

Parsha Q&A



Parshas Bamidbar

For the week ending 29 Iyar 5759
14 & 15 May 1999

Parsha Questions

1. Why were the Jewish People counted so frequently?
2. What documents did the people bring when they were counted?
3. What determined the color of the tribal flags?
4. What is the difference between an *os* and a *dege*l?
5. How do we see that the Jews in the time of Moshe observed 'techum Shabbos' — the prohibition against traveling more than 2000 *amos* on Shabbos?
6. What was the signal for the camp to travel?
7. What was the sum total of the counting of the 12 tribes?
8. Why are Aharon's sons called "sons of Aharon and Moshe?"
9. Who was Nadav's oldest son?
10. Which two people from Megillas Esther does Rashi mention in this week's Parsha?
11. Why did the *levi'im* receive *ma'aser rishon*?
12. Which groups of people were counted from the age of one month?
13. Name the first descendant of Levi in history to be counted as an infant.
14. Who assisted Moshe in counting the *levi'im*?
15. Why did so many people from the tribe of Reuven support Korach in his campaign against Moshe?
16. Why did so many people from the tribes of Yehuda, Yissachar, and Zevulun become great Torah scholars?
17. In verse 3:39 the Torah states that the total number of *levi'im* was 22,000. The actual number of *levi'im* was 22,300. Why does the Torah seem to ignore 300 *levi'im*?
18. The firstborn males of the Jewish People were redeemed for five *shekalim*. Why five *shekalim*?
19. During what age-span is a man considered at his full strength?
20. As the camp was readying itself for travel, who was in charge of covering the vessels of the *Mishkan* in preparation for transport?

I Did Not Know That!

When Yaakov blessed his sons at the end of his life, he hinted that the tribes of Reuven, Yehuda, Yosef and Dan would lead the four flag-camps. Anyone whom Yaakov addressed in the second person — "you" — became the head of a flag-camp. Reuven: "You are my firstborn"; Yehuda: "You, will your brothers acknowledge"; Yosef: "From the G-d of your father"; Dan: "For your salvation I long."

Ba'al Haturim 2:2

Recommended Reading List

Ramban

- Introduction to Bamidbar
1:3 The Draft Age
1:45 The Reason for Counting
2:2 The Organization of the Camp
3:14 The *Levi'im*
4:16 The Role of Elazar ben Aharon

Ibn Ezra

- 1:19 Organization of the Camp

Sforno

Introduction to Bamidbar

Prepared by Ohr Somayach in Jerusalem, Israel

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Dedication opportunities are available for Parsha Q&A — Please contact us for details.

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Answers to this Week's Questions

All references are to the verses and Rashi's commentary, unless otherwise stated

1. 1:1 - They are very dear to Hashem.
2. 1:18 - They brought birth records proving their tribal lineage.
3. 2:2 - Each tribe's flag was the color of that tribe's stone in the breastplate of the *kohen gadol*.
4. 2:2 - An *os* is a flag, i.e., a colored cloth that hangs from a flagpole. A *degel* is a flagpole.
5. 2:2 - Hashem commanded them to camp no more than 2000 amos from the *Ohel Mo'ed*. Had they camped farther, it would have been forbidden for them to go to the *Ohel Mo'ed* on Shabbos.
6. 2:9 - The cloud over the *Ohel Mo'ed* departed and the *kohanim* sounded the trumpets.
7. 2:32 - 603,550.
8. 3:1 - Since Moshe taught them Torah, it's as if he gave birth to them.
9. 3:4 - Nadav had no children.
10. 3:7 - Bigsan and Seresh.
11. 3:8 - Since the *levi'im* served in the *Mishkan* in place of everyone else, they received tithes as "payment."
12. 3:15, 40 - The *levi'im*, and the firstborn of *B'nei Yisrael*.
13. 3:15 - Levi's daughter Yocheved was born while the Jewish People were entering Egypt. She is counted as one of the 70 people who entered Egypt.
14. 3:16 - Hashem
15. 3:29 - The tribe of Reuven was encamped near Korach, and were therefore influenced for the worse. This teaches that one should avoid living near the wicked.
16. 3:38 - The tribes of Yehuda, Yissachar, and Zevulun were encamped near Moshe, and were therefore influenced for the good. This teaches that one should seek to live near the righteous
17. 3:39 - Each *levi* served to redeem a first born of the Jewish People. Since 300 *levi'im* were themselves first born, they themselves needed to be redeemed, and could therefore not redeem others.
18. 3:46 - To atone for the sale of Yosef, Rachel's firstborn, who was sold by his brothers for five *shekalim* (20 pieces of silver.)
19. 4:2 - Between the ages of 30 and 50.
20. 4:5 - The *kohanim*.

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