

KOL MEVASSER

A Message from the Rabbi's Desk

Dear Members and Friends,

Thank you for welcoming me so warmly into the community. It was a pleasure to begin as your rabbi on such a happy and wonderful occasion as the Bar Mitzvah of Adam Zekaria last Shabbat.

As I get to know more of the members, staff, and volunteers, I am beginning to see that we have some great local talent among our ranks. In that spirit I am happy to invite our own Dafna Young to give a guest devar Torah in this week's Kol Mevasser.

Parashat Ekev exhorts that each of us engage in the Torah and take ownership over it, and I take joy in Dafna's excitement at doing just that.

With fond blessings,

Rabbi Melhado

Nourishing Our Souls and "The Good Land"

by Dafna Ezran-Young

This week's parasha, Ekev, we repeat a line that gives us the mitzvah of Birkat HaMazon,

the blessing after the meal on Shabbat or after any meal where we bless HaMotzi on bread. Transliterated it reads "V'achalta, v'savata u'ver-achta et Ad-nai Elohekha al ha'aretz hatova asher natan lakh," or, in other words "you will eat and be satiated and bless Ad-nai, your G-d for the good land which he gave you."

The land which is the source of crops, which nourishes flocks, and generally provides sustenance is here, clearly, the land of Israel. But, more abstractly, it represents the place from which all of G-d's bounty and sustenance radiates. While it is important to privilege the significance--spiritual, historical and immediate--of the land of Israel, it is also important to consider "the good land" both as a geographical site, Eretz Yisrael, and as an intangible yet ever-present location of the spirit.

When we stay in "the good land" that Hashem has given us we remain in a place of both plenty and gratitude. We recognize that Hashem's blessings do not come for free—we must physically work the land and we must also spiritually develop, as well as protect, our vulnerable and precious souls that are a gift from Hashem, the source of our life.

Just earlier in the parasha Hashem's relationship to us is described as that of a parent to a child. Just as Hashem watches over and nurtures us, sets boundaries for us, and when necessary

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KJ Schedule Parasha Ekev

Erev Shabbat

Friday, August 7th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am
Minha / Arvit 6:30 pm
Candle Lighting 7:30 pm

Shabbat

Saturday, August 8th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 8:30 am
Women's Tehillim 7:00 pm
Minha & Arvit..... 7:00 pm
Havdallah 8:33 pm

Weekdays

Sunday, August 9th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 7:30 am
Monday to Friday August 10th to 14th
Shaharit / Morning Prayer .. 6:30 am

Erev Shabbat & Erev Rosh Hodesh

Friday, August 14th

Shaharit / Morning Prayer ... 6:30 am
Minha / Arvit 6:30 pm
Candle Lighting 7:23 pm

Torah & Haftara Readings

Parashat Ekev in the book of Devarim/Deuteronomy 780 to 793

Haftara from Prophets Yeshayahu / Isaiah 794 to 798

(Continued from page 1)

corrects our actions so we too must watch over the little bit of Hashem that is in us, our "neshama," our soul. While sometimes it is challenging to read through, let alone understand, the prescriptions for how to care for our souls that exists in the Torah, because they may seem outdated either in their language or in what they ask of us, the essence that is at the heart of the mitzvot—both proactive and prohibitive—can always be accessed, even if it requires some effort, some tilling of the soil.

And, in a sense, that is what Moshe exhorts the Jewish people in the opening to our parasha Ekev. After listing all the bounty that awaits the Jewish people, he reminds them that they must participate in creating this bounty. They must till the soil—both the literal earth, and the metaphorical place planted within them, in their souls.

We must work to understand the mitzvot and to give them a modern context, a current understanding for both ourselves and our children. This is how we may reap the blessings that potentially come from the Torah's lessons, lessons not unlike the loving if sometimes challenging and cryptic wisdom and instruction shared by a loving parent to help children grow. *Shabbat Shalom*

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**KJ Membership
and High Holy Days**
In just one short month the new Jewish year of 5776 will begin on the eve of September 13th.
Now is a wonderful time to renew your membership at Kahal Joseph and reserve seats for yourself and your family during services on these special days.
For information or to renew please call Sarah in our office at 310.474.0559

**KJ Women's
Tehillim**
*Join us to pray for healing
Shabbat Afternoon
Saturdays @ 7:00 pm
before Seudah Shlisheet*

In Memoriam
We remember these yearzeit anniversaries Aug 8 to 15, 2015. It is customary to light a memorial candle, donate tzedaka, & attend Shabbat services.

