



These three weeks culminate in Tisha B'Av recalling the Temples' destruction and the Jews' rejection of God's promise of Israel. Let us contemplate the sins of those ancient Jews that flared God's wrath, and correct those behaviors in ourselves. **Now is a time of Teshuvah.**

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Jerusalem	7:29	Pittsburgh	8:34
Johannesburg	5:12	Seattle	8:50
Los Angeles	7:49	Sydney	4:45
London	8:58	Tokyo	6:41
Miami	7:58	Toronto	8:42
Montreal	8:26	Washington DC	8:18

Weekly Parsha

Mattos

RABBI BERNIE FOX

Take vengeance against the people of Midyan and afterwards you will be gathered to your nation. (BeMidbar 31:2)

The closing passages of Parshat Balak provide an intro-

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Weekly Parsha

Beyond Balak: Understanding the People of Moav

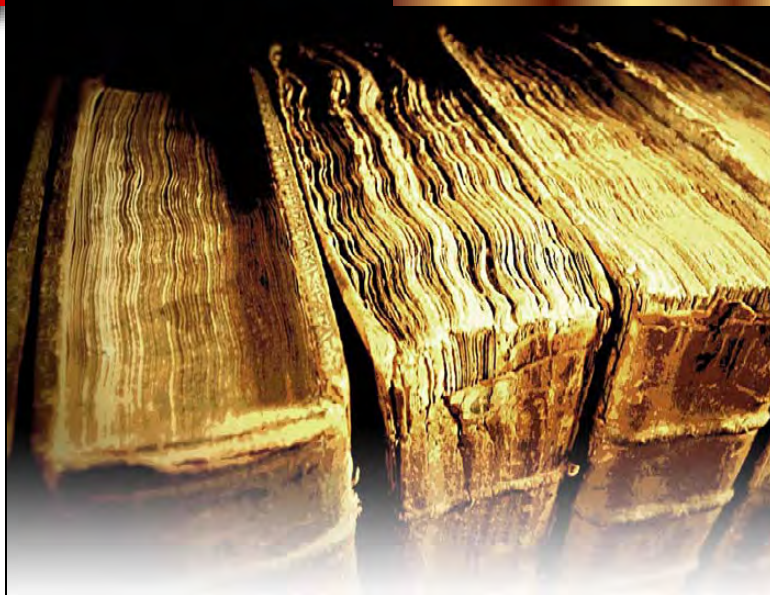
RABBI DR. DARREL GINSBERG

We are in the midst of the three weeks, approaching the nine days which culminates in Tisha B'Av, the day so many tragedies befell Bnai Yisrael. This period of time affords us the opportunity to reflect on our current state, a period of introspection as well as recognition of the reality of our galus, our exile. At times, we tend to think that it is only through looking at ourselves as a nation that we can sufficiently reflect on our ways. It would seem, however, that there is indeed much to gain in analyzing and studying those nations surrounding us. Interestingly, in this week's parsha we see such an analysis, specifically regarding the nation of Moav. An objective approach to looking at other nations can offer a crucial message and the insights gleaned from them can serve to benefit us.

The sin by Bnai Yisrael with the women of Midyan, and the subsequent plague that killed 24,000 Jews,

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Fundamentals



Repentance

RABBI ISRAEL CHAIT

Maimonides in his Code gives us the specific formula for repentance:

"I beseech Thee O' Lord, I have sinned, I have deviated, I have been negligent before you and I have done such and such, and behold I have repented and am ashamed of my deeds, and I will never again repeat this deed." "This is the essence of the verbal formula for repentance," says Maimonides, "but whoever wishes to add to it may do so and this is even considered praiseworthy."

It is important to note that while repentance is accepted by God even if it is not verbalized, that is, even if it is done in thought alone, it is not considered complete until one has verbally expressed these thoughts. The essence of repentance is in the heart and mind as it is stated in Deuteronomy, "And you shall know this day and return to your heart... (Deuteronomy 4:39)." Why then does the Torah call for verbalization?

