

# Matot-Masai 5773

BS"D Parshiot Matot-Masai 5773

For most people, old age is not the prime of one's life. It is the time when great expectations and imaginative planning come to a dead end. When the money earned in the younger years through sacrificing one's health is now spent in attempts to regain back some of that health. A time when one's status in society becomes compromised as he retreats from being an active participant to being a passive spectator. A time when one sees the mistakes of children and grandchildren, but has no way of preventing them because the advice and counsel are looked upon as antiquated and irrelevant to the rhythm and cadence of today. A time when a broad mind and narrow hips trade places with a narrow mind and broad hips.

However, this was far from the case with regard to Moshe Rabbeinu who, even at the age of 120 and after a long and very difficult life, remained physically and mentally astute, as the pasuk states (Devarim 34,7):

וַיָּמָת מֹשֶׁה הָאִישׁ וַיָּמָת בְּעֵינָיו כֹּחַ וְכֹחַ לֹא יָבִישׁ וְכֹחַ לֹא יִדְּבַל

And Moses was a hundred and twenty years old when he died, yet his eyes were not weak nor his strength diminished

Going into the 40th year of the Jewish nation's presence in the desert, Moshe had plans for entering the land together with his brother Aharon and sister Miriam. He believed that after his demise, one of his sons – Gershom or Eliezer – would take his place as leader of the nation; because they were brought up under his personal tutelage and were the closest to Moshe in thought and in deed. Moshe also believed that his resting place would be a magnet for all Jews to gather and pray to HaShem – an everlasting testimony to the Exodus.

But as well as Moshe thought he understood HaShem, his

understanding did not even scratch the outer surface of Hashem's intellect and planning.

Miriam and Aharon were to die that year, as would Moshe himself, without entering the Promised Land. Moshe's sons would not replace their father as leader, but it was to be Moshe's protegee Yehoshua Bin Nun. This disappointment was felt heavily by Moshe when he was commanded to ascend Hor HaHar and transfer the Kehuna (priesthood) from Aharon to Aharon's son Elazar. And Moshe's place of burial on the eastern bank of the Jordan would not be revealed to any mortal.

Of all Moshe's hopes and plans, none materialized except for the knowledge that, until the time of techiyat hamaitim (resurrection), there would never again be a leader and prophet like Moshe Rabbeinu.

There is a great lesson to be learned from the disappointments of Moshe, that despite the fact that all of his desires were spiritual in nature – with no thought of personal benefit – these desires were denied him.

The lesson I learn from this is that there is no guarantee that even the best intentions of Torah and mitzvot will be actualized. To fulfill a mitzva is a favor that HaShem bestows upon us, because a mitzva is an entrance ticket to the next world where not everyone is privileged to enter. So, never take the opportunity to fulfill a mitzva for granted; for it is not you who is doing a favor for HaShem. It is He who is doing you the favor.

The highest mitzva of our unique generation is to leave the punishment of exile and return to our Holy Land. However, of those who would so much wish to fulfill the mitzva, not all will succeed. HaShem chooses whom He will help and whom He will not. He chooses who will succeed in planting roots here and who will return to the galut.

Aliya requires much tefila (prayer), because as I have said

many times before, it is an **elegant** mitzva reserved for the fortunate who find favor in HaShem's eyes.

One such couple is Avraham and Ariella Bracha Waldinger of Tzfat, who are celebrating ten years of aliya. On the honor of the occasion, Mrs. Waldinger wrote a beautiful essay entitled:

**THE ALIYAH EXPERIENCE: A MOUNTAIN CLIMBERS DREAM**

**"AVAILABLE ONLY TO THE LOVER OF HIGH PLACES"**

*Mountain climbing has been touted as one of the FINEST AND MOST EXHILARATING OPPORTUNITIES available for climbing enthusiasts, who aspire to see the world from its highest vantage point.*

*Mountain climbing is marketed in particular to "The Lovers of High Places," as the difficult ascent up the mountain is not for the faint of heart or the weak of spirit. Mountain climbing is all about the persistence it takes to put hands and feet onto one obstacle after another, to eventually reach the summit of a breathtaking mountain top panorama. It involves risk, commitment, hardship and extraordinary persistence, while at the same time providing countless uplifting, exhilarating and, some say, life altering experiences along the way. The entire process of ascending up the high mountain can ultimately foster a deep, profound sense of self actualization and renewed self confidence. Climbing enthusiasts speak of the journey up the mountain as a HOLY MISSION, providing great spiritual rewards in its purposeful pursuit.*

*I didn't realize when I chose to make Aliyah that I was signing up for one of the greatest expeditions of my life. No one told me I would be capable of unlocking and activating*

*mental, spiritual and emotional strengths I never dreamed I possessed, in order to cope with the Aliyah challenges of an upward climb.*

*Choosing to make Aliyah is a powerful metaphor for signing up for a mountain climbing expedition. Aliyah is a Hebrew word which means ascent or climb. Aliyah is about raising oneself up to a higher spiritual level in order to meet the heightened holiness embedded in the Holy Land. The Zohar teaches that Eretz Yisrael is the only place where Jews can achieve perfection, for there is a chemistry between the nation and the Land. Our Sages state that Eretz Yisrael represents and enables the highest fulfillment of earthly life, whereby the physical is brought into perfect harmony with the soul.*

*Reaching this level of fulfillment can only come about through the efforts expended to do the work of refining our character. This holy and worthy endeavor leads to the ultimate peak acquisition of spiritual refinement and self actualization. This refinement is achieved through hard work and is comparable to the actual process of climbing up a mountain.*

