



EGOISM OR ALTRUISM

Just before entering the Land of Israel, a drama unfolds: Two tribes prefer to remain outside. Why? How does Moses respond? And why does he add more people to their group?

TEACHER'S MANUAL



JEWISH INSIGHTS

A TASTE OF THE REBBE'S TEACHINGS



PARSHAT MATOT MASEI

Book of Bamidbar / Numbers

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Shluchim of the Rebbe to Mumbai India

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This week's Torah portion tells the story of the tribes of Gad and Reuven asking to be allowed to not cross the Jordan into the Land of Israel. Angered by their request, Moses recounts how their ancestors did exactly the same 40 years earlier, actions which resulted in their deaths and 40 years of wandering in the desert. The two tribes promise to take part in the battle for Israel, and Moses relents and grants them their desired land on the east bank of the Jordan River (Source 1).

When we read of Moses' acceptance of their proposal, an additional name is added to the list - half of the tribe of Menashe. The Rebbe points out: (a) A careful reading of the text reveals that the half-tribe of Menashe was never included in Moses' rebuke, nor in the denouncement of this affair in the book of Proverbs (Source 2). (b) Unlike the tribes of Gad and Reuven, the tribe of Menashe was not laden with cattle. Their desire to remain east of the Jordan must, therefore, be due to some other concern (Source 2).

B. Menashe Wanted Mashiach.....10

When G-d promised the Land of Israel to Abraham, he enumerated 10 lands that would be granted to his offspring (Source 3). When the time came to make good on that promise, only seven of those nations are mentioned. The remaining three - the Keini, the Kenizi and the Kadmoni - were not given to the Jewish people at this point (Source 4). They will only be granted with the coming of Mashiach (Source 5).

The tribe of Menashe, the Rebbe explains, wanted to take concrete action to symbolize the coming of Mashiach. This is why they asked to be granted land both within Israel and on the east bank of the Jordan (unlike the tribes of Gad and Reuven, who wanted land exclusively on the east of the Jordan, for the benefit of their flocks).

C. Levite Representation.....14

The Jewish people are commanded to set aside 42 cities throughout the Land of Israel, in addition to the six cities of refuge, for the residence of the Levites. Three of the cities of refuge were on the east of the Jordan, which means that there was also Levite representation in the lands of Gad and Reuven (Source 6).

What were the Levites doing east of the Jordan? The Rebbe explains this in the same vein as with regards to the tribe of Menashe: Part of the tribe of Levi was also tasked with this same goal of living east of the Jordan to symbolize and hasten the coming of Mashiach (Source 7).

D. Yearning for Redemption.....16

We can learn from the tribe of Menashe how the desire for the ultimate redemption should be manifested. Just like Menashe, who did not need to live on the east of the Jordan for personal benefit but chose to do so for the sake of the redemption, so too must every Jew yearn for the coming of Mashiach: Not in order to alleviate personal pain - physical or spiritual - but for the sake of redemption itself, which will bring completion to the entire universe.

Introduction:

This week's Torah portion tells us about the Jewish people preparing to enter the Land of Israel, and how two tribes wished for their portion of land to be on the east bank of the Jordan, and not inside Israel. Yet, for some reason, these two tribes are viewed differently than the half of a third tribe that chose to join them on the east of the Jordan river. Why?

As we now stand in the "three weeks", a time when the Jewish people plead before G-d for the ultimate deliverance and the rebuilding of the Holy Temple which was destroyed two thousand years ago, there is a lesson here on how every Jew ought to yearn for redemption during this time of exile.

השיעור לפרשת מטות מסעי

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A. Here We Go Again...

Source 1 Numbers, Ch. 32 Verses: 1-2, 4-5.

Our Torah portion tells of the two tribes who didn't want to enter the Land of Israel

The Reuvenites and the Gadites owned cattle in very great numbers. Noting that the lands of Jazer and Gilead were suitable for cattle, the Gadites and Reuvenites came to Moses, Elazar the priest, and the leaders of the community, and said:

“The land that G-d has conquered for the community of Israel—is land suited for cattle, and your servants have cattle.” They continued, “If we find favor in your eyes, this land shall be given to your servants as our portion; do not move us across the Jordan.”

וּמִקְנֵה רֶב הָיָה לְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן
וְלְבְנֵי גַד עֲצוּם מְאֹד, וַיָּרְאוּ
אֶת־אֶרֶץ יַעֲזֹר וְאֶת־אֶרֶץ
גִּלְעָד וְהִנֵּה הַמְּקוֹם מְקוֹם
מִקְנֵה. וַיָּבֹאוּ בְנֵי־גַד וּבְנֵי
רְאוּבֵן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל־מֹשֶׁה
וְאֶל־אַלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן וְאֶל־
נְשִׂאֵי הָעֵדָה לֵאמֹר.

“הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה ה' לְפָנַי
עֲדַת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶרֶץ מִקְנֵה
הוּא וְלַעֲבָדֶיךָ מִקְנֵה.”
וַיֹּאמְרוּ: “אִם־מִצְאָנוּ חֵן
בְּעֵינֶיךָ, יִתֵּן אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ
הַזֹּאת לַעֲבָדֶיךָ לְאֶחְזָה אֶל־
תַּעֲבֹרְנוּ אֶת־הַיַּרְדֵּן.”

Verses: 6-9, 13-15

Moses is understandably angered, and points out to them that they are repeating the sin the spies committed 40 years earlier, which resulted in the Jewish people roaming the desert for 40 years! Yet here they are again, about to go down the same path...

Moses replied to the Gadites and the Reuvenites, “Are your brothers to go to war while you stay here? Why would you turn the minds of the Israelites from crossing into the land that G-d has given them? That is what your fathers did when I sent them from Kadesh-Barnea to survey the land. After going up to the valley of Eshkol and surveying the land, they turned the minds of the Israelites from entering the land that G-d had given them.

G-d became incensed at Israel, and made them wander in the wilderness for forty years, until the whole generation that had provoked G-d's

וַיֹּאמֶר מֹשֶׁה לְבְנֵי־גַד וּלְבְנֵי
רְאוּבֵן: “הֲאֶחְיִיכֶם יָבֹאוּ
לְמִלְחָמָה וְאַתֶּם תָּשֻׁבוּ
פֹּה. וְלָמָּה תִּגְיִאוּן אֶת־לֵב
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵעִבֹר אֶל־
הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־נָתַן לָהֶם ה'.
כֹּה עָשׂוּ אֲבֹתֵיכֶם בְּשַׁלְחִי
אֹתָם מִקְדֵּשׁ בְּרִנְעָה לְרְאוּת
אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ. וַיַּעֲלוּ עַד־נַחַל
אֲשַׁכּוֹל וַיָּרְאוּ אֶת־הָאֶרֶץ
וַיִּגְיִאוּ אֶת־לֵב בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
לְבַלְתִּי־בֹא אֶל־הָאֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־
נָתַן לָהֶם ה'.

“וַיַּחַר־אַף ה' בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּנְעַם

displeasure was gone. And now you, a society of sinful people have taken your fathers' place, to add further to G-d's wrath against Israel. If you turn away from G-d, He will then leave them again in the wilderness, and you will bring calamity upon all this nation."

בַּמִּדְבָּר אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה עָד־
 תָּם כָּל־הַדּוֹר הָעֹשֶׂה הַרְעָה
 בְּעֵינֵי ה' . וְהִנֵּה קִמַּתָּם תַּחַת
 אֲבֹתֶיכֶם תִּרְבּוּת אַנְשִׁים
 חֲטָאִים לְסָפוֹת עוֹד עַל
 חֲרוֹן אַף־ה' אֶל־יִשְׂרָאֵל . וְכִי
 תָּשׁוּבוּן מֵאַחֲרָיו וְיָסַף עוֹד
 לְהַנִּיחוֹ בַּמִּדְבָּר וְשַׁחַתְתֶּם
 לְכָל־הָעָם הַזֶּה ."

Verses 16-18

The two tribes promise to take part in the battle for Israel.

Then they approached him and said, "We will build here sheepfolds for our flocks and towns for our children. And we will arm ourselves quickly and go ahead of the Israelites until we have established them in their home, while our children stay in the fortified towns because of the inhabitants of the land. We will not return to our homes until the Israelites—every one of them—are in possession of their portions.

וַיִּגָּשׁוּ אֵלָיו, וַיֹּאמְרוּ, "גְּדֵרֹת
 צִאֵן נִבְנֶה לְמִקְנֵנוּ פֹה וְעָרִים
 לְטַפָּנוּ. וְאֲנַחְנוּ נִחְלֵץ חַשְׁמִים
 לְפָנֵי בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל עַד אֲשֶׁר
 אִם־הִבִּיאֵנָם אֶל־מְקוֹמָם,
 וְיָשֵׁב טַפָּנוּ בְּעָרֵי הַמְּבֻצָּר
 מִפְּנֵי יֹשְׁבֵי הָאָרֶץ. לֹא נָשׁוּב
 אֶל־בְּתֵינוּ עַד הַתְּנַחֵל בְּנֵי
 יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ נַחֲלָתוֹ".

Rashi:

We will build here [sheepfolds] for our flocks:
 They cared for their property more than for their sons and daughters, for they mentioned their flocks before their children. Moses said to them "it should not be this way, do not conflate the essential with the unimportant. First build cities for your children and only then should you build sheepfolds for your flocks"

נִבְנֶה לְמִקְנֵנוּ פֹה:
 חֲסִים הָיוּ עַל מְמוֹנָם
 יוֹתֵר מִבְּנֵיהֶם
 וּבְנוֹתֵיהֶם, שֶׁהִקְדִּימוּ
 מִקְנֵיהֶם לְטַפָּם. אָמַר
 לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה "לֹא כֹן, עֲשׂו
 הָעָקֵר עָקֵר וְהַטֶּפֶל
 טַפֵּל, בְּנוּ לָכֶם תַּחֲלָה
 עָרִים לְטַפְּכֶם וְאַחַר
 כֵּן גְּדֵרֹת לְצִאֲנֵכֶם"
 (תנחומא):

Verse 33

Moses accepts, and grants them a portion of land on the eastern bank of the Jordan river.