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(Mattos cont. from pg. 1)

Weekly Parsha

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duction to this passage. In those passages, women from the nations of Moav and Midyan enter the camp of Bnai Yisrael. The women plan to seduce members of Bnai Yisrael and use these illicit relationships to lead their partners into idolatrous practices. The strategy is successful and discipline and sexual restraint begin to break down. Ultimately, Zimri - a leader of the shevet of Shimon - publicly enters into a romantic liaison with Kazbi - a princess of Midyan. Hashem strikes Bnai Yisrael with a plague. Pinchas, the son of Elazar the kohen, takes action. He executes Zimri and Kazbi. In response to Pinchas' zealotness, Hashem ends the plague.

Also, in Parshat Pinchas, Hashem commands Moshe to avenge the evil done by the people of Midyan. Moshe is told to "afflict" Midyan. Now, Hashem seems to repeat this command. He tells Moshe to take vengeance against the people of Midyan. This raises an obvious question. Why did Hashem repeat the command? Why is the command first stated in Parshat Pinchas and then repeated in our parasha?

It seems that each command is unique. The command in Parshat Pinchas does not indicate any specific action. It establishes a relationship between Bnai Yisrael and Midyan. Bnai Yisrael is to view the nation of Midyan as an adversary. Our relationship with Midyan should be predicated upon the assumption that the people of Midyan feel animosity towards Bnai Yisrael. We should take any and all action required to protect ourselves. However, this command does not include a specific obligation to wage war. The command in our parasha is more specific. It requires engaging Midyan in war. Moshe is commanded to seek out the people of Midyan and wage war against them.

Our pasuk makes an interesting connection. Hashem tells Moshe that he will die only after

completing this task. This implies that Moshe's involvement is essential. Why is Moshe's participation important? Two issues must be understood in order to answer this question.

First, the Torah's comments concerning Moshe's special status must be reviewed and understood. In the final passages of the Torah, Moshe's uniqueness is described. The Torah writes that no other individual can achieve Moshe's prophetic level. The Torah also explains that the wonders performed through Moshe exceed those executed through other prophets. These passages teach another

important lesson. The pesukim link Moshe's prophecy to the wonders he performed. Moshe was the greatest prophet. His closeness to Hashem was expressed in the profound level of his prophecy. This same intimacy allowed Moshe to perform wonders beyond the ability of other prophets. In other words, the degree of the wonders performed by or through a prophet is directly proportionate to the prophet's relationship with Hashem as expressed in his level of prophecy. The greater the individual's level of prophecy, the greater the wonders that can be performed by or through him. Moshe was the greatest prophet and therefore, the greatest wonders were performed through and by Moshe.



Second, as explained, the command outlined in the above passage is to wage war. This war was not to be fought by conventional means. Instead, this war would be waged by Hashem, through the agency of Bnai Yisrael. The Torah does not describe the specific wonders and miracles that took place during the campaign. However, it does communicate that this campaign was not conventional through its description of two of the war's aspects. First, Moshe stipulates that rather than the entire nation participating in the campaign, each shevet will contribute one thousand men to the effort.[1] In other words,

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Moshe insisted that Bnai Yisrael should assign to 12,000 men the task of subduing the entire nation of Midyan. Second, despite being overwhelmingly outnumbered by their adversaries, not one of these 12,000 participants was killed.[2]

Based upon the above, Gershonides explains the connection between the commandment to wage war against Midyan and the impending death of Moshe. Hashem told Moshe that this war must be waged before he died. This is because in this war, Hashem would destroy Midyan through His wonders. However, wonders of this degree can only be performed through a prophet of corresponding greatness. Moshe's prophetic accomplishment would allow for the performance of these great miracles. Through no other prophet could Midyan have been destroyed as totally and wondrously.[3]

War and Ritual Defilement

And you shall wash your clothes on the seventh day and you shall become pure. Afterwards, you shall come into the camp (BeMidbar 31:24)

After Midyan was attacked and completely destroyed, Elazar the Kohen Gadol, addresses the participants in the battle. He explains that they are ritually unclean through contact with the dead. During the period of their impurity, they may not enter the camp. They must undergo a process of cleansing. After completing this process, they may reenter the camp. This is not the first battle that Bnai Yisrael fought. The nation had conquered the kingdoms of Sichon and Og. In those campaigns, they certainly came in contact with dead bodies. Yet, they were not commanded to observe these laws of ritual impurity! Why, only now, were these instructions given?

