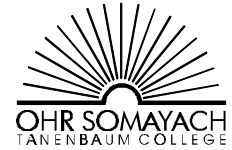


# Parsha Q&A



## Parshas Matos / Masei

For the week ending 2 Av 5758  
24 & 25 July 1998

### Parsha Questions

#### Matos

1. Who may annul a vow?
2. When may a father annul the *nedarim* of his widowed daughter?
3. The Jewish People were commanded to attack Midian. Why were they not commanded to attack Moav?
4. The people selected to fight Midian went unwillingly. Why?
5. What holy vessels accompanied the Jewish People into battle?
6. Those who killed in the war against Midian were required to remain outside the *machaneh* (camp). To which *machaneh* is the Torah referring?
7. In addition to proper cleansing to remove traces of forbidden food, what other preparation is needed to make metallic vessels obtained from a non-Jew fit for a Jewish owner?
8. *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* said, "We will build sheep-pens here for our livestock and cities for our little ones." What was improper about this statement?
9. During the conquest of the Land, where did *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* position themselves?
10. What promise did the *Bnei Gad* and *Bnei Reuven* make beyond that which Moshe required of them?

#### Masei

1. Why does the Torah list the places where the Jewish People camped?
2. Why did the King of Arad feel at liberty to attack the Jewish People?
3. What was the length of the camp in the *midbar*?
4. Why does the Torah need to specify the boundaries that are to be inherited by the Jewish People?
5. What was the role of the *nesi'im* (Princes) in the division of the Land?
6. When did the three cities on the east of the Jordan

- begin to function as places of refuge for murderers?
7. There were six cities of refuge, three on each side of the Jordan. Yet, on the eastern side of the Jordan, there were only two and a half tribes. Why did they need three cities?
  8. In order to be judged as an intentional murderer, what type of weapon must the murderer use?
  9. Why does the murderer remain in the city of refuge until the death of the *Kohen Gadol*?
  10. When an ancestral field moves through inheritance from one tribe to another, what happens to the field in *yovel* (Jubilee year)?

### Sherlox Holmes

"This text is most unusual," said Watstein: "And G-d spoke to Moshe saying: Avenge the vengeance of Bnei Yisrael from the Midianites; afterward you shall be gathered unto your people (i.e., die). And Moshe said to the people saying: Detach from your midst men for the army, and they shall be against Midian, to bring about the revenge of G-d against Midian. (Bamidbar 31, 1-3)"

"G-d commanded, Moshe acted," said world famous detective Sherlox Holmes. "What's unusual about that?"

"Nothing!" said Watstein. "That's exactly my question! There's absolutely nothing unusual about it!"

"So what's bothering you, my dear Watstein?" asked Sherlox.

"Rashi's comment bothers me," said Watstein. "On the verse 'and Moshe said to the people saying...' Rashi comments: Even though Moshe heard that his death depended on the matter, he did it with joy and didn't delay."

"Such selflessness," said Sherlox.

"Yes, but where does Rashi see in the verse that Moshe acted with joy? Rashi doesn't simply make comments unless something in the text prompts him to do so. What's bothering Rashi?"

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Parshas **Matos / Masei** — 2 Av 5758, 24 & 25 July 1998

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## Answer

“Notice,” said Sherlock, “that Moshe didn’t use the exact words that G-d used.” “How so?” asked Watstein.

“G-d said to exact the vengeance of Bnei Yisrael, the Jewish People. Moshe, however, told the people to bring about the vengeance of G-d.”

“Is there a difference?” asked Watstein.

“Yes and no,” replied Sherlock. “On the one hand, the vengeance of the Jewish People is synonymous with the vengeance of G-d, for an enemy of the Jewish People is automatically G-d’s enemy, as Rashi says in verse 3. On the other hand, however, one must ask oneself: Why indeed did Moshe choose to shift the focus from ‘the vengeance of Bnei Yisrael’ to ‘the vengeance of G-d?’ ”

“Why?” asked Watstein.

