

Bamidbar (In the desert)



Sinai Desert

Numbers 1:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, in the Tabernacle of the Congregation, on the first *day* of the second month, in the second year after they had come out of the land of Egypt, saying, 2 Take you אֶת־ *the sum* of all the congregation of *the* Children of Israel, after their families, by the house אֲבֹתָם *of their fathers*, with the number of their names, every male by *their* polls. C-MATS

Question: What does “אֶת־ *the sum*” mean? The Hebrew word is pakod, which also means to “remember” and “be concerned with.” Because יהוה greatly loves His people, He counts them all the time. There are different levels of observance among believers, with some keeping יהוה's commandments more strictly and some less. A person may belittle the worth of a less observant believer saying: “He is a nothing!” When יהוה commanded Moses to count the Israelite people, He instructed him to count each Israelite as “one,” no more and no less. יהוה's message was that the Israelite people are His children; each one is equally beloved and has equal value. *Chumash*

Question: Why were the Israelites counted by families? יהוה instructed the Israelites to group themselves according to families and maintain strong family identities. Our family is not just a group of people we happen to have been born into and live with, rather they are connected to us in a deep spiritual way. We gain so much when we value our families, and make them an important part of our lives. We have so many different people in our lives that sometimes we may forget to value and appreciate the people who really care the most about us - our families.

Question: Why do you think people sometimes enjoy being with their friends more than with their families? The relationship we have with friends, is in a certain sense, less challenging than that we have with our families. We choose our friends because we get along with them, and if the feelings sour we can simply discontinue the friendship. Family is different. We don't choose them, and no matter how well or poorly we get along, we will always be related. This may make the relationship seem more difficult and perhaps less fun, but if we put in the effort to work through the challenges, we have the potential to grow more than through the easier relationship with friends.

Question: How many times were the Israelites counted? On ten occasions was Israel counted.

- Once when they went down to Egypt (**Genesis 46:27 All together *the* House of Jacob, which came into Egypt, was 70**). They were counted as 75 in the Septuagint, not in Masoretic text.
- A second time when they came out of Egypt (**Exodus 12:37 And *the* Children of Israel journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about 600,000 men on foot, *not counting the children.***)
- A third time after the incident of the Golden Calf. (**Exodus 30:11 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 12 When you take **את** *the* sum (*census*) of *the* Children of Israel, then every man will give a ransom for his soul to ליהוה; that there will be no plague among **אתם** *them* after you number **אתם** *them.***)
- Twice in the Book of Numbers: once in formation of the camps (**Numbers 1:19 As commanded יהוה **את** Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai.**) and once in connection with the division of the land. (**Numbers 26:63 These *are* the ones who were numbered by Moses and Eleazar the priest, who numbered **את** Children of Israel in the plains of Moab by the Jordan *near* Jericho.**)
- Twice in the days of Saul (**I Samuel 11:8 And he numbered them in Bezek; and *the* Children of Israel were three hundred thousand and the men of Judah thirty thousand, and I Samuel 15:4 And summoned together Saul **את** the people and numbered them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen and ten thousand **את** men of Judah.**)
- The eighth time in the days of David (**II Samuel 24:9 And gave up Joab **את** sum of the numbering of the people to the king: and there were in Israel eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.**)
- The ninth time they were numbered was in the days of Ezra (**Ezra 2:64 The whole assembly together was forty and two thousand three hundred and threescore.**)
- The Tenth time will be in the future era of the Messiah, when "the flocks again pass under the hands of him that numbered them, says יהוה" Jeremiah 33:13. *Chumash*

Question: Why were the Israelites counted? A census expresses two contradictory truths. On the one hand, it implies that each individual is significant. On the other hand, a head-count is the ultimate equalizer: each member of the community, from the greatest to the lowliest, counts for no less and no more than "one." יהוה repeatedly commands Moses to count the Israelite people to emphasize both their individual worth--the fact that no single person's contribution is dispensable--as well as their inherent equality. *Chumash*

Question: How were the tribes counted if the husband and wife were from different tribes? A person's tribal affiliation is patrilineal. Thus, for example, an Israelite with a father from Judah and a mother from Asher belonged to the tribe of Judah. *Chumash*

Numbers 1:3 From twenty years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel: **אתה you and Aaron shall number **אתם** *them* by their armies. C-MATS**



Israelite army in Battle

Question: When is a man fit for military service? The minimum age to serve in the army -- the legion -- was twenty, since people achieve their physical maturity by then. *Chumash*

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Question: What is significant about the age of twenty years old?

- At five years of age, the study of Scripture begins
- At thirteen, the obligation to observe the commandments
- At eighteen, eligible for marriage
- At twenty begins the pursuit of a livelihood
- At thirty, one attains strength
- At forty, understanding
- At fifty, one can give counsel

In other words, the first twenty years of a person's life represent those periods and areas of his life in which he focuses almost exclusively on his individual growth: the acquisition of knowledge and wisdom and his moral and spiritual development. "Twenty" represents the point at which he ventures out to the world and begins to concern himself with the material involvements of life ("making a living"). Therein lies the deeper significance of יהוה's instruction to Moses that only "**From twenty years old and upward**" shall a person be counted as one "**able to go forth to war in Israel.**" One who does not graduate to the "post-twenty" phase of life (prepared spiritually) cannot count himself as a member of the "army of Israel." *Chumash*

Question: How did Moses handle important matters of the tribes? When important matters were discussed by the assembly, these tribal leaders were always called upon to help make decisions. *Chumash*

Numbers 1:4 And with you there shall be a man of every tribe; every one head of the house of his fathers. **5** And these *are* the names of the men that shall stand with you: of the tribe of Reuben; Elizur the son of Shedeur. **6** Of Simeon; Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. **7** Of Judah; Nahshon the son of Amminadab. **8** Of Issachar; Nethaneel the son of Zuar. **9** Of Zebulun; Eliab the son of Helon. **10** Of the children of Joseph: of Ephraim; Elishama the son of Ammihud: of Manasseh; Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. **11** Of Benjamin; Abidan the son of Gideoni. **12** Of Dan; Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai. **13** Of Asher; Pagiel the son of Ocran. **14** Of Gad; Eliasaph the son of Deuel. **15** Of Naphtali; Ahira the son of Enan. **16** These *were* the renowned of the congregation, princes of the tribes of **אבותם** *their fathers*, heads of thousands *in* Israel. **17** And took these, Moses and Aaron **את** men which are expressed by their names: **18** **ואת** and they assembled the entire congregation together on the first day of the second month and they declared their pedigrees after their families, by the house **אבתם** *of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, by their polls. C-MATS

Question: How did the people establish their genealogy? Since the count was to be done by tribe, the people had to establish the tribe to which they belonged, either by written documentation or valid witnesses, or by giving their word. One reason for this strict requirement of family purity was so that the merit of their forefathers would bring them יהוה's help during the impending wars. *Chumash*

Question: יהוה chose twelve leaders from the tribes to help Moses and Aaron with the census. Being a leader is a privilege, but it's also responsibility. How can a good leader help others? People can feel insecure facing what looks like a difficult challenge and can't imagine how they can possibly succeed. But once someone leads the way and shows them it can be done, it boosts their confidence to follow.

Question: What is the sign of a great person - his amount of privileges, or his responsibilities? Superficially, it might seem that the more privilege one has the greater one is, but this is an illusion. By that standard, an infant would be the greatest of all, because people constantly wait on him hand and foot, and demand nothing in return. True greatness is found in one who is willing and able to take on more and more responsibility. This is especially true in the spiritual realm, when a person is willing to take on the responsibility not only for his own well being, but also selflessly devote himself to help bring good to the entire world.

Question: If being a leader means more responsibilities and not less-why would anybody want to do it? The responsibilities of leadership-although often demanding-can be very rewarding. They help the person grow by bringing out his potential that would have otherwise remained hidden. Also, there is a deep satisfaction in being able to help guide others in a positive way.

Numbers 1:19 As commanded **את־יְהוָה** Moses, so he numbered them in the wilderness of Sinai. 20 And *the children of Reuben, Israel's eldest son, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 21 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Reuben, were forty and six thousand and five hundred.* 22 Of *the children of Simeon, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, those that were numbered of them, according to the number of the names, by their polls, every male from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war. 23 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Simeon, were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred.* 24 Of *the children of Gad, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 25 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Gad, were forty and five thousand six hundred and fifty.* 26 Of *the Children of Judah, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 27 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Judah, were seventy four thousand and six hundred.* 28 Of *the children of Issachar, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 29 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Issachar, were fifty and four thousand and four hundred.* 30 Of *the children of Zebulun, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 31 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Zebulun, were fifty and seven thousand and four hundred.* 32 Of *the children of Joseph, namely, of the children of Ephraim, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 33 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Ephraim, were forty thousand and five hundred.* 34 Of *the children of Manasseh, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 35 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Manasseh, were thirty and two thousand and two hundred.* 36 Of *the children of Benjamin, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 37 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Benjamin, were thirty and five thousand and four hundred.* 38 Of *the children of Dan, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 39 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Dan, were sixty and two thousand and seven hundred.* 40 Of *the children of Asher, by their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers*, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 41 Those that were numbered of them, *even of the tribe of Asher, were forty and one thousand and five hundred.* C-MATS

Numbers 1:42 Of the children of Naphtali, throughout their generations, after their families, by the house אבתם of their fathers, according to the number of the names, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war; 43 Those that were numbered of them, even of the tribe of Naphtali, were fifty and three thousand and four hundred. 44 These are those that were numbered, which Moses and Aaron numbered and the princes of Israel, being twelve men: each one was for the house of his fathers. 45 So were all those that were numbered of the Children of Israel, by the house אבתם of their fathers, from twenty years old and upward, all that were able to go forth to war in Israel; 46 Even all they that were numbered were six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty (603,550). C-MATS