Nachmanides suggests a simple answer. The campaign against Midyan involved only a small portion of the nation. The majority remained ritually clean. Elazar wanted to prevent the spread of ritual impurity throughout the nation. Therefore, he commanded those who were impure to remain outside of the camp. In contrast, the majority of the nation was involved in the wars with Sichon and Og. As a result, most of Bnai Yisrael were ritually unclean through contact with dead bodies. There was little point in segregating those who were impure.[4]



And the court shall protect the murderer from the avenger. And they should return him to the City of Refuge to which he fled. And he should dwell there until the death of the Kohen Gadol that was anointed with the sacred oil. (BeMidbar 35:26)

The accidental murderer discussed in this parasha did not kill through complete mischance. If an individual caused a death through unforeseeable and unpreventable means, there is no punishment. This section is dealing with a person whose behavior was somewhat negligent and caused a death. This person is considered guilty of a crime. This individual is referred to as a murderer. The penalty for intentional murder is death. Unintentional murder is punished with exile. Cities of Refuge are established throughout the Land of Israel. The unintentional murderer is required to flee to one of these cities.

How long is the sentence of exile? The Chumash explains that the period is not fixed. It is determined by the life of the Kohen Gadol. The murderer remains in exile as long as the Kohen Gadol lives. With the death of the High Priest, the murderer goes free. Therefore, the sentences vary. A person who enters into exile during the waning years of the Kohen Gadol's life experiences a short

sentence. A murderer placed in exile early in the High Priest's life spends many years of exile. This seems to be a strange system for determining sentences. However, Rabbaynu Yosef Bechor Shur explains that this law provides an important insight into the punishment of exile.

He explains that the punishment is designed to correspond with the crime. The murderer deprived an individual of life. Therefore, the murderer's life is restricted. He is forced to live in exile. It follows that, ideally, the period of the punishment should correspond to the life expectancy of the specific victim. For example, assume the victim was murdered at the age of twenty. If the victim would have lived another forty years - to the age of sixty, the ideal period of exile would be forty years. The problem with the application of the ideal is that there is no means to determine the number of years the specific victim would have lived. Some standard must be created. The Torah designates the Kohen Gadol as this standard. The number of years lived by the High Priest serves as a representation of the number of years denied the victim. With the death of the Kohen Gadol, this period ends and the unintentional murderer is justly punished.[5]

It seems according to Rabbaynu Yosef Bechor Shur, the linking of the length of the sentence imposed upon the murderer to the death of the Kohen Gadol, is designed to communicate the meaning of the exile. This message is communicated through a combination of two aspects of the punishment's structure. First, the Kohen Gadol's life span is selected as a representation of the victim's potential life span. Second, the period of the exile corresponds with the remaining years of the Kohen Gadol. The message communicated by the combination of these aspects of the punishment is that the exile corresponds to or atones for the years of which the victim was deprived. ■

[1] Sefer BeMidbar 31:4-5.

[2] Sefer BeMidbar 31:49.

[3] Rabbaynu Levi ben Gershon (Ralbag/Gershonides), Commentary on Sefer VaYikra, (Mosad HaRav Kook, 1997), p 142.

[4] Rabbaynu Moshe ben Nachman (Ramban/Nachmanides), Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 31:23.

