word *meitzar*, meaning "straits" or "limitations." The exodus from Egypt was not only a physical liberation from outside forces of enslavement, imprisonment and "limitation," but also a spiritual liberation of the Jews from the idolatrous depravity of Egyptian culture as well as from their own "straits"—their bad habits and inclinations. This inner liberation took many progressive stages, many "journeys," and each journey was an exodus from the "Egypt"—the limitation—of the previous stage.

For today's accomplishments in self-liberation from evil are tomorrow's "Egypt." Yesterday the person freed himself, to a certain degree,

from his former unwholesome traits; he left Egypt. But today he cannot be satisfied with yesterday's standards of accomplishment. Not only is yesterday's liberation from evil insufficient, imperfect—it is, for today, a strait, a limitation, an Egypt from which an exodus must be experienced.

The daily service of man through prayer reflects a similar pattern of successive stages or journeys "out of Egypt."

First, one prepares to pray. One contemplates "I, a man, my G-dly soul entrapped within a physical body with an animal instinct, (and, to make it worse, sullied by sin) am about to pray to the Al-mighty, Who is infinite and utterly without limitation." This sobering thought is uppermost in his mind when he puts on his prayer shawl and prepares to pray. The very act of setting himself to pray has driven his material concerns out of his mind — he has already left Egypt.

But his sense of self, his "ego," though now refined, is still ever-present in his awareness. However, as he starts to say the actual words of prayer, he begins to leave even this limitation, this "Egypt." Finally, the *Amida* is reached; all Egypt's are left behind. The worshipper loses all sense of "self"; he stands "as a servant before his master." He declares, "Oh L-rd, open my lips that my mouth should declare your praise"; he has reached a level of complete self-abnegation; he will merely repeat what is placed in his lips.

The final exodus has been accomplished; the "Holy Land" has been reached!

The Nine Days

The first nine days of the month of Av, and also the morning of the tenth, are days of acute mourning for the destruction of the first and second Holy Temples.

During this time we don't:

- Eat meat (including poultry) or drink wine, for during this period the sacrifices and wine libations in the Holy Temple ceased. The exceptions to this rule are meat and wine consumed on Shabbat or as part of a meal that celebrates a mitzvah, such as a circumcision, bar mitzvah, or the completion of a trac-