So Moses assigned to them—to the Gadites, the Reuvenites, and the half-tribe of Menasheh son of Joseph—the kingdom of Sichon king of the Amorites and the kingdom of Og king of Bashan, the land with its various cities and the territories of their surrounding towns.

וַיִּתֵּן לָהֶם מֹשֶׁה לְבְנֵי-גָד
וְלְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן וְלַחֲצִי שֵׁבֶט
מְנַשֶּׁה בְּנֵי-יִסָּף, אֶת-מַמְלַכְתּוֹ
סִיחֹן מֶלֶךְ הָאֱמֹרִי וְאֶת-
מַמְלַכְתּוֹ עֹוג מֶלֶךְ הַבָּשָׁן,
הָאָרֶץ לְעָרֶיהָ בְּגִבְלַת עָרֵי
הָאָרֶץ סָבִיב.

>> The Rebbe

Where did the tribe of Menashe come from?

Regarding the land on the east bank of the Jordan, the Torah relates that the tribes of Reuven and Gad asked Moses to give them this land as their portion. When Moses heard this he was upset with them, and called them a “society of sinful people.” Only when they said “we will arm ourselves quickly and go before the children of Israel” did Moses agree to give them their portion on the east bank of the Jordan.

In the entire exchange, only the tribes of Reuven and Gad are mentioned. However, when the land on the east bank was actually given the verse says, “Moses gave the tribe of Gad, the tribe of Reuven, and half the tribe of Menashe...”

We can deduce two points from this:

אודות הנחלה בעבר הירדן - מספרת התורה¹ שבני ראובן ובני גד ביקשו ממשה רבינו לתת להם את עבר הירדן לנחלה. כאשר שמע משה את הדבר - קצף עליהם כו', עד שקרא להם "תרבות אנשים חטאים". ורק כשאמרו "ואנחנו נחלץ חושים לפני בני ישראל", אז הסכים משה לתת להם אחוזתם בעבר הירדן.

והנה, בכל המשך הכתובים הנזכרים לעיל לא נזכרו אלא בני גד ובני ראובן, ואילו בנוגע לנתינת אחוזה בעבר הירדן בפועל - נאמר²: "ויתן להם משה לבני גד ולבני ראובן ולחצי שבט מנשה גו".

ומזה למדים שני ענינים:

(1) משות לב, א.
(2) שם, לג.

The tribe of Menashe wasn't rebuked

(a) Moses' initial displeasure, which he expressed with the words "society of sinful people," was only expressed to the tribes of Reuven and Gad, not to the half-tribe of Menashe. We also find that the appellation of "an inheritance may be acquired hastily in the beginning" was only applied to the tribes of Reuven and Gad, and not to the half-tribe of Menashe.

(א) הענין הבלתי-רצוי שהיה בתחילה, שקצף עליהם משה וכינה אותם בשם "תרבות אנשים חטאים" - היה רק בנוגע לבני גד ובני ראובן, ולא בנוגע לחצי שבט מנשה. וכמו כן מצינו שהענין של "נחלה מבוהלת בראשונה"³ - נאמר בנוגע לבני גד ובני ראובן בלבד⁴, ולא בנוגע לחצי שבט מנשה.

Source 2 Proverbs, Ch. 20, Verse 21

In Proverbs, King Solomon bemoans the panic for material property - it never ends well. Rashi explains that Solomon is referring to our Torah portion.

An estate acquired in haste at the outset will not be blessed in the end.

Rashi:

An inheritance acquired in haste at the outset: [An inheritance] which one hastens to take hurriedly so as to be first, like the sons of Gad and the sons of Reuven, who hastened to take their share on the other side of the Jordan, and they spoke hastily, as it is said (Num. 32:16): "We will build sheepfolds for our flock here and cities for our children." They made the essential secondary, for they placed their flock before their children.

Will not be blessed in the end: For they were exiled many years before the rest of the tribes...

נחלה מבוהלת בראשונה
ואחריתה לא תברך.

רש"י

נחלה מבוהלת בראשונה:
שנבהל למהר ולטל
תחלה, כגון בני גד ובני
ראובן שמהרו לטל
חלקם בעבר הירדן,
ודברו בבהלה שנאמר:
גדרת צאן נבנה למקננו
פה וערים לטפנו - עשו
את העקר טפל שהקדימו
צאנם לטפם.

ואחריתה לא תברך:
שגלו כמה שנים קדם
שאר השבטים...