“Moshe wanted to infuse the nation with zeal for their mission. They might be willing to forgive their own vengeance, perhaps. But the vengeance of G-d? That is something that would fire them with enthusiasm, and is something which they would not be permitted to forgo. By his subtle change in phraseology, Moshe reveals his enthusiasm and verve to perform the will of G-d, even though his death depended upon it.”

*Based on Devek Tov*

## ***I Did Not Know That!***

When listing the name of the nasi (prince) of each tribe, three tribes — Yehudah, Binyamin and Shimón — do not have the word nasi mentioned. Rav Nissim Gaon explains that in the case of Yehudah, everybody knew that Calev deserved to be the nasi due to his actions during the episode of the spies. The tribe of Shimón did not deserve a nasi, due to the actions of Zimri (25:14). The nasi for Binyamin was Eldad, who had prophesied in the camp (Bamidbar 11:26), and being a prophet an even higher spiritual level than being a nasi.

*Sifsei Tzadikim*

## **Recommended Reading List**

### **Matos**

#### **Ramban**

30:16	Responsibility
31:2,6	Vengeance
31:23	Cleansing Vessels
31:36	Miracle of the Spoils
31:49	Jewish Victory
32:33	Menashe’s Inheritance
32:41	Yair’s Ancestry

#### **Sforno**

31:15	The Meaning of Silence
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### **Masei**

#### **Ramban**

33:53	The Land
35:14	Cities of Refuge
35:29	The Sanhedrin

#### **Kli Yakar**

33:49	The Greater Loss
35:6	Temporary Dweller

#### **Sefer Hachinuch**

408	Cities of the <i>Levi'im</i>
409	Capital Punishment
410	Exile

#### **Sforno**

33:1	The Merit of the Journeys
36:4	The Inheritance of Daughters
36:12	The Husbands of the Daughters of Tzafchad

# Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

## Matos

1. 30:2 - Preferably, an individual who is an expert in the laws of *nedarim*. If such a person is not available then three ordinary people.
2. 30:10 - If she is widowed before she is fully married, and is less than twelve and a half years old.
3. 31:2 - Because Moav only acted out of fear against the Jewish People. Also, Ruth was destined to come from Moav.
4. 31:5 - They knew that the death of Moshe would follow the execution of vengeance upon Midian.
5. 31:6 - The *aron* and the *tzitz*.
6. 31:19 - The *Machaneh Shechina*.
7. 31:23 - Immersion in a *mikveh*.
8. 32:16 - They showed more regard for their property than for their children.
9. 32:17 - At the head of the troops.
10. 32:24 - Moshe required them to remain west of the Jordan during the conquest of the Land. They promised not to return home for an additional period after the conquest while the Land was being divided among the tribes.

## Masei

1. 33:1 - To show Hashem's love of the Jewish People. Although it was decreed that they wander in the desert, they did not travel continuously. During the span of the 38 years they moved only 20 times.
2. 33:40 - When Aharon died, the *ananei kavod* (clouds of glory) which protected the Jewish People departed.
3. 33:49 - Twelve *mil*.
4. 34:2 - Because there are certain *mitzvos* that apply in the Land, but not outside the Land.
5. 34:17 - Each *nasi* represented his tribe in the division among the Tribes. He also allocated the inheritance to each family in his Tribe.
6. 35:13 - After Yehoshua separated three cities on the western side of the Jordan.
7. 35:14 - Because murderers were more numerous on the eastern side of the Jordan.
8. 35:16 - One which is capable of inflicting a lethal injury.
9. 35:25 - Because the *Kohen Gadol* causes the *Shechina* to dwell in Israel and prolongs life, and the murderer causes the *Shechina* to depart from Israel and shortens life. The murderer is not worthy to stand in the vicinity of the *Kohen Gadol*.
10. 36:4 - It remains in the possession of the new tribe.