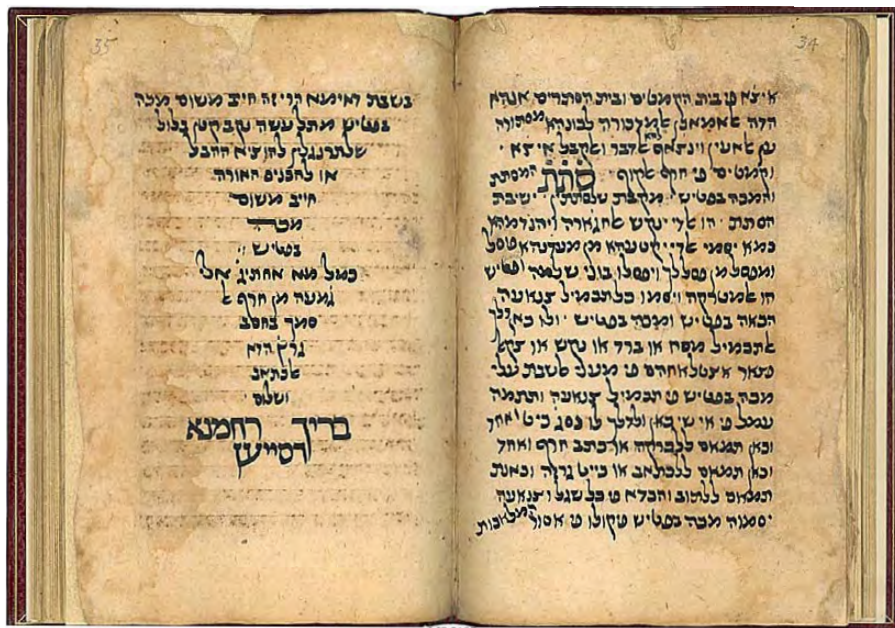
[5] Rabbaynu Yosef Bechor Shur, Commentary on Sefer BeMidbar 35:26.

The answer lies in a principle of Halakah that verbalization is the most complete expression of human thought. The ideas of the mind, as profound as they may be, reach their full fruition only when they are translated into tangible statements. For this reason one may think in Torah without reciting a blessing before doing so, while verbalizing Torah or even writing Torah ideas demand a blessing. The Torah considers verbal expression to be the final stage of the thinking process, the crystallization of one's thoughts. Repentance is not complete until one can stand before the Creator and enunciate one's thoughts clearly concerning his or her misdeeds.

Why is it necessary for one to invoke the Creator in one's expression of repentance? Is not the essence of repentance the recognition of one's error and the conviction never to return to the misdeed, that is, never to perform it again? Why then is it necessary to begin the repentance formula with the expression "I beseech Thee O' Lord"?

Here we get an opportunity to see the great insight of Torah. The objective of the entire Torah is to give man the correct idea of God. This idea is the one idea that must never be distorted. Hence Torah rails constantly against idolatry or attaching any form to the Creator. Once the idea of God is distorted in any way whatever man is doomed.

Man is a creature that is guided by thoughts. This is true even in his most mundane actions. But aside from the activities that are vital for man's existence there exists a realm of behavior that involves man's higher nature, that part of him which is truly human. Here man's activities are determined by his value system or what he considers to be good or not good. The Torah teaches us the remarkable concept that this is all dependent on one's idea of God. If one sees God as a big daddy in the sky that metes out punishment for infractions and gives rewards for certain actions then one's entire life will be spent trying to gain reward and avoid punishment. If one thinks God has a physical form one will ascribe to him human traits and act towards him as he would towards a human being. He will also think that the physical reality is the underlying reality of all existence. If one knows that God is not physical, nor can He be compared to any of His creation as the prophet states, "And to whom can you compare me sayeth the Holy One (Isaiah 40:25)," that this God is the source of all existence, as is stated in the first verse of Genesis, and that all that we perceive as physical stems from the underlying reality of God's



infinite knowledge, then one will spend one's life in reaching God as He reveals Himself through His infinite knowledge and wisdom. All the actions of such a person will have just one objective, that is, to know God as the prophet states, "In all your ways you shall know Him..." (Proverbs 3:6)." Such an individual will indulge in physical and psychological pleasures only insofar as is necessary in order to be able to pursue his relationship with the Creator via the divine element God has implanted in man's soul.

