

CHAYUS

A Shabbos Stimulus

THE EDA AND DAVID SCHOTTENSTEIN EDITION

In Loving Memory of Itta Bas Yosef Mordechai And Tzvi Daniel Ben David Ainsworth ע"ה

Dedicated by David & Eda Schottenstein

Erev Shabbos Parshas Matos-Mas'ei, 5781 – July 9, 2021
Erev Rosh Chodesh Menachem-Av

ערב שבת פרשת מטות-מסעי, כ"ט תמוז, ה'תשפ"א
ערב ראש חודש מנחם-אב

כתר שם טוב

PORTIONS OF LIGHT

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Life Journeys

These are the journeys of the children of Israel when they left the land of Egypt (Bamidbar 33:1).

The Torah lists forty-two journeys from Egypt to the Holy Land. In a sense, these same forty-two journeys are undertaken by each Jew during his lifetime. Our journey begins with leaving Egypt, which alludes to childbirth—the first step of our sojourn on earth. Our remaining steps play out during the course of our life-

time until we reach our final destination. Our last step is to enter the supernal Land of Life.

Focus: The events and conditions that shape your life are highly orchestrated.

שער הבטחון

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Understanding Tests

There are two reasons why the Creator deemed it in such a way that a person must make efforts to pursue and search for the means of his livelihood and other needs:

The first reason is that G-d, in His wisdom, decided to test the person as to whether he will choose to serve G-d or to rebel against Him.

The second reason why G-d deemed that people be required to exert effort and employ various means to obtain their livelihood is that if a person did not need to exert himself to pursue and search for means of sustenance, he would rebel and pursue that which is forbidden, and he would not heed his obligations toward G-d in exchange for the kindness of G-d toward him. As the verse says (Isaiah 5:12): *And there are harp and lute, tambourine and flute, and wine at their drinking feasts. The work of the L-rd they do not regard, and the deed of His hands they have not seen.* Similarly, it says (Deuteronomy 32:15): *And Jeshurun became fat and rebelled; you grew fat, thick, and plump. Israel forsook the G-d Who made them.*

Commentary: The purpose of creation was to elevate the Jewish soul from its previous state before it descended into a body to a higher level of Divine consciousness that can only be realized through overcoming the tests and challenges the soul will have in this physical world (*Marpei Lanefesh; Ne'edar Bakodesh*. See also *Chovot Halevavot*, the Gate of Serving G-d, ch. 9).

In Chasidic teachings, the purpose of creation is explained based on the teaching that “G-d desired a dwelling place in the lowest worlds” (*Midrash Tanchuma* 16)—i.e., G-d diminished His energy to the extent

that He created a materialistic world where G-dliness is obscure; a world of “darkness.” Man was then instructed to introduce and reveal the presence of G-d in such a setting through the suppression of material desires and by living a Torah lifestyle, thus transforming the world into a Divine palace. It is clearly a challenge to find G-d in the “worldly reality,” where everyone and everything is self-centric. Yet the soul must demonstrate that it is not only G-dly while in a spiritual setting, but it remains committed to G-d and affects its body in the same vein, despite the harshness and struggles of this physical

world. The goal is that when the collective body of Jewish souls *are able* to achieve this revelation of G-d and lead the world to Messianic times, the essence of G-d will be revealed, and the soul (and body) will enjoy the highest levels of Divine spiritual experience (*Tanya, Likkutei Amarim*, chs. 36-37).

A test has no inherent value. It exists solely in or-

der to test the inner resolve of man. If the person being tested passes the test, he has thus proven the total futility of the test's existence in its own right. Notwithstanding the futility in the "testing" times, the test arouses and accomplishes the greatest revelations of G-d in this world, and the greatest expressions of human connect- edness to G-d.

לקוטי שיחות

A SICHA

By: ProjectLikkuteiSichos.org

Adapted from the works of the [Lubavitcher Rebbe](http://LubavitcherRebbe.org)

Bil'am's Sinister Speech

The Verse: The Jewish people waged a war of revenge against Midyan, but spared the females. Moses admonished the military captains for this misplaced act of compassion:

"Moses said to them, 'Did you allow all the females to live? It was they who caused the children of Israel, by the word of Bil'am, to betray G-d regarding the matter of Peor, resulting in the plague among G-d's congregation'" (*Bamidbar* 31:15-16).

