

# Parashat Bamidbar

## פרשת במדבר

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## Cohen, Priest, Husband, Messiah

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 1:1-4:20

הפטרה: Hosea 2:1-22

הברית: John 1-2

החדשה

*Triennial cycle: Bamidbar / Numbers 1:1-54*

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In this week's reading, Parashat Bamidbar (*Bamidbar / Numbers 1:1-54*) from the triennial cycle, God commands Moshe to take a census of the people numbering those who are able to go to war. Sefer *Vayikra / Leviticus 1:49* states that the Levites were excluded from the census Moshe is taking of the sons of Yisrael indicating the importance of the role of the Cohanim (Priests). Verse *1:50* also states that the Levites are to be in charge of the Mishkhan (tabernacle) and all that belonged to it. It is interesting that the scriptures say *וְסָבִיב לְמִשְׁכַּן יְחֻנּוּ* meaning "and they shall camp around the Tabernacle." This phrase is repeated in *1:53* saying *וְהַלְוִיִּם יְחֻנּוּ סָבִיב לְמִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה קֶצֶף עַל-עֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל* which translates as 'But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel ...' Here additional information is given saying that the presence of the Cohanim is to preserve the people and prevent God's wrath from coming upon the congregation.

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## במדבר 1:48-54

וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: אַךְ אֶת-מִשְׁחֵה לְוִי  
לֹא תִפְקֹד וְאֶת-דְּרֹאשָׁם לֹא תִשָּׂא בַתּוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:  
וְאֹתָהּ תִפְקֹד אֶת-הַלְוִיִּם עַל-מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת וְעַל כָּל-  
כֵּלָיו וְעַל כָּל-אֲשֶׁר-לוֹ הִמָּה יִשְׂאוּ אֶת-הַמִּשְׁכָּן וְאֶת-  
כָּל-כֵּלָיו וְהֵם יִשְׁרְתֻהוּ וְסָבִיב לְמִשְׁכַּן יְחֻנּוּ: וּבְנִסְעֵי  
הַמִּשְׁכָּן יוֹרִידוּ אֹתוֹ הַלְוִיִּם וּבְהִנַּחַת הַמִּשְׁכָּן יִקְוּמוּ אֹתוֹ  
הַלְוִיִּם וְהַזֶּכֶר הַקָּרֵב יוֹמֵת: וְחֻנּוּ בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ עַל-  
מַחֲנֵהוּ וְאִישׁ עַל-דִּגְלוֹ לְצַבְאֹתָם: וְהַלְוִיִּם יְחֻנּוּ סָבִיב  
לְמִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה קֶצֶף עַל-עֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל  
וְשָׁמְרוּ הַלְוִיִּם אֶת-מִשְׁמֶרֶת מִשְׁכַּן הָעֵדוּת: וַיַּעֲשׂוּ  
בְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת-מֹשֶׁה בֵּן  
עֲשׂוֹ:

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### Bamidbar / Numbers 1:49-54

1:49 'Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, nor shall you take their census among the sons of Israel. 1:50 'But you shall appoint the Levites over the tabernacle of the testimony, and over all its furnishings and over all that belongs to it. They shall carry the tabernacle and all its furnishings, and they shall take care of it; they shall also camp around the tabernacle. 1:51 'So when the tabernacle is to set out, the Levites shall take it down; and when the tabernacle encamps, the Levites shall set it up. But the layman who comes near shall be put to death. 1:52 'The sons of Israel shall camp, each man by his own camp, and each man by his own standard, according to their armies. 1:53 'But the Levites shall camp around the tabernacle of the testimony, so that there will be no wrath on the congregation of the sons of Israel. So the Levites shall keep charge of the tabernacle of the testimony.' 1:54 Thus the sons of Israel did; according to all which the Lord had commanded Moses, so they did. (NASB)

What is the purpose of the priest and how are we to understand the role of the priest according to the Scriptures (the Bible)? Now based on our understanding of the Scriptures, the various pagan religions had their respective priests. The priests of Pharaoh that ministered the Egyptian religion we find in *Shemot / Exodus* the first mentioning that we know of on the role of a priest to serve the false gods of Egypt. But where did the concept of the priest come from? That is what I would like to investigate in this week's Parashah.