Question: What did the number 603,550 represent? This was only the men. The women and children were not included in the count. *Chumash*

Numbers 1:47 But the Levites after the tribe אבתם of their fathers were not numbered among them. 48 For יהוה had spoken to Moses, saying, 49 Only את the tribe of Levi you shall not number, ואת and the sum of them neither take among the Children of Israel. C-MATS

Question: What was the only tribe that Moses commanded not to “number”? Moses is commanded by יהוה to take a census of all the 12 tribes except one and the one tribe Moses is commanded not to count is the only tribe that an את appears before their name, the Levites; whose job it is to minister in the את Tabernacle to Elohim and to take care of all the furnishings and to encamp round about the entire Tabernacle as a buffer between the Tabernacle and the 12 tribes. The Levite's job is to move the Tabernacle and to set it up and if a stranger comes near the Tabernacle he is to be put to death. Continuing through Numbers chapter 2, 3 and 4 we see the את placed primarily before sacred objects pertaining to the Levites and their caring for the Tabernacle and the sacred furnishings, utensils etc., which is all part of fulfilling יהוה's role through את Yahusha by the Covenants made with Abraham and Moses with the 12 tribes. C-MATS

Question: Why were the Levites not counted with the other tribes? יהוה foresaw that a decree was destined to be enacted against all those counted from twenty years and upward condemning them to die in the desert. He said, “Let these not be included, for they are Mine, since they did not err in the sin of the golden calf.” *Chumash*

Question: Did the tribe of Levi serve in the army? They were to serve at the Tabernacle, and not in the army like the other tribes. *Chumash*

Question: Did יהוה appoint the tribe of Levi a representative to stand among the tribal leaders? יהוה did not appoint a representative of the tribe of Levi in the list of tribal leaders. *Chumash*

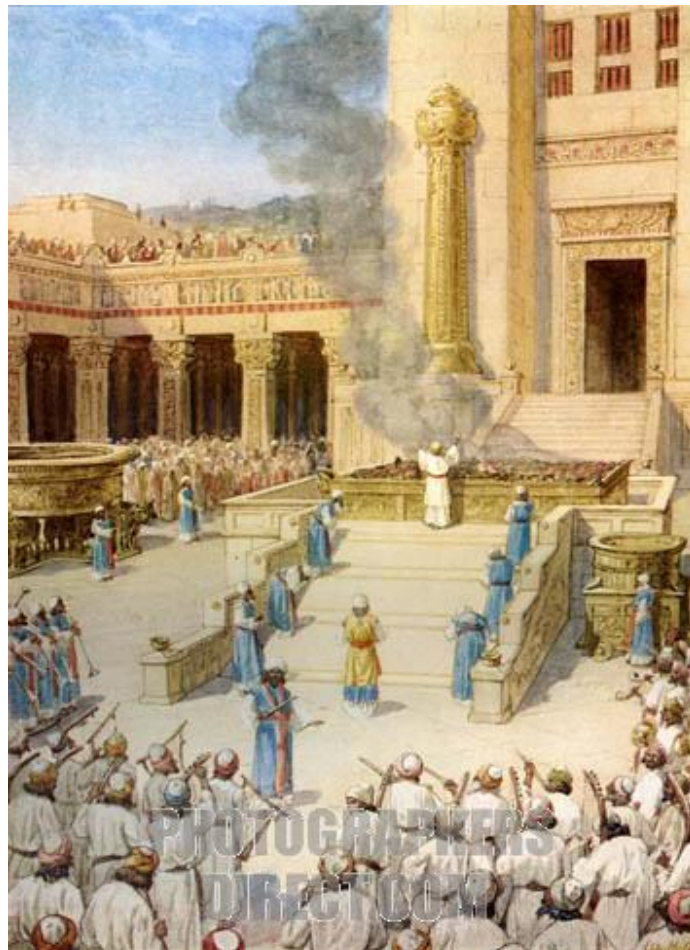
Numbers 1:50 ואתה And you shall appoint את the Levites over the Tabernacle of Testimony and over all the vessels of it and over all things that belong to it: they shall carry את the Tabernacle (mishkan) את and all the vessels of it; and they shall minister in it and shall encamp round about the Tabernacle. 51 And when the Tabernacle goes forward, the Levites shall take אתו it (him) down: and when the Tabernacle is to be camped, the Levites shall set אתו it (him) up: and the stranger that comes near shall be put to death. 52 And the Children of Israel shall pitch their tents, every man by his own camp and every man by his own standard, throughout their hosts. C-MATS

Numbers 1:53 But the Levites shall pitch round about the Tabernacle of Testimony, that there is no wrath on the congregation of *the* Children of Israel: and shall keep the Levites אֶת־ the charge of the Tabernacle of Testimony. 54 And the Children of Israel did according to all that commanded אֶת־ יהוה Moses, so did they. C-MATS

Question: How did the Levites guard the Tabernacle? The task of the Levites was not so much to protect the Tabernacle, as to serve as an honor guard, as befits the royal palace. In Jerusalem, the Levites stood guard at twenty-one positions around the Temple. *Chumash*

Question: יהוה counted all the tribes and each man was important to Him. Do you ever feel as if you do not “count”? There are always going to be people who try to make us feel like we don't 'count' - but we should always remember that we do. A person who feels he doesn't count won't feel motivated to take his responsibilities seriously. Because each of us - every person in the world - is a special creation of יהוה. יהוה made each of us for a purpose and with a purpose in life that only we can fulfill. The world would be lacking if any of us weren't here; therefore, everyone, even if sometimes it doesn't look or feel like it, counts more than we can even imagine.

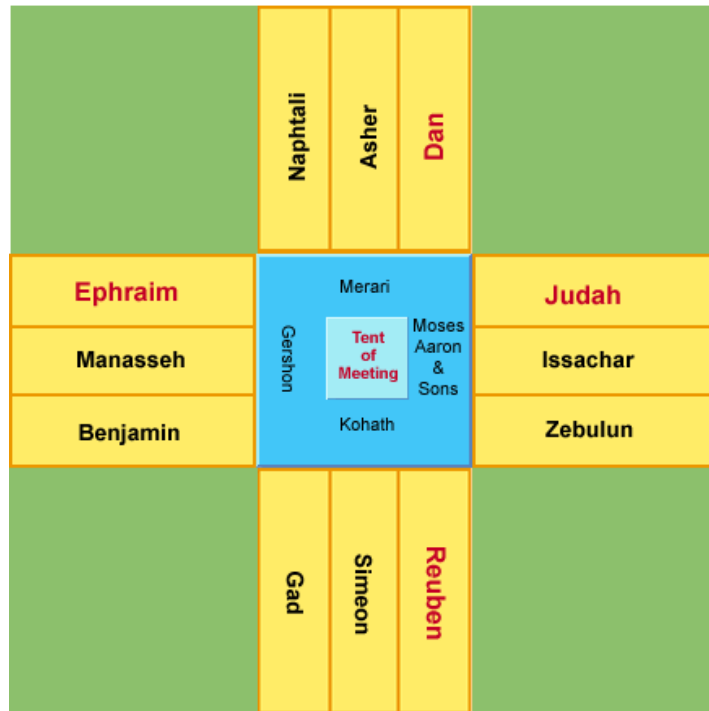
Spiritual exercise: How can you make others feel like they are special this week?



Levi priests as honor guard around the Temple during the sacrifices

Numbers 2:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses and to Aaron, saying, 2 Every man of *the* Children of Israel shall pitch by his own standard, with the ensign אֲנֹתָם of their father's house: far off about the Tabernacle of the Congregation shall they pitch. C-MATS

Question: How were the tribes assigned around the Tabernacle? Their places around the Tabernacle would be the same as those Jacob had assigned to his sons when he instructed them on how to escort his casket to Israel for burial. *Chumash*



Question: Who were the leaders of each of the four formations? Reuben, Judah, Dan, and Ephraim (seen in red in diagram above)

Numbers 2:3 And *on the* east side toward the rising of the sun shall they of the standard of the camp of Judah pitch throughout their armies: and Nahshon the son of Amminadab *shall be* captain of *the* Children of Judah. 4 And his army and those that *were* numbered of them were sixty and four thousand and six hundred. 5 And those that do pitch next to him *shall be* the tribe of Issachar: and Nethaneel the son of Zuar *shall be* captain of *the* children of Issachar. 6 And his army and those that were numbered of it *were* fifty and four thousand and four hundred. 7 *Then* the tribe of Zebulun: and Eliab the son of Helon *shall be* captain of *the* children of Zebulun. 8 And his army and those that were numbered of it *were* fifty and seven thousand and four hundred. 9 All that were numbered in the camp of Judah *were* a hundred thousand and fourscore thousand and six thousand and four hundred, throughout their armies. These shall first set forth. C-MATS

Question: What tribes were on the east of the Tabernacle? Judah was chosen for his leadership. Issachar was the tribe of Torah Scholars. Zebulun was the tribe of wealth. Zebulun is the tribe that undertook to support the Torah study of Issachar. So great is the merit of the Issachar-Zebulun partnership that the two are treated as equals. *Chumash*

Numbers 2:10 *On the south side shall be the standard of the camp of Reuben according to their armies: and the captain of the children of Reuben shall be Elizur the son of Shedeur. 11 And his army and those that were numbered of it were forty and six thousand and five hundred. 12 And those which pitch by him shall be the tribe of Simeon: and the captain of the children of Simeon shall be Shelumiel the son of Zurishaddai. 13 And his army and those that were numbered of them were fifty and nine thousand and three hundred. 14 Then the tribe of Gad: and the captain of the sons of Gad shall be Eliasaph the son of Reuel. 15 And his army and those that were numbered of them were forty and five thousand and six hundred and fifty. 16 All that were numbered in the camp of Reuben were a hundred thousand and fifty and one thousand and four hundred and fifty, throughout their armies. And they shall set forth in the second rank.* C-MATS

Question: What tribes were on the south of the Tabernacle? The honor of leading the second formation went to Reuben because he symbolized repentance because of his sincere and continuous remorse after having slighted his father. The south is the source of blessed dew and rain, and is thus the appropriate position for a penitent, for he brings יהוה's mercy and blessing to the world. Of Reuben's companions, Gad symbolizes strength, while Simeon needed atonement. It was fitting that Simeon be flanked by repentance and strength. This formation embarked second, because the importance of repentance is second only to that of Torah. *Chumash*

Numbers 2:17 *Then the Tabernacle of the Congregation shall set forward with the camp of the Levites in the midst of the camp: as they encamp, so shall they set forward, every man in his place by their standards.* C-MATS

Question: What were the names of the Levi families that camped around the Tabernacle and carried the pieces of the Tabernacle? The Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites.

