

Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 32

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BAMIDBAR

5th Sivan 5775

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 1 - 19

- ✚ It was the 1st Iyar during the 2nd year after the exodus when Hashem instructs Moshe to take a census of Bnai Yisrael.
- ✚ With help from Aaron and a representative from each tribe, they count every male person over the age of twenty, and those who would be eligible to go to war if and when required to do so.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 1, verses 20 - 54

- ✚ The results of the Census are revealed, tribe by tribe, giving us a grand total of 603,550
- ✚ However this census does not include anyone from the tribe of Levi. This is because as it is their duty to be involved in dismantling, carrying and re-erecting the Mishkan (Tabernacle) whenever they travelled, none of them would be allowed to go into battle;

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 2, verses 1 - Chapter 2, verse 34

- ✚ Hashem advises Moshe and Aaron on how to set up camp around the Mishkan. The Levi'im will first encircle the Mishkan with their tents so they can guard and protect the Mishkan from all sides.
- ✚ On the eastern side of the Mishkan, the tribes of Yehuda, Yissachar and Zevulan will make camp. The tribes of Reuven, Shimon and Gad will settle in the south with the tribes of Ephraim, Menashe and Binyamin positioning themselves on the west side and the tribes of Dan, Asher and Naftali setting up home on the north side.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 3, verses 1 - 13

- ✚ Hashem tells Moshe the Levi'im will be put in charge of serving and assisting the Kohanim in the Mishkan and the guarding all of its vessels.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 3, verses 14 - 39

- ✚ A census of the Levi'im is now taken consisting of all the males from one month of age and above adding up to 22,000 in all.
- ✚ There are three main families within the tribe of Levi, Gershon, who were put in charge of transporting the tapestries, curtains belonging to the Mishkan. The family of Kehat role was to transport all the holy vessels and Merari's family were the ones who had to carry all the beams, panels and sockets. .

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 3, verses 40 - 51

- ✚ Next Hashem asks Moshe to count every firstborn male belonging to Bnai Yisrael from one month old and above. The total came to 22,273.
- ✚ Hashem explains that all the Levi'im counted will replace the rights given to the firstborns. This is because all firstborns are now sanctified to Him as they were saved on the day that Hashem struck down all the firstborn Egyptians.
- ✚ Each firstborn will be redeemed with a Levite. The remaining 273 are to be redeemed by handing over five shekels to either Aaron or one of his sons.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 4, verses 1 - 20

- ✚ Finally Moshe is instructed by Hashem to take a census of the family of Kehat between the ages of thirty and Fifty as they would be the only ones eligible in transporting the Mishkan's Holy vessels.
- ✚ The last section deals with how the Mishkan should be dismantled and preparing all the sacred vessels before moving them to the next destination.

Haftorah – Hoshea, Chapter 2 verses 1 to 22

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ The Haftorah begins with the Navi (prophet). Hoshea speaking about the future redemption.
- ✚ Hosea first prophesies about the eventual reunification of the houses of Judah and Israel. During the Messianic Era, when these two perennial antagonists will make peace and appoint a single leader once more.
- ✚ Hosea then rebukes the Jewish people for their infidelity, abandoning their "husband," Hashem, and engaging in adulterous affairs with pagan deities. He describes the punishments they will suffer because of this unfaithfulness.
- ✚ Eventually, though, Hosea gives reassurances that Teshuva (repentance) will take place, and Hashem will accept them all back wholeheartedly.

LINK TO SEDRA READING:

- ✚ Parsha Bamidbar deals primarily with the counting of Bnai Yisrael in the desert. The Haftorah begins with the words, "The number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand on the seashore, which can be neither measured nor counted." Proving that numeric greatness is also part of Bnai Yisrael's legacy, fulfilling Hashem's promise to Avraham that his people will be as numerous as the stars in heaven etc.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

Tonight, Motzei Shabbat, will be Shavuuous, the time when we celebrate that the Torah was given to us on this day upon mount Sinai. Our Commentators tells us that before Hashem presented his most precious gift to us, He first offered it to all the other nations first but for whatever reason they all refused to accept it.

The Children of Esav for example declined because they felt they could not abide by the commandment 'Thou Shall Not Commit Murder' as they as a nation lived and died by the sword. The Ammonites and the Moabites had to say no also because of the law 'Thou Shall Not Commit Adultery' as they were all descended from a lineage of adulterers and felt it would be an injustice to their forefather Lot if they accepted it now, etc. On what basis were these mighty nations entitled to reject the Torah? Surely they were obligated through the seven Noahide Laws to keep those very same commandments of not to steal, murder and commit adultery already.

There is a great distinction between the seven Noahide Commandments and those seemingly identical ones which appear in the Torah. In Truth there is no difference between the two except that the Ten Commandments given at Mt Sinai have far more reaching implications and are therefore basically different fundamentally in character to the Noahide laws.

For Example, although the Laws of incest and immoral behaviour appears in both sets of Laws; In practice the only factor they have in common is a general warning of not to commit these acts. However there is a vast difference regarding the finer details which the torah elaborates upon. In the case of Bnai Noach marital relations were only forbidden with the immediate family, such as a Mother or Sister. Yet the same prohibition when applied through the Torah includes a wider spectrum of forbidden relationships, such as the mother in law, sister in law, daughter in law and other distant relations. Even if anyone of them happens to have become widowed or divorced.

The same principle applies to all the other Noahide Laws too. Even though all the nations of the world have to adhere strictly with them; the torah is more inclusive and has greater emphasises on the finer details which we the Jewish Nation agreed to abide by 100% when we proclaimed those immortal words 'Naaseh Vnishma'.

Chazal further suggests another reason why the other nations refused the Torah. Torah is a forever non-negotiable binding contract between Man and Hashem. Once a nation had agreed and accepted the Torah's terms and conditions there would be no turning back. The Torah tells us, 'Not even the wisest or most powerful person is allowed to alter, add or subtract any of the 613 mitzvors given at Sinai.' So the nations hoped by not accepting the torah they would in the future be able to find some way to release themselves from the stranglehold of the moral code of practice set out in the Noahide laws which they were compelled to embrace with no strings attached.

The Torah was and is really intended to be in the possession of everyone. The fact Hashem offered it first to Esav and Ishmael is irrelevant as it was not intended as an exclusive gift to one nation alone but was indeed destined to become all the other nations as well, inclusively. May we all appreciate tonight, the greatest treasure any nation could have received from Hashem, who has entrusted us the 'Jewish People' to spread the words of Hashem through the whole world, who will with Hashem's help get the other nations of the world to grasp and accept the torah as their own too; in order to bring in the commencement of the messianic era speedily in our days

