

THE SEQUENCE OF BAMIDBAR 26-30

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INTRODUCTION:

PARASHAT T'MIDIN UMUSAFIN

Chapters 28-29 in Bamidbar present the "Mishkan-calendar" of set, public offerings, in the following order:

- A. Korban Tamid
- B. Musaf: Shabbat
- C. Musaf: Rosh Hodesh
- D. Musaf : Matzot
- E. Musaf : Bikkurim (Shavuot)
- F. Musaf : Yom T'ruah (Rosh haShanah)
- G. Musaf : Yom haKippurim
- H. Musaf: Hag Hashem (Sukkot) day 1
- I. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 2
- J. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 3
- K. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 4
- L. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 5
- M. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 6
- N. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 7
- O. Musaf: Hag Hashem day 8

Hence, this section (including its concluding verse, at 30:1) is called "Parashat T'midin uMusafin".

The immediate oddity that strikes the reader is one of location - why is Parashat T'midin uMusafin placed near the end of Sefer Bamidbar; it's natural location would be in the middle of Sefer Vayyikra, either at the conclusion of the "Torat haKorbanot" (chs. 1-7) or in the parallel treatment of the calendar in Ch. 23. Indeed, the calendar so closely approximates that of Vayyikra 23 that it would have been an "easy fit" to integrate the two parashot by including the specific Korban of each day as an expansion of the general command "v'hikravtem isheh l'Hashem" (you shall offer a burnt-offering to Hashem).

The issue of location raises a larger question about the sequence of commands in the latter chapters of Bamidbar. Beginning from ch. 20:

- 1) Death of Miriam/Mei M'rivah (20:1-13)
- 2) Edom (20:14-21)
- 3) Death of Aharon (20:22-29)
- 4) War with K'na'ani (21:1-3)
- 5) Travels (complaints, plague, song of the well) (21:4-20)
- 6) Sichon/Og (21:21-22:1)
- 7) Balak/Bil'am (22:2-24:25)
- 8) P'or/Pinchas (25:1-15)
- 9) Command to Harass the Midianites (25:16-18)
- 10) Census (26:1-51)
- 11) Division of the Land (26:52-56)
- 12) Levite Census (26:57-65)
- 13) Daughters of Tzlafchad (27:1-11)
- 14) Imminence of Death of Mosheh (27:12-14)
- 15) Mosheh's request re: continued leadership (27:15-23)
- 16) T'midin uMusafin (28:1-30:1)
- 17) Nedarim (vows) (30:2-17)
- 18) War with Midian (31)
- 19) Apportionment of East Bank to Gad and Reuven (32)

Understanding the rhyme behind the sequence here is a challenge; for purposes of this shiur we will

confine ourselves to items 8-18. The problem is exacerbated once we note the following conundrum:

Since God commanded B'nei Yisra'el to act with enmity towards Midian (something which, one would assume, is doubly difficult for Mosheh considering that his wife and esteemed father-in-law are Midianites) in the immediate aftermath of the Midianite-inspired whoring after the Moavites and their god, why is that command interrupted (in text, if not in time), with two censuses, two passages dealing with the division of the land, God's command to Mosheh that he ascend the mountain, Mosheh's "demand" of God that He appoint a successor, T'midin and Musafin and the laws of personal vows?

This question may be asked in two fashions, depending on how strictly we apply chronological fidelity to the text.

If we assume that the events in the Torah are presented in the order in which they happened (except where impossible - compare Bamidbar 1:1 and *ibid.* 9:1; see Ramban at Sh'mot 18:1), then these commands were given and these interactions took place between God's command to harass the Midianites and the direct command to wage a war of vengeance against them.

If, following Ibn Ezra (Sh'mot 18:1 and elsewhere), Rashi (*ibid.*) and others, we make no assumption about the relationship between chronos and textus, the question becomes even stronger. Why did the Torah choose to interrupt the command regarding the war against Midian with these other passages, which may have happened at an earlier time?

