

# Torah Weekly

July 12-18, 2020  
20-26 Tammuz, 5780

Torah: Matot-Massei:  
Numbers 30:2 - 36:13

Haftarah:  
Jeremiah 2:4-28;  
Jeremiah 4:1-2

PARSHAT  
MATOT-MASSEI

## Calendars

We have Jewish Calendars. If you would like one, please send us a letter and we will send you one, or ask the Rabbi/Chaplain to contact us.

## Family Programs

Do you have family on the outside struggling? Please contact or have them contact our office to learn more about our family programs. You and they are not alone, we are here to help.

## Grape Juice & Matzah

We offer free Grape Juice and Matzah for you to be able to make the blessings every Shabbos. Please have your chaplain / Rabbi contact us to enroll (available to all prisons).

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**A Timely Yartzeit** In the concluding portion of the Book Numbers, Moses chronicles the forty-two journeys that the Israelites traveled in the desert—while en route from Egypt to the Promised Land. For the most part the list is very concise – "They traveled from X and camped in Y; they traveled from Y and camped in Z..." – omitting the events that transpired in the areas where they camped. For example, the Sinai Desert stopover is mentioned without reference to the giving of the Torah that occurred there. There are, however, several exceptions, where the list is interrupted to point out an event that occurred at a particular location. One of these exceptions is the encampment at Mount Hor: "They journeyed from Kadesh and camped at Mount Hor, at the edge of the land of Edom. Aaron the High Priest ascended Mount Hor at G-d's behest and died there, on the first day of the fifth month, in the fortieth year of the Children of Israel's exodus from Egypt"—Numbers 33:38. Interestingly, this is the *only* time that the Torah mentions the exact date of a *yahrtzeit* (anniversary of death). Also interesting is the fact that the section containing this *yahrtzeit* is always read within a week of the *yahrtzeit*—the first day (Rosh Chodesh) of Av. And some years, when Rosh Chodesh Av is on Shabbat, we read about Aaron's *yahrtzeit* on the very date when it is observed! This begs the obvious question: what is so remarkable about

the timing of Aaron's *yahrtzeit* that it merits explicit mention in the Torah? Aaron's passing is also associated with another event. While the Israelites traveled through the desert they were ensconced and protected by Clouds of Glory from all sides. This special miracle was in the merit of Aaron's righteousness. With Aaron's passing, these clouds departed, leaving the Israelites vulnerable to the elements and to enemy strikes. And indeed, the King of Arad immediately took advantage of this development, and mounted an attack. On a deeper level: Aaron was the ultimate peacemaker. Our Sages tell us that he was a "lover and pursuer of peace," who always sought to bring peace between rivals and quarreling spouses. His efforts were rewarded in kind, with the appearance of Clouds of Glory that served as a unifying force, molding the entire Israelite encampment into a cohesive unit. And as long as the Israelites were united they were insulated against their enemies—for we are only vulnerable to outside attacks when discord reigns in our midst. When Aaron passed away, leaving the nation bereft of his peacemaking efforts, the clouds disappeared. There was a resulting lack of unity, and the enemy pounced. The clouds did reappear for a short period (in Moses' merit), but soon after they disappeared for good. Ultimately unity must come from within, stemming from a genuine respect for our fellows, not due to external influences such as a peacemaker or

isolationism. Drawing on Aaron's inspiration we must strive to make love for our fellows part and parcel of our character, one that does not depend on external factors. Aaron passed away on the day that ushers in the saddest month on the Jewish calendar, the month when both Holy Temples were destroyed. "Why was the first Temple destroyed? Because of three sins—idolatry, sexual indiscretions and murder. The second Temple – when the people were involved in Torah, mitzvot and acts of kindness – why was it destroyed? Because they harbored baseless hatred towards each other!"—The Talmud. In order to rectify our lack unity, we were dispatched on an exile which took us to all corners of the globe. We have never been more "out of the clouds" than today. Spread out all over and divided into different communities, affiliations and ancestries, our biggest challenge is to remain united despite all the differences in ethnicities, customs, ideologies, etc. We have left the cloud, and now we must internalize Aaron's message of love and peace. This will immunize us against our enemies' designs, and will hasten the day when we will all be returned to our land with joy, and these mournful days will be celebrated as festive holidays.

By Rabbi Naftali Silberberg  
**Journeying Through Life**

Buying The Torah speaks in great detail about the journeys of the Children of Israel through their years in the wilderness.



The Torah specifies each and every one of the forty-two journeys which they undertook. The Torah does not just tell us things for no reason. There is always a lesson which we can take away for our everyday lives. All of us have embarked upon many journeys throughout our lives, both physically and spiritually. We make many stops along the way. These stops are important—they are rungs on the ladder, stages on the way to our destination. It is all too easy, once we get there, to forget about the stages we passed along the way. Sometimes we forget about the people who helped us along the way. The Torah reminds us that even though we may have reached our destination, we should always be cognizant of the path which brought us there and not take for granted those who have encouraged and guided us throughout our “journeys.” Those previous stages may seem like mere “stepping-stones” now that we have reached our goal, but they are nonetheless important. At the time, they represented a journey, progress, a step closer to our destination. They are still important now, as without them we would not be where we are today.