>> The Rebbe

The tribe of Menashe didn't have large amounts of livestock

b) The reason for requesting a portion on the east bank of the Jordan was because "it is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock." This rationale was only present for the tribes of Reuven and Gad, as the verse says, "the tribes of Reuven and Gad had an abundance of livestock, very numerous."

The reason why specifically the tribes of Reuven and Gad had an abundance of livestock is explained in earlier sources. Regarding Reuven: Jacob had a large amount of livestock, and Reuven was his firstborn son, who inherits a double portion. Regarding Gad: This tribe had a special affinity for the manna, as alluded to in the verse, "the manna was like the gad seed." Since they ate primarily from the manna, they didn't slaughter many of their livestock, leaving them with "an abundance of livestock."

The tribe of Menashe, however, did not have "abundant livestock." Their request for a portion on the east bank of the Jordan must have had some other reason.

We are left with two questions:

A. Why wasn't the tribe of Menashe rebuked by Moses and condemned by King Solomon—who condemns the hastiness of the tribes of Reuven and Gad?

B. Why did the tribe of Menashe decide to stay on the east bank of the Jordan if they didn't have large amounts of livestock?

(ב) הסיבה לבקשת נחלה בעבר הירדן מפני ש"ארץ מקנה היא ולעבדיך מקנה" - היתה רק אצל בני גד ובני ראובן, כמפורש בקרא "ומקנה רב היה לבני ראובן ולבני גד עצום מאוד".

וטעם הדבר, שלהם דווקא היה "מקנה רב גו' עצום מאד". ומבואר בספרים⁵: בנוגע לראובן - מכיון שליעקב היה מקנה רב⁶, הרי ראובן שהוא בכור ישראל, נוטל פי שניים⁷. ובנוגע לגד - לפי שהיו מחבבים את ה"מָן" ביותר, וכמרומו הקשר שבניהם - "והמן כזרע גד הוא"⁸, היה ה"מָן" עיקר מאכלם, ולא שחטו (כל כך) צאן ובקר כדי לאכול בשר, ובמילא, היה להם "מקנה רב".

אבל שבט מנשה - לא מצינו שהיה לו "מקנה רב", ומה שביקש נחלה גם בעבר הירדן - סיבה אחרת היתה לו.

(7) ראה פרש"י וישלח לה, כג. 8 במדבר יא, ז.

(4) הושע ד, יז.
(5) ב"ר פל"ח, ו.
(6) ויק"ר פכ"ו, ב.

B. Menashe Wanted Mashiach

Ten or seven?

Source 3 Genesis 15, 18-21

When G-d promised the Land of Israel to Abraham (Genesis 15:18-21), he named 10 lands

On that day G-d made a covenant with Abram: “To your offspring I have assigned this land, from the river of Egypt to the great river, the river Euphrates. The Kenites, the Kenizites, the Kadmonites. The Hittites, the Perizites, the Rephaim. The Amorites, the Canaanites, the Girgashites, and the Jebusites.”

בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא כָּרַת ה' אֶת־
אֲבְרָם בְּרִית לְאָמֹר: "לְזֶרְעֲךָ
נָתַתִּי אֶת־הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת
מִנְהַר מִצְרַיִם עַד־הַנָּהָר
הַגָּדֹל נְהַר־פָּרָת. אֶת־הַקְּנִיזִי
וְאֶת־הַקְּנִזִּי וְאֶת־הַקְּדֻמִּנִּי.
וְאֶת־הַחִתִּי וְאֶת־הַפְּרִזִּי
וְאֶת־הַרְפָּאִים. וְאֶת־הָאֲמֹרִי
וְאֶת־הַכְּנַעֲנִי וְאֶת־הַגִּרְגָּשִׁי
וְאֶת־הַיְבוּסִי."

However, when the time came, Only 7 of these lands were given to the Jewish people.

Source 4 Deuteronomy 7:1

When the L-rd your G-d brings you to the land that you are about to enter and possess, and [G-d] will dislodge many nations before you—the Hittites, Girgashites, Amorites, Canaanites, Perizites, Hivites, and Jebusites, seven nations much larger and greater than you.

כִּי יְבִיאֲךָ ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֶל־
הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר־אָתָּה בָּא־
שָׁמָּה לְרִשְׁתָּהּ, וְנָשַׁל גּוֹיִם
רַבִּים מִפְּנֶיךָ - הַחִתִּי
וְהַגִּרְגָּשִׁי וְהָאֲמֹרִי וְהַכְּנַעֲנִי
וְהַפְּרִזִּי וְהַחִוִּי וְהַיְבוּסִי -
שִׁבְעָה גּוֹיִם רַבִּים וְעֲצוּמִים
מִמֶּנֶךָ.

Since G-d promised the entire land to the Jewish people, including that of the Kenites, the Kenizites, and the Kadmonites, and this has not yet taken place, this serves as proof that this will happen in the days of Mashiach.