II

STRUCTURE OF THE INTERVENING SECTIONS

A review of the "interrupting" passages which break up the commands regarding the war against Midian reveals a curious structure, once we utilize the Parashot of the Masoretic text as our guide:

(War against Midian)

Census of the army (12 Parashot)

Command to Divide the Land (1 Parashah)

Census of the Levi'im (1 Parashah)

Interaction with B'not Tz'laf'had (2 Parashot)

Command regarding impending death of Mosheh (1 Parashah)

Mosheh's "demand" that God appoint a successor (1 Parashah)

T'midin uMusafin (15 Parashot)

Nedarim (1 Parashah)

(War against Midian)

The "interjection" includes 16 Parashot relating to various aspects of the national census, 2 Parashot which are associated with the transfer of leadership and another 16 which deal with offerings (and vows - see the end of the Ramban's comments at Bamidbar 30:2).

In other words, squarely placed in the middle of the "interrupting section" are the two Parashot which deal with the end of Mosheh's leadership and the onset of Yehoshua's.

Having identified the structure, we can see that this entire section is made up of two sub-sections (Census and T'midin) with the transfer of leadership as the fulcrum around which they revolve. As such, we would expect a single message to emerge from each of the sub-sections, a message which is somehow made clearer by the 14 verses at its axis.

Let's begin from the inside out - from the command to Mosheh that he ascend the mountain and Mosheh's response:

12. And Hashem said to Mosheh, Get up into this Mount Abarim, and see the land which I have given to the people of Israel.

13. And when you have seen it, you also shall be gathered to your people, as Aharon your brother was gathered.

14. For you rebelled against my commandment in the desert of Zin, in the strife of the congregation, to sanctify me at the water before their eyes; that is the water of Meribah in Kadesh in the wilderness of Zin.

15. And Mosheh spoke to Hashem, saying,

16. Let Hashem, the God of the spirits of all flesh, set a man over the congregation,

17. Who may go out before them, and who may go in before them, and who may lead them out, and who may bring them in; that the congregation of Hashem be not as sheep which have no shepherd.

18. And Hashem said to Mosheh, Take Yehoshua the son of Nun, a man in whom is spirit, and lay your hand upon him;

19. And set him before Eleazar the priest, and before the entire congregation; and give him a charge

in their sight.

20. And you shall put some of your honor upon him, that the entire congregation of the people of Israel may be obedient.

21. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him according to the judgment of Urim before Hashem; at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the people of Israel with him, the entire congregation.

22. And Mosheh did as Hashem commanded him; and he took Yehoshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before the entire congregation;

23. And he laid his hands upon him, and gave him a charge, as Hashem commanded by the hand of Mosheh.

The first thing for us to note here is that Mosheh is commanded to ascend the mountain at this point, never to return. That would mean that his glorious career has come to an end now, in Moav, just after having conducted a final census and seen to the complete disposition of the Land. This is, however, not the way that matters play out: Mosheh goes on to oversee the war with Midian, the division of the East Bank of the Jordan and to deliver a full farewell speech (Sefer D'varim). As noted above, we might posit that the command given here was given later, towards the end of Mosheh's farewell speech - but, if that is the case, why does the text insert it here? Either way, there must be something in Mosheh's response which somehow modifies the Divine decree and allows Mosheh to continue his leadership, if only for a short while.

III

"AS AHARON YOUR BROTHER WAS GATHERED"

Mosheh was told that he would be gathered unto his people "as Aharon your brother was gathered". This comparison is ambiguous - does it mean that he would die in the same manner? (see Rashi ad loc.) Could it be referring to the single violation in which both Mosheh and Aharon participated that caused their premature removal from the leadership of B'nei Yisra'el?

There is yet another aspect to this comparison which will illuminate our understanding of Mosheh's response and the evident "extension" he received as a result.

There are two basic models of leadership in T'nakh - dynamic and dynastic.