Whenever man sins he lacks, of necessity, knowledge either of the Creator or himself. Because of his error he sways from his course and engages in activities that take him away from God. He must therefore first and foremost approach God, reestablish his relationship with Him and turn to Him with the words "I beseech Thee O' Lord." With this one most powerful phrase one comes to realize that sin is not just a misdemeanor and repentance a childish resolution, but that sin involves a necessary turning away from the Creator, a deviation from one's program in life and repentance is a return to that way of life that involves an endless reaching out towards the Creator.

Maimonides in his ingenious formulation of the laws of repentance taught us an important truth. He stated that in order to repent one must have knowledge of certain principles of Torah. In his heading for the laws of repentance he states, "The explanation of this commandment and the principles that are drawn along with it and because of it are in these chapters." These

principles include free will, the afterlife, how God judges man, what is apostasy, knowledge of God, the value of repentance, which things prevent repentance, and the correct way to serve God. Why is it necessary to know all these things in order to repent? The answer is plain; Since repentance is not a mere act of contrition but a qualitatively new relationship with the Creator one must have a sound knowledge of these principles which are the very basis of man's relationship with God. One must review these principles and seek in them new depths of understanding in order to establish one's relationship with God on a higher plane. The Torah and the prophets have made it clear that without knowledge one cannot serve God. David charged his son Solomon upon his taking leave from this earthly existence with the words "know the God of your fathers and serve Him (Chronicles I 28:9)." As the Rabbis say, "first one must know Him and then one may serve Him." All perfection involves a knowledge of the Creator and the more perfected one is the greater is that knowledge. As man strives for higher levels throughout his life his knowledge of God is forever changing, forever deepening.

The measure of a human being is in direct proportion to his knowledge of God. As such there are various degrees of human existence until one reaches the level of our great teacher Moses whose knowledge of God was the very highest attainable by the human species.

Repentance as seen by the Torah is not a mere act but the quintessence of man's relationship with God. ■



OLAM HABA

RABBI REUVEN MANN

Student: I was learning the Ramban about Olam Haba (the afterlife), and I have a couple of questions. I was hoping that you could help. In learning your tape on this subject, you said that since the Ramban says that we will return to the state of Adam HaRishon, that means that our mind will naturally dominate over our instincts.

How does this work with the other parts of the Ramban's explanation. In Deuteronomy (30:6), the Ramban says "the heart will not desire the improper and it will have no craving whatever for it." "This is a reference to the annulment of the evil instincts..." "...for in the days of the Messiah there will be no evil desire in man, but he will naturally perform the proper deeds and therefore there will be neither merit nor guilt in them, for merit and guilt are dependent upon desire."

If there are no instincts, how are we similar to Adam? In that state, will we still sin?

Thanks for your help.

Rabbi Mann: You ask a good question. I would say that the Ramban holds that Olam Haba is analogous to the state of Adam, however it is not identical in every respect. For it is clear that Adam had free will and was therefore given commandments for whose violation he was punished. However he was different than we are in the structure of his instincts - his "yetzer hara", required external stimulation. For the natural flow of his instinctual energy was toward truth. In terms of his natural state one could say he lacked a yetzer hara. Thus the Ramban uses that state as the analogy to provide a model for Olam Haba. However it need not mean that Olam Haba is identical to Gan Eden (Adam's era) in every particular. In Olam Haba the structure of his soul will be such that he will not be subject to a desire for evil even regarding those things which are external. His energies will be such that his love of truth will always be superior to any physical desire. In general this was the state of Adam in Gan Eden, and the Ramban refers to this only by way of analogy.



In summation, Adam's natural energies were in line with the good but he had within him the potential for an emotional attraction which would be powerful enough to overcome his reason. Thus, Adam can be summarized as a natural state of good with possibility of sin (ie. if external stimulus occurs which attracts sufficient energy to create a conflict between reason and emotion) Olam Haba is analogous to Gan Eden only regarding the first idea. However it is different regarding the second, because the possibility of a conflict in which emotion will contain the potential to overpower reason will not exist.

Student: I assume that sin would then be impossible in Olam Haba. Will this change the system of Mitzvos? Will we still have Yom Kippur?

