**פרשת מטות / Parashat Mattot**

The **Triennial cycle** of Torah reading may refer to the historical practice in ancient Israel by which the entire Torah was read in serial fashion over a three year period

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| **השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week’s Reading** | |
| **תורה:**  **הפטרה:**  **הברית:**  **החדשה:** | Numbers 30:2-32:42  Jeremiah 1:1-2:3 Matthew 5:33-37 |

**Bamidbar / Numbers 31:21-23**

31:21 Then Eleazar the priest said to the men of war who had gone to battle, ‘This is the statute of the law which the Lord has commanded Moses: 31:22 only the gold and the silver, the bronze, the iron, the tin and the lead, 31:23 everything that can stand the fire, you shall pass through the fire, and it shall be clean, but it shall be purified with water for impurity. But whatever cannot stand the fire you shall pass through the water. (NASB)

In this week’s parsha for the triennial cycle we are looking at *Bamidbar / Numbers 30:2-31:54*.

**Parsha Summary**

1. Moshe introduces a set of laws to the tribal leaders on “nedarim” (נדרים, vows), *Bamidbar / Numbers 30:2-17*.
2. HaShem tells Moshe before he dies he is to avenge Beni Yisrael (children of Israel) against Midyan, *Bamidbar / Numbers 31:1-11*.
3. They take the male children, women, and booty. Moshe is angry with the men of war for doing this, *Bamidbar / Numbers 31:12-20*.
4. Purification of the booty, *Bamidbar / Numbers 31:21-23*.
5. Dividing the booty for HaShem, the Levites, the men of war, and Beni Yisrael, *Bamidbar / Numbers 31:24-54*.

During the purification of the booty (loot, spoils of war) there are a number of interesting things I would like to discuss this week in *Bamidbar / Numbers 31:21-23*:



**חוק**

nm. law, rule, statute, ordinance.

**נדה (>>נידה)**

nf. menstruation

**מי נדה**

**מים של נדה**

“Waters of Niddah”

**אש**

nf. fire, flame, light

Eleazar the cohen felt it was especially important to remind the men of war about the chukot (statute) of the torah that everything which comes into the fire (the cooking vessels) are to be purified by fire. According to Avodah Zarah 75b “passing through fire” does not merely mean to pass the vessel quickly through the flames but to heat up the vessel in the manner in which it is used. In addition to the purification by fire, the scriptures say they vessels need to be cleansed by the waters of niddah. The men are to then wash their cloths, and on the seventh day they are clean and allowed to come back into the camp.

Let’s first define some terms before we continue:

**Niddah (נדה)**

* Literally means “separation” and it generally refers to separation by ritual impurity. During a woman’s menstrual cycle she is considered niddah. After she immerses herself in a mikvah she is considered cleansed. Through this immersion the wife brings holiness into her marriage and draws merit and blessing upon her home and family including the children she has bore. (see *Vayikra / Leviticus 15:19-30, 18:19, 20:18*)
* The term niddah also appears in the description of the red heifer ceremony in the phrase waters of niddah. The waters of niddah are used to purify one after having touched a corpse.

***Bamibar / Numbers 19:9***

*וְאָסַף ׀ אִישׁ טָהֹור אֵת אֵפֶר הַפָּרָה וְהִנִּיחַ מִחוּץ לַֽמַּחֲנֶה בְּמָקֹום טָהֹור וְהָיְתָה לַעֲדַת בְּנֵֽי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְמֵי נִדָּה חַטָּאת הִֽוא׃*

***Bamibar / Numbers 19:13***

*כָּֽל־הַנֹּגֵעַ בְּמֵת בְּנֶפֶשׁ הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת וְלֹא יִתְחַטָּא אֶת־מִשְׁכַּן יְהוָה טִמֵּא וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מֵי נִדָּה לֹא־זֹרַק עָלָיו טָמֵא יִהְיֶה עֹוד טֻמְאָתֹו בֹֽו׃*

