## Parashah Bamidbar

The one where the Israelites organize the tribes as they journey through the wilderness following their liberation from slavery in Egypt.

**The parashah begins with the commandment for Moses and Aaron to conduct a census (count) of the Israelites**. They are instructed to count all men aged 20 and above who are fit for military service. This census is needed for organizing the Israelite community as they prepare for their journey through the wilderness.

**The arrangement of the camp is carefully described**. The twelve tribes are assigned strategic positions around the Tabernacle (Mishkan in Hebrew), which serves as the central place of worship and divine presence. Each tribe shows its unique banner, creating a vibrant mix of unity and order.

**The Levites are set apart for special duties as guardians of the Tabernacle**. They are not included in the census of the other tribes. Instead, they are responsible for the care, dismantling, transportation, and reassembly of the Tabernacle whenever the Israelites move. The Levites are seen as a special and honored group within the community.

**This parashah also introduces laws and rituals related to purity and impurity within the camp**. It outlines rules for dealing with those who are impure, such as lepers or those who have come into contact with the dead. These laws help the spiritual and physical well-being of the community.

All of this is happening while the Israelites are a nomadic community on the move. Picture the Israelites as a cohesive force, a bustling caravan, each tribe playing a unique, vital role in the epic journey toward the Promised Land.

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## Teen Takeaways from Parashah Bamidbar

1. **Teamwork matters**: Just like the Israelite tribes had to work together, it’s important for us to cooperate with our peers and family members. We all have unique talents, and when we combine them, we can achieve amazing things.
2. **The Israelites are made up of many teams working independently and together**. Do you think they were competing or cooperating, or both? Why is competition sometimes a good thing?
3. **Know your strengths**: Just as the Israelites were organized to understand their strength, it's good to know what you're good at and where you can improve. This self-awareness can help you set goals and make the most of your abilities. Everybody has some talent or strength.
4. **Celebrate diversity**: The different Israelite tribes had their own identities, but they were still part of the same nation. We should appreciate and respect people from different backgrounds and cultures. Our differences make the world interesting! Are Jews all alike? How can our diversity make us a more interesting group of people?
5. **Find your calling**: Just like the Levites had special roles, we all have unique talents and interests. Discover what you're passionate about, and use it to make a positive impact in your community. Do you have common interests with your best friends? Is that what you like about one another, or did you develop those interests while together?
6. **Stay connected to your beliefs**: The Tabernacle (Mishkan in Hebrew) symbolizes spirituality and having a sense of purpose. Having something that guides you and keeps you grounded can be very important.
7. **Life is a journey**: Life is full of ups and downs, like the Israelites' journey in the wilderness. Remember that challenges are a part of growing up and each experience helps you learn and become stronger. What did you feel like after you accomplished something challenging? How do you think you will feel the day after your b'nai mitzvah?
8. **Stay organized**: Having a plan and staying organized can make your life smoother and less stressful. It's a skill that will be super helpful in school, for extracurricular activities, and later in your career. Are you a planner, or are you more spontaneous? Are there times when one is preferrable to the other?
9. **Leadership isn't easy**: Leaders like Moses and Aaron faced many challenges. If you ever find yourself in a leadership role, remember that it can be tough, but being patient, understanding, and persistent can help you succeed.
10. **Appreciate what you have**: When the Israelites counted themselves, this reminded them to be grateful. Take time to appreciate your family, your friends, and the good things in your life. Gratitude can make you happier. Have you ever heard the expression "count your blessings"? What does that mean to you?
11. **Plan for your future**: Just as the Israelites were preparing to enter the Promised Land, think about your goals for the future. What do you want to achieve? Having a plan can help you get there. The Israelites had to change their route and their plans along the way. If you have a plan, does that confine you to one particular path?

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## Summary

Parashah Bamidbar teaches us about **teamwork**, **self-discovery**, **respecting diversity**, **finding purpose**, and **facing life's challenges**. These lessons can help you grow and **navigate the teenage years** with confidence and wisdom.

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