

*The actual dvar was based on the following notes:*

Great book....history, intrigue, attempted coup d'état, miracles galore, snakes, quail, giant lemons, talking donkeys, you name it

Unfortunately none of that is in this parsha.

We get the census. Then the battle formations. Which, by the way, don't move for 40 years.

Ramban and Rambam argue about whether you can even have a census, Ramban saying yes, Rambam saying no, so that is why the counted money instead of heads.

The general commentaries on Bamidbar talk about the need for individuality and individual responsibility as represented by the fact that each person had to contribute the half shekel. The formations and banners speak to community and the upcoming trial and tribulations of the Jewish people in the desert and beyond

And some wax poetically about the desert and how if one gets enough peyote....actually Bamidbar can be read as the first Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas. Talking donkeys. Need I say more. Lhavdil.

Bamidbar is also about Moshe and Aaron – their saga continues.

Oh yeah, Miriam, too. Wouldn't want to disrespect the women. But that's another dvar

Aaron – the first great sidekick. Jimmy Olsen, Ed Norton and Tonto (l'havdil)

Rashi, that sometimes Aaron is mentioned before Moses and sometimes Moses is mentioned before Aaron. This, says the Midrash, comes to teach us that they were both equal.

He cites "Aaron & Moshe" in that order in Shmot 2:16

(Devarim 34:10) "Never again has there arisen [or will there arise] in Israel a prophet like Moses." This clearly indicates that Moses was greater than any other prophet including his older brother Aaron.

So, how can they be equal?

we can understand the necessity for Moses to be above anyone else, since he is the one G'd chose to convey the entire Torah with the 613 mitzvot to the Jewish Nation for all generations. His authority must forever be indisputable

The Talmud establishes this fundamental belief and teaches that since the giving of the Torah not even a prophet has the authority to alter it in any form whatsoever. Except the guys who wrote the Talmud as we are coming to learn.

So if Moses was so special, how can our sages suggest that Aaron was his equal?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein explains that when our sages teach that Moses and Aaron were equals they are not talking about their level of prophecy or piety, but rather that each one fully utilized their capabilities in their service of G'd. Every human being is blessed with specific abilities and potentials that they need in life to fulfill

their unique purpose. G'd does not measure our achievements as much as our effort and toil. Our achievements are in the hands of G'd Himself; whereas the effort and toil is our input. Rabbi Moishe Chaim Luzatto writes (Path of the Just Chapter 1): "The foundation of piety is for every individual to clarify what is his obligation in his world and towards what should he focus and aim with all that he toils throughout his life." Rabbi Luzatto here directs us to understand that every individual has their personal obligation that they must discover how to achieve.

Sounds like a burden...always to be searching for one's true destiny

"Ben Zoma said: ....Who is rich? He who is satisfied with his lot

So it is a balancing act....between striving and being satisfied with what we have.

Where do we find this balance in our lives? How do we know that we have found the right balance?