

PARSHA SUMMARY FOR PARSHAS MATOS & MASEI

by Rabbi Aron Tendler

Note: The Shabbos Torah Reading is divided into 7 sections. Each section is called an Aliya [literally: Go up] since for each Aliya, one person "goes up" to make a bracha [blessing] on the Torah Reading.

The year is 2488 and the 40 years in the desert are drawing to a close. Miriam and Aharon have passed on, and Yehoshua has been appointed as the successor. In these last two portions of Sefer Bamidbar, Mattoth - Massey, Hashem begins to wrap things up. Pay attention to the laws selected to end the 4th Sefer.

1st Aliya: The laws of personal vows are detailed and Moshe is instructed to "take revenge" against Midian. In the battle, both Balak and Bilaam are killed.

2nd Aliya: In the aftermath of the war, Moshe instructs the soldiers regarding the applicable laws of Tumah - impurity, and deals with the division of the booty between the soldiers, community, and the Mishkan.

Note verses 22 and 23 which teach us the laws of how to make kosher our vessels, and the Torah requirement for metal vessels made by a non-Jew or purchased from a non-Jew to be immersed in a mikvah before being used. (the Rabbis extended this law to included glassware)

In appreciation for the fact that not a single soldier was lost in battle, the Generals and Captains donate their personal percentage of the captured gold to the Mishkan. The total weight of the donated gold weighed 837.5 lbs.! (Areyeh Kaplan)

3rd & 4th Aliyot: Moshe is approached by the tribes of Reuven, Gad, and 1/2 of Menashe to acquire the Trans-Jordan territories captured from Sichon and Og. Moshe first treats their petition with suspicion; however, an agreement is reached between the 2 1/2 tribes and Moshe: Trans-Jordan in exchange for manning the front lines in the campaign to take Eretz Yisroel.

5th Aliya: Moshe instructs the Bnai Yisroel to clear out the Land from all negative influences, and sets the Biblical boundaries of the Land.

6th Aliya: New leaders are appointed to oversee the division of the Land, and the 48 Levitical cities, including the 6 Cities of Refuge, are mandated.

7th Aliya: The laws regarding the inadvertent murderer are detailed, and the prohibition against marrying outside one's tribe is established. This prohibition was only for the generation that occupied the Land.