

# Bamidbar

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699

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

# Pachad David

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Under the auspices of **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlit**  
Son of the tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l**, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker **Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"l**



Maskil L'David

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by **Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlit**

## The Lesson to be Learned from Counting the Jewish People

**"Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by families following their fathers' houses"**

(Bamidbar 1:2)

This parshah discusses at great length the number of Bnei Yisrael, in order to get an exact count. Of course, the entire Torah teaches man the way to behave and how to conduct himself. What is the lesson to be learned from counting the Jewish people? We also need to clarify why the Torah enumerates every Tribe separately instead of giving the total sum of all the Tribes together. It is also puzzling that after the Torah counted all the Tribes and recorded the total, the Tribe of Levi was counted separately. Thus Hashem commanded (Bamidbar 1:49): "Only the tribe of Levi you shall not number, and you shall not reckon their sum among the children of Israel." In what way was the Tribe of Levi unique that they were counted separately? Furthermore, we have to understand that the number of Levi'im correspond to the first-born Jews, and Rashi explains that this is because the first-born were supposed to serve in the Beit Hamikdash, but since they sinned with the Golden Calf the Levi'im served instead of them. However, since the first-born numbered more than the Levi'im by two hundred seventy three people, Hashem commanded them to be redeemed by five shekalim, as it is stated (Bamidbar 3:47-48) "You shall take five shekels per head... You shall give the money to Aharon and his sons, in redemption for the firstborns who are in excess of them." Yet, since Hashem, may His Name be blessed forever, is Omnipotent and He could have arranged for another two hundred seventy three Levi'im to be born so that it would correspond exactly to the number of the first-born, then why did He cause there to be additional first-born who would need to be redeemed?

To resolve these questions, we should first remember that the entire point of counting Bnei Yisrael is in order to show His affection and appreciation for them, and in order that we should realize that every single Jew is a beloved treasure of Hashem, just like a favorite son, as it is stated (Shemot 4:22) "My firstborn son is Israel." Yisrael is chosen as Hashem's favorite and referred to as Hashem's sons, as it is stated (Devarim 14:1) "You are children of the L-rd, your G-d." Because of His love for us, Hashem watches over us constantly and counts us, as Rashi explains: "Because they were dear to Him, He counted them often. When they left Egypt, He counted them (Shemot 12:37); when [many] fell because [of the sin] of the golden calf, He counted them to know the number of the survivors (Shemot 32:28); when He came to cause His Divine Presence to rest among them, He counted them." Therefore, when Hashem counted B'nei Yisrael, He counted each Tribe separately, in order to demonstrate that each Tribe

is like an only son; just as if each Tribe was an only Tribe, and there were no other Tribes except for them.

This is the lesson learned from this parshah. Just as Hashem showers His love upon His sons, and out of His affection He counts them, so too, every Jew must appreciate and love his fellow wholeheartedly, with all his resources, as the Torah states, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." A person should take care to provide his fellow with all his needs and be very careful not to slight his honor, as it is stated (Avot 2:15), "Let the honor of your fellow be as dear to you as your own." Just as Hashem favors His sons, so too should each person behave towards his fellow and treat his fellow with respect. How can one achieve this level? The answer lies in the word "Bamidbar – in the Wilderness." By turning himself into a virtual "wilderness," which people trample over, his appreciation for his fellow will grow, and he will be respectful of others. One who wishes to acquire Torah must perceive himself as a "wilderness," as Chazal say (Eiruvin 44a): "And from the Wilderness to Mattanah" – if a man allows himself to be treated as a wilderness over which everybody treads, his study will be retained by him, otherwise it will not. Likewise, in order to achieve the virtue of loving-kindness, he must perceive himself as a "wilderness" and be humble, because an arrogant man assumes that the whole world was created to serve him, and thus is not capable of considering other people's needs. However, if he perceives himself as a "wilderness" and is humble, he is certainly prepared to be considerate of his fellow and consequently honor his wishes and respect him.