Numbers 2:18 *On the west side shall be the standard of the camp of Ephraim according to their armies: and the captain of the sons of Ephraim shall be Elishama the son of Ammihud. 19 And his army and those that were numbered of them were forty thousand and five hundred. 20 And by him shall be the tribe of Manasseh: and the captain of the children of Manasseh shall be Gamaliel the son of Pedahzur. 21 And his army and those that were numbered of them were thirty and two thousand and two hundred. 22 Then the tribe of Benjamin: and the captain of the sons of Benjamin shall be Abidan the son of Gideoni. 23 And his army and those that were numbered of them were thirty and five thousand and four hundred. 24 All that were numbered of the camp of Ephraim were a hundred thousand and eight thousand and a hundred, throughout their armies. And they shall go forward in the third rank.* C-MATS

Question: What tribes were on the west of the Tabernacle? Ephraim's formation was to the west, the source of extreme weather, such as hail, cold, and heat presumably because the Mediterranean Sea is west of Israel. The three tribes in this formation possess the strength that is necessary to withstand such harsh elements. Furthermore, יהוה's Presence was at the western side of both the Tabernacle and Temple, in the boundary of Benjamin's portion in the Land. The strength represented by these three tribes is the necessary companion of Torah [Judah] and repentance [Reuben], for both dedication to Torah study and repentance require strength of conviction and character. *Chumash*

Numbers 2:25 The standard of the camp of Dan *shall be on the north side by their armies: and the captain of the children of Dan shall be Ahiezer the son of Ammishaddai.* **26** And his army and those that were numbered of them *were* threescore and two thousand and seven hundred. **27** And those that encamp by him *shall be* the tribe of Asher: and the captain of *the* children of Asher *shall be* Pagiel the son of Ocran. **28** And his army and those that were numbered of them *were* forty and one thousand and five hundred. **29** Then the tribe of Naphtali: and the captain of *the* children of Naphtali *shall be* Ahira the son of Enan. **30** And his army and those that were numbered of them *were* fifty and three thousand and four hundred. **31** All they that were numbered in the camp of Dan *were* a hundred thousand and fifty and seven thousand and six hundred. They shall go last with their standards. **32** These *are* those which were numbered of *the* Children of Israel by the house אבתם *of their fathers: all those that were numbered of the camps throughout their armies were* six hundred thousand and three thousand and five hundred and fifty (603,550). C-MATS

Question: What tribes were on the north of the Tabernacle? North is symbolic of darkness [the word means hidden], and Dan, too, is symbolic of darkness, because it was in his territory that King Jeroboam placed a national idol, in order to wean the people away from their pilgrimages to the Temple, and Dan's descendants set up the notorious Graven Image of Micah in their land (**Judges 18:31** So they set up them אה graven image which Micah made, all the time that the House of Elohim was in Shiloh.), the darkest of all moral conditions. To balance this symbol of darkness, Dan's formation included Asher, which was famous for its olive oil (**Deuteronomy 33:24** And of Asher he said, Let Asher be blessed with children; let him be favored by his brothers and let him bathe his feet in oil.), symbolizing illumination of the darkness, and by Naphtali, whom Moses blessed with special favor. This formation is described as journeying not "fourth" but last -- unlike the other formations that are described as "first, second, and third" -- because a tribe that symbolizes idol worship is indeed the last in terms of worthiness. *Chumash*

Numbers 2:33 But the Levites were not numbered among *the* Children of Israel; as commanded יהוה אה Moses. **34** And *the* Children of Israel did according to all that commanded יהוה אה Moses: so they camped by their standards and so they set forward, every one after their families, according to the house of their fathers. C-MATS

Question: Did each tribe have its own flag or banner? Each tribe had its own flag. **Psalm 20:5** We will triumph in your salvation (*Yeshuwah*) and in the name of our Elohim we will set up our banners.

Question: How did the tribes know when to journey? When the cloud was seen departing, the Kohanim would sound the trumpets, and the camp of Judah would set off first. And when they traveled, they journeyed forward retaining the same positions in which they camped: the Levites and the wagons in the center, the division of Judah to the east, that of Reuben to the south, that of Ephraim to the west, and that of Dan to the north. *Chumash*

Question: How is Israel's camp like יהוה's own Heavenly Throne room? Israel's camp on earth was the counterpart of the Heavenly Court, where יהוה's Throne is surrounded by four companies of angels, like the four formations around the Tabernacle. The Throne is in the center and is surrounded by four animals, as it were. On earth, the Tabernacle represents the Throne, surrounded by the four formations. *Chumash*

Question: How was the community set up around the Tabernacle? When they set up the tabernacle, they received it into the midst of their camp, three of the tribes pitching their tents on each side of it; and roads were cut through the midst of these tents. It was like a well-appointed market; and everything was there ready for sale in due order; and all sorts of artificers were in the shops; and it resembled nothing so much as a city that sometimes was movable, and sometimes fixed. The priests had the first places about the tabernacle; then the Levites, who, because their whole multitude was reckoned from thirty days old, were twenty-three thousand eight hundred and eighty males; and during the time that the cloud stood over the tabernacle, they thought proper to stay in the same place, as supposing that יהוה there inhabited among them; but when that removed, they journeyed also. *Josephus*

Question: How were the tribes identified? The Midrash (*Bamidbar Rabbah 2:7*) provides a summary of the flags' appearance. It begins by telling us that the colors of the flags corresponded to the colors of the stones that were on the *Choshen* (or Breastplate) of the High Priest. The High Priest was commanded to wear a special breastplate that had twelve precious stones, one for each of the twelve tribes. Each stone had a symbolic meaning unique to that particular tribe. *Garments of Light*



Modern Rendition of the Choshen, the High Priest's Breastplate

Reuven's was the *odem*, a ruby, and so his flag was red. The symbol on the flag was the *duda'im*, flowers that Reuven had picked for his mother Leah (**Genesis 30:14 And Reuben went out in the days of the wheat harvest and found mandrakes in the field and brought אתם them to his mother Leah.**). It was on account of these flowers that Leah went on to have three more children. *Duda'im* is often translated as "mandrakes", though according to Rashi they were of the Jasmine plant.

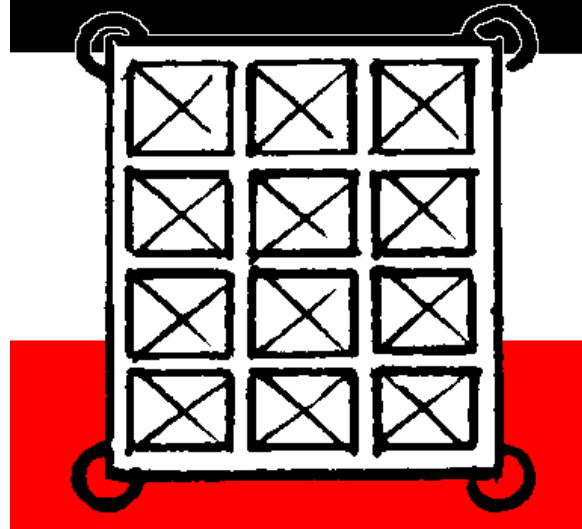


Shimon had the *pitdah*, probably topaz, and his flag was green. The symbol upon the flag was an image of the city of Shechem. This is in memory of the episode where Shimon (together with his younger brother Levi) took up swords to decimate the Shechem population after the abduction and rape of their sister Dinah (Genesis 34:27 They took **את־** Dinah out of Shechem's house and left. 27 The sons of Jacob came upon the slain and spoiled the city, because they had defiled their sister.).



Levi's was *bareket*, possibly an emerald or onyx, and the flag had three bands of colors: white, black, and red. Upon the flag was an image of the *Urim V'Tumim*, the mystical objects kept within the High Priest's breastplate that were apparently used for communication with the Divine.

Urim Vetumim



Yehuda had *nofech*, a stone more difficult to identify, with different opinions holding that it was either red, green, or blue. The Midrash here describes the flag as blue like the skies. Emblazoned upon it was the image of a lion. Before his passing, Jacob blessed each of his twelve sons, and in his blessing, he described Yehuda as a lion (**Genesis 49:9** *Judah is a lion's cub from the prey, my son, you have gone up (you stand over your prey): he bows down, he lies down as a lion and as an old lion; who will rouse him up? Who dares to provoke him?*). The lion would later become associated with the Davidic dynasty of kings (which hails from the tribe of Yehuda), and with the seat of their throne in Jerusalem, a city that goes by a number of names, including *Ariel* ("God's lion").