*The mountain consists of many of the same situations and experiences that challenge us along the way as we attempt to settle into a new life in a new country with many unknowns gnawing at our vulnerabilities. The process of tackling the raw materials of our life and confronting our issues is the path that must be taken to reach the summit of self mastery and happiness. It requires commitment, persistence, patience, and a lofty vision. From the challenges inherent in the process, one refines himself, so that he can tap into the*

*extra dimension of holiness embedded in the Land. It is truly a Holy Mission of epic dimension, as it is part and parcel of the Divine commandments we accepted at the revelation on Har Sinai when we received the Torah.*

*The new immigrant, like the mountain climber, must have a clear vision of how to move forward to assure his continued upward mobility. The success of the mission will depend on the sheer force of personal desire to move beyond the challenges that stand in opposition to the climb. But the great comfort to be found in the challenges is that along the way, your spirit will be awakened by brilliant flashes of inspiration, even as they are looming before your eyes. Stirrings of inner awakening from years of slumber will propel you forward and without realizing it, you will be emerging into the light of the Holy Land and drawn into its spiritual vortex. Scaling the mountain of personal challenges gives you access to the self mastery needed to rise to new levels of self awareness and Divine consciousness. This affords you the ability to savor the spiritual bounty present in the Holy Land.*

*Dovid Rosoff in his book, "Land of Our Heritage" states that "As Jews, we must understand that embedded within our DNA is the inner desire to return to our ancestral homeland. It is a spiritual blueprint that resides within us." Just as the bird migrating to its natural habitat, following its inborn instincts, knows that whatever heights it has to scale or whatever occurrences it has to withstand, nothing will prevent it from returning home to reach its ultimate Divine destination.*

*Aliyah manifests the true path that can lead to spiritual*

greatness because it forces you, in the process of ascending, to see what you are made of. The pettiness and facades fall away as you catch a glimpse of the core greatness that becomes manifest in the journey up the mountain of settling into the challenges. As the process of ascent up the mountain is tackled and surmounted, you can absolutely perceive the world from a higher vantage point. Like the mountain climber who has surmounted great obstacles to finally stand atop the highest most breathtaking panoramic vista, he attests to the ultimate satisfaction of achieving his lofty goal. Reaching a deeper understanding through overcoming the challenges creates breathless moments of exhilaration. It ultimately allows you to stand atop the summit of G-d's mountain, blanketed in ancestral memory and to embrace it with all your being. The end result of surmounting the challenges unearths a newfound humility which lends itself to greater spiritual inspiration and gratitude, as we learn from our Sages that one can only claim his inheritance of Eretz Yisrael when he has been humbled.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk wrote to his followers stating that anyone who comes to reside in the Holy Land will be challenged on many levels because the Holy Land is rich in spirituality and holiness. He wrote: "Be aware that many transformations and developments will occur within every person who comes to reside in the Holy Land." He cautions his followers to strengthen their faith and refine themselves to the degree that they truly love the Land of Israel. He says that one must become spiritually worthy of the Land. This is the reason why one must truly be a *LOVER OF HIGH PLACES* in order to have a successful Aliyah. The persistence is aptly rewarded by a pristine vision of a better life in our nation with G-d in the center. The experience is exhilarating, as the pure air of a higher spiritual altitude makes one joyous and wise.

*The perils in making aliyah and climbing up the mountain of challenges are nothing compared to the spiritual dangers of not making Aliyah. Eretz Yisroel is the only place where you can dwell in the shadow of HaShem and be secure in the covering of the shelter of His wings. NO place on earth can compare with the virtues of Eretz Yisrael, nor its safety. The distinctive atmosphere of the Holy Land allows us to shed the influences of life lived outside the land. From this newly formed, higher, more receptive vantage point, we can receive the strong signals of Divine Providence and guidance present in the Land and experience a more genuine Jewish life.*

*I believe making Aliyah is the greatest, most courageous act of faith and trust a Jew can undertake today. The choice forces us to assess our core values and reason for living. It enables and empowers us to live on the level of our Jewish destiny with every endeavor. It affords us the opportunity to contribute our own unique, individual gifts like a free will offering on the holy altar. Living in our national homeland brings honor to G-d's name and brings our light into the world. We must strive for true allegiance to our Divine, national mission and pledge our full, personal commitment. Fulfilling the Divine will is like climbing a difficult mountain and it is a strenuous climb indeed, but it is within our ability...we can do it, if we are willing to make the supreme effort of returning home to our G-d given land.*

**ASPIRE TO REACH THE SUMMIT OF LIFE AS A JEW IN THE LAND AND YOU TOO WILL BECOME A LOVER OF HIGH PLACES**

*With Blessings of love and light, Ariella Bracha Waldinger.*

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Waldinger;

That was beautiful.

Permit me to add the word's of King David in Tehilim (24,3-5)

:מִי יֵאָסֵד אֶת-הַר-יְהוָה וְיַעֲמֵד בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ

:מִי יֵאָסֵד אֶת-הַר-יְהוָה וְיַעֲמֵד בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ מִי יֵאָסֵד אֶת-הַר-יְהוָה וְיַעֲמֵד בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ

:מִי יֵאָסֵד אֶת-הַר-יְהוָה וְיַעֲמֵד בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ מִי יֵאָסֵד אֶת-הַר-יְהוָה וְיַעֲמֵד בְּקֹדֶשׁוֹ

*Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord? Who may stand in his  
holy place?*

*The one who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not  
trust in an idol or swear by a false god*

*They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from  
God their Savior.*

Shabbat Shalom

Nachman Kahana

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