The entire book of Shoftim deals with a form of dynamic leadership whereby Hashem's response to B'nei Yisra'el's suffering and attendant calling out in pain is to inspire a new leader (invariably a member of the tribe "under fire" at the time). That leader rallies the troops to defeat the oppressor, loosen the bonds of persecution and then retains his position for life. Upon his death, however, the position becomes a void - until the next time when B'nei Yisra'el find themselves in need of

salvation.

Dynastic leadership (the focus of Sefer Sh'muel), contradistinctively, establishes a built-in system where the impending death of a leader is accompanied by the appointment of a successor (usually from among the sons of the dying monarch), such that there never need be a void of leadership. See, for instance, the opening chapter of Sefer Melakhim - where the succession of David's throne is being contested while the hoary king is on his death-bed.

What sort of leadership is the lot of Aharon? It is clear that his was dynastic. For example, when he is charged with maintaining the sanctified areas and items:

And Hashem said to Aharon, You and your sons and your father's house with you shall bear the iniquity of the sanctuary; and you and your sons with you shall bear the iniquity of your priesthood. (Bamidbar 18:1)

Throughout the commands to Aharon, the phrase "Aharon uvanav" (Aharon and his sons - see, e.g. Sh'mot 27:21, Vayyikra 6:9, Bamidbar 4:5) is found with great frequency. Furthermore, in the command regarding the Parah Adumah (Bamidbar 19), given while Aharon is still alive, his son El'azar is mentioned by name as responsible for the sprinkling of the blood (vv. 3- 4).

Ostensibly, Mosheh's leadership was of a dynamic sort; he was selected to lead B'nei Yisra'el out of Mitzrayim (i.e. in response to oppression) and, now that his career was to end, there would not necessarily be a need for another leader until the next "crisis" came about. Much as the leadership operated in a post-Yehoshua Israel, the nation could have been run by a loose federation of the elders until entering the land. In other words, the position of leadership (Navi/Melekh) occupied by Mosheh was not necessarily to be constant, rather in response to need. For example, note the way that the Torah describes the appearance of later prophets:

(in response to the anticipated temptation among B'nei Yisra'el to consult soothsayers)

Hashem your God will raise to you a prophet from your midst, from your brothers, like me; to him you shall listen; According to all that you desired of Hashem your God in Horev in the day of the assembly, saying, Let me not hear again the voice of Hashem my God, neither let me see this great fire any more, that I die not. And Hashem said to me, They have well spoken that which they have spoken. I will raise them a prophet from among their brothers, like you, and will put my words in his mouth; and he shall speak to them all that I shall command him. (D'varim 18:15-18)

As such, Hashem's command that Mosheh ascend the mountain - alone - signaled the end of that glorious career and an impending void of leadership.

Although the Divine intent in the phrase "as Aharon your brother died" may have been associated with the manner of death (or the violation, as above), Mosheh extended it to relate to the manner of succession.

What was the manner of succession of Aharon's leadership?

And Hashem spoke to Mosheh and Aharon in Hor haHar, by the border of the land of Edom, saying, Aharon shall be gathered to his people; for he shall not enter into the land which I have given to the people of Israel, because you rebelled against my word at the water of Merivah. Take Aharon and El'azar his son, and bring them up to Mount Hor; And strip Aharon of his garments, and put them upon El'azar his son; and Aharon shall be gathered to his people, and shall die there. And Mosheh did as Hashem commanded; and they went up to Mount Hor in the sight of the entire congregation. And Mosheh stripped Aharon of his garments, and put them upon El'azar his son; and Aharon died there in the top of the mount; and Mosheh and El'azar came down from the mount. And when the entire congregation saw that Aharon was dead, they mourned for Aharon thirty days, all the house of Yisra'el. (Bamidbar 20:23-29)

As Rashi (quoting the Midrash Tanhuma) points out (ad loc. v. 25), Mosheh consoled Aharon that at least he could see his "crown" given to his son while he was alive (that Mosheh would never see). A critical point in this entire scene is the presence of El'azar, whose donning of the garments established an unbroken chain of Kehunah which effectively outlived the person of Aharon.