Yehudah

יָהוּדָה

Lion



Issachar's was a sapphire (or lapis lazuli) stone, and his flag was of a very dark blue color (almost black). Upon it was the image of the sun and moon. The Midrash describes the people of Issachar as being wise in astronomical and chronological matters, citing I Chronicles 12:32 **And of the children of Issachar, men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do, the heads of them were two hundred; and all their brethren were at their commandment.**



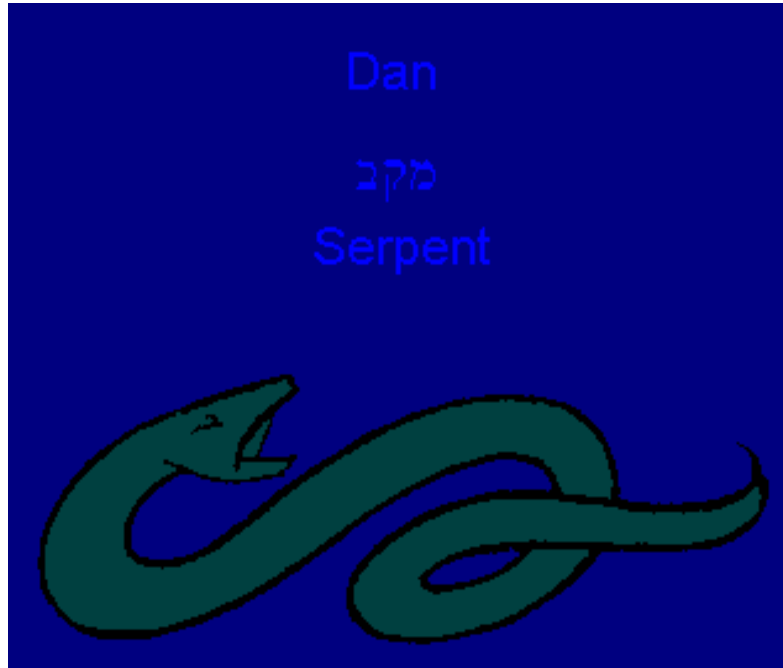
Zevulun had a *yahalom*, today's Hebrew word for diamond, though there may be other possibilities. Zevulun's flag was white, and bore a depiction of a ship, again based on Jacob's blessing to the tribe to be successful sea-going merchants, and live along the Israeli coastline. **Zebulun will settle at the haven of the seashore; and he will become a haven (port) for אֲנִיּוֹת ships; and his border will adjoin to Zidon (fishery).** Genesis 49:13

Zevulun

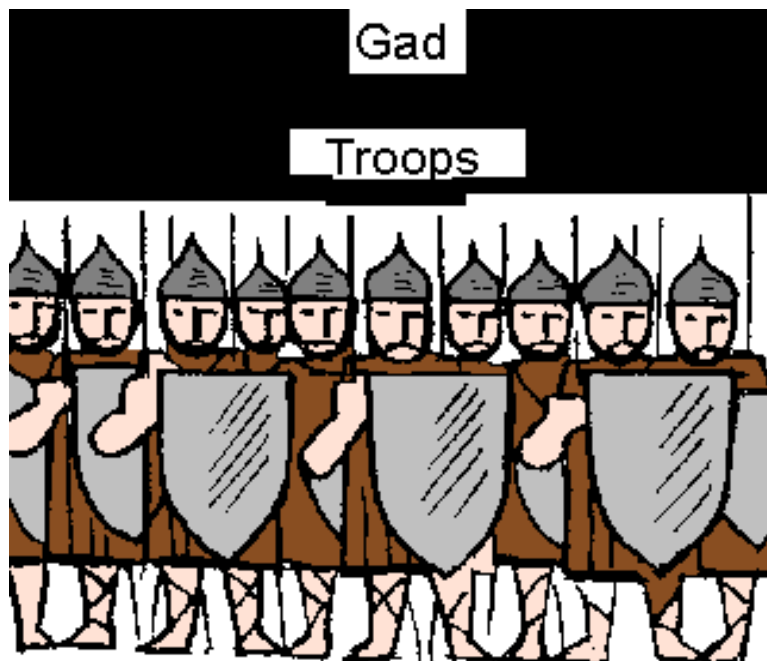
Ship



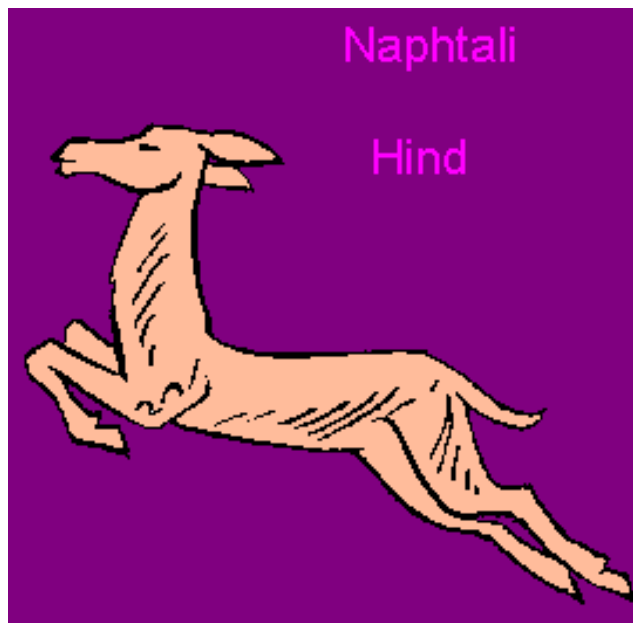
Dan had *leshem*, amber, with a flag of a sapphire-like color (despite the fact that amber is typically golden-red). Upon the flag was the symbol of a snake, once more based on Jacob's blessing. "Dan will be a serpent on the way, an adder (*snake*) in the path that bites the horse's heels, so that his rider will fall *off* backward." Genesis 49:17



Likewise, Gad's flag bore the image of a military camp, on a black and white background, based on Gad's stone of *shevo*, a black agate or obsidian. "Gad, a troop will overcome him: but he will overcome at the last." Genesis 49:19



Naphtali had *achlamah*, the purple amethyst. His flag was of a similar color, described by the Midrash as pure wine that isn't too strong. It is interesting that the Midrash should compare it to wine, since amethyst was believed in ancient times to keep one sober and prevent drunkenness. Upon the flag was an image of a gazelle, also from Jacob's blessing. "**Naphtali is a doe set free: he uses beautiful words (*sayings*).**" Genesis 49:21



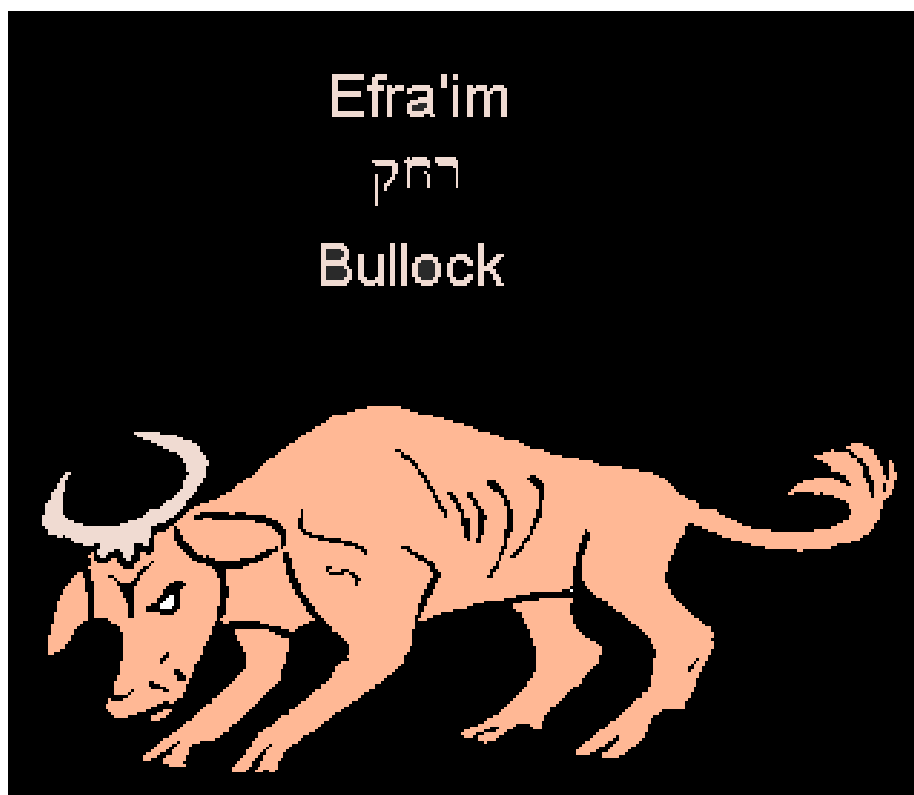
Asher's stone of *tarshish* is certainly the least identifiable of the dozen. Opinions range from chrysolite and coal to flint and hyacinth. The Midrash doesn't help in clarifying the matter, describing the flag as similar to the color of an expensive jewel stone worn by women. Whatever the case, the image upon the flag was that of an olive tree, since Jacob blessed Asher with fatty riches and delicacies. **Out of Asher his bread (*food*) will be rich and he will yield royal delicacies (*fit for a king*).** Genesis 49:20



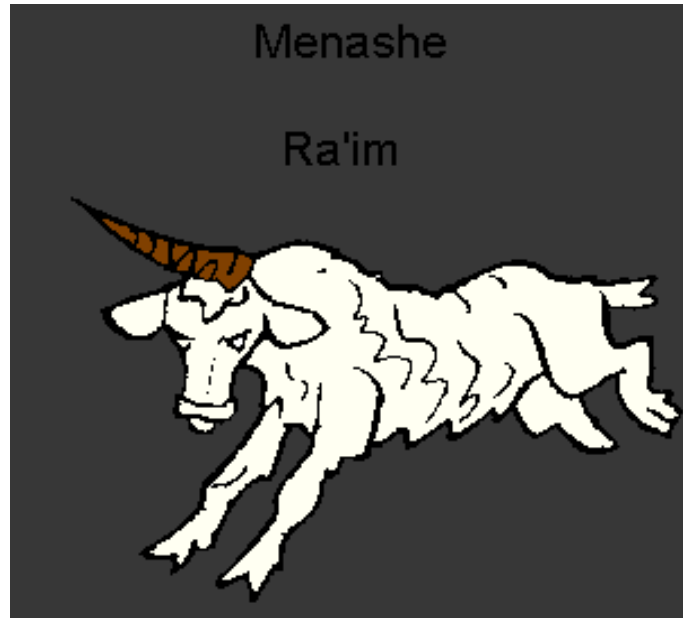
In the encampment, the tribes of Ephraim and Menashe were counted separately. On the breastplate, however, they were counted as one, under the banner of their father Yosef. This is because Ephraim and Menashe were not Jacob's sons, but his grandsons, and on his deathbed, Jacob elevated their status to that of his own sons. Thus, we always maintain that there are twelve tribes: if we include the priestly Levites in the count, then Ephraim and Menashe are combined into one, Yosef, to ensure twelve. If we do not include the Levites since, after all, they are in a different class (and did not inherit any land for that matter), Ephraim and Menashe are counted independently of each other.