Rabbi Mann: It would seem that since there will be no sin there will be no reward and punishment, hence there will be no need to repent and hence no Yom Kippur. Bear in mind that the key point is that the Ramban identifies Messianic Era with Olam Haba, which means the perfected state of the soul - the ultimate reward. Thus everything which we posit about Olam Haba. ie. "The world that is koolo Aruch (eternal), the world that is koolo tov (all good) etc." means that it will be qualitatively different than the world we are in now. The Ramban accepts all the statements about Olam Haba which indicate that it is a state of absolute good with no evil. The only difference is that he maintains it will take place in the physical universe and man will have a physical form. However, he will be a perfected being, not subject to conflict, and incapable of sin. As such, there will be no need for Torah and mitzvos which were given to man in his imperfected state as a means of perfecting him and bringing him to his perfected state. Once in that state there is no longer any need for the system which brought him to perfection. Once you are on the moon, you do not need the space ship which got you there.■

leaves some of the issues unresolved. God therefore commands Moshe to wage battles against the Midyanim (Bamidbar 31:2):

"Take revenge for Bnai Yisrael against the Midianites, afterward, you shall be gathered to your people."

Looking back at Parshas Balak, one can obviously see that there were two nations involved in these nefarious plans – the Midianites and the Moavites. The question here is: what about the fate of the other aggressor, the Moavites? Rashi (ibid, based on a Gemara) offers two explanations:

"But not against the Moavites, for the Moavites entered the matter out of fear. They were afraid of them, [fearing] that they would plunder them, as it only says, 'do not provoke them with warfare.' The Midianites, however, were enraged over a dispute which was not theirs. Another interpretation: for the sake of two virtuous doves whom I must extract from them – Ruth the Moavite, and Na'amah the Ammonite."

Looking at each interpretation raises some interesting questions. In terms of the first possibility, why should the Moavites be spared punishment because they were motivated by fear? When all is said and done, they tried to destroy Bnai Yisrael. That alone should merit their annihilation. Furthermore, it seems as though their actions were provoked by a fear of their property being taken. If so, why go through the trouble of scheming with Midian to take down Bnai Yisrael? A simpler approach would be to negotiate some sort of deal with Bnai Yisrael. For example, offer Bnai Yisrael a gift in exchange for not taking any of their belongings. Why go through all this trouble?

The second possibility is even more difficult to comprehend. Ruth was just a figment in her parents' imagination at this point. To say an entire society merited being saved due to one unborn individual, one who had the ability to exercise her free will and possibly not become Jewish, does not seem to make sense. One could raise the argument that Avraham debated with God regarding Sedom's avoidance of destruction (see Bereishis 18:20-33) based on just ten righteous people living in the city. However, these people would be alive at the time, so their affect on their surroundings would be manifest – this would merit their safety. Ruth was not alive, so the analogy holds no water. How are we to understand Rashi's explanation?

Before diving into Rashi, it is important to have a basic understanding of the basis for war between Bnai Yisrael and the other nations. The Torah describes God, in the Shiras Yam Suf (Shemos 15:3), as follows:

"God is the master of war, God is His Name."

Rashi (ibid) explains as follows:

"He does not conduct His wars with weapons but, rather, He wages war with His Name, as David said (to Goliath): 'I come against you in the Name of God of Hosts.'"

What does this mean? It could be Rashi is differentiating between the motivations that normally guide nations in fighting each other versus why Bnai Yisrael fights, based on God's directive. Most wars are fought due to territorial disputes, the craving for conquest, and even the desire to spread one's distorted theology. In the case of milchemes mitzva (war of mitzva) God commands Bnai Yisrael to fight due to the ideological threat posed by the other nation. The direct result of the creation of Bnai Yisrael was a hatred of the ideology the Jewish people represent. This fact was encapsulated with Amalek, whose only motivation to attack Bnai Yisrael was an unwillingness to tolerate the philosophy of Judaism. While Amalek was, and is, the paradigm of true anti-Semitism, many other nations and societies developed and internalized this desire to rid the world of the ideology of Bnai Yisrael. These nations are the ones who pose a direct threat to Bnai Yisrael, and it is due to their existence that milchemes mitzva are commanded. Other nations fight with conventional weapons for conventional purposes. Bnai Yisrael fight to sanctify the name of God.