A well-to-do Jew in Brazil told me that there is a holiday in his country held once a year in honor of the country. During that week everyone gathers together and they dance, sing, eat and drink, get drunk and go wild. As it is known, in Brazil there are some of the largest underground criminal organizations in the world, and they are known to kidnap rich people and ask for enormous ransoms... I asked him how he dares to join in this celebration; isn't he afraid that he would be kidnapped, since he is wealthy? He explained to me that in honor of their country, even the criminals are prepared to control themselves for a week and not harm anyone in order not to spoil the celebrations... I said to myself – if they understand that they have to unite in peace in honor of their country and not spoil the celebration, which is a disgusting rampage of alcohol and debauchery, how much more so must we be careful not to violate Hashem's joy and live in peace and harmony with our fellow in honor of our Creator, and love every Jew with all our souls and all our resources unconditionally. This does not apply just for one week, but all our lives this mitzvah must be a priority, as it is stated, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

### Chevrat Pinto NYC

207 West 78<sup>th</sup> Street • New York NY 10024 • U.S.A  
Tel: +1 212 721 0230 • Fax: +1 212 721 0195  
hevratpinto@aol.com

### Jerusalem • Pninei David

Rehov Bayit Va Gan 8 • Jérusalem • Israel  
Tel: +972 2643 3605 • Fax: +972 2643 3570  
p@hpinto.org.il

### Ashdod • Orh 'Haim Ve Moshe

Rehov Ha-Admour Mi-Belz 43 • Ashod • Israel  
Tel: +972 88 566 233 • Fax: +972 88 521 527  
orothaim@gmail.com

### Ra'anana • Kol 'Ha'im

Rehov Ha'ahouza 98 • Ra'anana • Israel  
Tel: +972 98 828 078 • +972 58 792 9003  
kolhaim@hpinto.org.il



### Hillulah of Tzaddikim

2 - Rabbi Yisrael of Vizhnitz

3 - Rabbi Yitzchak Chaim Hacohen Rabin

3 - Rabbeinu Ovadia of Bartenura

5 - Rabbi Yosef Ezra Zilkha

6 - King David

7 - Rabbi Yisrael Baal Shem Tov

7 - Rabbi Zalman Rottenberg Rosh Yeshiva "Beit Meir"



## Walking in their Ways

*Tidbits of faith and trust penned by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik, Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita*

### Believing in a Better Tomorrow

I once delivered a shiur in the Beit Hakneset Hagadol, in Vincennes, Paris. Afterward, an elderly woman approached me. She claimed that she must speak to me on the spot, for she did not have the strength to return when I normally accepted audiences. Many people were standing around, so I asked them to move aside in order to hear what this woman had to say.

This was her story:

My dear daughter reached marriageable age, but could not find her Divinely-intended partner. The years passed slowly by, and she became older, living at home all the while. One day, she approached the Rav, asking to be blessed with finding her intended. You blessed her that in the merit of your holy fathers, she would merit finding her life partner easily. But time marched on, and she was far from marching down the aisle. The blessing did not seem to take effect, for my daughter

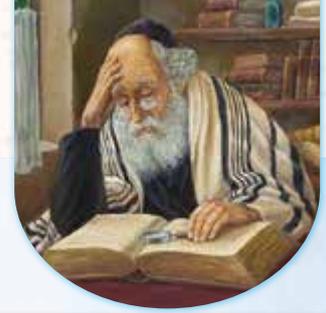
was nowhere near getting engaged. She therefore visited you time and again, never giving up her request for a blessing.

The last time she came, the Rav pounded on the table, declaring, "B'ezrat Hashem, in the merit of the tzaddik, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"a, tomorrow you will meet your truly intended!" My daughter accepted these words as a guarantee and walked out with a bounce in her step.

Honored Rav, I would like to fill you in on the rest of the story. The very next day, one of my daughter's friends invited her over to her house. There, she met this friend's brother. With Heavenly kindness, they were married and even merited bringing children into the world!

The woman was extremely emotional.

I told the woman that this wonderful miracle occurred in the merit of my holy ancestors and her and her daughter's simple faith in the blessing of the Rav. She took my words at face value.