And so writes Maimonides:

Source 5 Mishneh Torah, Laws Pertaining to Murder and the Preservation of Life 8:4

In the days of Mashiach, three additional cities of refuge will be added to the existing six. As it is written “then you shall add three more cities to these three” (Deuteronomy 19:9). Where are these three cities to be set up? Among the cities of the Kenites, the Kenizites and the Kadmonites. For a covenant has been made to Abraham whereby he’d possess their land, but this has not yet occurred. With regards to these cities it is written in the Torah “And when the Lord your G-d enlarges your territory” (Deuteronomy 19:8).

בִּימֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ מוֹסִיפִין
שְׁלֹשׁ אַחֲרוֹת עַל אֱלוֹ הַשָּׁשׁ.
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (דְּבָרִים י ט)
”וַיִּסְפֹּת לָךְ עוֹד שְׁלֹשׁ עָרִים
עַל הַשְּׁלֹשׁ הָאֵלֶּה”. וְהִיכֵן
מוֹסִיפִין אוֹתָן בְּעָרֵי הַקֵּינִי
וְהַקֵּנִזִי וְהַקַּדְמוֹנִי שֶׁנִּכְרַת
לְאַבְרָהָם אָבִינוּ בְּרִית עֲלֵיהֶן
וְעַדְיוֹן לֹא נִכְבְּשׁוּ וְעֲלֵיהֶן
נֶאֱמַר בַּתּוֹרָה (דְּבָרִים י ט ח)
”וְיֵאֵם יִרְחִיב ה' אֶלְהֶיךָ אֶת
גְּבֻלְךָ”:

(It's worth noting, that Maimonides (Laws of Kings, 11:2) uses this very verse as one of the main sources in the Bible for the future coming of Mashiach)

Our sages often make mention of how the Land of Israel is destined to “stretch” in the era of the ultimate redemption, when “all its citizens will dwell upon it”. Moreover, the physical borders of the land will greatly expand, as G-d promised to Jacob (Genesis 28:14), “You shall spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south”. - an unlimited expansion (see Tractate Shabbat, 118a)

Optional: our Divine service in the Messianic era - as explained through the light of Chassidus.

Chassidus (see at length the discourse “Al Tatzar et Moav”, and in “Sefer Hasichot” 5751 volume 2, p. 874) explains the inner reason why during the time of exile we were only given the lands of the 7 nations, and only with the ultimate redemption will we be in possession of all ten. The number 10 expresses perfection and wholeness of all of man's attributes, while 7 corresponds to the emotional attributes (of which there are 7), without the 3 cerebral attributes, wisdom, understanding and knowledge. This is the principal difference between our times and the era of redemption. Nowadays, it is incumbent upon us to seek to refine only our inborn emotions - to suppress their negative expression and channel them in the right direction.

Man's main struggle within, is on the emotional realm, in the conflict with desires and inclinations. The mind merely serves to overcome and control emotions.

It is for this reason that we have been granted the land of the 7 nations of Canaan - symbolic of the 7 negative emotions, so that we can indeed control and remedy these negative inclinations, and seek out the good ones. The remaining 3 lands, representing the cerebral traits, were not yet granted to us since it is not yet the time nor is it required for us to deal with them at present.

However, with the coming of Mashiach, when the emotional realm will have been perfected, a new age will be upon us, wherein the cerebral attributes will be refined. The mind will then be an end in and of itself, and not merely a means with which to control emotions. Our main occupation will be the study of G-d, and this will be expressed in our being given control of the additional 3 lands, signifying our refinement of the mind.

(taken from “Sichat Hashavua” - Topics in Chassidut)

>> The Rebbe

The tribe of Menashe wanted their portion in the Land of Israel to resemble the division of the land in the Messianic era. Knowing that in the time of Mashiach the Jewish people will receive the land of 10 nations—the seven of the Land of Canaan, and the Keni, Kenizi, and Kadmoni of the east bank of the Jordan—they asked to receive “two portions in the land, half on the east bank of the Jordan, and half in the Land of Canaan,” similar to the division that will be done in the Messianic era.

The tribe of Menashe wanted to take an actual step in this world symbolizing the coming of the Messiah. This is why they asked for portions both in the Land of Israel and on the east bank of the Jordan.

Spiritual Altruism

This explains the advantage Menashe had over Gad and Reuven regarding their portion on the east bank. The tribes of Gad and Reuven had a material reason compelling them to request a portion on the east bank, “it is a land for livestock, and your servants have livestock.” They needed this “land [suitable] for livestock” in order to pasture their flocks.

Of course, this is a Torah-sanctioned request. The Torah says “I will give grass in your field for your livestock,” and even says that “it is forbidden for a person to eat before providing food for his animals, as the verse says first ‘I will give grass in your

שבט מנשה רצה שנחלתו בארץ תהיה מעין ודוגמת נחלת הארץ לעתיד לבוא, ולכן, ביודעו שלעתיד לבוא יקבלו בני ישראל ארץ עשר אומות, הן שבע אומות שבארץ כנען, והן כל האומות שבעבר הירדן (כולל ארץ קיני קניזי וקדמוני) - ביקש לנחול “שני חלקים בארץ, חציו בעבר הירדן וחציו בארץ כנען”, מעין ודוגמת הנחלה לעתיד לבוא!