This principle serves to help elucidate Rashi's words. The first possibility Rashi offers has to do with the motivation of the Moavites in trying to trip up Bnai Yisrael. Their concern seemed not to be ideologically orientated--their fear is what drove them, not their hatred. On the other hand, the people of Midian were driven by their ideological abhorrence of Judaism. They had no reason to get involved; not only did they join with Moav, but they were the ones who concocted the plan to bring in Bilaam (see Rashi, Bamidbar 22:4). Clearly, Midian needed to be destroyed. However, the people of Moav (excluding Balak) had no ideological bone to pick with Bnai Yisrael. This being the case, there would be no justification to destroy them. Yet if their fear was a rational one, there also would be no reason to point out why they were saved – it would be obvious. Rashi states that they were concerned Bnai Yisrael would take all of their possessions. On the surface, this does not seem to be an irrational fear. It is how they dealt with it that exposes their flaw. While the people of Moav were not motivated by

their hatred of the Jewish religion, one should not assume Moav was a model of intellect and morality. Their ties to their property reflected their intense attachment to the physical world, which drove them to scheme against Bnai Yisrael. The Moavites assumed that the same value they placed on their property was shared by Bnai Yisrael. In other words, they projected their value system on Bnai Yisrael. They believed that Bnai Yisrael, in their wars, were driven by the desire to acquire property, to conquer for the sake of amassing wealth and fortune, so they went to all lengths to prevent their property from being taken. In essence, they perceived the desire to fight through the same lenses as all other nations, not realizing how Bnai Yisrael was unique.

In regards to the second explanation, we are being introduced to a more positive side of Moav. If the entire society was morally corrupt, it would not make sense to avoid destruction on the basis of a person who was not even alive yet. Rashi might be pointing us in an interesting direction. As mentioned above, nobody would argue that Moav was not a model society. We also know that Ruth possessed unique personality traits, setting her apart from the rest of her brethren. It could be that while Moav was far from perfect, there were some social or cultural values that existed that would help foster the right environment for someone like Ruth to emerge. Many times, societies function based on a warped moral compass, and yet they may nonetheless possess one or two redeeming characteristics. These positive traits can make a tremendous difference in the emergence of, for example, a convert from his/her surroundings. Ruth did not develop her personality in a vacuum. While her surroundings were far from ideal, there must have been some positive aspects to that environment that allowed for her to become the great woman she was to be. For that reason as well, the people of Moav merited being saved.

What we see from these examples is an important insight into how to view other nations. Our viewpoint must always be from the perspective of the ideological. Not every nation is ideologically opposed to the existence of Judaism and not every aspect of other societies should be deemed unhealthy. On the one hand, there are many corrupt elements that exist that, when understood, help us learn to avoid their pitfalls. On the other hand, there may exist some redeeming features, where great people can emerge and affect Judaism in a positive way. While we must remain true to our ideals and immovable in our observance, we must also recognize that there are benefits to the world around us and the people in it. ■

The Downside of FREEDOM

RABBI REUVEN MANN



This past week we, along with our fellow Americans celebrated Independence Day. We have much to be thankful for as few countries in history have been as just and compassionate as the United States. A nation's true character can be seen in its treatment of minorities, especially the Jews. America fought a Civil War in order to abolish slavery and engaged in many subsequent struggles to provide equal opportunity for all citizens, irrespective of race, color or creed. No group has thrived on these shores more than the Jews. Nowhere else in the long history of the exile have we experienced such religious, economic, political and social freedom. There is, however, a dark side to this happy picture. We must ask: how have we used the opportunity we have been granted? From the spiritual standpoint, the American experience has been a disaster. The overwhelming majority of Jews have abandoned Judaism in favor of the "American dream." Is it possible that for thousands of years Jews retained their identity only because of the hostility of our enemies. We have always viewed antisemitism as an unmitigated evil and strove for its elimination. Is it feasible, however, that antisemitism is a vital requirement for Jewish survival, that without enemies Jews have no incentive to be Jewish?