## Words of Our Sages

### Which job is preferable?

**"These are the descendants of Moses and Aaron"**  
(Bamidbar 3:1)

Rashi explains (according to what is stated in Sanhedrin 19b) the reason why the pasuk lists only the sons of Aharon. The pasuk states "These are the Descendants of Moshe and Aharon," yet only the sons of Aharon are mentioned. However, they are considered descendants of Moshe because he taught them Torah. This teaches us that whoever teaches Torah to the son of his fellow man, the Torah regards it as if he had begotten him.

The Shelah Hakadosh adds: It is not only "as if" he begot him and not actually begot him, since, on the contrary, he truly begot him himself. This is because his father and mother provide him with his body, and his Rav bestows him with his soul... Thus, blessed is he who does so and learns and teaches his fellow's son Torah free of charge, since then his reward is double from Heaven.

When the Rabbi of Petach Tikvah, Rabbi Reuvain Katz, zt"l, established the regional Beit Din in his city, he sought a suitable candidate for the position of Dayan from the Sephardic community. He searched and inquired, and finally he chose the gaon Rabbi Yehudah Tzadkah, zt"l.

Rabbi Katz suggested that he come to Petach Tikvah to help decide and judge cases between man and his fellow.

The job that he offered was most respectable and tempting, and also he was promised a substantial salary. However, Rabbi Yehudah replied with absolute decisiveness that he did not intend to leave his job of teaching in the Porat Yosef yeshiva, because he felt that this was his mission in life.

The Rabbi of Petach Tikvah did not relent. He inquired what his salary was from the yeshiva, and he offered him a fivefold salary! He stressed that with such comfortable conditions he would be able to continue studying Torah even in the future with a peace of mind.

However, Rabbi Yehudah was not convinced by this argument at all, and was determined to remain in Porat Yosef. The ideal of establishing generations of Torah scholars, who would continue the chain of Torah appealed to him most. "Engaging young students in Torah is dearer to me than anything else," he declared.

## The Haftarah

The haftarah this week:

**"And the number of the children of Israel"**

(Hoshea 2:1)

The connection to the parashah: The prophet Hoshea relates in this haftarah that the number of Bnei Yisrael will multiply and be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or counted. This is similar to the parashah and the beginning of "Sefer Hapikudim" which mentions the ranks and number of Bnei Yisrael.



## Guard Your Tongue

*The Power of Speech*

### Distance yourself from a bad neighbor

It is prohibited to live in an environment of slanderers, and even more so to live amongst them and hear their gossip, even if he does not intend to believe them, because ultimately he hears it. One must be even more careful not to choose a seat in the Beit Hakneset near gossipers, since besides for indoctrinating him with bad character traits to gossip as well, he will also lose out answering "Amen, yehai Shmay Rabba" and "Barchu."



## Chazak U'Baruch

### Strengthening Fellowship and Meriting Blessing

Reish Lakish says that anyone who answers Amen with all his might, the gates of Gan Eden are opened for him, as it is stated (Shabbat 119b), "Resh Lakish said: He who responds 'Amen' with all his might, has the gates of Paradise opened for him, as it is written, Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth truth [shomer emunim] may enter in: read not 'shomer emunim' but 'she'omrim amen' [that say, amen]."

The gaon Rabbi Lipa Zilberman, shlit"a, the Mashgiach of the Talmud Torah "Kamenitz" met with the gaon Rabbi Moshe Aharon Stern, zt"l, the Mashgiach in the yeshiva of Kamenitz to ask his advice of how to instill the importance of answering Amen properly in the hearts of the boys.

The Mashgiach cited various Midrashim about the virtue of answering Amen and the greatness of he who answers. But Rabbi Lipa responded; I have already told them these Midrashim and it did not influence them to change their attitude.

The Mashgiach contemplated his words for a moment and then said, "I have an idea of how to illustrate the importance of the matter to them."

"Once when I was abroad, I received an invitation to my friend's wedding, with a small note attached stating that I had to confirm my reservation. I was not used to the idea of confirming my reservation and ignored the card. In the end, I spontaneously decided to attend.

When I arrived, I met a guard at the entrance of the hall, holding a list of the guests that had confirmed their attendance. My name did not appear on the list and I was not allowed to enter the hall. I tried in vain to argue that I was invited and was a close friend of the parents. I explained that it was mere forgetfulness on my part that I did not confirm my attendance. I pleaded that he should allow me to enter just for a few minutes to wish them "Mazel Tov" and nothing else. I explained that I had come from far away and I begged that my trip should not be in vain. However, my words fell on deaf ears.