ועל פי זה מובן העילוי של מנשה לגבי גד וראובן - בנוגע לנחלה בעבר הירדן: לבני גד ובני ראובן היתה סיבה גשמית שהכריחה אותם לבקש נחלה בעבר הירדן - “הארץ גו’ ארץ מקנה היא ולעבדיך מקנה”, כלומר, יש להם צורך ב”ארץ מקנה” כדי שיוכל לרעות את מקנם.

- בוודאי שצורך זה הוא על-פי תורה, שהרי התורה אמרה “ונתתי עשב בשדך לבהמתך”⁹, ועד כדי כך, ש”אסור לאדם שיאכל קודם שייתן מאכל לבהמתו”, שנאמר “ונתתי עשב בשדך לבהמתך, ואחרי זה ואכלת”¹⁰, ומה גם שכל

⁹ דברים יא, טו.
¹⁰ ברכות נו, א.

field for your livestock,' and only then says 'and you will eat.'" In addition, their entire engagement with material matters was all for the purpose of transforming them into something spiritual. But nevertheless, the bottom line is that their compulsion to ask for this was due to a material reason.

The tribe of Menashe, on the other hand, did not have "abundant livestock" and had no need for "a land for livestock." There was no material reason compelling them to ask for a portion on the east bank. Their only reason for asking to also receive a portion on the east bank was because they wanted to receive a portion that would resemble the division of the land in the Messianic era!

התעסקותם בעניינים גשמיים אינה אלא כדי לעשות מגשמות - רוחניות; אבל אף-על-פי-כן, סוף-כל-סוף היה להם הכרח בדבר מפני סיבה גשמית.

ואילו לשבט מנשה - לא היה "מקנה רב", ולא היה להם צורך ב"ארץ מקנה", כך שלא היתה שום סיבה גשמית שהכריחה אותם לבקש נחלה בעבר הירדן; הסיבה היחידה לבקשתם לנחול גם בעבר הירדן - לא היתה אלא מפני שרצו לנחול מעין ודוגמת הנחלה לעתיד לבוא!

C. Levite Representation

Give the Levites 48 cities

Source 6 Numbers 35:1-2, 6, 13-14

G-d spoke to Moses in the plains of Moab at the Jordan near Jericho, saying: Instruct the Israelite people to assign, out of the holdings apportioned to them, cities for the Levites to dwell in; you shall also assign to the Levites pasture land around their cities. Among the cities you shall give to the Levites, shall be six cities of refuge, which you shall provide [as places] to which a murderer can flee. In addition to them, you shall provide forty-two cities. The cities that you thus assign shall be six cities of refuge in all. Three cities shall be designated beyond the Jordan, and the other three shall be designated in the land of Canaan: they shall serve as cities of refuge.

The Jewish people are commanded to grant the Levites 42 cities throughout the Land of Israel, in addition to the 6 cities of refuge. Being that 3 cities of refuge are on the eastern side of the Jordan river, the implication is that the Levites were intended to live there as well.

וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּעֶרְבַת מוֹאָב
עַל-יַרְדֵּן יְרֵחוֹ לֵאמֹר. "צוּ אֶת-
בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָתַנּוּ לְלוֹיִם מִנְחָלָת
אֲחֻזָּתָם עָרִים לְשִׁבְתָּ, וּמִגְרָשׁ
לְעָרִים סְבִיבֹתֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ לְלוֹיִם.
וְאֵת הָעָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ לְלוֹיִם
אֵת שְׁשֵׁ-עָרֵי הַמִּקְלָט אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ
לְנֶס שְׂמָה הַרְצֵחַ וְעֲלֵיהֶם תִּתְּנוּ
אַרְבָּעִים וּשְׁתַּיִם עִיר. וְהָעָרִים
אֲשֶׁר תִּתְּנוּ שְׁשֵׁ-עָרֵי מִקְלָט
תִּהְיֶינָה לָכֶם. אֵת שְׁלֹשׁ הָעָרִים
תִּתְּנוּ מֵעַבְרַת יַרְדֵּן וְאֵת שְׁלֹשׁ
הָעָרִים תִּתְּנוּ בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן עָרֵי
מִקְלָט תִּהְיֶינָה."

Why send the Levites to the east bank of the Jordan?

Source 7 Likutei Sichot (Hebrew edition), vol. 28, p. 249

The weekly Torah portion tells us about the cities that G-d designated for the residence of the tribe of Levi. The Torah lists them, "six cities of refuge . . . in addition to them, you shall provide forty-two cities." The Torah then relates the commandment of the cities of refuge, and then mentions that the six cities of refuge were "three cities on the east bank of the Jordan, and three cities in the land of Canaan."

