



## PARSHAS MATOS-MASEI – MICHAEL BASS

Parshas Mattos is always read during the period of Bein Hametzarim, the three week period between the fasts of 17th of Tammuz and the 9th of Av, when we mourn the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash. Obviously this is no coincidence so perhaps it is possible to find a link between them.

An important theme in this week's parsha is the care that we must take in the use of words and language because of their great power.

Early in the parsha we find a reference to the kedusha of speech:

“He shall not profane his word; according to what comes out of his mouth he shall do”. Whilst specifically referring to vows, the M'forshim have broadened the concept to apply to all that we say. Speech is what separates us from the animals and such a gift must not be misused.

Chazal tell us that the Churban (destruction) came about due to improper use of speech.

Megillas Eicha which we read on Tisha B'Av is written in alphabetical order, yet there are instances where the Novi Yirmiyah placed the letter “pe” before the letter “ayin” on which Rashi comments that at that time “people spoke about what they had not seen with their own eyes” (Eicha 2:16) - the middah of emess was missing.

Towards the end of last week's sedra Moshe Rabbeinu appeals to Hashem to appoint a new leader to take Bnei Yisrael into Eretz Yisrael (Rashi, Bamidbar 27:17). But perhaps more important than that was to teach them the correct manner of behavior, so that they would merit to STAY in Eretz Yisrael and one of these is shmiras hadibbur taking care with what and how we speak.

The Gemorra tells us that Shabbos is also a time for careful speech, that the way we speak on Shabbos should be different from the weekdays (Shabbos 113b). Later (118b) we are told that were Bnei Yisrael to keep all the halachos of two shabbosos, immediately they will be redeemed – it would seem that Shabbos provides the opportunity to repair the misuse of speech which brought about the destruction.

With this thought in mind may we take the opportunity to turn this gloomy period from darkness to light, from mourning to joy and be zoche to the rebuilding of the Beis Hamikdash bimheiro b'yameinu.

**L'illuy Nishmas Avi Mori Reb Sholom ben Reb Pinchos Z"L**