The stone of Yosef was *shoham*, which also has a number of opinions to its identity. The Midrash tells us that the flag was black, which supports the suggestion that *shoham* is malachite, a stone that has dark green and black colors.

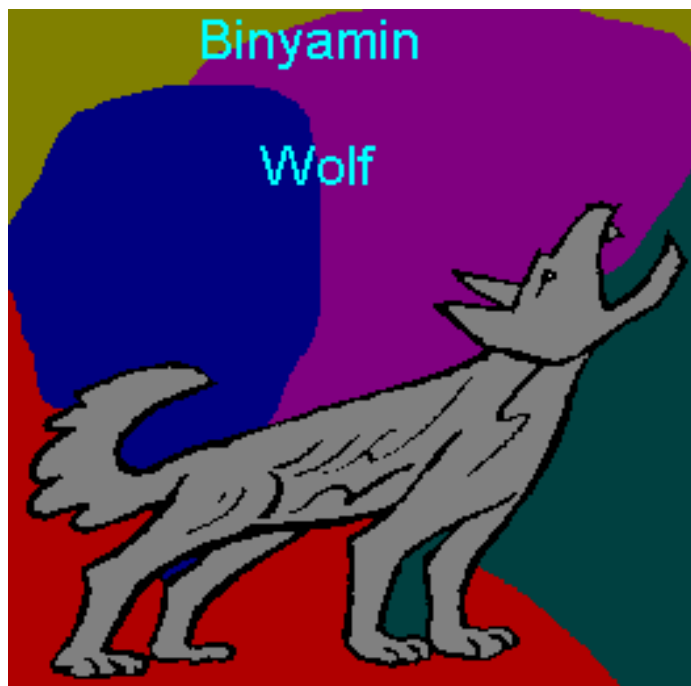
Ephraim's black flag had a bull depicted on it. This is drawn from Moses' final blessing to the tribes of Yosef (**His glory is like the firstborn bull. Deuteronomy 33:17.**) The Midrash also tells us that the bull represents Joshua, who was of the tribe of Ephraim.



Based on the same verse in Moses' blessing, Menashe's black flag had a *re'em*, a horned animal sometimes translated as a unicorn, or perhaps an ox or even a rhinoceros. **"And his horns are like the horns of unicorns (wild oxen): with them he will gore the peoples, all of them, to the ends of the earth" Deut 33:17**, which alludes to Gideon son of Joash who came from the tribe of Manasseh.



Binyamin's flag famously depicted a wolf, based on Jacob's description (**Genesis 49:27 Benjamin will be as a ravenous wolf: in the morning he will devour the prey and at night he will divide the spoil.**). The stone of Binyamin was the *yashfe*, another unidentified one. The Midrash tells us that Binyamin's flag had a mix of the colors of all the other tribal flags. This is likely due to the fact that Binyamin was the beloved little brother of the family, and all of his older siblings, though sometimes at odds with one another, always united to protect him. It is said that this is the reason why the Holy of Holies in the Temple was specifically in the territory of Binyamin (while the rest of the Temple was in the land of Yehuda), since the whole nation put aside their differences and united as one when it came to the smallest of their brothers.



Question: How were the tribes different from each other? When the Israelites were traveling in the desert, on the way to the Land of Israel, they were divided into 12 different tribes, or extended families. Each tribe had a prince and a flag whose color corresponded to the color of its stone in Aaron's breastplate. Each tribe had its own talents and customs, but they accepted each other and remained united, working together. They realized that their differences were part of יהוה's plan to form the best nation possible. We, too, can learn to accept each other's differences, and even come to appreciate how these differences can complement each other and help us to best reach a common goal.

Question: In your opinion would the world be a better place if everyone did things the same way and all had the exact same opinions on things? While the differences between people are a potential source of conflict, they also provide a tremendous opportunity for growth and learning. When we encounter others who are different from ourselves in some way, we are challenged to try to understand them and accept them. In the process we learn more about ourselves -- who we are and who we are not. יהוה created the world with endless variety of plants, animals, and people. His decision not to make everyone the same was for our benefit, to learn from and appreciate each other and become better people in the process.

Question: It can be difficult to relate positively with people who seem different than us, with different ways of dressing, tastes in music etc. Can you suggest a way to overcome this hurdle? No one is exactly like us. Everyone we meet is going to have certain things in common with us as well as certain differences. How well we relate to them is going to have a lot to do with whether we choose to focus on the similarities or on the differences. When we focus on what we have in common with somebody else we naturally begin to feel a connection to them. Perhaps with some people it could be common goals, even if they come out in different ways. With others we may share family backgrounds or mutual friends. Still others may seem so different from us that we need to remember that we are both children of the same loving יהוה. Once we are able to find each other's "common denominator" and turn a bit of a "blind eye" to what we don't have in common, we are well on our way toward building more tolerant and harmonious relationships.

Question: Is there any 'common denominator' that can unite the whole world? Yes, we are all ultimately related, descended from the same two parents: Adam and Eve. But even more, we are all children of the One Elohim, who put us all here together for the common purpose of making the world a better and more righteous place. When the world learns to focus on these two things we will all live peacefully united.

Question: The "Ethics of the Fathers" says that a wise person learns from everyone. Do you think everyone has something to teach? Since each of us is different, we all have certain knowledge or experience that no one else does. A wise person will try to appreciate everyone's differences and see what he can learn from them.

Spiritual Exercise: Talk to someone different from you today and find out what you can learn from them.

Numbers 3:1 Now these *are* the generations of Aaron and Moses as in *the* day spoke יהוה אֱתֹ with Moses in Mount Sinai. 2 And these *are* the names of the sons of Aaron; Nadab, the firstborn and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar. C-MATS

Question: The Torah only lists the four sons of Aaron. Why does the verse refer to "*these are the generations of Aaron and Moses*"? Moses tells the Israelites that יהוה had been very angry with Aaron for his involvement with the golden calf and that he wanted to destroy him: "And יהוה was very angry with Aaron *and wanted to destroy him*: and I prayed for Aaron *at the same time*." Deuteronomy 9:20. The commentator Rashi explains that יהוה considered killing all four of Aaron's children. Moses' prayers were able to save two of the sons--Elazar and Itamar. Since two of Aaron's children were saved through Moses' intervention, they are also called the children of Moses. *Chumash*

Numbers 3:3 These *are* the names of the sons of Aaron, the priests' which were anointed, whom he consecrated to minister in the priest's office. 4 And Nadab and Abihu died before יהוה, when they offered strange fire before יהוה, in the wilderness of Sinai and they had no children: and Eleazar and Ithamar ministered in the priest's office in the presence of Aaron their father. 5 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 6 Bring near אֶתֹ the tribe of Levi and present אֹתוֹ them (him) before Aaron, the priest that they may minister to אֹתוֹ it (him). 7 And they will carry out אֶתֹ his duties אֶתֹ and the duties of the whole congregation before the Tabernacle of the Congregation to perform אֶתֹ the service of the Tabernacle. 8 And they will be in charge of אֶתֹ all the furnishings of the Tabernacle of the Congregation אֶתֹ and carry out the duties of the Children of Israel to perform אֶתֹ the service of the Tabernacle. 9 And you will give אֶתֹ the Levites to Aaron and to his sons: they *are* given to him אֶתֹ from the Children of Israel to serve him. 10 אֶתֹ and Aaron אֶתֹ and his sons you will appoint and they will carry out אֶתֹ the priest's office and duties: and anyone that comes near will be put to death. C-MATS



Question: What were some of the duties of the Levites? The Levites should serve at the Sanctuary, to be gate keepers and singers over the offerings every day. *Chumash*

Question: Why were the Levites burdened with duties in the Tabernacle? Helping isn't a burden—it's a privilege. It is more beneficial to help a wise person than even to study from them. By helping someone we admire, we forge a bond with them that we'd never get through study alone. We learn how they think and how they do things and we discover the less obvious inner abilities that helped them become what we admire—so we can become that too.

Question: What do you think might be the connection between helping others and coming closer to יהוה? The way we come closer to יהוה, in a spiritual sense, is by treating others the way He treats us. Since יהוה is always helping us, when we help others we draw closer to יהוה.

Question: What do you think makes someone great? Greatness comes from the inside. It's not about looks, wealth, fame, or even talent. It's all about character, kindness and values.