The first mention of a priest occurs in *Bereshit / Genesis 14:18* **יח ומלכי- יח** : **צדק מלך שלם הוציא לחם ויין והוא כהן לה' לאל עליון** meaning "And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; now he was a priest of God Most High." (NASB) The Hebrew word **כהן** (Cohen) is derived from "kahan" meaning "to serve as" an attendant, or a servant, to mediate, or to officiate. Now this is the earliest mention where a man operated in an intermediary role on behalf of the Lord God. In *Bereshit / Genesis 14*, the role of the priest is clearly laid out in scripture saying **יח והוא כהן לה' לאל עליון** meaning "and he was a priest of God Most High." Clearly, the role of Melchizedek is one that stands to mediate for Avraham on behalf of the Most High God. If we examine the intermediary role, can you think of an earlier reference in the Torah (before *Bereshit / Genesis 14*) that shows a man operating as an intermediate to the Lord God? Who was it that failed to operate as an intermediate before God that resulted in devastating consequences?

In *Bereshit / Genesis 2*, we find a retelling of the creation account and God created for Adam a woman (Eve) that was suitable to help him and to be with him so that he was not alone.

## בראשית 2:15-18

15 **קדמת אשור והנהר הרביעי הוא פרת: ויקח יהוה**  
**אלהים את האדם וינחהו בגן עדן לעבדה ולשמרה:**  
16 **ויצו יהוה אלהים על האדם לאמר מפל עץ הדגן אכל**  
**תאכל: ומעץ הדעת טוב ורע לא תאכל ממנו כי**  
17 **ביום אכלך ממנו מות תמות: ויאמר יהוה אלהים**  
**לא טוב היות האדם לבדו אעשה לו עזר כנגדו:**  
18 **ויצר יהוה אלהים מן האדמה כל חית השדה ואת**

### Bereshit / Genesis 2:15-18

2:15 Then the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it. 2:16 The Lord God commanded the man, saying, 'From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; 2:17 but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.' 2:18 Then the Lord God said, 'It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him.' (NASB)

Here we see the Lord commanded Adam that he may eat from any tree in the garden except from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. At this point God declares **וי' אמר יהוה אל' הים ל' א-טוב היות האדם לבדו** "and the Lord God said, it is not good for man to be alone." God then forms from the ground the beasts of the field and birds in the air and brought them to man to see what he would call them. After having the animals pass before Adam, he named them but he did not find a suitable helper. As a result, God caused Adam to sleep (2:21) and took from him one rib with which he used to fashion a mate, incorporating the rib in the woman as God created her.

בראשית 2:19-3:1

19 וַיִּצַר יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים מִן־הָאָדָמָה כָּל־חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְאֵת  
 כָּל־עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיָּבֵא אֱלֹהֵי־הָאָדָם לְרֹאשׁוֹת מֵהַיְקָרָא־  
 לוֹ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר יִקְרָאֵלּוּ הָאָדָם נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה הוּא שְׁמוֹ:  
 20 וַיִּקְרָא הָאָדָם שְׁמוֹת לְכָל־הַבְּהֵמָה וְלְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 21 וְלִכְל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה וְלָאָדָם לֹא־מָצָא עוֹר כְּנֻדוֹ: וַיִּפֹּל  
 יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | תְּרַדְמָה עַל־הָאָדָם וַיִּישָׁן וַיִּקַּח אֶחָת  
 22 מִצִּלְעוֹתָיו וַיִּסְגֵּר בָּשָׂר תַּחֲתָנָה: וַיִּבֶן יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים | אֶת־  
 הַצִּלְעַת אֲשֶׁר־לָקַח מִן־הָאָדָם לְאִשָּׁה וַיְבָאָהּ אֱלֹהֵי־הָאָדָם:  
 23 וַיֹּאמֶר הָאָדָם וְאֵת הַפֶּעַם עָצָם מֵעַצְמִי וּבָשָׂר מִבְּשָׂרִי  
 24 לָוֹאֵת יִקְרָא אִשָּׁה כִּי מֵאִישׁ לָקַחָהּ־זֹאת: עַל־כֵּן יִעֹבֵד  
 אִישׁ אֶת־אִבּוֹ וְאֶת־אִמּוֹ וְדָבַק בָּאִשְׁתּוֹ וְהָיוּ לְבָשָׂר  
 25 אֶחָד: וַיִּדְּוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם עַרוֹמִים הָאָדָם וְאִשְׁתּוֹ וְלֹא יָתַבְּשׁוּ:  
 ג וַהֲנַחֵשׁ הָיָה עָרוֹם מִכָּל חַיַּת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה יְהוָה  
 אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהֵי־הָאִשָּׁה אַף כִּי־אָמַר אֱלֹהִים לֹא  
 2 תִּאָכְלוּ מִכָּל עֵץ הַגָּן: וַתֹּאמֶר הָאִשָּׁה אֱלֹהֵי־הַנָּחַשׁ מִפְּרִי