The Rashi: *By the word of Bil'am* — He said to them, "Even if you assemble all the multitudes of the world, you will not be able to overcome them. Are you more numerous than the Egyptians, who had six hundred chosen chariots? Come, and I will advise you. Their G-d hates immorality. [thus, entice them to sin with your women...]," as appears in the chapter of *Cheilek* (*Sanhedrin* 106a) and in *Sifrei* (*Mattos* 43).

The Questions: Rashi previously related Bil'am's scheme in his commentary on Bil'am's words (in *parshas Balak*), "Come, I will advise you." (*Bamidbar* 24:14) There, however, Rashi does not include Bil'am's preface: "Even if you assemble all the multitudes of the world, you will not be able to overcome them. Are you more numerous than the Egyptians, who had six hundred chosen chariots?"

- 1) Why does Rashi find it necessary to cite this lengthy preface here and not in *parshas Balak*?
- 2) Why does he only mention the "six hundred chosen chariots" (*Shemos* 14:7) and not the far more imposing description later in that verse, "all the chariots of Egypt, with officers over them all"?

The Preface to the Explanation: In *parshas Balak*, the Torah only mentions Bil'am's "advice" — "come, I will advise you." Rashi, therefore, only mentions his plot, "Their G-d hates immorality [thus, entice them to sin with your women]."

Here, however, Moses speaks about "Bil'am's words," implying that Bil'am's advice was part of a lengthier speech that was relevant to Moses' admonition of the military officers.

The Explanation: Bil'am explained to Balak that the Jewish people could not be overcome by physical force. Balak knew this; he saw how they defeated the mighty armies of Sichon and Og. Balak thought, however, that he could hurt them through spiritual, occult forces, such as Bil'am's sorcery.

Therefore, Bil'am continued, saying that the Jews were impervious even to those who had spiritual advantages: "Are you more numerous than the Egyptians, who had six hundred chosen chariots?" These chariots, Rashi explains in *Shemos*, "belonged to those who feared the word of G-d," yet still they failed to overpower the Jews. The only way to defeat the Jews, Bil'am concluded, was to wage a war of seduction against the Jews: "Their G-d hates immorality."

Moses was angered that the soldiers spared the females, not because of their past behavior, but because they were on the front lines in the Midyanite campaign against the Jews. As the Torah notes, "by the word of Bil'am," the Jews could only be weakened through immorality.

Further Question: How could the Jews have fallen so easily? To address this deeper question, Rashi points the reader to "*Sifrei*." This *Midrash* describes how the Jews grew gluttonous and decadent once they had indulged in the spoils of Sichon and Og. Thus softened, it was not long before the Jews fell for the Midyanites' seductions.

The Inner Dimension: G-d described the war against Midyan as revenge for the "Children of Israel." (31:2) Moses, in relaying it to the people, described it as "taking G-d's vengeance." (31:3) Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson explained that G-d cared for the Jewish people's honor, and Moses cared for G-d's honor (*Likkutei Levi Yitzchak on Zohar, Shelach*).

This mutual care was expressed in this particular war because it contained both elements: It was a physical assault on the Jewish people, but it was aimed at provoking G-d: "Their G-d hates immorality."

Ramban's Prayer

Ramban concludes the Book of Bamidbar with a poetic prayer for the final redemption, in perfect Hebrew rhyme. Here is its translation:

We have completed the book of numbers and colored flags; hundreds, thousands, and myriads of praise and thanks to the G-d of Hosts! Just as He performed great and mighty acts with our ancestors, so may He

speedily in our days bring the wondrous End! May He build the House with its chambers, units, and borders! May He establish thrones there for the House of David! May my eyes behold as He in His mercy will cleanse them from hidden sins and all errors, and He will show us the wonders of His Torah! Amen, so may it be His will!

ילקוט לוי יצחק על התורה

FROM THE REBBE'S FATHER

רב"צ רבי לוי יצחק שניינער

By Rabbis Dovid Dubov & Yaakov K. Chaiton

In honor of Yaakov Ben Zina & Leah Bas Shlima

From Desolate To Divine

וַיִּחַנו עַל הַיַּרְדֵּן מִבֵּית הַיְשִׁמוֹת עַד אֲבֵל הַשְּׁטִים בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב

They camped along the Jordan from Beis HaYeshimos to Avel Shittim, in the plains of Mo'av. (Bamidbar, 33:49)

This was the final encampment of the Jewish People's 40 year trek in the desert.