Question: Genuine wisdom is like water and it only flows down to the humble. Why do you think that might be so? A lot of wisdom has to do with being willing to listen and learn. Someone too full of himself won't do that. Also, wisdom and character go hand in hand. A person of haughty character may well be smart, even a genius, but he can never be truly wise. Only a humble person can become wise. *Ethics of our Fathers*

Spiritual Exercise: Listen when someone gives you advice or corrects you. It may be יהוה sending you a message on how to live a better life.



Question: Why were the Levites selected to sing in the Temple? The name Levi means cleaving. The soul of him who heard their singing at once cleaved to יהוה. *Chumash*

Question: How would the Levites protect the lives of others? The Kohanim must ensure that no one else performs the sacrificial service. By doing so, they will prevent aliens -- Levites and Israelites -- from suffering a Heavenly death penalty. *Chumash*

Numbers 3:11 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, **12** And I have taken **את** the Levites from among *the* Children of Israel instead of all the firstborn that opens the womb among *the* Children of Israel: therefore, the Levites will be mine. C-MATS

Question: Who did the Levites replace? In their new status, the Levites replaced the firstborn. When Moses and Israel brought offerings the day after the Ten Commandments were given, for example, the service was performed by the youths of the Children of Israel. Those youths were the firstborn. In this passage, the Levites were designated to replace them, thereby taking the sacredness of the firstborn upon themselves. *Chumash*

Numbers 3:13 All the firstborn *are* mine, because on the day that I struck all the firstborn in the land of Egypt I sanctified to Me all the firstborn in Israel, both man and beast: they are mine: I am יהוה. **14** And יהוה spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai saying, **15** Number **את** children of Levi after the house **אבתם** of their fathers, by their families number every male from a month old and older. C-MATS

Question: How were the Levites counted? The Levites would be counted twice. They would be counted from the age of one month and up; there was no minimum age -- the one month threshold was only to guarantee that the newborn baby was thriving and going to live. Also, there was no upper age-limit for the Levites; no matter how old, everyone was equally precious. In another departure from the procedure of the rest of the nation, the Levites would be counted again from the ages of thirty to fifty (**Numbers 4:30** You will count them from thirty years old to fifty years old, everyone who enters into the service to do **את** the work of the Tabernacle of the Congregation.), the ages at which they would be eligible to perform the Temple service. The count from one month and up was based on the innate sanctity of the tribe, indicating that the Levites' spiritual mission was not dependent on age or strength. The census from thirty to fifty indicated the period of maximum physical and emotional maturity when they could best perform their duties in the Tabernacle. *Chumash*

Question: Did the Levites serve יהוה all their lives? The Levite infants surely did not participate in guarding the Sanctuary; to the contrary, they themselves needed protection. Rather, יהוה wished to reward the Levites greatly for their loyal service, so when they became thirty years old and began to serve in the Sanctuary, יהוה considered it as if they had indeed served from the age of one month, and He rewarded them accordingly. Similarly, the prophet Samuel is credited with judging Israel all the days of his life (**I Samuel 7:15** And judged Samuel **את** Israel all the days of his life.), although he was a judge for only ten of his fifty-two years. Nevertheless, because of his lifelong dedication he was rewarded as if he had actually judged the people all of his life. *Chumash*



Samuel dedicated to the Temple as a child

Numbers 3:16 And Moses numbered **אתם** *them* according to the word of יהוה as He was commanded. 17 And these were the sons of Levi by their names; Gershon and Kohas and Merari. 18 And these *are* the names of the sons of Gershon by their families; Libni and Shimei. 19 And the sons of Kohas by their families; Amram and Izehar, Hebron and Uzziel. 20 And the sons of Merari by their families; Mahli and Mushi. These *are* the families of the Levites by clans according to the house **אבותם** *of their fathers*. 21 Gershon *was* the family of the Libnites and Shimites: these *are* the families of the Gershonites. 22 All men that were numbered were 7,500. 23 The families of the Gershonites will camp behind the Tabernacle towards the west. 24 And the chief of the house of the father of the Gershonites *will be* Eliasaph the son of Lael. 25 And the duties of the sons of Gershon in the Tabernacle of the Congregation *will be in charge of*: the Tabernacle and the tent, its coverings, the screen for the door of the Tabernacle of the Congregation, 26 And the hangings of the court **ואת** *and* the curtains for the door of the courtyard, the Tabernacle and the altar round about **ואת** *and* the ropes for these items and the maintenance of it. 27 And from Kohas *was* the family of the Amramites, Izeharites, Hebronites and Uzzielites: these *are* the families of the Kohasites. 28 All the men that were numbered were 8,600. They are in charge of the sanctuary. 29 The families of the sons of Kohas will camp on the side of the Tabernacle towards the south. 30 And the chief of the clan of the Kohasites *will be* Elizaphan the son of Uzziel. 31 And they are in charge *of* the Ark, the table, the menorah, the altar, the utensils they use to minister in the sanctuary and the curtain and all the maintenance of it. 32 And Eleazar, son of Aaron the priest, *will be* first among the chief of the Levites and *have* charge over them who perform the duties of the sanctuary. 33 Merari *was* the family of the Mahlites and the Mushites: these *are* the families of Merari. 34 And all the men that were numbered 6,200. 35 And the chief of the house of the father of the families of Merari *was* Zuriel, son of Abihail: *they* will camp on the side of the Tabernacle towards the north. 36 And the sons of Merari were assigned responsibility for the frames of the Tabernacle and the crossbars, the posts and the sockets and fittings and all the maintenance of it, 37 And the posts surrounding the courtyard with its sockets, pegs and ropes. 38 But those that camp in front of the Tabernacle toward the east, in front of the Tabernacle of the Congregation towards the sunrise, *were* Moses, Aaron and his sons, who were in charge of the sanctuary. *They carried out their responsibility on behalf of the* Children of Israel; and anyone that comes near will be put to death.

C-MATS

Question: Who did Moses and Aaron camp next to? "Fortunate is a Torah teacher and fortunate is his neighbor". Because the tribes of Judah, Issachar, and Zebulun encamped on the east near Moses, who was engaged in Torah study, they became great in Torah. Conversely, "Woe to the wicked and woe to his neighbor." The tribe of Reuben encamped to the south near the Kohathites, which included the family of Korach; therefore many of the Reubenites became enmeshed in his rebellion. *Chumash/ Ethics of our Fathers*

Numbers 3:39 The number of Levites, which Moses and Aaron counted at the commandment of יהוה, was 22,000. C-MATS

Question: The total number of Levite males adds up to 22,000. However, the numbers of the three Levite families add up to 22,300 in verses 22, 28, and 34; why are the three hundred omitted from the total? Three hundred of the Levites were themselves firstborn, so that they themselves required redemption. By dedicating themselves to the service of יהוה, they redeemed their own persons, but they could not redeem others as well. *Chumash*

Question: Compared to the totals of the other tribes, which were counted from age twenty, the total of the Levites from the age of a month and up seems strangely low. Why did they have such a small tribe? The large population of the other tribes was a miracle, for, as the Torah states, "But the more they afflicted them, the more they multiplied and grew." Exodus 1:12. The Levites, however, were spared the suffering, so they did not enjoy the compensatory blessing, and their numbers increased at a normal rate. *Chumash*

Numbers 3:40 And יהוה said to Moses, Count all the firstborn males from *the* Children of Israel from a month old and older and make a list אה the number of their names. 41 And you will take אה the Levites for me I am יהוה in the place of all the firstborn Children of Israel; ואה and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn cattle from *the* Children of Israel. 42 And counted Moses as יהוה commanded אהו it (him) אה all the firstborn Children of Israel. 43 And number of all the firstborn males, from a month old and older, were 22,273. C-MATS

Question: How were the Israelite firstborn redeemed? The Levites themselves took the place of Israelite firstborn. A Levite and a firstborn stood before Moses and he declared, "This Levite has redeemed this firstborn". There were 273 more Israelite firstborn than Levites; these excess Israelites were redeemed for five shekels each. Israelite livestock were redeemed for Levite livestock. *Chumash*

Numbers 3:44 And יהוה spoke to Moses saying, 45 Take אה the Levites in place of all the firstborn Children of Israel ואה and the cattle of the Levites in place of their cattle; and the Levites will be mine: I am יהוה. 46 ואה and since there are 273 more firstborn Children of Israel than the Levites, you are to redeem them; 47 You are to take five shekels for each of these. Use the shekel of the sanctuary, which is equal to twenty gerahs. 48 And you will give the redemption money to Aaron and his sons. C-MATS

Question: Why were "five shekels" chosen to redeem a first born? The 273 Israelite firstborn who could not be redeemed by Levites were each to be redeemed by five shekels, the same amount that the Torah would ordain as the redemption for all firstborn.

