



PhiloTorah D'var Torah

Look at the Calendar; Look at the Sedra

Last week's sedra, Pinchas, contained a mitzva which contrasted with one of the calamities associated with the 17th of Tamuz - the Korban Tamid and the cessation thereof.

Next week's sedra, D'varim, shares a calamity with Tish'a b'Av - the Sin of the Spies, the story of which Moshe told the generation poised on the threshold of Eretz Yisrael (in the sedra) and the saddest day of the year (Tish'a b'Av) declared because of Cheit HaMeraglim (and four other tragedies listed in Masechet Taanit.

And this week's sedra, Matot-Mas'ei has shared themes with the calendar, as well.

The period known as the Three Weeks (a.k.a. Bein HaMeitzarim) is the period of national mourning for the destructions of the two Batei Mikdash and the exile from Eretz Yisrael of the Jewish People.

In Parshat Matot, we find the request of the tribes of Gad and Reuven (later joined by half of Menashe) to settle on the east side of the Jordan River and NOT to receive land in Eretz Yisrael proper. Moshe's first reaction

was that of horror in the sin of the spies being repeated. It turned out not to be as devastating as Moshe first thought it might be, but it still ended up being a less than ideal situation.

Parshat Mas'ei, in a clearer way, is the opposite side of the Churban and Exile coin. We first find the travelog of the people from the time they left Egypt until - forty years and 42 encampments later - they are poised to enter the Land.

In Mas'ei, we find the source of the mitzva to conquer and settle in Eretz Yisrael. We find the description of the boundaries of the Land.

In Mas'ei, we find the names of the tribal leaders who will assist Elazar and Yehoshua in taking the people into the Land, conquering it, and settling it.

All that in sharp contrast to our mourning our loss of Eretz Yisrael.

The Torah - in Pinchas, Matot-Mas'ei, and D'varim show us what should have been; our calendar highlights when actually occurred. And the sedras also say to us: Don't get stuck in the cycle of fasts and yearly mourning. Let the Torah do more than show us what could have been, what should have been, but we (the people) messed up royally.

Let the Torah show us the way to repair the sins of then and work

towards what should have been and what will be with the Geula Sh'leima.

Every time a person says: We have everything we need for a complete Jewish Life here in (fill in your choice of the wonderful Jewish communities of Chutz LaAretz) - he/she perpetuates the sin of the spies. Every time a Jew says ALO NAALEH and makes Aliya, he/she is repairing that great sin and bringing us closer to the Geula. **PTDT**