

Bamidbar 2013

1.

Why are Leviyim counted from one month?

Nachlas Tzvi page 331

“These were all the counting’s of the Children of Israel, according to their fathers’ households, from twenty years of age and up, everyone who goes out to the legion (to war) in Israel”(1, 45)

"ויהיו כל פקודי בני ישראל לבית אבתם מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כל יצא צבא בישראל."

Why are the Leviyim counted from a different age, one month? The Leviyim did not go to war, and they didn’t receive a portion of the land in Israel. Therefore they do not need to be counted by the age of twenty because that age is irrelevant for these Leviyim who don’t go out to war. Another answer is the Jews in the desert, from twenty years and up, were counted by giving shekalim (coins). These shekalim atoned for the golden calf. Only when a person is twenty can he get punished and is fully responsible for his sins, therefore they count from twenty. But since the Leviyim were not involved or responsible for the golden calf, they were counted from the age of one month of age.

2.

Every Jew counts

Why is safer Bamidbar typically lained before Shavuos? Tosfos (Megilah 31b) answers that this is done in order that the curses that are lained in parshas Bechukosai aren’t uttered right before Shevuos.

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein offers an additional answer. Many people tend to incorrectly assume that they will not reach a high level and the therefore unfortunately give up and lose hope. They will end up being lax with their Torah learning. We therefore lain parshas Bamidbar prior to Shavuos in order to strengthen the concept that every single Jew matters and counts. We want people to be properly encouraged rather than discouraged. It is irrelevant how young or old they are. Every single person is incredibly important and has a very high value.