The brothers of Joseph, Rachel's firstborn, "they sold **את** Joseph to the Ishmeelites for 20 pieces of silver." Genesis 37:28 or twenty dinars, which equals five shekels -- so that this amount became the eternal atonement for that sin. *Chumash*

Numbers 3:49 And took Moses **את** money for the redemption **גְּאֵת** from those that were over and above those redeemed by the Levites: 50 The amount took he (*Moses*) **את** the money, from the firstborn Children of Israel was 1,365 *shekels*, using the shekel of the sanctuary: 51 And gave Moses **את** the money from those who were redeemed to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of יהוה, as commanded **את** יהוה Moses. C-MATS



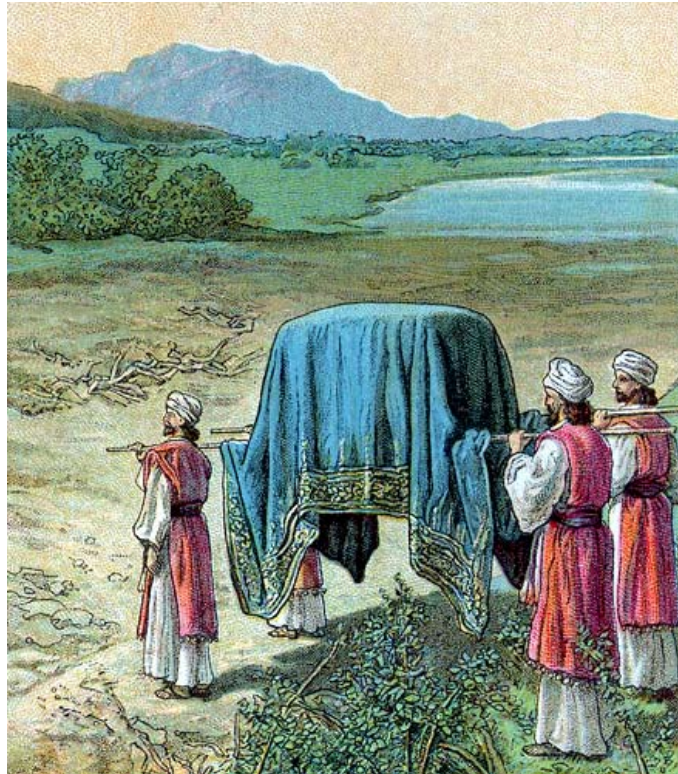
Redeeming the First Born

Numbers 4:1 And יהוה spoke to Moses and to Aaron saying, 2 Take **את** a count of the sons of Kohas who are among the sons of Levi, according to their families by the house **אבתם** of their fathers, 3 From 30 years old up to 50 years old, these will enter into service to do the work in the Tabernacle of the Congregation. 4 **זאת** This shall be the service of the sons of Kohas in the Tabernacle of the Congregation about the most sacred things. C-MATS

Question: Why was the clan of Kohath chosen to carry the Covenant Box? Though Kohath was Levi's second son, his progeny was counted first in deference to the greatness of his descendants, Moses and Aaron. Because Moses was the great teacher of the Torah, his brethren, the Kohathites, were given the honor of bearing the Ark. By assigning the Ark to the most meritorious of Levi's families, יהוה showed that honor is due to those who struggle to acquire Torah knowledge, not merely to those who are the oldest or the most privileged. *Chumash*

Numbers 4:5 And when the time comes to break camp, Aaron and his sons will go in and take down **את** veil, which serves as a screen and cover with it **את** Ark of Testimony. 6 And will put on it the covering of badger's skins (*fine leather*) and will spread over it an all blue cloth and will insert the *carrying* poles. C-MATS

Question: Who was asked to prepare the Covenant Box for travel? Aaron and his sons were to prepare and wrap the items for transit. The Levites would then carry them. The Kohanim used the curtain that divided the Holy of Holies from the rest of the Tabernacle. With it, the Kohanim covered the Ark and then covered the curtain. *Chumash*



Levites carrying the Covenant Box

Question: Were the poles ever taken from the Covenant Box? Unlike the poles of the Table and Altar, which were inserted only for transport, it is forbidden ever to remove the poles of the Ark from their rings (**The poles will be in the rings of the Ark: they will not be taken out of the rings. Exodus 25:15**). The term must mean that the poles were placed on the shoulders of the Levites, or that they were adjusted within their rings to facilitate the Levites' task of carrying the Ark. *Chumash*

Numbers 4:7 And on the table of showbread they will spread a cloth of blue and put on it **את** the dishes, **את** and incense pans, **את** and the offering bowls **את** and pitchers and the perpetual bread will remain on the table: 8 And they will spread on them a cloth of scarlet and cover **אתו** it (him) with a covering of badgers skins (fine leather) and insert **את** poles whereas to carry it. 9 And they will take a cloth of blue and cover **את** menorah for the light, **את** and his lamps, **את** and his tongs, **את** and his trays **את** and all the jars used to add oil to it: 10 And they will wrap **אתה** it (him) **את** and all the vessels in a covering of badger's skins (fine leather) and will place them on a carrying frame. 11 And on the golden altar they will spread a cloth of blue and cover **אתו** it (him) with a covering of badger's skins (fine leather) and insert **את** poles whereas to carry it: 12 And they will take **את** all the utensils they use to minister in the sanctuary and put them in a cloth of blue and cover **אותם** them with a covering of badger's skins (fine leather) and put them on a carrying frame: 13 And they will remove the ashes from **את** the altar and spread a purple cloth on it. C-MATS

Question: Was the fire continual burning on the altar? Even in transit, the Heavenly fire was always aflame on the Altar, crouching like a lion under the cover. A copper pot was placed over it to protect the cloth and hide covers. *Chumash*



Numbers 4:14 And they shall place on it **את** all the utensils *required for their altar service*: with **את** the fire pans, **את** the meat-hooks, **ואת** and the shovels, **ואת** and the basins and all *other* utensils for the altar; and they will spread on it a covering of badger's skins (*fine leather*) and insert the *carrying* poles in it. 15 And when Aaron and his sons have finished covering **את** the sanctuary **ואת** and all the utensils of the sanctuary, when the camp is about to move forward; the sons of Kohas will come to carry *it*: but they will not touch *any* sacred thing or they *will* die. These *things* are the responsibility of the sons of Kohas in the Tabernacle of the Congregation. 16 Eleazar the son of Aaron the priest is responsible for the oil for the light, the sweet incense, the daily grain *offering* and the anointing oil. He is in charge of all the Tabernacle and everything in the sanctuary and all the furnishings in it. 17 And יהוה spoke to Moses and to Aaron saying, 18 Do not cut off **את** the tribe of the families of the Kohasites from among the Levites: 19 **ואת** And *this* do for them, so that they may live and not die when they approach to **את** the most sacred things: Aaron and his sons will go in and appoint **אותם** them each one to his task: 20 But they (*Kohasites*) will not go in and see, when covered **את** the sacred things, otherwise they *will* die.
C-MATS

Question: What was the effect of this possibility of death upon the Kohathites? The Levites were so eager to have the honor of bearing the Ark that unless people were specifically assigned to other tasks, the vessels other than the Ark would have been neglected. Each of the Kohathites was appointed to do a specific service and they would be so organized that they would approach the Tabernacle in an orderly manner. *Chumash*

Question: What responsibilities were the Levites given? The Kohanim had been given the sole responsibility to insert the sacred items into their wrappings, and only then were the Levites to come and transport them, but they were forbidden to gaze upon them in their uncovered state, lest they die. Nor were they permitted to touch the Ark itself even when they were carrying it. It was to be borne only by means of its poles. When the Tabernacle arrived at its new destination and was to be reassembled, the Levites had to withdraw until the Ark was in place and shielded by the Curtain. Each Levite had two functions. Sometimes his work was to load vessels on the shoulders of his comrades, and sometimes he would carry a burden. They would relieve each other and take turns, according to a detailed schedule of assignments. (Chumash)

Do You Know????

1. יהוה told Moses to take a _____ of the People of Israel.
2. Originally, the _____ from each family was supposed to serve in the Tabernacle, but when they sinned with the Golden Calf, the privilege went instead to the Levites.
3. The tribe of _____ was counted separately from the other tribes.
4. The total number of all the Levites was counted starting with the males of age _____.
5. The rest of the tribes were counted starting with males of age _____.
6. A man is eligible to serve in the military from age _____ and older.
7. A priest can serve in the Temple from age _____ to _____.
8. All the tribes camped around the _____.
9. Each tribe had its own _____ that was flown above their camp.
10. Each tribe had its own _____ on the priest's breastplate.

Bonus: What were the names of the Levi families that camped around the Tabernacle and carried the pieces of the Tabernacle?

Answers:

1. census (count)
2. firstborn
3. Levi
4. one month old
5. 20 years old
6. 20
7. 30-50
8. Tabernacle
9. Flag/banner
10. Gemstone

Bonus: The Kohathites, the Gershonites, and the Merarites.

Haftorah

Hosea 1:10 Yet the number of *the* Children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered; and it shall come to pass that, in the place where it was said to them, אֱתָם You are not my people, it shall be said to them, *You are the Sons of the Living Elohim (Hebrew Gematria 153 prophetic picture of number of fish caught in John 21:11)*. 11 And the Children of Judah and *the* Children of Israel shall be gathered together and they shall appoint themselves one head and shall go up from the land; for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

