



Snapshot Torah



GUIDE TO THE WEEKLY PARSHA

ISSUE 42

30th July 2015

PINCHAS

24th Tammuz 5776

Kohen - First Aliya:

Chapter 25, verse 10 - Chapter 11, verse 4

- ✚ Hashem rewards Pinchas with his covenant of peace, zealously avenging Hashem by killing Zimri (A Prince from the tribe of Shimon) and Kozbi (A Princess of the Midianites).
- ✚ Since Pinchas had atoned for Bnai Yisrael's short comings, Hashem proclaimed that Pinchas and his descendants will be all be classed as Kohanim.
- ✚ As punishment, Hashem commands Moshe to smite and destroy the Midianites at every opportunity.
- ✚ Hashem then asks Moshe and Elazar to take a new census of all the men from 20 years upwards who were left, now the plague had come to an end.

Levi - Second Aliya:

Chapter 26, verses 5 – 51

- ✚ The totals are recorded here for each of the twelve tribes, (discounting the Levi'im).
- ✚ The grand total of all the tribes combined is 601,730.

Sh'lishi - Third Aliya:

Chapter 26, verse 52 - Chapter 27, verse 5

- ✚ 23,000 Levi'im males from one month old and upwards were counted separately.
- ✚ Hashem explains to Moshe how the land of Israel will be divided up accordingly by using the results from the Census. Larger families would receive greater portions than the small families.
- ✚ A special lottery was set up to determine which area of land in Israel will be designated to each tribe.
- ✚ The daughters of Tzelofhad approached and asked Moshe, if they would be eligible to receive their father's inheritance of land as he had died leaving behind no male offspring.
- ✚ Moshe relays their request to Hashem.

R'VI' - Fourth Aliya:

Chapter 27, verses 6 - 22

- ✚ Hashem agrees, allowing Tzelofhad daughters to inherit their father's estate and goes on to instruct Moshe on the laws relating to inheritance.
- ✚ Hashem asks Moshe to climb up to the top of Mount Avarim, enabling him to see the promised land for himself before he dies.
- ✚ Moshe appeals to Hashem to appoint a worthy individual as his successor.
- ✚ Hashem tells him to publically place some of his spiritual greatness on Yehoshua (Joshua) and pronounce him as his replacement to lead Bnai Yisrael.

Chamishi - Fifth Aliya:

Chapter 28, verses 1 - 15

- ✚ Details of the various Korbonos (sacrifices) offered up twice daily as well as additional korbonos given to honour Shabbat and Rosh Chodesh are discussed here.

Shishi - Sixth Aliya:

Chapter 28, verse 16 - Chapter 29, verse 11

- ✚ The korbonos offered and the laws relating to Pesach, Shavu'os, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are explained.

Sh'vi'i - Seventh Aliya:

Chapter 29, verse 12 - Chapter 30, verse 1

- ✚ To finish off the Korbonos given at Succot and Shemini Atzeret are mentioned here.

Haftorah – Yermeyahu (Jeremiah) Chapter 1 verse 1 to Chapter 2 verse 3

OVERVIEW:

- ✚ Yermeyahu recounts how Hashem appointed him as prophet and his initial reluctance to accept the task.
- ✚ He describes two prophetic visions shown to him. The first featured an almond tree branch which is interpreted as that just like an almond tree is very quick to blossom, so too Hashem will carry out his plan of punishing his people for any sins they have committed.
- ✚ The second vision was that of a boiling pot whose foam was directed northward. Hashem explains, this is an allusion to the afflictions the Jewish people who will suffer at the hands of their enemies, the Babylonians because they abandoned Hashem and worshiped idols instead.
- ✚ Yermeyahu is encouraged to deliver the prophecy and not to fear the Jewish populace who would certainly not take kindly to such harsh words because Hashem reassures him that because of Bnai Yisrael's commitment and devotion at the time of Matan Torah he will eventually forgive them and return them back to the land of Israel where they belong.

GEMATRIA LINKED TO SEDRA:

- ✚ When Hashem told Moshe to appoint Yehoshua as his successor, the Torah tells us that Moshe also had to transfer his glory over to Yehoshua also.
- ✚ The gematria of the word מהודך Meh'hodha (from his glory) is 75. This is the same value of the word הסוד Ha'sod (The Secret).
- ✚ This teaches us that Moshe also passed on and taught many of the Torah's secrets and hidden depths to Yehoshua too.

WEEKLY DISCUSSION:

The English title to the 4th book of the Torah, Bamidbar is Numbers. The name derives from the two recorded censuses made of Bnai Yisrael, contained within it. one at the beginning of the forty-year wilderness experience and one at the end. Not long after the exodus from Mitzraim, Hashem commanded Moshe to count the people by tribe to determine the number of Jewish men 20 years and older who were eligible to serve in the military. Later in this week's sedra, a second census was ordered. This time the purpose was not only to re-evaluate the nation's military force, but also to prepare and organize the property allocation once the promised land had been conquered.

Even though the Levi'im, were not included or part of either of the general censuses, they were still accounted for albeit with a different criterion. I.e. Every Male over the age of 1 month of age was included in the count. This was primarily because they were chosen as the priestly tribe, who bore the responsibility of everything connected to and the general upkeep and maintenance of the Mishkan along with the daily korbanos (Sacrifices) offered up to Hashem. As quoted in Bamidbar 1:49-50 "You must not count the tribe of Levi or include them in the census of the other Israelites. Instead, appoint the Levites to be in charge of the tabernacle of the covenant law—over all its furnishings and everything belonging to it. They are to carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings; they are to take care of it and encamp around it." And secondly because they were not allocated a specific portion of the land of Israel in their own right. They were scattered and dwelt in 48 designated cities across the whole country.

The first thing I feel compelled to mention and clarify is the explanation why women and any male under the age of 20 were excluded from the census. It wasn't like, even though some people think it is, anything related to their social status or class. on the contrary they were highly recognised, praised and honoured the same if not more than men. The reason was mainly due to their military ineligibility and was deemed unnecessary to be included in the census because they would not be sent to war.

Upon studying and comparing the statistics between the two. One point of interest I found was that despite a 3% loss, the total number of men ready for active service virtually stayed the same over the course of the whole 38-year period between the two censuses. Whilst they were still back in Mitzraim all the tribes (excluding the tribe of Levi) populations increased dramatically; Yet. Surprisingly! These 38 years in the wilderness saw no overall growth at all. I don't know about you but I would have expected the numbers of each tribe to increase and multiply, as is normal in the course of any generation. Instead, the numbers just remained where they were and stayed the same.

The second point of interest between the two censuses showed how seven of the tribes during this period had incurred significant gains while the other five suffered substantial losses. The most dramatic being the tribe of Simeon who had a staggering 64% decrease in their numbers and the tribe of Manasseh whose population actually increased by the same percentage.

This stagnation of population growth seems to be reflective of Bnai Yisrael's spiritual state during the whole time they remained in the Midbar. The evidence shown in the censuses clearly shows that Hashem was blessing those who had remained loyal and faithful towards him and punishing those who were not. It's just a shame that a whole generation had to die before Bnai Yisrael learned this lesson. With Hashem's help may our faith remain strong, enabling us to become a generation of G-d fearing people, bold enough with the Moshiach's help to retake the Promised Land and live forever in peace.