2:19 Out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called a living creature, that was its name. 2:20 The man gave names to all the cattle, and to the birds of the sky, and to every beast of the field, but for Adam there was not found a helper suitable for him. 2:21 So the Lord God caused a deep sleep to fall upon the man, and he slept; then He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that place. 2:22 The Lord God fashioned into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man. 2:23 The man said, ‘This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.’ 2:24 For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother, and be joined to his wife; and they shall become one flesh. 2:25 And the man and his wife were both naked and were not ashamed. 3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’ (NASB)

- 65 Here Adam declares that *“This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man.”* It is here that marriage between a man and a woman is established, and the concept of the husband and wife becoming one flesh. These scriptures provide us with the biblical mandate for monogamy in marriage (*Bereshit / Genesis 2:24-25, Matthew 19:4-6*). Note that the scriptures do not say that three shall become one flesh, or that four shall become one flesh, or that two men will become one flesh or two women will become one flesh. Scripture says that the two shall become one flesh, meaning one woman and one man, thus, polygamy was not established in the scriptures and neither was homosexuality sanctioned by God. Polygamy, the practice of having several spouses simultaneously, was the result of man’s desire and not based upon God’s design. Homosexuality is a direct rejection of God’s design and called an abomination (*Vayikra / Leviticus 18:22*). Now, immediately following these events, the scriptures say *3:1 Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said to the woman, ‘Indeed, has God said, ‘You shall not eat from any tree of the garden?’* In Chapter 3, following closely the creation of Eve (woman) we find the serpent tempting Eve by questioning God’s command *וַיִּמְעַץ הַדְּעַת טוֹב וְרָע לֵאמֹר לֹא תֹאכַל מִכָּל־מִצְעוֹ* not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. During the temptation of Eve, Adam remained silent. If we look at the sequence of events in sefer *Bereshit / Genesis*, God commanded Adam not to eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (*2:17*) and then later created woman from Adam’s rib (*2:21-25*). Based upon the sequence of events, Adam acted in the role of the

Cohen (priest) because the serpent is questioning Eve on God's command. It is obvious from the text that Adam had told Eve of God's command to not eat from the tree. Based upon these scriptures, each man is to be a priest in his family acting as an intermediary on behalf of his wife to serve, protect, and to help his family stand strong in the God's Word. Adam fell short of his role as Cohen; he did not help Eve to stand strong in God's Word. We know this because of the Hebrew word כהן (Cohen), derived from "kahan," or כהן כ- means "to serve as" an attendant, or a servant, to mediate, or to officiate before God. Do you see how important it is as a husband or a Dad to have faith in the Lord and in the Bible, God's Word?