Without a confirmation of my attendance I was not allowed to enter! I had to turn around and leave.

What is my point?

Man suffers tremendously in this world, sweating to make a living, enduring illness and pain, hardships in raising children, and experiences various difficult challenges. He says to himself: This world is ephemeral, as in a "corridor to the eternal world." Ultimately one ascends Above and gives reckoning, and of course, he is found to have committed many sins. He has to undergo a purifying process in Gehinom.

He is transferred from one section to another, suffering in anguish, while consoling himself that his sentence to Gehinom will only last for twelve months and thereafter he will merit Eternity.

And at last, he rises from the depths of Gehinom and reaches the gates of Gan Eden, where he will find solace. But, the gates are locked, and there is an angel standing guard, who asks for his entrance ticket.

"Entrance ticket," the man wonders? "But the Heavenly Court ruled that when my sins are purified in Gehinom, I will have a place in Gan Eden, where I will receive reward for my Torah study and observance of mitzvot."

"Sure," says the angel. "Your place is reserved for you. But in order to enter you need a ticket."

"Fine," answers the man. "But, please tell me what kind of ticket you are talking about."

The angel says: It is an explicit pasuk, "Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation which keepeth truth [shomer emunim] may enter in," and the Gemara explains, "Read not 'shomer emunim' but 'she'omrim amen' [that say, Amen]."

Whoever answers Amen properly, the gates of Gan Eden are opened for him. Otherwise, the gates remain locked.

## Treasures

Based on the teachings of  
Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagaon Hatzaddik  
Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita



### Pure lineage

**"And they assembled all the congregation on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees according to their families according to their fathers' houses" (Bamidbar 1:18)**

Rashi explains: "They brought the records of their pedigrees and witness of their birth claims, so that each one should trace his genealogy to a tribe." Chazal say that the nations of the world were jealous of B'nei Yisrael that Hashem favored them by counting them and having them camp with distinct flags. Hashem said to them – bring me your records of your genealogy, which will testify that not one of you know from which slave you stem from. In this parashah the modesty and sanctity of the Jews are praised, since they guarded themselves from immorality, unlike the nations of the world who could not prove their lineage.

This parashah is read in the beginning of the summer period, in which there is a greater need for guarding one's eyes. We need to be extra careful not to stumble in seeing immoral sights in the streets today. Only by guarding one's eyes one can refrain from transgression and preserve his family's pure lineage.

The Torah lengthens in great detail about their sum total, lineage and their exact number, and this is also true regarding the lengthy details of their encampment according to their individual flags and exact count of the sons of Levi. This is a puzzling thing, since the Torah does not elaborate in detail regarding the practical application of the mitzvot, such as the prohibition to work on Shabbat, which is punishable by stoning, and nevertheless, they are only hinted to. We need to clarify why the Torah is lengthy in this parashah.

It seems that the very fact that the Torah expands on the subject of B'nei Yisrael's lineage indicates Hashem's love for B'nei Yisrael and appreciation of them, because of their modesty and moral way of life in guarding their pure lineage, which testify to the purity and holiness of the Jewish people. This is why they merit special closeness to Hashem. As mentioned above, according to Chazal, family purity is the foundation of B'nei Yisrael and the basis for the Torah way of life. This is why the Torah expands on it.

This is the difference between the nations of the world and Am Yisrael. Am Yisrael are as scrupulous in performing a "minor" mitzvah as in a "major" one, and are scrupulous in adhering to the laws of modesty, which is not the case with the Gentiles, as it is stated regarding them (Chabakuk 3:6) "He stood and meted out to the earth; He beheld and caused nations to wander." Chazal say (Baba Kama 38a) "What did He behold? He beheld the seven commandments which had been accepted by all the descendants of Noah, and since [there were clans that] rejected them He rose up and granted them exemption. Does this mean that they benefited [by breaking the law]? And if so, will it not be a case of a sinner profiting [by the transgression he committed]? — Mar the son of Rabana thereupon said: 'It only means that even were they to keep the seven commandments [which had first been accepted but subsequently rejected by them] they would receive no reward.'" Thus we see that the Gentiles are not capable of observing even a few mitzvot, let alone the entire Torah. But, Am Yisrael are pure and holy and willing to accept all of Hashem's commandments wholeheartedly and observe them properly, to the extent that they would sacrifice their lives to fulfill them.