That is how Mosheh "turned" the phrase "ka'asher meit Aharon ahikhah" - that if I am to die as did my brother Aharon, I should see the inauguration of my successor while I live. Mosheh effectively turned his leadership into a potential quasi-dynasty and "steered" the Divine command from a statement of the type of death he would experience into a statement about his entire career.

As such, Mosheh's reaction is understandable. Since God commanded him to ascend the mountain and die as did his brother, Mosheh "calls Him on it" and insists that the similarity between their deaths be complete: That he see his successor inaugurated before his death.

Hashem responded to this "request", indicating Divine acceptance (if not favor) to the Mosaic initiative. Indeed, the mention of El'azar in the context of Yehoshua's appointment creates the immediate association with Aharon's death.

Compare:

21. And he shall stand before Eleazar the priest, who shall ask counsel for him according to the judgment of Urim before Hashem; at his word shall they go out, and at his word they shall come in, both he, and all the people of Israel with him, the entire congregation.

22. And Mosheh did as Hashem commanded him; and he took Yehoshua, and set him before Eleazar the priest, and before the entire congregation;

with

And Mosheh stripped Aharon of his garments, and put them upon El'azar his son; and Aharon died there in the top of the mount; and Mosheh and El'azar came down from the mount. And when the

entire congregation saw that Aharon was dead...

The two cited passages share the presence of Mosheh, El'azar and "the entire congregation" (kol ha'edah), along with a mention of the priestly garb worn by El'azar, solidifying the association created by the phrase "as did Aharon your brother".

IV

THE NEW LEADERSHIP

What changed as a result of Mosheh's insistence on creating a quasi- dynasty?

(I refer to it as a quasi-dynasty because, in spite of the continuity of leadership, the absence of filial ascension renders it something less than a full dynasty. This may be the reason that there was no concern about Yehoshua's children and their worthiness for the post - if he had any - since the position of "next shepherd of B'nei Yisra'el" would not be filled by a family member but by the man most fit for the job.)

To ask the question more clearly - what would have happened had Mosheh not responded as he did?

First of all, there is no reason to think that Mosheh would have had to lead the people to the point of entry in to the Land; the decree was never stated that he would have to die just before they entered (enhancing the drama and personal frustration). Witness Aharon, whose death was decreed at the same time and for the same purpose (but cf. Abravanel, D'varim 1:37) but who died at some point earlier than "the very last moment of the desert wandering", before the East Bank of the Jordan was captured from the Emorite kings of Heshbon and Bashan.

Second, the orientation of Mosheh's farewell would likely have been more "past-oriented", reflecting on the Exodus and wanderings, without creating the continuity with the next stage of national existence in the Land.

Now that a succession has been established, the "rules" have changed.

Mosheh's leadership must continue until the point where Yehoshua is ready to take over, since, under the new scheme, that leadership is to be a continuum.

Since the next "crisis" to be faced is entering the Land and disinheriting its people, that is the point at which Yehoshua is to take over; hence, Mosheh will live until that point (unlike Aharon) - taking the decree until the last minute and the final kilometer, so to speak.

As a result of that, any wars to be fought on the East Bank must now be fought under Mosheh's leadership. Since the war with Midian was not a "crisis" but rather the result of a Divine command in response to the Midianite/Moabite treachery associated with P'or-worship, there is no need for

Yehoshua to be installed at that point. In fact, Yehoshua plays no role in that war - rather, Mosheh and El'azar are the central figures in Ch. 31.

