

"shevet Levi" : Sefer Bamidbar vs. Sefer Devarim

OUTLINE for shiur by Menachem Leibtag /- www.tanach.org

A. Intro - defining the problem

What is the distinction between a "kohen" & a "levi"

See Bamidbar 18:2-7; 18:21-24; in light of 1:48-51; 3:5-10

Note as well "birkat kohanim" in 6:22-27

See Devarim 10:8-9; 17:8-9

B. Concept of "bechor" in light of Sefer Breishit & Shmot 4:22

Connection to "kedusha" in light of Shmot 19:5-6

Dedication of first born to Hashem /Shmot 13:1-3, 11-16

& Transfer of duties to Levites/ Bamidbar 3:

C. Discussion - concept of 'privilege' vs. 'responsibility'

Note Bamidbar 16:8-9

Relate to underlying purpose of being 'chosen'

[Logic of need of an eternal group of educators to instruct]

D. Original designation of Shevet Levi, according to Devarim 10:8-9

יח בעת ההוא, הבדיל ה' את-שבט הלוי,

• לשאת, את-ארון ברית-ה'—

(do we need an entire tribe for a one-time job?)

• לעמד לפני ה' לשרתו

▪ (what type of service does this refer to?)

• ולברך בשמו, עד היום הזה.

▪ (isn't that only the kohanim who bless the people?)

ט על-בן לא-היה ללוי, חלק ונחלה--עם-אחיו: ה' הוא נחלתו, כאשר דבר ה' אליהם לו .

Discussion - what does it mean to carry "the ark of the covenant"

Relating to purpose of Mishkan & connection to Matan Torah

E. The reason for the transfer of responsibilities

see Shmot 32:25-30, in the aftermath of chet ha'egel?
an 'after-thought' or 'added' responsibility?

F. Their obligations as teachers and judges - & to inspire

see Devarim 33:10, in Moshe's blessing [see also 24:8]
see Devarim 14:22-23, teaching the fear of God in Jerusalem
note 14:26-27; 12:11-12; 12:17-19 - in contrast to 16:10 & 14
see Devarim 17:7-8;12; 17:18 & 21:5 - in regard to their authority
see Devarim 18:1-8, regarding their compensation
see Devarim 19:16-17, regarding their function as judges [& 16:18-20]
see Devarim 27:9-14 & 31:9-13, 24-26 -regarding to their national function
see II Divrei Hayamim 17:7-9; 29:1-15; 30:21-27; 35:1-5//
and Nechemya 8:13-18

G. Who fulfills the function of shevet Levi today? Rambam/Hilchot Shmita 13:12-13

ולמה לא זכה לוי בנחלת ארץ ישראל ובבזתה עם אחיו מפני שהבדל לעבד את ה' לשרתו ולהורות
דרכיו הישרים ומשפטיו הצדיקים לרבים שנאמר " יורו משפטיך ליעקב ותורתך לישראל".
לפיכה הבדלו מדרכי העולם לא עורכין מלחמה כשאר ישראל ולא נוהלין ולא זוכין לעצמן בכל
גופן. אלא הם חיל השם שנאמר "ברך ה' חילו". והוא זוכה להם שנאמר "אני חלקך ונחלתך":

12 Why were the Levites not allotted land in Eretz Yisrael or a share in its booty along with their brethren? Because they were singled out to serve the Lord and minister to him, to teach his upright ways and just laws to many people, as it is written: "They shall teach thy laws to Jacob, and thy instruction to Israel" ([Deuteronomy 33:10](#)). For this reason, they were separated from worldly affairs: they fought no battles like the rest of Israel; they inherited no land; they won nothing by means of their physical ability. They are indeed the Lord's army, as it is written: "Bless, O Lord, his substance" (11). He, blessed be he, has won them for himself, as it is written: "I am your portion and your share" ([Numbers 18:20](#)).

ולא שבט לוי בלבד אלא כל איש ואיש מפל באי העולם אשר נדבה רוחו אותו –
והבינו מדעו להבדל לעמד לפני ה' לשרתו ולעבדו לדעה את ה'
הלך ישר כמו שעשהו האלהים- ופרק מעל צנארו על החשבונות הרבים אשר בקשו בני האדם--
הרי זה נתקדש קדש קדשים --ויהיה ה' חלקו ונחלתו לעולם ולעולמי עולמים
ויוזכה לו בעולם הזה דבר המספיק לו כמו שזכה לכהנים ללוים.
הרי דוד עליו השלום אומר [תהילים טז ה](#) " ה' מנת חלקי וכוסי אתה תומיך גורלי":

13 Not only the tribe of Levi, but each well-informed thinking person whose spirit moves him to devote himself to the service of the Lord, to know the Lord, and has walked uprightly after casting off his neck the yoke of many a cunning wile that men contrived, is indeed divinely consecrated, and the Lord will forever and ever be his portion. God will provide sufficiently for his needs, as he did for the priests and the Levites. David, may he rest in peace, declared: "The Lord is my allotted portion and my cup; thou holdest my lot" ([Psalm 16:5](#)).