A young boy was traveling from Jerusalem to the Galilee. He arrived at a four-way crossroads and discovered, to his horror, that the sign had fallen down. Now he had no way to know which road to take to reach his destination. What was he to do?

The answer was simple. He knew where he was coming from—Jerusalem. By arranging the sign so that Jerusalem pointed to the path he had just come from, he was able to figure out which way to go. When we know where we have come from, we can know where we are going to. This Torah remind us of this. May we all strive for, and ultimately reach, our destination.

*By Rabbi Mordechai Wollenberg*

**Sunday, July 12, 2020 --- 20 Tammuz, 5780**

**Passing of Rabbi Avraham Chaim Na'eh (1954)**

Rabbi Avraham Chaim Na'eh (1890-1954) was born in Hebron to Rabbi Menachem Mendel Na'eh, a Lubavitcher chassid and dean of the Magen Avot, a yeshiva founded by the S'dei Chemed. With the outbreak of World War One, the Turks, who controlled the Land of Israel at the time, expelled anyone who was not a Turkish citizen. Most of the exiled Jews, including Rabbi Avraham Chaim, gathered in Alexandria, Egypt. During his time there, Rabbi Avraham Chaim founded Yeshivat Eretz Yisrael and wrote the halachic work *Shenot Chaim*, a concise digest of halachah for Sephardic Jews. In 1918, he returned to Palestine to work for the Edah HaChareidit (a prominent Orthodox communal organization), under Rabbi Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld.

Rabbi Na'eh best known for his halachic works *Ketzot ha-Shulchan* and *Shiurei Torah* ("measurements of the Torah"), in which he converted archaic halachic measurements into modern terms. Contemporary halachic authorities follow his measurements to this day.

**Monday, July 13, 2020 --- 21 Tammuz, 5780**

**Baal Shem of Worms (1636)**

The noted Kabbalist Rabbi Eliyahu ben Moshe Loanz, known as "Rabbi Eliyahu Baal Shem" of Worms, Germany, passed away on the 21st of Tammuz of the year 5396 from creation (1636 CE). He was a grandson of the famed *shtadlan* (Jewish activist) R. Joselman of Rosheim, and the author of *Michlal Yofi* commentary on Ecclesiastes.

**Tuesday, July 14, 2020 --- 22 Tammuz, 5780**

**R. Shlomo of Karlin (1792)**

Rabbi Shlomo (1738-1792), Chassidic Rebbe in the town of Karlin, Russia (near Pinsk), was killed in the pogroms which accompanied the Polish uprising against Russia.

**Wednesday, July 15, 2020 --- 23 Tammuz, 5780**

**R. Moshe Cordovero (1570)**

Passing of Rabbi Moshe Cordovero (1522?-1570) of Safed, the Holy Land, known as the "Ramak", authoritative Kabbalist and author of *Pardes Rimonim*.

**Friday, July 17, 2020 --- 25 Tammuz, 5780**

**Passing of Rabbi Aharon Berachia of Modina (1639)**

Rabbi Aharon Berachia ben Moshe of Modina (? - 1639) was an Italian Kabbalist and a student of Rabbi Menachem Azariah of Fano. At the request of the Burial Society at Mantua, he instituted rites for them. The author of many Kabbalistic works, he is perhaps best known for his work *Ma'abar Yabbok*, which contains mystical dissertations on purity and holiness. He also wrote additional prayers to be offered for the sick and the dead, as well as a code of conduct for their treatment. Many of the prayers recited at the gravesites of the deceased were composed by him.

Tradition has it that an angel called a "maggid" would come and study with him, similar to the angel that would visit Rabbi Yosef Caro.

**Shabbat, July 18, 2020 --- 26 Tammuz, 5780**

**Frankists Vanquished (1759)**

The Frankist sect was created by Jacob Frank, who claimed to be the reincarnation of the false Messiah Shabbetai Zvi. In the mid-1700's, he sought to create a new religion that would incorporate both Judaism and Christianity, leading to the formation of the Frankist sect, centered in Poland.

In 5519 (1759), the bishop of Lvov arranged for a debate between the Frankists and three prominent Jewish leaders: R. Israel of Mezhibuzh (the Baal Shem Tov), R. Chaim Rappaport, and R. Yitzchak Dovber Margulies. The four-day debate ended with a resounding victory for the rabbis, and the date was instituted as a day of rejoicing, celebrating the successful halt of the Frankists' evil influence. (*Hatamim*, pp. 550, 558. See also *Igros Kodesh*, vol. 19, p. 81)