

פרשת מטות / Parashat Mattot

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Koshering our lives

השבועות הזה קוראים / This Week's Reading

תורה: Numbers 30:2-32:42

הפטרה: Jeremiah 1:1-2:3

הברית: Matthew 5:33-37

החדשה

10 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” (נדורים, vows), *Bamidbar / Numbers 30:2-17*.
- 15 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*.
- 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*.

25 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*:

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

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)

20 תִּתְחַטְּאוּ בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וּבַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי אַתֶּם וְשִׁבְיֵיכֶם: וְכֹל־
בַּגָּד וְכֹל־כְּלִי־עוֹר וְכֹל־מַעֲשֵׂה עֵצִים וְכֹל־כְּלִי־עֵץ תִּתְחַטְּאוּ:
21 וַיֹּאמֶר אֶלְעָזָר הַכֹּהֵן אֶל־אֲנָשֵׁי הַצָּבָא הַבָּאִים
22 לַמִּלְחָמָה זֹאת הַקֶּתֶת אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה: אֵךְ
אֲתִּיהוּב וְאֲתִּיהַכֶּסֶף אֲתִּיהַנְּחֹשֶׁת אֲתִּיהַבְרֹזֶל אֲתִּיהַבְדִּיל
23 וְאֲתִּיהַעֲפָרֶת: כֹּל־דָּבָר אֲשֶׁר־יִבֹּא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בָאֵשׁ טָהוֹר
24 אֶת־בְּמֵי נִדְהָ וְכֹל אֲשֶׁר לֹא־יִבֹּא בָאֵשׁ תַּעֲבִירוּ בַמַּיִם:
וְכִבְּסֹתֶם בַּגְּדֵיכֶם בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי וְטָהַרְתֶּם וְאַחַר תִּבְאוּ אֶל־

חוק
nm. law, rule, statute, ordinance.

אש
nf. fire, flame, light

נדה (<<נידה)
nf. menstruation

מי נדה
מים של נדה
“Waters of Niddah”

המחנה
v.9 ס'א מקניקם מלא וכן ד'ג דט"ו ד"ג ח"ש ת"ע ות"י . v.12 ס'א ואל-כלי וכן ח"ש ת"י ת"ע ת"ס
ות"ר . v.16 ס'א הן | לגרמיה וכן ד"ג . v.22 ס'א ואת וכן ח"ש ות"ע .

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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 the 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.

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For greater insight let’s look at a few definitions before we continue:

Niddah (נדדה)

- 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.

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Bamibar / Numbers 19:9

וְאִישׁ / אִישׁ טָהוֹר אֶת אֵפֶר הַפָּרָה וְהַזֵּיִת מַחוּץ לַמַּחֲנֶה בְּמָקוֹם טָהוֹר וְהִיָּתָה לְעֵדוּת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְמִשְׁמֶרֶת לְמִי נִדְדָה חֲטָאתָה וְאֵל:

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Bamibar / Numbers 19:13

כִּי לֹא־הָיָה גֵזַע בְּמַת בְּנִפְשׁ הָאָדָם אֲשֶׁר־יָמוּת וְלֹא אִתְחַטָּא אֶת־מִשְׁפַּח יְהוָה טָמֵא וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל כִּי מִי נִדְדָה לֹא־זָרָה רַק עָלָיו טָמֵא יִהְיֶה עַד וְדַ טָמְאָתָּה כִּי־וְ:

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Waters of Niddah

Bamibar / Numbers 19:20

וְאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר־יִטְמָא וְלֹא אִתְחַטָּא וְנִכְרְתָה הַנֶּפֶשׁ הַהִוא מִתּוֹךְ הַקָּהָל כִּי אֶת־מִקְדָּשׁ יְהוָה טָמֵא מִי נִדְדָה לֹא־זָרָה רַק עָלָיו טָמֵא הִוא:

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Bamibar / Numbers 19:21

וְהִיָּתָה לָהֶם לְחֻקֹּת עֹלָם וְיִמּוּזָה מִיִּהְיֶה־הַנֶּדָּה יִכַּבֵּס בְּגָדָיו וְהָיָה גֵזַע בְּמִי הַנֶּדָּה יִטְמָא עַד־הָעָרֶב:

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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.

75 Most forms of impurity can be nullified through immersion in any natural collection of water what is called “living water” (מים חיים).

80 • 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.

• 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).

85 • 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*.

Yerimiyahu / 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)

90 **ירמיהו 17:13**
11 קבא דגל ולא ילד עשה עשר ולא כמשפט פחצי ימו
12 יעזבנו ובאחריתו יהיה נבל: פסא כבוד מרום מראשון מקום
13 מקדשנו: מקוה ישראל יתה בלעזביך יבשו יסורי בארץ
יכתבו פי עזבו מקור מים חיים את יהוה:

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)

95 **Discussion**

100 When Eleazar told the men of war to purify the cooking vessels and themselves we see the practical application of *Bamidbar / Numbers 19:9, 19:*

9 יכבם בגדיו במים ורחץ בשרו במים וטמא עד הערב: ואספא
איש טהור את אפר הפרה והניח מחוץ למחנה במקום טהור
והיתה לעדת בני ישראל למשמרת למי נדה חטאת הוא:
19 ועל הנגע בעצם או בקלל או במת או בקבר: והזהר הטהור
על הטמא ביום השלישי וביום השביעי וחתאו ביום השביעי
20 וכבם בגדיו ורחץ במים וטהר בערב: ואיש אשר יטמא ולא

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)

105 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 the Jewish concepts of the cahanut

110 (“priesthood”), the sacrificial system, Avraham, Moshe, Yisrael in the wilderness,
the biblical covenants, 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.

115 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
kasher 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 needs
120 to clean out the vessel very well to remove any 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 fit to be used for kosher
cooking. Another example, if the non-kosher food was cooked in it with boiling
125 water, it now needs to be immersed in boiling water to remove what might have
been absorbed.

In the same way we need to purify ourselves from spiritual impurities and
defects. Koshering our spiritual lives means we need to remove the “rust” of our
transgressions by repenting and believing upon HaShem’s Messiah Yeshua.
130 Today we see how the world is perishing for lack of the knowledge of G-d and the
church is famishing for want of the Lord’s presence in their lives. The problem
occurs when one desires to have more of a physical experience of His presence
without the deep study of scripture, waiting upon the Lord in prayer and
meditation, and separating him/her self as holy to the Lord.

135 Kashrut or keeping kosher originates in the Torah and is G-d’s mandate and
was designed to bring G-d’s holiness into our lives several times a day through
the simple act of eating. As believers we need to consciously bring the holiness
of the Lord into our lives, it takes a conscious decision to remain consistent in
walking in holiness. The question remains however in determining what holy
140 living is all about. What portions of scriptures do we take to heart and try to live
out for the purpose of honoring HaShem making him Lord of our lives? Do we
take all of scripture or do we pick and choose only the parts that we like? I think
it has always been the nature of the life of G-d’s children to live our faith through
obeying His holy word.

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Be Blessed in Yeshua our Messiah!

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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