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Family Parsha Sheet

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Matot-Masei עטוט-מֵשֵׁי July 7, 2021



Parsha Questions

(Answers on the back!)

- 1) There are 14 Parshiyot that are sometimes paired together. Aside from Matot-Masei, can you name the other 6 pairs?
- 2) Why is it significant that Bilam was killed with a sword?
- 3) In this parsha, what law involves fire and water?
- 4) Why didn't Moshe exempt the Shevatim of Reuven and Gad from fighting in the war of independence?
- 5) "We will build sheep-pens here for our livestock and cities for our little ones." What was improper about this statement?
- 6) What promise did Bnei Gad and Bnei Reuven make beyond that which Moshe required?
- 7) Why did Moshe send only 1/2 of Shevet Menashe to live with Reuven and Gad on the other side of the Yarden?
- 8) Which encampment mentioned in this parsha may allude to the holiday of Chanukah?
- 9) Why did the King of Arad feel at liberty to attack the Jewish People?
- 10) What is this part of the Jewish calendar called?

Words of Wisdom

Mishna Taanit 4:6**משנכנס אב ממעטין בשמחה****When the month of Av arrives we decrease our happiness**

Did You Know?

Why do we sometimes read Double Parshiyot?
(Chabad.org)

The basic issue is that although we split the Torah into 54 portions (or Parshiyot), a regular Jewish year has 353–355 days. That leaves us with 50–51 Shabbats on which to read the Torah portion. Additionally, when a Jewish holiday coincides with Shabbat, we read the special holiday reading instead of the weekly Torah portion. This leaves us with a maximum of 48 (but often fewer) weeks in a regular year in which to read the 54 Torah portions. [Technically we only need 53 Shabbats, since the last portion, Vezot Hab'rachah, is traditionally read on Simchat Torah, which generally (and outside Israel, always) occurs on a weekday.] In order to reconcile the weekly cycle of Parshiyot with the number of Shabbats available, we need to double up some of the Parshiyot. In a Jewish leap year, we add an extra month consisting of 30 days, which includes four more Shabbats (or five, depending on the day of the week the new month starts). Thus, in a leap year we have a lot fewer double Torah portions.

Parsha Answers:

- 1) Vayakhel-Pekudei, Tazria-Metzora, Acharei-Kedoshim, Behar-Bechukotai, Chukat-Balak, and Nitzavim-Vayelech.
- 2) Rashi 31:8 - Bilam tried to kill Bnei Yisrael with their power (speech). He ends up getting killed with his power (the sword).
- 3) The pasuk says (31:23) that to kasher any utensil that was used with fire, it must be passed through fire, whereas those not used with fire may be kashered with water.
- 4) Moshe felt that such a move would dishearten the spirit of the other Shevatim. They might think that Reuben and Gad were too scared to fight the Canaanites.
- 5) Rashi 32:16 - They showed more regard for their property than for their children.
- 6) Rashi 32:24 - Moshe required them to remain west of the Jordan during the conquest of the Land. They promised to remain after the conquest until the Land was divided among the tribes.
- 7) Moshe knew how much Menashe loved Eretz Yisrael. Sending only half over the river would ensure that those living Me'Ever LaYarden would stay connected to Eretz Yisrael and Am Yisrael.
- 8) The 25th encampment is a place called Chasmonah (33:29). Chanukah is celebrated beginning on the 25th day of the month of Kislev. The heroes of the holiday were the priests known as Chashmonim.
- 9) Rashi 33:40 - When Aharon died, the clouds of glory protecting the Jewish People departed.
- 10) These are the 9 Days from Rosh Chodesh Av until Tisha B'Av.

This Week

In Jewish History

Av 1 (Aish.com)

Yahrtzeit of Aaron (1395-1272 BCE), the elder brother of Moses and the first High Priest of Israel. Aaron was a great prophet and righteous man, who was known for bringing peace between people. During the period of Jewish slavery in Egypt, Aaron accompanied Moses in deliberations with Pharaoh. After the giving of the Torah, when Moses spent 40 days on Mount Sinai and the people became impatient, Aaron worked to minimize damage from the building of the Golden Calf. All Kohanim in history are descended from Aaron; indeed, DNA research in recent years supports this tradition.

Tefilla Insights

Yaaleh VeYavo (Ou.org)

On days which have a musaf prayer, that is, Yom Tov, High Holidays and Rosh Chodesh, we say the prayer yaaleh veYavo in the blessing on the restoration of the Temple service. The essence of this prayer is that our prayers should ascend on high and be heard and responded to by G-d. The stages that our remembrance is supposed to go through - ascend, and come, and arrive, and be seen, and find favor, and be heard, and be acted upon and remembered - remind us of someone who writes a letter of request. In order for his request to be answered, the letter must be posted and collected, sorted, delivered, noticed, be accepted, opened and read, and finally be responded to. The metaphor of prayer as a message which needs to be delivered, and which can get mislaid along the way, is an ancient one in Jewish literature. For instance, one common motif is the idea of the "gates of prayer" through which our requests have to pass (Berakhot 32b).

Key Number or Word In The Parsha

42

This number comes up twice in the parsha. There were 42 stops that Bnei Yisrael made throughout the 40 years wandering the Midbar. And there were 42 Arei Leviyim, where the Leviyim lived throughout the land. These cities also served as Arei Miklat, Cities of Refuge, where accidental murderers could flee. Rashi (33:1) notes that although there were 42 stops, 14 of them were in the 1st year, and 8 of them were in the last, so they only actually moved 20 times during the middle 38 years.