23 Av / Shabbat, August 8th
Gloria Levi *Gloria Mazal bat Rahel*
Rachel Moses *Rachel bat Moshe*

24 Av / Sunday, August 9th
Isaac Ezra *Itzhak ben Abdullah Ezra*

25 Av / Monday, August 10th
Matty Yaquob *Simha bat Sulha Mitana*

27 Av / Wednesday, August 12th
Lulu bat Shereen

28 Av / Thursday, August 13th
Goel Berookhim
Malka Isaac *Malka bat Rivka*

29 Av / Friday, August 14th
Rebecca Shamash *Rivke bat Sarah*

30 Av / Shabbat, August 15th
Israel Messiah *Yisrael ben Mashiach*

Refuah Shlemah
Abe Abraham
Moselle Amron
Mordechai Cohen
Sylvia Cohen
Esther Duke
Sassoon Ezra
Tilda Levy
Miriam bat Yetta
Maurice Ovadia
Habiba bat Mazli

Growing from Adversity— Parashat Ekev

Shabbat Talks, from Judaic.org

Life's inevitable difficulties can be reframed as opportunities for growth. Teaching this attitude can help people focus on constructive self-improvement when faced with difficulties, rather than pointless complaining or blaming. Remembering that the difficulty is really God's challenge to make a "better you" will lead to creative ways of improving ourselves to overcome the difficulty. We end up better for having gone through the challenge.

Context

Moshe, in his farewell speech to Israel, helped Israel understand their history and specific events in the wilderness. As Israel is about to enter the land, it is important that they have the proper attitude towards its prosperity, and understand that the suffering in the wilderness was in fact preparation for entry into the land. Moshe wants to ensure that Israel learns the proper lessons from its history so that they will be better suited to meeting the challenge of settling the land.

Text

All the commandments that I command you this day you will observe, that you may live, and multiply and go in and possess the land that the Lord swore to your fathers. And you shall remember all the way that the Lord your God led you these forty years in the wilderness, to afflict you and to challenge you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep His commandments or not. He afflicted you and made you hunger. He fed you with manna, of which you knew not and neither did your fathers know, that He might make you know that man does not live by bread alone,

*but by what proceeds out of God's mouth man lives. Your clothing did not wear out upon you and your foot did not swell these forty years. You should also consider in your heart that as a man chastises his son, so the Lord your God chastised you. **Deuteronomy 8:1-5***

Analysis

What was the lesson that Bne Yisrael were supposed to learn by their experience with the Manna?—That man lives by what God commands. If God wants man to live eating manna, that's what man lives on. God controls nature and man has to be ready to follow God's will.) [Note that the usual explanation of the English phrase "man does not live by bread alone," namely that people need something in addition to the basic foods, differs greatly from the Torah's intention with this verse.]

Being hungry and having to trust in God to bring the manna every morning was a challenge whose purpose was that Israel should learn through experience that man's sustenance is always dependent upon God. That lesson could be repeated many times, but only by experiencing the day-to-day dependence upon God was Israel able to fully absorb the idea. Although hunger was a difficulty, Israel was to learn and grow from that difficulty.

Discussion

The Torah compares God's afflicting Israel to a father disciplining his child. Just as a loving parent disciplines his child to improve him, for his ultimate good, so God chastised Israel. God made things difficult for Bne Yisrael in order to improve Bne Yisrael so that they would be better able to meet the challenge of entering the land.

Why does a parent discipline his child? Is it because the parent is mean? A parent disci-

plines his child in order to teach him the right way. The parent who truly loves his child wants him to be safe and to do the right things. Discipline is the way that parents do this. To see Hashem's hand in our own lives, we should consider some challenges that we have to face and consider how to turn these setbacks into opportunities for our growth.

Additional Text

(continuation of the above text)

*Therefore you shall keep the commandments of the Lord your God, to walk in His ways, and to fear him. For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths that spring out of valleys and hills; A land of wheat, and barley, and vines, and fig tress, and pomegranates; a land of oil olive and honey; A land wherein you shall eat bread without scarceness, you shall not lack anything in it; a land whose stones are iron, and out of whose hills you may dig brass. When you have eaten and are full, they you shall bless the Lord your God for the good land that He has given you. **Deuteronomy 8:6-11***

The land was so "naturally" good that God wanted to make sure that Bne Yisrael always would know that man's prosperity and sustenance comes only from God. The manna that Israel waited for on a daily basis was the means whereby God educated Israel. This preparation was necessary for the time when the land would appear to provide for Israel's needs. Bne Yisrael suffered the difficult conditions of hunger in order to grow as a people and recognize Hashem as the ultimate source of sustenance and nourishment. We should likewise use our difficulties as challenges to grow into better people.

Shabbat Shalom

The community is
invited to a
Kiddush Luncheon
welcoming



Rabbi Raif Melhado

Shabbat Day, August 15th
following services

*Rabbi Melhado will address
the Kahal Joseph community
sharing his vision for the future growth
and development of our congregation*

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