Waters of Niddah

***Bamibar / Numbers 19:20***

*וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִטְמָא וְלֹא יִתְחַטָּא וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מִתֹּוךְ הַקָּהָל כִּי אֶת־מִקְדַּשׁ יְהוָה טִמֵּא מֵי נִדָּה לֹא־זֹרַק עָלָיו טָמֵא הֽוּא׃*

***Bamibar / Numbers 19:21***

*וְהָיְתָה לָּהֶם לְחֻקַּת עֹולָם וּמַזֵּה מֵֽי־הַנִּדָּה יְכַבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְהַנֹּגֵעַ בְּמֵי הַנִּדָּה יִטְמָא עַד־הָעָֽרֶב׃*

**Mikvah (מקווה)**

* A specific type of bath designed for the purpose of ritual immersion in the bible. The word “Mikvah” as used in the Tanach literally means a “collection,” generally speaking a collection of water. The purpose of the mikvah is to regain ritual purity after having become ritually impure. Most forms of impurity can be nullified through immersion in any natural collection of water what is called “living water” (מים חיים).
* The purpose of the mikvah in Judaism is restoration of spiritual status, renewal, and rebirth, a return to your inner, pure, innocent self and refreshing restoration of your pristine spirituality.

**Yerimyahu / Jeremiah 17:13**

17:13 Hope of Isra'el, ADONAI! All who abandon you will be ashamed, those who leave you will be inscribed in the dust, because they have abandoned ADONAI, the source of living water. (CJB)

* The Soferim (סופרים, scribes) while making a copy of the holy scriptures would perform a Mikvah prior to writing the YHVH (the name of G-d).
* The “Living Water” in the mikvah must be from a living source (natural source) such as rain water, a flowing stream, or even melt from snow. Also G-d identifies himself as the fountain of living water in *Yeremiahu / Jeremiah 17:13*.

**17:13 ירמיהו**



**Bamidbar / Numbers 19:9**

19:9 'Now a man who is clean shall gather up the ashes of the heifer and deposit them outside the camp in a clean place, and the congregation of the sons of Israel shall keep it as water to remove impurity; it is purification from sin. (NASB)

**Discussion**

Here we see the practical application of *Bamidbar / Numbers 19:9, 19*:



**Bamidbar / Numbers 19:19**

19:19 'Then the clean person shall sprinkle on the unclean on the third day and on the seventh day; and on the seventh day he shall purify him from uncleanness, and he shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and shall be clean by evening. (NASB)



Clearly, Eleazar is concerned with not only the individual’s ritual purity but also the purity of the vessels which were taken in battle. These acts of purification also should bring to our thoughts these very Jewish concepts of the cahanut (“priesthood”), the sacrificial system, Avraham, Moshe, Yisrael in the wilderness, the biblical covenants, and even the great men of faith found in the Tanach, the role of the Torah for our lives today and the B’rit HaChadashah (the New Covenant) and the common thread that ties them all together.

The Torah in this section of verses, *Bamidbar / Numbers 31:21-24*, gives us the commandment on koshering our cooking implements that are brought back from war as booty. What lessons can we learn from koshering a pot? In order to kosher a pot it is imperative that we remove any non-kosher food that was absorbed into the vessel walls before using it to cook kosher food. First one need to clean out the vessel very well to remove and rust that may have formed on the walls. Then the vessel needs to be used in the same manner in which it was previously used, for example, if it were directly in the fire, it needs to have direct contact to the fire and heated up in order for it to be fir to be used for kosher cooking. Another example, if the non-kosher food was cooked in it with boiling water, it now needs to be immersed in boiling water to remove what might have been absorbed. It is in the same way we need to purify ourselves from spiritual impurities and defects. First a person needs to remove the “rust” of his transgressions by repenting and believing upon HaShem’s Messiah Yeshua.

**Be Blessed in Yeshua 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