This should cause us to look at the issue of peace in the Middle East in a different light. I do not put much stock in the peace process which is being conducted by President Obama. I regard the Israel-Arab dispute as irreconcilable due to the inability of the Muslim world to accept a Jewish state in their midst. The theological implications of a reborn Jewish state in control of Jerusalem are too troubling for them to bear. I do not believe that true peace will emerge from the current negotiations. And maybe this is not such a bad thing. Has anyone considered the spiritual consequences of a cessation of the Israeli - Arab dispute. The Book of Devarim is filled with warnings about "forgetting Hashem" when things go well for us. It's easy to remember G-d when we are hated and persecuted and have no one else to turn to. The true test of our devotion is when we are prosperous, secure and respected. We must, during this season of national mourning, strengthen our attachment to Judaism by additional Torah study and the performance of mitzvot. The love of Israel and the Jewish people which is rooted in the love of Hashem and His torah will endure forever.

Shabbat Shalom. ■

The 9 Days

A Reminder

RABBI REUVEN MANN

This coming Monday, July 12th is Rosh Chodesh and thus initiates the period known as the 9 days which culminate in Tisha B'Av on Tuesday, July 20th. During this time Ashkenazim observe a number of restrictions. They are:

1) swimming or bathing for pleasure. One may not immerse the entire body in water for the sake of pleasure. However washing to remove dirt or sweat is not considered "for pleasure" and is permitted. One may wash his hands, face and feet with cold water for any reason but can not wash with warm water unless it is necessary for hygienic purposes;

2) It is prohibited to launder not only garments but anything such as towels, bed sheets, etc. which require washing, nor can we give clothes to the launderers or cleaners during the 9 days. Therefore, one should make certain to launder all the clothing one will need for the 9 days before sunset on Monday, July 12th. Clothing of children which is constantly soiled, such as diapers, are exempt from the prohibition;

3) It is prohibited to wear freshly laundered or pressed clothing during the 9 days. One should set aside any such clothing before the 9 days and wear them for a short period of time. Once they are worn they may be worn again during the nine days since they are no longer regarded as "freshly" laundered;

4) It is permitted to bathe or shower on Friday for the sake of Shabbat. So too, one may wear freshly laundered a pressed clothing for Shabbat. After Shabbat these clothes may be worn since they are no longer regarded as "freshly laundered";

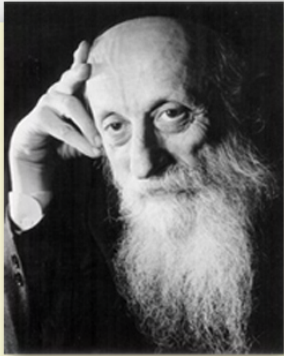
5) It is prohibited to eat meat and chicken and to drink wine during the nine days. One may drink other alcoholic beverages such as beer. These rules are suspended for Shabbat;

6) The prohibition of shaving and haircutting begins on the 17th of Tammuz and remains in effect for the 9 days;

7) All of the prohibitions of the 9 days are in effect until the day after Tisha B'av Wednesday July 21 at midday (12:35 pm) ■

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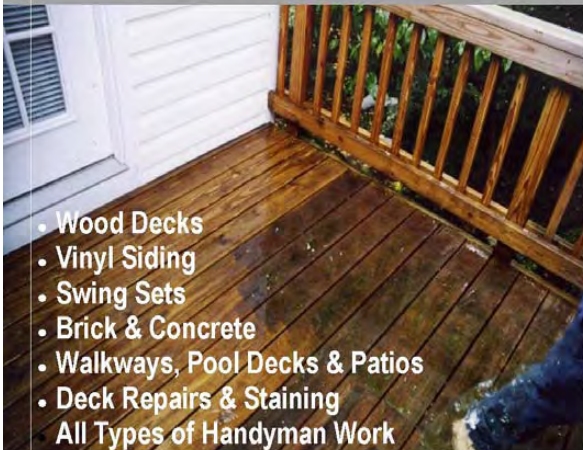
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