

# Divrei Jeshurun

Parshat Ba'alotecha 5761

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by Rabbi Joshua Cypess

## Statistics: Ba'alotecha

- ❖ 36th of the 54 Torah portions
- ❖ 3rd of 10 in Bemidbar
- ❖ Written on 240 lines in a Sefer Torah (5.7 columns) -- ranks 10th in the Torah
- ❖ 16 parshiyot; 11 open, 5 closed
- ❖ One of the parshiyot (it's a S'TUMA) is separated from the parshiyot before and after it by more than blank space (as is usual) - namely, backwards NUNs. Consequently, this parsha is the most isolated of all parshiyot. (see below)
- ❖ 136 verses - ranks 11th (4th in Bemidbar)
- ❖ 1840 words - ranks 12th (3rd in Bemidbar)
- ❖ 7055 letters - ranks 12th (4th in Bemidbar)
- ❖ Ba'alotecha contains 5 of the 613 mitzvot according to the *Sefer ha-Hinukh* - 3 positive & 2 negative (see chart)

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## Halakha in the Parsha: Halakha Chart

The following is a listing of the commandments in this week's parsha. The first column is a simple ordinal listing within the parsha. The next column lists each mitzva relative to the total of 613. The next column states whether the command is positive or negative. The last column is where the command is listed in Numbers.

#	613	☺	Command	Num.
1	380	P	How to observe "Pesach Sheni" on the 14th of Iyyar	9:11
2	381	P	How to offer the paschal sacrifice ( <i>pesach</i> ) for <i>Pesach sheni</i> and to eat it with <i>matzah</i> and <i>maror</i>	9:11
3	382	N	Not to leave over any part of the <i>pesach</i> for the next day	9:12
4	383	N	Not to break the bones of the <i>pesach</i> offering	9:12
5	384	P	To sound trumpets & <i>shofars</i> in the Temple and in battle	10:9

## Insight in the Parsha: The Inverted Nuns

The text of the Torah has been preserved by the class of scholars known as the *Baalei Mesorah* (the masters of the Tradition) -- scribes who kept the Divine Writ as error free as humanly possible. Masoretic marks are common in the Torah (e.g. large or small letters) but surely the most mysterious is in this week's parsha.

The passage of **Bemidbar 10:35-26** is bracketed, fore and aft, by an inverted *Nun* (the letter). The Talmud (TB Shabbat 115b-116a) learns a number of laws from this peculiar passage. For example, Rabban Shimon ben Gamliel teaches that this passage is a separate book of the Torah! It contains 85 letters (and two names of God) and so the minimum text for a "book" of Torah is 85 letters (this has ramifications for what can be saved from a fire on Shabbat).

Thus, according to Rashbag, there are 7 books of the Torah: 4 before the passage, and 2 afterwards (Bemidbar being split into three). A verse in **Proverbs 9:1** -- stating there are *seven pillars* in the house of wisdom.

Those who disagree with Rashbag claim that the *Nuns* indicate that the 2 verse passage is just printed out of place in order to separate the punishment period of the journey to Israel.

Rav Ashi claims that this passage is meant to be in Chapter 2 of Bemidbar with the description of the banners & travelling of Israel.