

# BOSTONER TORAH INSIGHTS

BOSTONER 'CHASSIDUS' IN ENGLISH

PARSHAS MATOS MASEI – ROSH CHODESH MENACHEM AV 5781

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In the Book of Yehoshua (19:47) we learn that even though the tribe of Dan was given a portion along the western coast along the Mediterranean, they also conquered an area in the northwest, near the current Lebanon border in the Golan Heights, known as the Banias, which is obligated in tithing Maaser. On the other hand, the land conquered by King David, known as Suria, is considered the conquering of an individual, which is exempt from Maaser. If this is true, certainly, the conquering of the tribe of Dan in the times of Yehoshua should also be considered the conquering of an individual and be exempt from Maaser.

I thought that perhaps the answer is that since Hashem showed Moshe Rabbeinu the land of Israel, Moshe must have also seen the area of the Banias. The Gemara (Baba Basra 56a) states that any land that Hashem showed to Moshe Rabbeinu is obligated in Maaser. Thus, not only is the Banias obligated in Maaser, but this would mean that all of the land of Ayvair L'Yarden is obligated in Maaser, not because of how it was conquered, but because Hashem showed Moshe the land.

The Rambam in Hilchos Melachim codifies that in the times of Moshiach the Land of Eretz Yisroel will be reallocated into portions and the tribe of Levi will receive portions in this new distribution. May it be Hashem's will that we should see this soon with the coming of Moshiach.

"All of the Mitzvah that I command you today, you should observe to perform..." (Devarim 8:1). Rashi cites the Midrash Tanchuma (Eikev 6) that this Pasuk comes to teach us that a Mitzvah is attributed to the one who completes the Mitzvah. As it says in the Navi, "The bones of Yosef that Bnei Yisroel carried up from Mitzraim and buried in Shechem" (Yehoshua 24:32). However, we know from Parshas Beshalach that "Moshe took the bones of Yosef with him" (Shemos 13:19). The conclusion drawn by the Midrash is that even though Moshe began the Mitzvah and may have been responsible for the bones of Yosef during the 40 years in the Midbar, because he could not enter Eretz Yisroel to complete the Mitzvah, the Mitzvah of 'carrying up' Yosef's bones 'from Mitzrayim' is attributed to Bnei Yisroel and not Moshe in Sefer Yehoshua.

Rav Yonasan MiRopshitz asks why Moshe Rabbeinu did not bury Yosef in Menashe's portion of Eyver HaYarden, in order to complete the Mitzvah of burying Yosef's remains in Eretz Yisroel. The answer may be found in the same penultimate Pasuk of Sefer Yehoshua, where it states that they buried Yosef's bones in Shechem, "in the portion of the field that Yaakov acquired from the children of Chamor, the father of Shechem for 100 Kesitah". Why was it necessary to mention here in such detail the transaction between Chamor and Yaakov of the sale of the land from Parshas Vayishlach, especially since Bnei Yisroel have now conquered all of Eretz Yisroel.

Seemingly, Shechem is considered Eretz Yisroel because it was purchased by Yaakov and therefore its sanctity remains absolute. Other parts of Eretz Yisroel that were conquered, may lose their sanctity, if the land is conquered by another nation and Bnei Yisroel are sent into exile. Accordingly, Moshe did not bury Yosef in Eiver HaYarden, which would lose its sanctity of Eretz Yisroel during a future exile. Similarly, Yaakov instructs his children to bury him in Maarat HaMachpayla in Chevron since that land was also purchased by Avraham Avinu and will always retain its sanctity. It is important to note that the Torah goes into detail about how Shechem and Chevron were purchased, as well as the Navi describing in detail how Dovid HaMelech purchased the area of the Har HaBayis to demonstrate that these areas within Eretz Yisroel *indisputably* belong to Bnei Yisroel regardless of any periods of exile.

The discussion of Arey Miklat, appears in Parshas Massei. Hashem commands Moshe, "Three cities shall you designate on the other side of the Jordan and three cities shall you designate in the land of Canaan, they shall be cities of refuge" (Bamidbar 35:14). In Sefer Yehoshua, the Cities of Refuge on the Eastern side of the Jordan River are listed in the order of conquest from South to North. First, Betzer in the southernmost portion of Reuven; then, Ramot in the portion of Gad; and finally, Golan in the northernmost portion of Menashe. However, the Cities of Refuge in Eretz Yisroel proper are listed from North to South, in the opposite order than they were conquered. First, Kedesh in the northern Galil area; then, Shechem; and finally, Chevron in the southern region of Yehudah.

Perhaps, when it came time to sanctify the Cities of Refuge in Eretz Canaan, they first needed to measure the distances between cities to assure they were properly spaced so that one fleeing from a Go'el HaDam would effectively be able to reach a City of Refuge as quickly as possible. Thus, they had to reach the northernmost city and sanctify it first, then they could retrace their steps back toward Shechem and sanctify it second, and finally continue south to Chevron and sanctify it last. In contrast, the Cities of Refuge that were sanctified by Moshe by the command of Hashem were all done simultaneously, so they are listed in the order of their conquest and not in the order of their sanctification.

May it be His will that we should merit the rebuilding of the Beis HaMikdash speedily with the coming of the Go'el Tzedek.