

## **Matot-Massei**

by Benjamin Gee - Tuesday, July 30, 2019

<https://chiefrabbi.org/all-media/matot-massei/>

### **Remaining focused on the final destination...**

Is change always a good thing?

At the commencement of Parashat Massei, we find that Hashem had asked Moshe to keep a diary, so to speak, of all the journeys of the Israelites in the wilderness. And we are told “vayichtov Moshe et motza’eihem l’masseihem al pi Hashem”, ‘according to the word of Hashem, Moshe wrote all of their goings out, according to their journeys’, “v’eila masseihem l’motza’eihem”, ‘and these are their journeys according to their goings out’. It’s quite extraordinary that in one and the same verse we have a switch around in the order of these words and it begs for an explanation.

Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch brilliantly explains that the Godly way of proceeding in life is ‘motza’eihem l’masseihem’ - all of our departures, all the changes that we make in life, need to have the ultimate destination in mind - they need to be part of a master plan for a good and productive future. However, we see here that there was a frailty within the minds of the Israelites because what actually happened in the wilderness was “masseihem l’motza’eihem” - their journeys were according to their departures. The departure itself - the desire for change was uppermost in their minds.

Indeed it is human nature that often we crave change. We get bored of what we’ve got. We want novelty, we want variety, we want excitement in life. Sometimes this is relevant within our democracies when it comes to a general election. It happens so often that there is a mood for change - that people just get used to something and out of a sense of desire for novelty they want to switch what they have for something else. Sometimes change is good and appropriate, but sometimes it is possible that we might actually be sacrificing our long term interest on the altar of change.

Hashem wants us always to remember that our way of life should be ‘motza’eihem l’masseihem’ - change should be viewed in the context of what is right, with a destination in mind.

When it comes to where we live, the schools our children attend, the appliances we have in our homes, our mindset with regard to the key issues in the countries within which we live - of course, change can sometimes be the very best way forward but sometimes it might be the worst mistake we ever have made.

Let us, therefore, adopt a Godly approach to change, and that is to have ‘motza’eihem l’masseihem’. All the changes we make must have the ultimate destination in mind, our long term interests! Let’s not change for the sake of change, but rather only for the best.

Shabbat shalom

---

PDF generated by Kalin's PDF Creation Station