



Traditional Congregation

Affiliated with the
Union for Traditional Judaism
Rabbi Seth D Gordon
Rabbi Ephraim I Zimand, Emeritus

July 23, 2011

כא תמוז תשע"א

Parashat - Numbers 30:2-32:42 (מטות)

Hertz - p702

Stone - p 900

Haftarah - Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

Hertz - p 710

Stone - p 1192

Kiddush sponsored by Ken & Cyndee Levy in gratitude for the safe return of their children from their summer travels

Rabbi Gordon's Talmud Class 6:00 PM

***Minchah* -7:15 PM**

***Shabbat Ends* - 9:02 PM**

On This Week's Torah Portion

מטות

Parashat Mattot has a number of commandments that by modern standards seem out of date, or even immoral. The *parasha* begins by explaining the laws when a woman takes a vow. It then jumps to the Israelites' war with the Midianites and concludes with the request by some of the tribes to settle east of the Jordan River.

At first glance, the laws concerning a woman's vow seem somewhat restrictive, as a woman needs her father's or husband's "permission" in order to take a vow which would prohibit her in some way. It appears that only an adult woman who is not married has complete freedom in choosing her vows.

The next part of *Mattot* seems even more problematic. G-d instructs Moses to lead a war of vengeance against the Midianites. They kill all of the men, but initially do not kill the women and children. They are then instructed to kill everyone else, with the exception of the young female children. By today's standards, I imagine the Israelites would have been called war criminals.

The key words in the last sentence are, "by today's standards." I think one of the great lessons of this *parasha* is to avoid the trap of moral relativism. There can be no question that by the standards of "Western" society, these actions seem criminal. However, we also know that much of "Western" society deems the actions of the Israeli Defense Forces to be criminal as well.

It is easy for many European countries that are only now experiencing terror first hand, to claim that Israel acts immorally when dealing with the Palestinians. They have not had to deal with over half a century of terrorism on a daily basis. They judge Israel based on their own, often skewed, moral values.

Perhaps we are doing the same thing when we make moral judgments about the Israelites. We have no idea what it was like to be the only nation that worshipped one G-d, and was attempting to break free of all the immoral practices of the surrounding nations. Morality is not subjective. Ultimately, we need to look to G-d for our moral compass. Fortunately, He gave us the Torah to help guide us.

*Shabbat shalom,
Zumi Brody*

פרשת מטות - Inside the Parashah: Matot

Rabbi Seth D Gordon, Traditional Congregation, Creve Coeur, MO

Aliyah 1

What is the subject of the 1st *aliyah*? Why is this significant? What conditions are legislated?

Aliyah 2

What happens with Midian? What strong measures are taken?

Aliyah 3

Why is Moshe angry with the military? What does he order? What reaction do you have to the order?

What is the significance of 31:19-20 in light of previous teachings in *B'midbar*?

What rule is commanded in 31:21-24? How do these teachings apply today?

Aliyot 4 & 5

What is the theme of the rest of this *aliyah*?

Aliyah 6

What special request is made? Who makes the request? How does Moshe react? What is the response to Moshe?

Aliyah 7

What is the final resolution of the issue in the previous *aliyah*?

UPCOMING EVENTS

Office hours for the month of July:

9:00 AM - 1:00 PM(ish), Monday through Friday.

Sunday, July 24 **Membership Committee Meeting**, 10:00 AM, all welcome to attend and share ideas

Sunday, July 24 **Intercongregational League Softball Games, come out and support our teams:**

9:00 AM vs. B'nai Amoona (at Millenium Park)

11:40 vs. UH

3:40 PM vs. B'nai El

Monday-Friday, July 25-August 12 **Camp Derech Eretz** at Traditional Congregation

Tisha B'Av Schedule of Services:

Monday, August 8:

Minchah/Arvit 7:45 PM including the chanting of *Eichah* (Lamentations)

Tuesday, August 9:

Shacharit **6:30 AM** without *Tallit* or *Tefillin*; includes *Kinot* (elegies)

Minchah/Arvit 7:15 PM **with *Tallit* and *Tefillin***

Fast Ends 8:03 PM (sunset); 8:43 PM (3 stars)

Too hot to cook?? The Crown Center invites the community to join them for dinners in their Kosher Dining Room, Monday -Thursday at 5:00 PM, Friday at 4:45 PM. Kosher dinners are prepared by Jon Rubin Catering. No charge for age 60 and up but suggested donation is \$3.00 per meal; for 59 and under, the cost is \$7.00. Call 314-991-2055, ext. 124, to make a reservation.

.DAILY SERVICE TIMES

Sunday morning - **8:00 AM (note time change)**

Monday - Friday morning - 7:00 AM

Monday - Friday evening - 6:30 PM

PRAYER

O Lord,
You are a consolation to your creatures,
For in moments of forgetting,
We but call to mind your care,
And we are comforted.

When we hope no more,

*A pattern in the snow
Reminds us of your loving kindness.*

**Your dawns give us confidence,
And sleep is a friend.**

*Our sorrows dissipate
In the presence of an infant's smile,
And the wise words of the old
Revive our will-to-wish.*

**Your hints are everywhere,
Your signals in the most remote of places.**

*You are here,
And we fail words to say,
"Mah Tov!"
How good our breath,
Our rushing energies,
Our silences of love.*

Danny Siegel

THOUGHT FOR THE MOMENT OF SILENCE

Anger is the only thing to put off 'til tomorrow.

Slovakian Proverb