בפרשה מסופר על הערים שקבע
הקדוש-ברוך-הוא לתת ללוויים
"לשבת", והתורה מפרטת אותן -
"את שש ערי המקלט... ועליהם
תתנו ארבעים ושתים עיר".
ולאחר מכן מופיעה פרשת ערי
המקלט והתורה מציינת, שש
ערי המקלט, היו "שלוש הערים...
מעבר הירדן", ושלוש - בארץ
כנען."

This is puzzling: We know that the settlement on the east bank of the Jordan wasn't desirable, as is clear from Moses's stern rebuke to the tribes of Gad and Reuven. Why then would G-d command that the Levites be given cities east of the Jordan to dwell in?

This couldn't have been because the Levites were looking for a land of pasture, because the Levites were designated to serve in the Temple, not to occupy themselves with livestock.

While it was necessary for there to be cities of refuge on the east of the Jordan as well—even more than in the Land of Canaan—this doesn't require the Levites to live there.

Based on the above explanation regarding the half-tribe of Menashe, this can be understood very well.

Taking a portion on the east bank of the Jordan was undesirable only when it was done like the tribes of Gad and Reuven, who made their request because "they treasured their money." But the actual taking of a portion on the east bank of the Jordan could also serve as an illustration of the future division of the land in the Messianic era, as explained.

As a result, the Levites, who did not sin with the golden calf because of their great love for the Land of Israel, were the ideal candidates for settlement on the east bank of the Jordan, together with the half-tribe of Menashe. Their settlement resembled the Messianic division of the land, because they received cities on the east bank of the Jordan as well, not just within the borders of the Land of Canaan.

ותמוה: כיון שאנו רואים שקבלת נחלה בעבר הירדן לא היתה רצויה, כפי שמובן מתוכחתו העזה של משה רבינו לבני גד ולבני ראובן, כיצד ייתכן שהקדוש-ברוך-הוא יצווה לתת ללוויים ערים לשבת בעבר הירדן!?

ובוודאי לא היה זה משום ששבט לוי חיפש מקום מקנה, שהרי על שבט לוי נאמר "וילוו עליך וישרתוך", תפקידם הוא עבודה ושירות במקדש, ולא עיסוק במקנה.

אמנם, צריכות להיות ערי מקלט גם בעבר הירדן, והן נחוצות שם אף יותר מאשר בארץ כנען, אך לא משום כך צריכים הלוויים לגור שם.

אך לפי המבואר לעיל לגבי חצי שבט מנשה, מובן, שהיא הנותנת - וביתר הדגשה:

כאמור לעיל, שקבלת נחלה בעבר הירדן נחשבת לבלתי רצויה, הוא רק כאשר הדבר נעשה כבני גד ובני ראובן, אשר רצו בכך משום ש"חבבו את ממונם". אך עצם נטילת חלק בעבר הירדן עשויה, להיפך, להיות דוגמה לירושת הארץ לעתיד לבוא, כדלעיל.

ומשום כך, אדרבה: דווקא אצל שבט לוי, שלא נכשלו בחטא המרגלים, כי חבבו ביותר את הארץ, כמנשה, דווקא אצלם הייתה ישיבה בארץ בדומה לירושה לעתיד לבוא, שקבלו ערים לשבת גם בעבר הירדן, ולא רק בארץ כנען לגבולותיה.

D. Yearning for Redemption

>> The Rebbe

Comfortable exile

This leads us to the special lesson we learn from Menashe, the great desire and yearning for the future redemption.

There are Jews that say that they are comfortable in exile, G-d forbid. From their perspective, the state of exile can continue for another 2000 years... It is shocking to even consider this.

G-d has blessed us that we live under circumstances that enable us to study Torah and observe mitzvot punctiliously in full comfort, without any obstacles. So long as a Jew is in exile (because G-d wishes it so) he must do his job of “I was created to serve my creator” in the most complete way. This means doing so “with all of your heart, all of your soul, and all of your means,” including “all of your money,” thereby refining his portion of the world. This he indeed does...

Regarding the opportunities that the Messianic era will bring that are lacking now, he says that G-d exempts us, because we are compelled to be in exile. True, being exempt is not the same as actually fulfilling, but to be concerned and to complain about something he has no control over—which is the meaning of the exclamation “Mashiach Now!”—what is the point of this, he asks?!

על פי האמור לעיל מובנת ההוראה המיוחדת שלמדים ממנשה - גודל החפץ והכמיהה והתשוקה לגאולה העתידה.

ישנם יהודים שטוענים ש"טוב להם בגלות" - רחמנא ליצלן, ומצדם - יכול מצב הגלות להימשך עוד אלפים שנה... דבר הכי מבהיל אפילו לחשוב כן.

