

# Parsha Q&A



## Parshas Bamidbar

For the week ending 29 Iyar 5756  
17 & 18 May 1996

### Parsha Questions

1. How were the Jewish People counted?
2. What was the minimum age for drafting someone?
3. Why was the Tribe of Levi not counted with the rest of the Jewish People?
4. How far away from the *Ohel Mo'ed* did the individual tribes encamp, and why this distance?
5. What was the signal for the camp to travel?
6. In what formation did the Jewish People travel in the desert?
7. Why does the Torah call the sons of Aaron the "sons of Aaron and Moshe"?
8. Why did the *Levi'im* receive a tithe ("*ma'aser rishon*")?
9. Why were the *Levi'im* chosen to serve in the *Ohel Mo'ed*?
10. Why were the *Levi'im* counted only after the age of one month?
11. Name one member of the tribe of Levi who was counted at birth.
12. Who assisted Moshe in counting the *Levi'im*?
13. What negative influence did the family of Kehas have on its neighbors?
14. What positive influence did Moshe have on his neighbors?
15. Which descendant of Levi was not numbered along with the *Levi'im*?
16. 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 ignore 300 *Levi'im*?
17. The firstborn males of the Jewish People were redeemed for five *shekels* which was equal to twenty pieces of silver. What other firstborn had previously been valued at this price?
18. There were 22,000 *Levi'im* who were an "exchange" for the firstborn. There were 22,273 firstborn among the other Tribes. The remaining 273 redeemed themselves by paying five *shekels*. How did Moshe determine which of the first-born had to pay?
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?

**Bonus Q:**

At the conclusion of the census (1:44-46), the Torah emphasizes three times that the Jewish People were "numbered." Why?

### *I Did Not Know That!*

The *Nasi* of the Tribe of Shimon, Shlumiel ben Tzorishadi (1:6), appears in the Torah in two other places under different names. He was Shaul ben Canaanis, who entered Egypt as one of the 70 souls (*Bereishis* 46:10). Also, he was Zimri ben Salo, who was killed by Pinchas at the end of *Parshas Balak*.

*Sanhedrin* 82b

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Parshas **Bamidbar** — 29 Iyar 5756, 17 & 18 May 1996

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## Recommended Reading List

### Ramban

- 1:3 Introduction to Bamidbar  
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 Aaron

1:19

### Ibn Ezra

Organization of the Camp

### Sforno

Introduction to Bamidbar

## Answers to this Week's Questions

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

- 1:2 - Each person donated a half-shekel (see *Shemos* 38:26).
- 1:3 - Twenty years old.
- 1:49 - Since they were "separated" for service in the *Mishkan* they were counted separately. Also, those who were "numbered" would die in the desert, and *Levi'im* were not to be punished since they did not participate in the sin of the golden calf.
- 2:2 - 1 mil [approx. 2000 *amos*], the permitted distance for travel on Shabbos. This allowed them to go there on Shabbos.
- 2:9 - The cloud over the *Ohel Mo'ed* would depart, and the *Kohanim* would blow the trumpets.
- 2:9 - In the formation in which they encamped.
- 3:1 - Because Moshe taught them Torah.
- 3:8 - The *Levi'im* served in the *Mishkan* in place of everyone else, and received tithes as "payment".
- 3:12 - Since the *Levi'im* did not sin with the golden calf, they were chosen to replace the firstborns who did sin and were thereby disqualified.
- 3:15 - A child is not known to be viable until it has lived thirty days.
- 3:15 - Yocheved, the daughter of Levi, was born while the Jewish People were entering the gates of Egypt. She is counted as one of the seventy souls who entered Egypt.
- 3:16 - The *Shechina*.
- 3:29 - Their proximity to the Tribe of Reuven led some of the Reuvenites to become involved in the rebellion of Korach.
- 3:38 - Moshe camped in the East, adjacent to the Tribes of Yehuda, Yissachar, and Zevulun. Many from these Tribes became great Torah scholars.
- 3:39 - Aaron *HaKohen*.
- 3:39 - The *Levi'im* were being counted in order that they might be used to redeem the firstborn of the Jewish People. Since 300 *Levi'im* were themselves first born, they could not be used to redeem others. Thus, the Torah didn't include them.
- 3:46 - Yosef, Rachel's firstborn, was sold by his brothers for 20 pieces of silver (*Bereishis* 37:28).
- 3:50 - By lottery.
- 4:2 - Between the ages of 30 and 50 years old.
- 4:5 - The *Kohanim*.

BONUS

A:

To stress that the census served three distinct purposes. They were:

- 1) To determine who was fit for military service
- 2) To publicize Hashem's greatness, that from 70 souls who entered Egypt, He created a nation of over 600,000
- 3) To allow Moshe and Aaron the opportunity to bless each member of the Jewish People individually

Ksav Sofer

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