

Intro to Sefer BaMidbar – Sefer Bamidbar is referred to as Sefer HaPekudim. **Rav Aharon Lichtenstein ztl.** noted that there are three distinct interpretation to the word Pekudim. On the one hand, it refers to an accounting and in the book of Bamidbar 2 distinct accountings of the Jews are presented. At the same time a Pekuda or charge is presented to the Jewish people and their leadership in particular in Bamidbar. This version of Pekudah is more interpersonal than the former. Pakad refers to the idea of being mindful of something or someone beyond ourselves. A Jew is always counted, always charged, always attended to. There are times that we wish we would be left alone, but a Jew is never left alone. The Jew is “called.” You cannot sit on the sidelines, even if you have a box seat; you must be on the playing field. Jewish life is bound by specific halakhic guidelines and involves living a life of command. Some people like to live laid-back lives and not listen to too many orders, but to be a Jew means to be always ready.

And they gave birth according to their families (1:18) –**The Yalkut** notes that at the time of the giving of the Torah, the nations of the world challenged Hashem. Hashem silenced them by asking them to bring their Sefer yichus. What is the connection? **Rav Modechai Banet of Nikolsburg** explains that based on tehillim 119:150, kirvu rodfei zima mitoraseicha richeiku that one who does not have purified yichus isn't ready to receive the Torah. Hence, Bamidbar is always read prior to Shavuos.

And they gave birth according to their families (1:18) – **Sforno** comments that each family examined its Yichus to determine that it was part of a Shevet. This was done since the Shechina does not rest except on the Mishpachos Miyuchasos shel Yisrael. **Rabbi Akiva Eiger** likened this to a pot filled with water (Mayim Rabim Lo Yuchlu L'Chabos) where the heating of the water cannot squash the fire as long as there is a container containing its spread. That container is the barrier against assimilation.

And they gave birth according to their families (1:18) – The author of the **Zichron Yehoshua** explains that the purity of the Shevatim was achieved because they were set up l'Beit Avosam – that they had an image of what their parents expected of them in their homes. Hence, they were able to thrive up to expectations.

And with you shall be each man according to his tribe, each a leader to his family he shall be (1:40) – **The Darchei Teshuvah of Munkatz ztl.** would often quip that a man keeps his eyes down as a sign of humility (L"Match = L"Matta) for he knows where he fits in within his family.

And they shall camp each according to his encampment and each according to his flag (1:52) – The reason why we read Parshas Bamidbar yearly prior to Shavuos suggests **Rav Yehoshua Heshel of Manistritish ztl.** is because one of the 48 ways of acquiring Torah is through knowing one's place. By reading Bamidbar, one will come to the appreciation necessary for one to truly value the place where s/he comes from and to shine from it.

And these are the children of Aaron and Moshe (3:1-2) – It is fascinating that the children of Moshe are themselves never mentioned in the census. Why not? **Rav Soloveitchik ztl.** suggested that Moshe Rabbeinu lost his family life when Bnei Yisrael left the Mamad Har Sinai. From that moment, he was no longer an individual because he was now the nursemaid (Omein) of Klal Yisrael. Hence, the children of Moshe do not get mentioned as his own in the census. For as the Goel of the Jewish people requires complete dedication to the nation even at the expense of one's own family.

Haftorah: Simply the Haftorah and the Parsha seem to connect in that they both focus on the idea of the census. However, **Rav Hershel Schachter Shlita** suggested a deeper level of connection. The Parsha ends with the idea of not gazing at the Aron Hakodesh. A similar idea exists in the Haftorah when Bnei Yisrael are K'Ishee U'K'Baalee. When we are in the Beis HaMikdash in an ideal relationship with Hashem, there is no issur to gaze at the Kruvim. In fact it was the practice to show the Olei Regel this love directly. However, when travelling in the Midbar or in the second temple time or in the Galus, so our relationship with Hashem is like an Arusa and as such not everything is yet revealed.