Rashi on this verse quoting the Talmud¹ gives us unique insight into the nature of this location:

"Here (the Torah) teaches you the extent of Israel's camp being twelve mil.² For Rabbah bar bar Channah said, "I myself saw that place and it is three parsa³ by three parsa."

Driving Questions:

1. Why does the Torah delve into the detail of this particular encampment and not others?
2. What is the significance of the numbers 3 and 12 in this context?

R' Levi Yitzchak explains:

The fact that this was the final encampment in their journey before entering the Holy Land, represents the totality of their divine mission in traversing the desert as a preparatory sojourn to entering Eretz Yisroel.

The desert is a desolate and barren place physically, which represents the same emptiness on a spiritual

level. This particular area was called *Yeshimos* — which translates as barrenness, representing even further wasteland. This refers to the state known in Kabbalistic teachings as *Tohu*⁴ — chaos. This is expressed in the verse: *'מֵצֵאֵהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ מְדִבֶּר וּבְתֵהוּ יִלֵּל וְשָׁמֹן*, "He found him in a desert region, in an empty howling waste..."⁵

The second detail mentioned here is that it was in *Shittim*. The word *Shittim* stems from the root word *shtus* — folly. This represents a spirit of folly that is sourced in *Klipa* (unholy energy) which ensnares a person and causes them to sin.⁶

The mission of the Jewish People is to transform the spiritually desolate state represented by a wasteland - *Tohu* — of the world and the folly from the side of negativity, into a place where G-d can be seen and felt in actuality. This is done by adopting an approach of service that goes beyond the letter of the law and transcends rationale. This is known as a *Shtus D'Kedusha* — a folly of holiness.⁷

4. Kabbalah teaches that before our world existed, there was a previous "attempt" at creation which wasn't sustainable. This first version was called *Tohu* (lit. chaos) and it didn't endure because the raw energy was too intense and could not be channelled into infrastructure efficiently. In contrast, our world is termed "Tikkun" (lit. rectification) because it maintains a balance between energy (אור) and infrastructure (כּלִים), and serves as the repair of the prior collapse of *Tohu*.

5. Devarim 32:10.

6. Talmud Sotah 3a: "Reish Lakish says: A man commits a transgression only if a spirit of folly [*shtus*] enters him."

7. Basi L'Gani 5710, chapter 5: As we have seen, man has a potential for deviating from the middle path, lower than reason and understanding; this deviation [by which he sinks to the level of an animal] is called the folly

1. Eruvin, 55b.

2. A *mil* is a Talmudic era measurement of distance, equal to 2000 *amos* (each *amo* being roughly 1.5 feet). Thus, a *mil* is approximately 3500 ft. By comparison to today's standards, a kilometer is 3280 ft. and a mile is 5280 ft. So, a *mil* is slightly more than 1 km. and approximately $\frac{2}{3}$ of a mile.

3. A *parsa* is also a Talmudic era measurement, equivalent to 4 *mil*. Thus, 3 *parsa* = 12 *mil*.

Ultimately, it is transformed into a place of ערבות (Arvus)⁸, which represents inter-connectedness. It was at this place that the Jewish People entered into a pact of responsibility to one another.

We can now understand the significance of the numbers 3 and 12. The Jewish People are likened to the moon,⁹ with twelve cycles, representing their impact on the totality of time.

of unholiness. Similarly he has a potential for a deviation above reason and understanding [and by means of this deviation he can approach self-transcendence]. This level of conduct is also called folly, the folly of holiness. (This is based on a Talmudic story — quoted by R' Levi Yitzchok here - of the man who danced "like crazy" at a wedding and it was referred to as holy *Shitus*. See *Kesubos* 17a.)

8. The literal meaning of ערבות is "plains", but *Arvus*, from the word *Areiv* also refers to כל ישראל ערבים זה בזה, meaning we are interdependent; this represents a unity achieved there. Chassidus also explains that the word means "sweet" and it refers to the sweetness of G-dliness, representing it becoming conducive to G-dliness.

