

PORTION	DATE	HEB DATE	TORAH	NEVIIM	RENEWED
Mattot Massei	3 Aug. 2019	2 Av 5779	Num. 30:1-36:13	Jer. 2:4-28, 3:4	Luke 13:1-9 Mark 11:12-23

This week's Torah portion Mattot and Massei ends the Book of Bemidbar. We have discussed that the Book of B'resheet is about the creation and the foundation of faith. The Book of Shemot is about the exodus from Mitzrayim and the giving of the Torah. The Book of Vayikra explains the Torah. And the Book of Bemidbar shows us how the Yisraelites lived in the desert. It is like a soap opera as it details lashon hara (slander) against Moshe and Hashem, consequence of idol worship, leprosy, etc.

We have explained the difference between vows and oaths, and how it applies to our daily lives. (07142018 Mattot Massei) Rashi asks, "Under what conditions could a woman whose vow was annulled require forgiveness?" (Bemidbar 30:6) The answer: When a woman utters a nazirite's vow and her husband or her father hears about it and annuls her vow without her knowledge, and she violates her vow by drinking wine or defiles herself by coming in contact with the corpse requires forgiveness even though her vow was annulled. Ramban said that if she violates the vow before her husband/father restrains her, Hashem does not forgive her as the sages say, "He terminates the vow, but he does not nullify it retroactively.

Rashbam said that if the woman marries her husband while her vow is still in effect (v. 6), he can annul such vows (v. 8). When her husband or her father hears about her vow, they do not have a whole day to annul it. They might only have few hours. For example: Let's say that a woman makes a vow and her husband/father hears about it at 3 o'clock in the afternoon. They only have few hours before a new day begins since the biblical day starts in the evening and ends the following evening is considered a day. (v. 14) Therefore, if he annuls the vow after the day he finds out (v. 15) without her realizing that he had found out earlier, she shall bear her guilt for the vow is not actually annulled in this case. But if she violates it, she does so unwittingly, for she had no way of knowing whether he had found out about it earlier or not.

"He shall bear her crookedness." (v. 15) This refers to a case in which the woman does not know that her husband has learned about her vow. He eventually tells her falsely that he has just learned about it and that he is restraining her from her vow. If she violates her vow under such belief that her vow no longer applies, then "he shall bear her crookedness."

"Take vengeance for the children of Yisrael on the Midyanites." (31:2) It has been decreed that Moshe would not cross the Yarden (Jordan). On this side of the Yarden, he was fully in command, thus it would be Moshe who should take vengeance as Yehushua (Joshua) will not take command until he cross the Yarden. Since Moshe lived with the Midyanites for a while, he sent Pinehas. The sages taught that the family of Yitro joined Yisraelites during the war with other Midyanite tribes whose women disguised themselves as Moabites by worshipping Baal Peor.

Moshe said, "Send a thousand from each tribe...so there were supplied." (vv. 4-5) These men were righteous who were not involved with pagan worship (*avodah zarah*) (ch. 25). However, they did not want to go because they heard that Moshe's death had been decreed once they had wreaked vengeance of Midyan until they had to be "delivered (supplied)" against their will.

Moshe was angry "with the officers of the army" (v. 14) for bringing "all the women of Midyan captive, with their little ones, and took as spoil all their livestock, and all their possessions." (v. 9) Thus he exclaimed, "Have you kept all the women alive?" Meaning, "You kept the women who were involved to cause sin

against Hashem by making us to worship idols?" (ch. 25) "Look, they are the one who caused the children of Yisrael, through the word of Bil'am, to trespass against YHWH, in the matter of Pe'or, and there was a plague among the congregation of YHWH." (v. 16) Here, we also learn from this verse that it was Bil'am who gave an advice to Balak on how to overcome Yisrael through sexual immorality and pagan worship. Bil'am was amongst that was killed as he was there to collect his rewards that caused the death of 24,000 Yisraelites.

In Chapter 32, the children of Reuben and Gad came to Moshe, and implored that their Tribes not to cross over the Yarden since the land of Ya'zer and Gil'ad was good for their livestock. The commentators said that the tribe of Reuben is mentioned in verse 1 as he was the firstborn. However, the tribe of Gad is mentioned in verse 3 indicating it was the children of Gad who encouraged the children of Reuben to join their cause to stay in the land of Ya'zer and Gil'ad. And it was they who approached Moshe.

It is written, "And of Gad he said, "Blessed is he who enlarges Gad. He dwells as a lion, and shall tear off his arm, also the crown." (Devarim 33:20) So, they were not afraid of staying by themselves amongst other nations. Instead, Moshe suspected that they were afraid of the Canaanites which the spies said, "We are not able to go up against the people; for they are stronger than we." (Bemidbar 13:31) Therefore, Moshe like their [Gad] ancestors is accusing them of not trusting in Hashem and warning them that their action might result in Hashem's abandoning the Yisraelites in the wilderness once more. (32:15) That is why they responded, 'Hashem forbid! We are not afraid to enter Canaan and fight the enemies of Hashem, for they are our prey!'"

It is written, "And unto the half-tribe of Manasseh the son of Yosef." (v. 33) Ramban explains that the tribe of Manasseh did not come before Moshe first. But when he assigned the land to Gad and Reuben, he realized it [land] was more than they needed. Therefore, he asked whether anyone wished to join them. Some of the Manassites volunteered and Moshe gave them their share of the land. "Half" does not necessary be "half", but it also means "part" by alluding to Melekim Aleph (First King) 16:21, "Then were the people of Yisrael divided into two parts: half of the people followed Tibni the son of Ginath, to make him king; and half followed Omri."

According to Bemidbar 26:29-32, there were eight Manassite clans. The Machirites and the Gileadites took their inheritance here. They were such valiant fighters that they captured it on their own. Moshe thus gave them a territory out of proportion with their numbers. But the other six clans crossed the Yarden. (Yehushua Ch. 17)