

WORDS OF WISDOM FROM RABBI YITZI

PARSHAS MATTOS

Stronger Through Difficulty

At the start of this week's Parsha, Mattos, by the laws of Annulment of Vows, the tribes of Israel, which are usually called shvatim, instead are called mattos.

Why the different words? What connection does it have to the Annulment of Vows?

Though the two words shevet and matteh are alike in meaning, roughly translate as stick or staff, they have fundamental differences.

Shevet refers to a branch still attached or recently detached from the tree. It is still wet inside. Matteh however has been separated for a while and has had time to dry and harden.

A craftsman who wishes to create something of quality needs to be aware of the moisture content of the wood. The conditions the wood was subject to will also have an effect on the quality of the wood.

Today for example. Reclaimed wood (old wood once used in construction, resold, and reused) is very sought after for its qualities that are not found in new lumber.

Next, the craftsman using his tools to saw, drill, chisel, etc. the wood, brings out the true natural beauty and function of the wood.

Now, why would a person take a vow? When a person has a weakness bringing him or her to commit a sin. Taking a vow to abstain from it is helpful because of the strength and the fear of breaking that vow. However, the vow doesn't change the person. For someone to annul this kind of vow seems counterproductive.

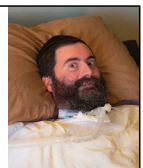
That is where the wise man comes in. The job of the wise man who does the annulment is to help the one who took the vow to work on himself to become stronger. To bring out strength from deep within to overcome the weakness. The vow would then be unnecessary.

Each of us is a matteh. Hashem puts us through all different kinds of situations, some happy, and, in some, we suffer. However, we know that it is Hashem, the Ultimate Craftsman, who is putting us through these conditions and that He helps us overcome any obstacles He puts before us. We know that He will bring out our greatest potential.

The same is true of the Jewish people. Hashem has put us through all kinds of difficult conditions. Though we don't know why, we do know that He has a plan and that what He does is good.

By now, we are an ancient piece of wood, we have been through so much. We are truly magnificent.

Despite facing one of life's most difficult challenges, Rabbi Yitzi Hurwitz continues to spread joy and faith to thousands around the globe. Diagnosed in 2012 with ALS, Rabbi Yitzi is now 95% paralyzed and no longer able to speak or breath on his own. Thanks to the miracle of technology, Rabbi Yitzi continues to spread his wisdom through his eyes, focusing on each and every letter of these Torah articles. Rabbi Yitzi, his wife Dina and their seven children are the Rebbe's Shluchim to Temecula, California.



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PARSHAS MAASEI

Together in Friendship

In this week's Parsha, Maasei, the borders of Israel are clearly defined. It also tells how to apportion the land. Every Jew has a portion.

This Parsha is always read during the Three Weeks, the time of year we mourn the destruction of our Holy Temple in Jerusalem, and the exile of our people.

What message is found in all this for us now?

Every Jew has a portion in the holy land, showing a natural unity among us. It is specifically through brotherly love and unity that we merit the Holy Land.

When we are together in brotherhood, we are even stronger. We help each other overcome obstacles.

Now, during the three weeks, it is a time to strengthen our bonds of friendship, especially with those we have the most difficulty with. Now is the time to overcome our differences.

**IT IS ALMOST
IRRESISTIBLE TO
G-D TO SEE HIS
CHILDREN IN
UNITY.**

When Jewish people are unified with love and brotherhood, it gives Hashem the greatest nachas. It is almost irresistible to Hashem to see His children in a state of

togetherness.

More than any Mitzvah, Ahavas Yisrael, love between Jews, is what will end this exile. We need Moshiach now more than ever.

Being the last Parsha in the book of Bamidbar, Numbers, we end with the call of Chazak, be strong.

Our brave soldiers fight to protect our brothers and sisters in our land. We should do our part, learning extra Torah, praying, and giving tzedaka in their merit.

Let us wish them Chazak, be strong, we are with you, and Hashem is with you. We are all in this together.

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