Hosea 2:1 Say you to your brethren, Ammi (*my people*); and to your sisters, Ruhamah (*mercy is shown*). 2 Contend with your mother, contend; for she is not my wife, neither am I her husband; and let her put away her whoredoms from her face and her adulteries from between her breasts; 3 lest I strip her naked and set her as in the day that she was born and make her as a wilderness and set her like a dry land and kill her with thirst. 4 אֲנִי and her children will I have no mercy; for they are children of whoredom; 5 for their mother has played the harlot; she that conceived them has done shamefully; for she said, I will go after my lovers, that give me my bread and my water, my wool and my flax, my oil and my drink. 6 Therefore, behold, I will hedge up *your* אֶת way with thorns and I will build אֶת a wall against her, that she shall not find her paths. 7 And she shall chase after אֶת her lovers, but she shall not overtake אֲנִי them; and she shall seek them, but shall not find them: then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband; for then *was it* better with me than now. 8 For she did not know that I gave her the grain and the new wine and the oil and multiplied to her silver and gold, which they used for Baal (*lord*). 9 Therefore, will I take back my grain in the time thereof and my new wine in the season thereof and will pluck away my wool and my flax which should have covered אֶת her nakedness. 10 And now will I uncover אֶת her lewdness in the sight of her lovers and none shall deliver her out of My hand. 11 I will also cause all her pleasure to cease, her feasts, her New Moons and her Sabbaths and all her solemn assemblies. 12 And I will lay waste her vines and her fig-trees, of which she has said, These are my hire that my lovers have given me; and I will make them a forest and the beasts of the field shall eat them. 13 And I will visit upon her אֶת days of the Baal (*lord*), to which she burned incense, when she decked herself with her earrings and her jewels and went after her lovers אֲנִי and Me she forgot says יְהוָה. 14 Therefore, surely, I will allure her and bring her into the wilderness and speak comfortably to her. 15 And I will give her, אֶת her vineyards from therein אֶת and Valley of Achor (*troubled*) for a door of hope; and she shall make answer there, as in the days of her youth and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt. 16 And it shall be at that day, says יְהוָה that you shall call Me Ishi (*husband*) and shall call Me no more Baali (*my lord*). 17 For I will take away אֶת names of the Baals (lords) out of her mouth and they shall no more be mentioned by their name. 18 And in that day will I make a covenant for them with the beasts of the field and with the birds of the heavens and with the creeping things of the ground: and I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land and will make them to lie down safely. 19 And I will betroth you to Me forever; yea, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and in justice and in loving-kindness and in mercies. 20 I will even betroth you to Me in faithfulness; and you shall know אֶת יְהוָה. 21 And it shall come to pass in that day, I will answer, says יְהוָה, I will answer אֶת the heavens and they shall hear אֶת the earth; 22 And the earth shall hear אֶת the grain אֶת and the new wine אֶת and the oil; and they shall hear אֶת Jezreel. 23 And I will sow her to Me in the earth; and I will have mercy upon אֶת her that had not obtained mercy; and I will say to them that were not My people, אֶתהּ you are My people; and they shall say, *You are my Elohim*. C-MATS

Question: What is Hosea prophesying in these verses? These verses are Hosea's first prophecies about the eventual reunification of the houses of Judah and Israel. During the Messianic Era, these two consistent rivals will make peace and appoint a single leader. Hosea then rebukes the Israelite people for their infidelity, abandoning their "Ishi (*husband*)," יהוה, and engaging in adulterous affairs with pagan deities. He describes the punishments they will suffer because of this unfaithfulness. Eventually, though, Hosea reassures the Israelites that they will repent, and יהוה will accept them back wholeheartedly.

Brit Chadashah

Matthew 4:1 Then was Yahusha led up of the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil. 2 And when he had fasted forty days and forty nights, he was afterward hungry. 3 And when the tempter came to him, he said, If you be the Son of Elohim, command that these stones be made bread. 4 But he answered and said, **It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of Elohim.** 5 Then the devil took him up into the holy city, and set him on a pinnacle of the temple, 6 And said unto him, If you be the Son of Elohim, cast yourself down: for it is written, He shall give his angels charge concerning you: and in their hands they shall bear you up, lest at any time you dash your foot against a stone. 7 Yahusha said unto him, **It is written again, You shall not tempt יהוה your Elohim.** 8 Again, the devil took him up into an exceeding high mountain, and showed him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them; 9 And said unto him, All these things will I give you, if you will fall down and worship me. 10 Then said Yahusha unto him, **Get you hence, Satan: for it is written, You shall worship יהוה your Elohim, and him only shall you serve.** 11 Then the devil left him, and, behold, angels came and ministered unto him. 12 Now when Yahusha had heard that John was cast into prison, he departed into Galilee; 13 And leaving Nazareth, he came and dwelt in Capernaum, which is upon the sea coast, in the borders of Zabulon and Nephthalim: 14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet, saying, 15 The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephthalim, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; 16 The people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up. 17 From that time Yahusha began to preach, and to say, **Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.** C-MATS

Luke 2:1 And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria. 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; because he was of the house and lineage of David: 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. C-MATS

1 Corinthians 12:12 For as the body is one, and has many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Mashiach. 13 For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit. 14 For the body is not one member, but many. 15 If the foot shall say, Because I am not the hand, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? 16 And if the ear shall say, Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body; is it therefore not of the body? C-MATS

1 Corinthians 12:17 If the whole body were an eye, where were the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where were the smelling? **18** But now has Elohim set the members every one of them in the body, as it has pleased him. **19** And if they were all one member, where were the body? **20** But now are they many members, yet but one body. **21** And the eye cannot say unto the hand, I have no need of you: nor again the head to the feet, I have no need of you. **22** Nay, much more those members of the body, which seem to be more feeble, are necessary: **23** And those members of the body, which we think to be less honorable, upon these we bestow more abundant honor; and our uncomely parts have more abundant comeliness. **24** For our comely parts have no need: but Elohim has tempered the body together, having given more abundant honor to that part which lacked: **25** That there should be no schism in the body; but that the members should have the same care one for another. **26** And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it. **27** Now you are the body of Mashiach, and members in particular. **28** And Elohim has set some in the assembly, first apostles, secondarily prophets, thirdly teachers, after that miracles, then gifts of healings, helps, governments, diversities of tongues. **29** Are all apostles? are all prophets? are all teachers? are all workers of miracles? **30** Have all the gifts of healing? do all speak with tongues? do all interpret? **31** But covet earnestly the best gifts: and yet show I unto you a more excellent way. C-MATS

Following the Lead

Being a leader is a privilege, but it's also responsibility. This week's Torah portion lists the leaders of the 12 Israelite tribes who led their people through the desert toward the land of Israel. We can take from this a lesson in leadership and an inspiration to gain the tools we need to lead others and ourselves

LEADERSHIP TRAINING

"Please Mrs. Jackson. Let me be the group leader, okay?" Kate begged her gym instructor, waving her hand frantically in the air. Her gym class was about to go on a special 'Outdoors-Adventure' activity, where they'd hike through the woods, go through a special obstacle course and learn some basic outdoors survival techniques. When the instructor announced she needed to appoint a group leader, Kate jumped at the chance. Not because she enjoyed these kinds of rugged outdoor activities -- Kate's idea of roughing it was setting the air conditioner on 'low'. Nope, she'd volunteered to be the leader because she *didn't* like these kinds of things and figured that being the leader would be an easy way to get out of it. After all, what does a leader do, but just look on, take it easy, and tell the other people what to do, right? "Are you sure you want the responsibility of leading, Kate?" the instructor asked. The girl nodded her head, enthusiastically. "Alright, Kate. Since you seem so gung-ho, you can be the group leader," the instructor agreed to Kate's relief. "Now all of you line up to get your 'Adventure Packs.' the woman went on, and started handing out the backpacks. When it was Kate's turn to get hers, the instructor waved her hand and said. "No, as group leader, you don't get one of these." *Great! Kate thought. The privilege of being the leader was paying off already! It would be so much easier not to have to schlep one of those clumsy bags around, the way everyone else did.* But her joy was short-lived when the instructor pointed to a pack twice the size of the others and said, "You get this 'Leader's Pack' instead, with all the extra emergency supplies in it. As the group leader you're responsible to have these things on hand in case anyone needs them."

Kate gulped and with great effort, managed to swing the monstrous thing over her shoulder. After walking for a while, they got to the obstacle course, a big, intimidating-looking line-up of wooden gym equipment, hanging ropes and rubber tires. "The point of this obstacle course is to show you that you can accomplish something difficult if you have to," Mrs. Jackson said. The kids began to groan. "It's not as bad as it looks," she smiled. "But I'm not going to force any of you to do it." Kate felt relieved -- at least now, she'd be able to get out of this part, even without being the leader. "But to show you that it *is* doable, our group leader, Kate, will go through first, to demonstrate." "*Oh, no! Kate gasped. There's no way I can do this!* She was about to tell the instructor so, when she realized how bad that would look. She was the leader, after all and had to set an example. If she didn't do it, *who* would?"

Taking a deep breath, Kate put down her pack, and following the instructor's directions, she surprised herself by somehow managing to climb, crawl and swing her way through the difficult obstacle course. The other kids, now encouraged, lined up to follow. "Wow, Kate, thanks for leading us," her classmate, Jenny said at the end of the trip. "I was really scared of all those things we did today. If you hadn't gone through first, there's no way I would have had the guts to try it." "Yeah," agreed Danny, "You really led the way!" Kate felt good. Even though being leader hadn't been the free ticket she'd expected, it had been so much more; a chance to lead others -- and herself -- to be more than they thought they could be.

Question: What life-lesson do you think Kate learned that day? She had assumed that being a leader just meant having more privileges than anyone else. But she discovered that leadership was, more than anything, a responsibility.

Question: Why do you think the other kids felt more able to do the obstacle course after Kate led the way? People can feel insecure facing what looks like a difficult challenge and can't imagine how they can possibly succeed. But once someone leads the way shows them it can be done, it boost their confidence to follow.

Question: What differentiates a good leader from a bad? A good leader is focused on the people he or she leads and sincerely concerned with their needs and growth. A bad leader is only looking to exploit their position for their own comfort and power.

Question: What are the characteristics of a good leader?

A good leader has an exemplary character.

A good leader is enthusiastic about their work or cause and also about their role as leader.

A good leader is confident.

A leader also needs to function in an orderly and purposeful manner in situations of uncertainty.

Good leaders are tolerant of ambiguity and remain calm, composed and steadfast to the main purpose.

A good leader as well as keeping the main goal in focus is able to think analytically. Not only does a good leader view a situation as a whole, but is able to break it down into sub parts for closer inspection. Not only is the goal in view but a good leader can break it down into manageable steps and make progress towards it.

A good leader is committed to excellence. Second best does not lead to success.

Barbara White

Spiritual Exercise: Challenge yourself by leading a project or group and developing your leadership abilities.

Resources:

The Stone Edition of The Chumash

The Complete Messianic Aleph Tav Scriptures **C-MATS** www.AlephTavScriptures.com

“Weekly Torah Portion” from www.aish.com (stories)

Titus Flavius Josephus, Jewish Historian

Pirkei Avot (Ethics of Our Fathers)-Jewish oral law