

PARASHAT MATOT-MAS'EY

Numbers 30:2–36:13

Parashat Matot-Mas'ey is one of seven designated Torah portions that, depending upon the number of Sabbaths in a year, is either read as two separate portions or combined to assure the reading of the entire Torah. While this volume will combine them, it will present an interpretation on each of their most important themes.

Parashat Matot reports the laws, given to the Israelites, for making vows. It also contains a description of the Israelites' war against the Midianites, including the distribution of the booty. The Torah portion concludes with Moses resolving a request by the Gadites and Reubenites for the lands of Jazer and Gilead.

Parashat Mas'ey recounts forty years of *mas'ey*, or "journeys," by the Israelites from Egypt to the Land of Israel. Moses provides instructions for conquering the land, defining its borders, and dividing it among the tribes. He also defines provisions for setting up six cities of refuge where those accused of manslaughter may go for safety and a fair trial. The Book of Numbers concludes with a counterprotest regarding the daughters of Zelophehad (see the discussion in *Parashat Pinchas*) and a further clarification of the Torah's laws of inheritance.