## Why the Rebbe asked for a pipe

One needs special protection when he embarks on a journey and travels far away.

There is a story about a Chassid from Poland who came before his Rebbe to receive his blessings before setting out on a business trip to Berlin.



## Men of Faith

Excerpts from the book *Men of Faith on the lives and deeds of the House of Pinto*

### The Little Holds the Many

During the hilula, the shelter over the grave of Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol expands beyond its limits. The room adjacent to the shelter is small, capable of accommodating no more than thirty people. It is a miracle that on the hilula, hundreds of people gather inside. This is similar to the description of what occurred in Yerushalayim during the time of the Beit Hamikdash, which is another example of “the little that held the many.”

One year, at four a.m., the entire congregation was in the midst of the Selichot prayers by the holy gravesite. Moreinu v’Rabbeinu approached the Aron Hakodesh to lead the prayers, when suddenly he saw a bright light flash before him. He thought that perhaps it was the flash of a camera or a bright overhead light. But it was neither. It was an unusually strong light, something extraordinary, which cannot be described in words.

The Rav wondered if perhaps he had been the only one to notice it. After questioning other participants, many of them admitted that they too had seen the bright light pass before them. The Rav maintained that it was a flash of the light of the tzaddik.

Moreinu v’Rabbeinu explains the essence of the light similarly to the way the tzaddik, Rabbi Avraham Ben Attar, zt”l, describes it in his sefer:

When we light candles by the gravesite, it has a special meaning. In Mishlei it says, “For a commandment is a lamp

The Rebbe told him, since you will be staying in Berlin several months, certainly it would not be difficult for you to buy me an ivory pipe made in Germany.

The Chassid was delighted to have the privilege of doing his Rebbe a favor, and he set out blissfully.

After a few months he returned, and on his way he remembered that he had completely forgotten about the pipe. He was very upset, and then he thought of an idea. He quickly entered a large store, and after searching around he found what he was looking for – an ivory pipe imported from Germany.

He came to his Rebbe and happily presented him with the pipe. However, to his great shame, The Rabbi turned over the gift and found

a telltale label reading: Imported from Germany!

The Rebbe looked questioningly at his Chassid, and since he found no other way out, the Chassid decided to admit the truth; “I had forgotten to buy the pipe in Germany, but it is exactly the same pipe.”

“Do you think that I need specifically an ivory pipe from Germany?” The Rabbi asked him. The only thing I wanted was that even while staying in Berlin, in an alienated environment so far from the embrace of your Beit Midrash, you would remember your Rebbe, your Chassidic way of life, and your fervent prayers, and in this way you would be spared from the spiritual dangers befalling those that travel far distances.

and the Torah is light.” A candle refers to the neshamah, as well as to mitzvot. This means that a person illuminates his neshamah by performing mitzvot. When we light candles by the grave of a tzaddik, we commemorate the mitzvot that he did in his lifetime. By invoking the memory of the tzaddik’s great merit, it ultimately serves as an advocate on our behalf. This is the bright light; the light that is created by the mitzvot of the tzaddik.

When a person believes wholeheartedly in the powers of a tzaddik, that he is capable of performing miraculous salvation, the tzaddik advocates on his behalf. This can assist him greatly, especially prior to the Days of Awe, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, when he seeks to find ways to promote his cause and increase his merits. There is nothing like the merit of the tzaddik to advocate positively for a person.

When we visit the grave of a tzaddik, we arouse his merits. Certainly this awakens the tzaddik to act on our behalf. This is why the tzaddik may send a sign that he is pleased, since people come and connect to Hashem in his merit. His presence is expressed through the bright light of inner spiritual satisfaction.

According to this explanation, those who saw the flash are most fortunate. Not everyone is worthy of it. Seeing such a light is a sign that Hashem accepted his prayers. Hashem proves to us how close He is when He sends us signs from Heaven to illuminate our way to Him.