It follows, then, that the war against Midian was originally given to be carried out by B'nei Yisra'el after Mosheh's death. Hence, they were commanded to "harass" them in Ch. 25 but that command was not given a clear form until after Mosheh was told to ascend the mountain. Since Mosheh reoriented the leadership scheme, however, he would remain through that war and, as the text states:

Avenge the people of Yisra'el of the Midianim; afterwards shall you be gathered to your people.
(31:2)

V

THE CENSUS AND THE DIVISION OF THE LAND

The analysis suggested above brings us back to our original question regarding the odd placement of the Parashot of T'midin uMusafin.

Before directly addressing the question, let's return to the Parashot of the census. One of the remarkable features of the census is the startling result: 601,730 soldiers counted just before entering the land (Bamidbar 26:51). Compare this number with the census of nearly 39 years previous: 603,550 (ibid. 1:46). Through the wandering, the dying out of an entire adult population and the raising of a new generation, born free in the wilderness - the total adult male population is nearly the same as it was at the Exodus. (Leaving aside the curiosity that the number counted on the 20th day of the 2nd year - Bamidbar 1 - is exactly the same as that some months earlier during the collection for the Mishkan [Sh'mot 38:26 - see Rashi at Sh'mot 30:16 and Ramban ad loc. v. 12]; Rav Elhanan Samet has written a comprehensive article on the problem which can be found in his *Iyyunim beParashat haShavua*, Parashat Bamidbar).

It might be assumed that the representative participation of each tribe remained constant - but note the changes over the 39 years in the desert:

Tribe 2nd Year 40th Year

Reuven 46,500 43,730

Shim'on 59,300 22,200

Gad 45,650 40,500

Yehudah 74,600 76,500

Yissachar 54,400 64,300

Zevulun 57,400 60,500
Ephraim 40,500 32,500
Menasheh 32,200 52,700
Binyamin 35,400 45,600
Dan 62,700 64,400
Asher 41,500 53,400
Naphtali 53,400 45,400
Total: 603,500 601,730

In spite of the severe depletion of Shim'on's soldiers (likely as a result of the plague following the P'or-worship), the marked drop-off in Ephraim's army and the significant diminution of Naphtali's fighting force, the total remains nearly the same - a bit over the "magic" number of 600,000 (see BT Berakhot 58a).

One message that emerges from the comparison of these two censuses is the consistency of B'nei Yisra'el's existence and the phenomenon of "making up for losses" accomplished by the corporate whole. To wit, people are born, people die, but corporate Israel lives on.

This message is strengthened by the census of the Levi'im, which totals 23,000 men from one month and up in the 40th year (26:62), and totals 22,000 at the beginning of the second year (3:39).

Thus, the first 12 paragraphs, as well as #14, underscore the basic message of Israelite continuity in spite of the cycle of death and birth which takes its toll on every member.

Paragraph #13 deals with the division of the Land. Note that Mosheh is somewhat excluded from the process and the division will be based not on the households headed by "live" members, rather by those who left Egypt (and are now buried between Kadesh and Moav) - again, the nation that left Egypt lives on, even if the individuals do not.

The final two parashot in this section deal with the daughters of Tz'lafhad - the inclusion here is most appropriate, as it deals with the division of the land and the loophole which needs to be closed in the case of a man who dies, leaving only daughters.

Yet there is a short phrase that is very instructive in the presentation of B'not Tz'lafhad which serves to highlight what is new about this second generation - and what they share with their forebears.

When the young women approach Mosheh with their petition, they use the phrase: Lamah Yigara' - why should (our father's name) be left out? (27:4). This word combination appears only one other place in T'nakh. When the men come before Mosheh (at the very beginning of the second year) complaining that due to ritual impurity they are being excluded from the Korban Pesach (Bamidbar

9:7), they state *Lamah Nigara'* - why should we be left out?

The common phrasing here (which I addressed in the Siyyum on Sefer Bamidbar in a different vein) serves to tie the two generations together, while setting them far apart.

The generation that knew slavery, that experienced the Exodus first hand and that stood, as adults, at the foot of Sinai - continued to use Egypt as their frame of reference. When God "introduces" Himself to B'nei Yisra'el at Sinai (see Sh'mot 20:2 and, specifically, Abravanel and R. Yehudah haLevi [quoted in Ibn Ezra] ad loc. and ibid. 19:1-6), He uses the Exodus as the point of departure (pun intended) for establishing the ongoing B'rit.