Here in our verses for this week, in *Bamidbar / Numbers* chapter 1, we find the first location where God commands the priests to encamp surrounding the Mishkhan (Tabernacle) for the purpose of protecting the people from God's wrath. **Do we see a parallel here that is laid out in the Garden of Eden?** Adam was to protect Eve from God's wrath and failed the task. Here, the children of Levi (the Levites) are called out to be Cohanim (Priests) to God. The purpose of the Cohanim is to serve God and Yisrael as an intermediary and to protect the people, the Children of Yisrael, from the wrath of God. In addition to this, the role of the Cohen before God was to make an offering on behalf of the person bringing the offering. Do you think God showed Adam how to make atonement by blood after they had sinned? (See *Bereshit / Genesis 3:21*) When one brought the offering, one would lay their right hand upon the head of the animal before it was slaughtered, symbolizing the transfer of sin to the animal. The animal was slaughtered, and the blood was taken and placed upon the altar. In addition to this, a portion of the sacrifice was consumed by the Cohen. Examining sefer *Vayikra / Leviticus 10:17*, the Torah is very clear on the importance on the role of the priest in making atonement on behalf of the one bringing the offering. (To read more on this see *Parashat Shemini* from 2009 located here: [http://www.matsati.com/2008-2009/Parashat%20Shmini%20\\_2008-2009\\_.pdf](http://www.matsati.com/2008-2009/Parashat%20Shmini%20_2008-2009_.pdf)).

## ויקרא 10:17

16 כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה: וְאַתָּה שְׂעִיר הַחַטָּאת דָּרַשׁ דָּרַשׁ  
מֹשֶׁה וְהִנֵּה שָׂרָף וַיִּקְצַף עַל-אַלְעֹזֵר וְעַל-אִיתָמָר בְּנֵי  
17 אֶהֱרִין הַנּוֹתְרִים לֵאמֹר: מִדּוּעַ לֹא-אֲכַלְתֶּם אֶת-הַחַטָּאת  
בְּמָקוֹם הַקֹּדֶשׁ כִּי קֹדֶשׁ קִדְשִׁים הוּא וְאַתֶּם וְנָתַן  
לָכֶם לְשֹׂאת אֶת-עֹן הָעֵדָה לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם לִפְנֵי  
18 יְהוָה: הֵן לֹא-הוֹבֵא אֶת-דָּמָהּ אֶל-הַקֹּדֶשׁ פְּגִמָּה  
19 אָכַל תֹּאכְלוּ אֹתָהּ בַּקֹּדֶשׁ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוִּיתִי: וַיִּדְבֹּר

In addition to this, it is interesting that the Scriptures say the purpose of consuming the sacrifice is לָשׂוֹאת אֶת-עֹן הָעֵדָה meaning "to bear away the sins of the congregation," the sins of the people. How does a Cohen logically bear the sin of someone else if it is not understood from *Bereshit / Genesis*, the role of the

Cohen as a husband who becomes bone of bone and flesh of flesh with his wife? The becoming of one flesh facilitates the understanding that redemption is achieved by the husband acting in the role of the Cohen operating as an intermediary before God on our behalf. This is very similar to what the Apostle Paul wrote in *1 Corinthians 7:14 For the unbelieving husband is sanctified through his wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified through her believing husband; for otherwise your children are unclean, but now they are holy. (NASB)* But more importantly is the imagery of Yeshua (Jesus) being our husband and we being His bride.

Let's summarize what we know according to the Scriptures. The first high Priest of God is recorded in sefer *Bereshit / Genesis*, the last high Priest of God is Yeshua the Messiah. By the first Adam, sin entered into the world, in the second Adam or the last Adam (Yeshua the Messiah, *1 Corinthians 15:46*) we find redemption from sin. In the first marriage between Adam and Eve, Adam operated as priest in the marriage relationship. In the last marriage, between the bridegroom (Yeshua) and His bride (You and me) Yeshua took on our sins upon the cross (the execution stake) and bore our iniquities away making atonement in His own blood. Yeshua acted as our intermediary before God and successfully made atonement according to God's design. Can you see all of the parallelisms here and how Yeshua has fulfilled each one? The word of God became flesh, taking on our bone and flesh. The imagery of becoming one is laid out here in scripture leading to a messianic expectation of the Messiah Yeshua. Throughout all of scripture we find these parallelisms, the role of priest paralleled in the family, a Dad/Husband is to take on the role of priest in the household and protect his wife, and his children, etc.

