

## Parsha Bullets on Matos/Masei, 5783

### Above Board

Rabbi Efrem Goldberg

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| Bamidbar 30:3-5  | במדבר ל'ג-ה'   |
| <p>If a man makes a vow to the LORD or takes an oath imposing an obligation on himself, he shall not break his pledge; he must carry out all that has crossed his lips. If a woman makes a vow to the LORD or assumes an obligation while still in her father's household by reason of her youth, and her father learns of her vow or her self-imposed obligation and offers no objection, all her vows shall stand and every self-imposed obligation shall stand.</p> | <p>אִישׁ כִּי-יָדַר יְדָר לַיהוָה אוֹ-הִשָּׁבַע שְׁבַעַה לְאִסּוּר אִסּוּר עַל-נַפְשׁוֹ לֹא יַחַל דְּבָרוֹ כְּכֹל-הֵי יֵצֵא מִפִּיו יַעֲשֶׂה: וְאִשָּׁה כִּי-תִדְרַר נָדַר לַיהוָה וְאִסְרָהּ אִסּוּר בְּבֵית אָבִיהָ בְּנַעֲרִיהָ: וְשָׁמַע אָבִיהָ אֶת-נִדְרָהּ וְאִסְרָהּ אֲשֶׁר אִסְרָה עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ וְהִחֲרִישׁ לָהּ אָבִיהָ וְקָמוּ כָל-נִדְרֶיהָ וְכָל-אִסּוּר אֲשֶׁר-אִסְרָה עַל-נַפְשָׁהּ יִקּוּמוּ:</p> |

#### Why are oaths significant?

- **R. Soloveitchik** points out that the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur, begins with Kol Nidrei, expressing the importance of our words.

#### Why is there this difference between men and women?

- The **Tosafos HaRosh** notes that women mature faster than men.

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| Bamidbar 31:2   | במדבר לא"ב'   |
| <p>"Avenge the Israelite people on the Midianites; then you shall be gathered to your kin."</p> | <p>נָקָם וְקָמַתְל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֵאֵת הַמִּדְיָנִים אַחַר תִּאֶסֶף אֶל-עַמִּיךָ:</p> |

#### What does this teach us?

- Moshe did not delay with his mission, even though he was told he would not enter the room.
- The verse below (v. 4) says אֶלְף לַמִּטָּה אֶלְף לַמִּטָּה; **the midrash** notes that 1 thousand people davened for the military success of the people.

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| Bamidbar 32:4   | במדבר לב"ד'  |
| <p>the land that the LORD has conquered for the community of Israel is cattle country, and your servants have cattle.</p> | <p>הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר הִכָּה ה' לְפָנָי עַד־תּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֶרֶץ מִקְנָה הוּא וְלַעֲבָדַי מִקְנָה: {0}</p> |

**The tribes of Gad and Reuven ask for land. Why does Moshe chastise them? Why does Moshe include half the tribe of Menashe?**

- They saw a business need and wanted to have a place for their flock. Moshe responds and reverses the order of their request to teach that taking care of their children must take precedence over their livestock.
- The **Nachalas Tzvi** connects this to Avraham. He was also described as someone with a lot of livestock. However, in his case it did not define him.
- **R. Shaul Alter** also notes that Moshe taught them the importance of demonstration and example when he said, "וְהִיָּצָא מִפִּיכֶם תַּעֲשׂוּ.".
- **R. Moshe Shmuel Shapiro** explains the Targum who says that they were students of the *mergalim* by saying that we can learn from people subtly, even without being explicit students of them.
- **R. Yosef Sorotzkin** gives an explanation for why Moshe made assumptions about the tribes of Gad and Reuven: 1) they failed to appreciate the Land and 2) they failed to prioritize their offspring.

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| Bamidbar 32:22  | במדבר לב:כב'   |
| and the land has been subdued, at the instance of the LORD, and then you return—you shall be clear before the LORD and before Israel; and this land shall be your holding under the LORD. | וּנְכַבְּשָׁה הָאָרֶץ לְפָנַי ה' וְאַחַר תָּשׁוּבוּ וְהִיִּיתֶם נְקִיִּים מֵה' וּמִיִּשְׂרָאֵל וְהִיִּיתָה הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת לְכֶם לְאֻחֲזָה לְפָנַי ה': |

**What is the significance of this verse?**

- The **Raavad** says this principle of וְהִיִּיתֶם נְקִיִּים מֵה' is incredibly important.

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| Bamidbar 33:2  | במדבר לג:ב'  |
| Moses recorded the starting points of their various marches as directed by the LORD. Their marches, by starting points, were as follows: | וַיִּכְתֹּב מֹשֶׁה אֶת־מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם עַל־פִּי ה' וְאֵלֶּה מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם: |

**Why does it say Moshe wrote this?**

- The **Or HaChaim** says Moshe first recorded them in a notebook, then Hashem told him to write it down.
- **Degel Machane Ephraim** tells us that we all, like the Jews in the Midbar, go through 42 journeys in our lives.
- R. Yosef Sorotzkin teaches: it says מוֹצְאֵיהֶם לְמַסְעֵיהֶם and מַסְעֵיהֶם לְמוֹצְאֵיהֶם as there is significance to both nature and nurture.