הקב"ה זיכה אותו להיות במצב שביכולתו ללמוד תורה ולקיים מצוות בהידור מתוך הרחבה, וללא כל מניעות ועיכובים. ובמילא, כל זמן שנמצאים בגלות (בגלל שכך הוא רצונו של הקב"ה) - צריך יהודי לעבוד את עבודתו, "אני נבראתי לשמש את קוניי"¹¹, בתכלית השלימות. "בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאודך", כולל - "בכל ממונך". בירור חלקו בעולם כו', וכל זה - אכן עושה בפועל...

ומה שחסרה השלימות שתהיה בגאולה - הרי "אונס רחמנא פטריי"¹²! אמנם, "אונס, כמאן דעביד לא אמרינן"¹³, אבל לאידך, להיות מיצר ודואג ומתאונן על דבר שאינו באשמתו ואינו בשליטתו,

(13) ירושלמי קידושין פ"ג ה"ב

(11) משנה וברייתא סוף מס' קידושין.
(12) ב"ק כ"ה, סע"ב, ושי"ג.

He argues that on the contrary, being upset and bitter over the fact that the redemption has not yet arrived could interfere with serving G-d joyfully and gladly!

שזהו תוכן הצעקה "משיח נאו" - מהי התועלת בכך, שואל ותמה! אדרבה: אם יצטער ויתמרמר על זה שעדיין לא באה הגאולה - יבלבל הדבר לעבודת ה' בשמחה ובטוב לבב!

For generations, we have been awaiting and yearning for the coming of Mashiach, and praying for his arrival three times a day. Why do we want Mashiach?

A. We know that Mashiach will bring an end to our troubles. The nations of the world will stop persecuting us, and we will be able to live in peace.

But there is also an additional, more spiritual, reason. In the Messianic era we will be free to study Torah and observe mitzvot in a much greater way, and we will live more spiritual and moral lives.

This can lead to the question: What about a person who lives in a free country where Jews don't suffer persecution; and who has been blessed with money and peace of mind, enabling him to study Torah and observe mitzvot with no distractions. Why does he pray for Mashiach every day? Perhaps this will only disturb him from his divine service?

The lesson from the tribe of Menashe

This is the lesson we learn from the conduct of Menashe, who desired and yearned for the redemption so strongly that they asked to receive a portion of land similar to the division that will be made in the Messianic era.

Menashe had no need for a portion on the east bank of the Jordan. Their personal needs would have been fully met by a portion in the Land of Canaan, together with the rest of the Jewish people. There was no need for half of the tribe to join the tribes of Gad and Reuven. But there was one thing that Menashe cared about: the future redemption!

ועל זה באה ההוראה מהנהגתו של מנשה - שהיה חפץ ומשתוקק כל כך לגאולה העתידה, עד שביקש לקבל נחלה שהיא מעין ודוגמת הנחלה שתהיה בגאולה העתידה!

למנשה לא היה כל צורך בנחלה בעבר הירדן; הוא מצדו, מצד צרכיו האישיים, היה יכול לנחול בארץ כנען יחד עם כל בני ישראל, ללא כל צורך שחצי שבט יצטרף לבני גד ובני ראובן: דבר אחד בלבד היה אכפת ונוגע למנשה - הגאולה לעתיד לבוא...

A Jew can be in an excellent position, physically and spiritually, studying Torah and observing mitzvot properly, but how can he rest when the true and complete redemption is yet to arrive?! How can he not raise a tumult, exclaiming and shouting "Mashiach now!"

He has all possible good in this world and the next, but what value does any of this have compared to the redemption?!

Menashe teaches us that the redemption is much greater than just peace and tranquility in the spiritual and physical sense. In the Messianic era the world will achieve its ultimate state, and the relationship between the Creator and His creations will be on a completely different level. This is why Menashe wanted a portion on the east bank of the Jordan, despite not needing it for their livestock etc. - to bring Mashiach closer.

יהודי יכול להימצא במעמד ומצב טוב ונעלה, הן בגשמיות והן ברוחניות, לומד תורה ומקיים מצוות בהרחבה; אבל כיצד יכול הוא לנוח ולשקוט כאשר עדיין לא באה הגאולה האמיתית והשלימה?!... היתכן שאינו מרעיש עולמות בקריאה וצעקה "משיח נאו"?!...

יש לו אמנם כל טוב עולם הזה ועולם הבא - אבל איזה ערך יש לזה לעומת הגאולה האמיתית והשלימה?!*

משיחת שבת פרשת צו, שבת הגדול
ה'תשמ"ה.

רשימת השומעים בלתי מוגה.
תורת מנחם, ה'תשמ"ה חלק ג' עמוד 1644

בעת דביקותו: "איך וויל זע גאר ניסט, איך וויל ניט דיין גן עדן. איך וויל ניט דיין עולם הבא כו, איך וויל מער ניט אז דיך אליין..."

* ובלשון הכתוב [תהלים עג, כה]: "מי לי בשמים ועמך לא חפצתי בארץ".
כידוע [שרש מצות התפלה פ"מ (דרמ"צ קלה, סע"א)] לשון אדמור"ר הזקן