9. See Talmud Sukkah 29a, regarding the Jewish People's association to the moon. In Kabbalah, "*Knesses Yisrael*" (the community of Israel) is synonymous with *Malchus*, the divine feminine. The moon receives its light from the sun, as the female is the recipient of the male energy, and is thus

The 12 *mil* corresponds to the twelve tribes.¹⁰ Each tribe, encompassing every single Jew, is charged with the mission of bringing and revealing the G-dly energy into every aspect of time.

Similar to the moon itself, which radiates a light it receives from the sun, the Jewish People reveal the G-dliness which is radiated to them.

From where do they receive this energy? What is its source?

We receive it from our *Avos* (forefathers) — Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. This is hinted at with the number three. Every soul possesses this energy as an inheritance and through it is empowered to transform the world into a G-dly place.

Also significant in relation to the number three is, that at this encampment G-d made a third covenant with them.¹¹ This constituted a reacceptance of the Torah, and is thus also a milestone encampment with an overarching implication.

Likkutei Levi Yitzchok,
Igras Kodosh, page 399¹²
(*Yalkut Levi Yitzchak al Hatorah*, Vol. 5, ch. 29.)

בענין מחנה ישראל שהי' ג' פרסי לנגד הג' אבות. וי"ב מיל לנגד הי"ב שבטים יש לומר, ישראל הם מבחינת מלכות, כי כל ישראל בני מלכים הם, ומלכות נקראת נקסט ישראל... והשעור ד"ב מיל הוא לנגד מלכות לבנה... כמו הי"ב חדשים שבמלכות...
ודע שמה שמחנה ישראל הוא ג' פרסי נלמד זה ממה שכתוב "מבית הישמת עד אבל השטים" כדאיתא בעירובין, למה מהמקום הזה דנקא נלמד זה. המקום הזה הוא המקום האחרון שחננו בו ישראל במדבר. המדבר בכלל רומז על תהו שהיא ארץ לא עבר בה איש כו' כדויע, והמקום הזה האחרון דהמדבר בפרט רומז על תהו כשנשבר כלו. וזהו שהוא בית הישמת ואכל השטים, בית הישמת רומז על תהו שעליו כתיב "והאזן שממתיני... וכתוב וכתהו ילל ושימוז... ושם חנו בני ישראל בני ישראל במסע האחרון להגיע כל זה ולברם...
הרי מה שישראל חנו שם הוא שפררו את המקום הזה, שנעשה סטרא דקדושה, והרי בהמקום הזה בערבובת מואב נקרת ברית פעם שלישי על התורה, אם כן על קרקע שנעשה סטרא דקדושה...
עד אבל השטים, הוא בחינת שטות דקדושה, על דרך "מוטב שאהי שוטה כל ימי", "אהניא לי שטותא לסבא, פתי יאמין לכל דבר, בהמות הייתי עמוך בתניא פרוק ח".

also synonymous with *Malchus*. Similarly, the Jewish People are the bride and recipient of G-d's *shefa*.

10. See *Chiddushei Agados* on the quoted Talmud who explains that the calculation was in fact one mil per tribe.

11. Midrash Tanchuma, Parshas Nitzavim teaches that the 3 covenants were: (1) Upon the Exodus, (2) At Mount Sinai, (3) Prior to entering the Land of Israel, at this final encampment.

12. This letter, dated 7 Iyar, 5697 (1937) was a reply from R' Levi Yitzchok to his son, the Rebbe, commenting on many novel Torah thoughts which the Rebbe sent his father. It seems that the kernel of this idea was the Rebbe's suggestion, upon which his father added Kabbalistic commentary.

מורה שיעור לחת"ת ורמב"ם לשבת
SHABBOS CHITAS / RAMBAM GUIDE

BOOK	SECTION
Chumash – Rashi*	Matos-Mas'ei, 7th Aliyah
Tehillim*	Chapter 1 – 9
Tanya*	Igeres Hateshuvah, Ch. 11 עמ' - 200 ומ"ש וחטאתי... עד עמ' קא- פשעיו.
Rambam – Sefer Hamitzvos*	Positive Mitzvah #13.
Rambam – One Chapter*	Sefer Zera'im, – Hilchos Matnos Aniyim, Chapter 1
Rambam – Three Chapters**	Sefer Ahava – Hilchos Tefillin, Mezuzah v'Sefer Torah, Chapters 2 – 4

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לעילוי נשמת
ר' חיים שניאור זלמן יהודה ע"ה בן
יבלחט"א ר' אהרן לייב
RABBI YUDI DUKES A"H

