



פרשת מטות-מסעי

"LIVING AND GROWING"

20 Av, 5745-1985

*Free Translation**

The first and most important thing is to 'live.'

We see this within our daily service. The first thing, at the very beginning of the day, we recite: "I offer thanks to You... *living* and eternal King." This is said immediately "upon awakening from sleep," as soon as we realize that we are alive — "for You have restored my soul within me."

The service of the entire day follows from this point.

There are many different levels of "life":

One cannot compare the life force and vitality of a day-old baby with that of a twenty year old. The same is true of the years in between, and the years following.

This is something that is plainly seen. And when do we begin seeing signs of a life imbued with meaning?

When the child begins to talk, and even more so once he reaches the age of education. We see clearly that a sign of life is growth.

This change and growth from year to year is mainly noticeable — not so much between the 13th and fourteenth year of a boy, or between the twelfth and thirteenth year for a girl— but rather, in the years of early childhood. During those years growth is most obvious. This means that the life force is most noticeable in those years; this is something that can be seen plainly.

Surely, bodily growth is connected to the soul's growth. Thus, we can understand how much a child's soul is growing, at least in those years. Now is therefore an appropriate time:

Present here today are many youth, who are still before the age of Bar Mitzvah.

They utilized their vacation time—since there is an odd custom that many schools and Yeshiva grades, do not continue in full force through the summer months.

So these children have gone to summer camps where they have been absorbing the Torah of Life, and with preparation and education towards fulfilling its Mitzvot, about

*) Taken from the Subtitles that appear on the screen



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which we are told "you will live through them." This education becomes the proper preparation—for the more we "educate the youth," the greater he will be "even when he will grow old."

The children who are here, will act as emissaries to their friends who remained in camp. That they should know that every Jew must be alive, and the first sign of life is energy, that "he does not rest," because he cannot rest.

And we see this literally, that children by their very nature cannot rest. An adult sometimes seeks an opportunity to rest and relax; but a child, by nature, as soon as he is born he starts to move his hands and feet.

This continues as he grows older; he continuously talks and asks questions, keeps on moving and cannot stay in one place. He bothers his parents and counselors, to answer his questions and to find things to keep him busy with, because having nothing to do is against the very nature of a child.

And educators must endeavor to educate the children to be involved with good, positive, and helpful activities. Through this, they too merit that "God illuminates the eyes of them both," even if the teachers would wish to find excuses to rest, the children don't allow them to, and they continue to push and demand of them that they keep going "from strength to strength."

Since we are now at a Farbrengen, each one of the children should say L'chaim, and then they should all sing a joyous song together.

This should act as a good beginning:

Even when camp ends, and each child returns to his home, when going from home to the synagogue or to school, the child must go through the public streets, and who knows what kinds of "winds" and influences blow there. Not only will it not have a negative effect on him, Heaven forbid, but on the contrary: He will transform the public domain, into a "private domain," —dedicated to the One God.