The people, as well, continued to refer to Egypt - specifically in their complaints. They longed to return, even to be buried in Egypt (Bamidbar 14:2), waxed nostalgic about the free food and plenty of Egypt (while conveniently forgetting their servitude - ibid. 11:5) and so on.

The impure men of Chapter 7 feel cheated by their exclusion from the offering and ask Mosheh to find them a solution (which turns out to be the Pesach Sheni). These men long to participate in the Korban Pesach - an offering which celebrates the Exodus from Egypt.

When the daughters of Tz'laf'had, raised in the desert without adult memories (if any) of Egypt, express their great desire not to be excluded, it is the Land that they long to inherit. Whereas the last generation felt its identity as "Yotz'ei Mitzrayim", the new generation saw its *raison d'etre* as entering the land.

The common phrase *Lamah Nigara' / Yigara'* serves to demonstrate the great change which has taken place over 38 years - along with the consistency which accompanies that change.

What is the nature of the consistency? A great desire to be included with the community (see the Siyyum on Sefer Bamidbar) and to fully partake in the experience of K'lal Yisra'el.

Thus, the entire section bridging the command to harass the Midianites and the command to Mosheh to ascend the mountain is defined by the constant nature of Am Yisra'el throughout the desert - at once affirming Mosheh's success as a leader and teacher, and denying the need for him to remain present, since the nation goes on regardless of the fate of the individual.

VI

T'MIDIN UMUSAFIN

The sixteen paragraphs following the "turn" in leadership are devoted to the calendar of public offerings; following the reasoning outlined above (and noting the neatly balanced number of Parashot bridging the appointment of Yehoshua and the command to wreak vengeance on Midian) we would expect some underlying message to be found in these paragraphs which associates with the common theme.

Each paragraph is imbued with significant concepts and ideas - and perhaps we will address them in a separate essay. For purposes of this analysis, however, we will simply note that which is common throughout the first fifteen - the Korban haTamid.

In 28:1-8, we are commanded to offer up one lamb in the morning and one in the afternoon, parallel or modeled after the offering at Sinai (28:6). This is the "constant Korban" which is brought daily, including Shabbat, holidays and even overriding ritual impurity (BT Menahot 72b). Each Musaf concludes with some form of the statement Al Olat haTamid - accompanying the Olat Tamid.

The constancy of worship - that each special day is framed within the contours of "Tamid" (the morning Tamid is brought before all other Korbanot and the afternoon brought after all others excepting the Korban Pesach), is something which is quite remarkable within the context of Mikdash worship. Normally, that which is special, festive etc. trumps the mundane and regular experience - but the message of the T'midin is the very opposite. The primacy of constancy as emerging from Parashat haTamid is a message which is adopted by Haza"l:

Ben Zoma says: we have found an encompassing verse: "Sh'ma Yisra'el"; Ben Nanas says: we have found an even more encompassing verse: "v'Ahavta l'Re'akha Kamokha". Shim'on ben Pazi says: We have found a yet more encompassing verse, namely: The one lamb you shall offer in the morning..." (Maharal, quoting an otherwise unknown Midrash, Netivot Olam, Netiv Ahavat Re'a Ch. 1).

This message of constancy of worship is the ideal balance to the message identified in the 16 paragraphs dealing with the census and the land.

As such, these parashot of the power of constancy - the constancy of Am Yisra'el as a nation on the one side and the constancy of Am Yisra'el's relationship to haKadosh Barukh Hu on the other, serve to perfectly frame the dialogue between Mosheh and Hashem during which the dynamic leadership of a Shofet/Navi becomes the quasi-dynastic leadership of a Melekh - constant and seamlessly passing to the next leader, just as his brother did on Hor haHar.

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