

Matot-Masei  
Jul. 20th - 21st  
2nd Av

### EVERY TRAGEDY HAS A FLIPSIDE

Our people have been around for a long time. We have experienced highs and lows to a greater extreme than most others. Starting from the beginning of our remarkable history, our story is comprised of the most spectacular events in world history. From the exodus of Egypt to the destruction of our Jewish temples, from the glorious reign of King Solomon in the Land of Israel to one of the greatest tragedies the world has known, the Holocaust. Yet, throughout our tumultuous journey, we Jews have managed to persist and grow.

What is the secret of our survival? What is it that despite the adversity, has given us the hope to carry on? What is it that makes us Jews different than everyone else? Why is it that not only do we survive the many tragedies that have befallen us, but on the contrary, we seem to bounce back each time with a greater fervour and focus than ever before.

In a most brilliant insight into that tragic moment when Moses - upon coming down Mount Sinai and witnessing the Jewish people serving the Golden Calf - breaks the tablets, the Lubavitcher Rebbe explains as follows: This in fact could be seen as a historic moment in the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. For up until this point the nature of the bond between man and G-d was performance related. If the Jew kept his side of the agreement then G-d would be obligated accordingly. However if the Jew did not perform then the very essence of that relationship would be severely challenged.

This then is what inspired Moses to break the tablets, something for which he eventually received G-d's approval. Moses was in fact bringing to light the profound bond that lay at the core of the relationship between G-d and the Jewish people. For by breaking the tablets Moses was demonstrating that the connection between the Jew and G-d transcends the Torah. consequently, even if a Jew were to reject both G-d and his Torah, he or she would be no less a Jew.

Here we have a classic and a most profound example of how, what seemed to be a momentous tragedy was in fact a defining moment in the relationship between the Jewish people and G-d. It is also a powerful demonstration of how by looking deeper into an apparent calamity one can uncover the seeds from which even greater opportunity will arise.

On the flipside of every tragedy lies even greater opportunity. It is this perspective that has given the Jewish people both the courage and hope to persist and prosper despite all adversity.

*By Yosef Vogel*

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20<sup>th</sup> July  
Sedra: Matot-Masei

Shabbat Begins: 20.52pm  
Shabbat Ends: 22.05pm