The role of the Cohen was instituted in sefer *Bereshit / Genesis* between a husband and wife, and the Levitical priesthood was instituted in sefer *Shemot / Exodus* when the children of Yisrael made their journey from Egypt to the mountain of Sinai. The scriptures state that the priests must be of the sons of Aharon, from the tribe of Levi. The Scriptures point out that the role of the Cohen (Priest) is unique and the people chosen to operate as Cohanim are specially chosen by God. God created Adam to be a priest to his wife Eve. These roles were very specifically and specially chosen (designed) by God as a messianic expectation of the Messiah. All of these things found in the Scriptures are given to us as a tutor or guardian to lead us to the School of the Messiah as it says in *Galatians 3:19*.

***Galatians 3:19***

*3:19 So then, why the legal part of the Torah? It was added in order to create transgressions, until the coming of the seed about whom the promise had been made. Moreover, it was handed down through angels and a mediator. (CJB)*

According to the Ketuvei Shelachim (Apostolic Writings) the Torah was given to direct us to the one God had promised and to the blessing that we would obtain through that one, the blessing of Avraham's seed (descendents) and through whom all of the world would be blessed. Trusting in the Lord is foundational to all that is written in the Torah. Studying and understanding the

175 first five books of Moshe and how they reveal Yeshua the Messiah is very important. When Paul wrote to the Gentile's in *2 Timothy 3:16-17* saying *3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; 3:17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work. (NASB)* he was of course referring to the Hebrew Scriptures since the Ketuvei Shelachim was not compiled as of yet. In  
180 this week's Study in sefer *Bamidbar / Numbers* we find the idea of salvation by the grace of God in the role of the Cohen that is based on God's design. That concept of salvation by the grace of God in the role of the Cohen and Husband is fulfilled in Yeshua our Lord and Savior. This brings deeper meaning to what the Apostle Paul said about husbands and wives in *Ephesians 5:25 Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her, 5:26 so that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 5:27 that He might present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she would be holy and blameless. 5:28 So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; 5:29 for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church, 5:30 because we are members of His body. (NASB) Ephesians 5:31* goes on to repeat *Bereshit / Genesis 2:24*, saying that a man shall leave his parents and become one with his wife. Have you placed your faith, and trust in Yeshua as your personal  
185 Savior? Is God living and has God established his dwelling place in your life? If you have doubts and cannot answer "YES" then say the following prayer with me.

200 Heavenly Father,

Thank You for the gift of Your Word and for making an everlasting covenant by Your Word in Your Son Yeshua. I believe the Scriptures that Yeshua (Jesus) had come as the Word of God, took on flesh, and lived a perfect  
205 life. I believe that Yeshua laid His life down on my behalf. I believe by faith that Yeshua established an everlasting covenant in His blood for me. Please forgive me of my sins, heal me both spiritually, and physically, and help me to begin the work of Your kingdom as a disciple of Yeshua the Messiah. Lord please come into my life and make your dwelling place in me. I ask you to send your Ruach HaKodesh (Holy Spirit) to dwell within me, to lead me and guide me in life and  
210 as I study Your holy Word. I thank You Lord for all of the gifts You have given, I now want to give a gift back to You, the gift of a life lived for you. Thank You for the mercy you have shown me all of these years and the new mercies you are showing me today and will show me tomorrow. To Your Name be the glory, the  
215 honor, and the praise forever and ever. In Yeshua's Name I pray!

Amen

220 **What to pray:** *Thank the Lord for the gift of His Word, the gift of His Son, and the gift of everlasting life. Thank the Lord from lifting the burden of sin and setting you free.*

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**Be Blessed in Yeshua, Christ our Messiah!**

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הללויה לאדוננו מורנו ורבינו ישוע מלך המשיח לעולם ועד:  
Hallelujah for our Lord, our Teacher, our Rabbi,  
“Yeshua” King Messiah forever and ever

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