

Bamidbar

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Hilula

- 5 Sivan, Rabbi Zeev of Zhitomir

- 6 Sivan, Rabbi Avraham
Mordekhai Alter, the Admur
of Gur

- 7 Sivan, Hochea ben Bari

- 8 Sivan, Rabbi Yaakov Meir

- 10 Sivan, Rabbi Ishmael
Hacohen

- 10 Sivan, Rabbi Yeshaya
Meshorer

- 11 Sivan, Rabbi Itzhak Yaakov
Weiss

Weekly Bulletin on the Parshah

Pachad David

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Under the auspices of Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

Son of the tzaddik Rabbi Moshe Ahron Pinto, zt"l, and grandson of the holy tzaddik and miracle-worker Rabbi Chaim Pinto, zy"ta



MASKIL LEDAVID

Weekly talk on the Parshah given by Moreinu v'Rabbeinu Hagoon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto, shlita

The Advantage of the Lineage of Bnei Yisrael

"And they established their genealogy according to their families, according to their fathers' household" (Bamidbar 1:18)

Rashi writes on this verse: "They brought their books of genealogy and witnesses of the veracity of each birth to prove they belonged to that tribe". Chazal tell us, "The nations of the world were jealous of the Bnei Yisrael. Why are they fitting to come close to Hashem through counting and belonging to a certain flag, more than us? Hashem answered them – bring your own books of lineage and it came out that they could not verify from which maidservant each one descended."

This parsha praises Am Yisrael's modesty and holiness in their remaining faithful to their lineage. They abstain from intermarriage, unlike the nations of the world who do not preserve their lineage.

This parsha is read at the beginning of the summer, when there is a particular need to guard one's eyes. One must be doubly careful not to stumble when going outside; the sights one meets in the streets are most immodest and unfortunately it is almost impossible to walk outside without stumbling; only through guarding one's eyes is a person prevented from sin and in this way protects his families' lineage.

The Midrash Rabba expounds on the verse, "These are the creatures that you may eat" (Vayikra 11:2), that Hashem considered all the nations and did not find a nation worthy to receive the Torah besides the Jewish people. The sefer 'Divrei Yoel' questions: "We have to understand why the Midrash brings this reference of the Jewish nation receiving the Torah, especially here in the section of "These are the creatures...?"

I would like to suggest an answer, bs"d, according to the Chazal that tells us (Yalkut Bamidbar remez 684), "At the time when the Bnei Yisrael received the Torah, the nations of the world were jealous. They said, why are they fitting to come close to Hashem more than the other nations? Immediately Hashem stopped up their mouths. He said to them, bring your book of genealogy just as My children are bringing, as it says "And they established their genealogy according to their families". Therefore, He counted them at the beginning of this sefer, following "These are the commandments..." (end of Sefer Vayikra), which is followed by "Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai...Take a census..." (beg. of Sefer Bamidbar). They reason why they merited receiving the Torah was because of their lineage."

From this Chazal it is clear that the main reason why the Bnei Yisrael merited receiving the Torah was because they acted with modesty and protected their lineage, whereas the other nations do not preserve their lineage. Now we can understand why the Midrash connects the fact that the Bnei Yisrael were the ones who merited receiving the Torah, to the commandment of not eating forbidden foods. Since Am Yisrael restrain themselves and do not behave like animals, therefore

it is not fitting for them to eat impure animals. This is in accordance with the Chazal, "Your deeds will bring you close and your deeds will distance you". Since the deeds of Yisrael are kosher, they were also commanded to eat food that is kosher. However, the nations of the world who behave "like a horse, like a mule, without understanding", and anyway behave like the lowest of the animals and beasts, therefore there is no reason to forbid them to eat impure animals and other bugs and insects- the idea being to increase holiness – for anyway their ways and deeds are utterly defiled.

We see from here that the manner of the Chosen Nation is unlike that of the other nations. Am Yisrael said "We will do and we will obey" and they observe the Torah with their mouths and with their hearts; it is implanted within them. However, the nations of the world, and even those who "The lofty praises of G-d are in their throats", those who talk lofty speech about the existence of the Creator, their deeds contradict their words and their behavior is like the lowest of the animals.

This parsha is read close to the festival of Shavuot – the festival of receiving the Torah. Of course, during these days, we must continue to strive in our avodat Hashem, even though each person has been preparing himself for seven weeks – during the days of the sefirah which are in fact days of preparation for receiving the Torah. Nevertheless, the last few days of the sefirah should not be taken lightly and one must persevere in one's avodat Hashem and preparations for the Chag. If a person disregards these days and cuts back in his avodat Hashem, it can be compared to an engaged couple who spend months preparing themselves for their wedding. But now, in the last week, they take things easy and the chatan arrives at the chupah in an old suit, or he arrives late and this is certainly most inappropriate. Similarly, despite all one's preparations throughout the days of the sefirah, one must continue with one's spiritual preparations right until the Chag – to purify oneself and one's thoughts, and especially during the shloshet yemei hagbalah (the three days of preparation prior to the Chag) whose significance is so great, as the Chida writes at length in his sefer "Lev David", concerning the great importance of these three days.

The women, too, must prepare themselves spiritually, by being meticulous with their modesty and guarding their tongues and strengthening themselves in other areas. The main distinction of women is that they help their sons to learn Torah and wait for their husbands and this affords them a share in the reward of all their husband's mitzvot.

May we merit approaching the holy Chag of Shavuot in holiness and purity, and armed with the fitting preparations, Amen.



Walking in their Ways

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

In Iyar 5771, I was receiving people in the yeshiva, where I intended to stay until late at night.

Against all logic, at about five o' clock I suddenly thought about going home. It is most perplexing to me - I was supposed to remain in the yeshiva for several more hours, receiving people and being available for the Klal. But I acted on the thought and decided to return home. As I walked up the steps of my building, three men brushed past me on their way down the stairs. I did not attach any significance to this, but as soon as I arrived at my door - I realized what had just happened. The front door was wide open - thieves had entered my home...

I immediately connected this with the three men who had rushed down the stairs; seemingly they were the ones involved. With Hashem's kindness they did not manage to steal anything, for one of them had been on the lookout by the window, and signaled to them that I was on my way home so they ran for their lives. The special Divine intervention was clear to me - how Hashem put this unexpected idea into my head to get up and return home. "How can I repay Hashem for all His kindness to me?"

As per the law, police officers arrived in order to investigate the details of the incident and to take finger prints. After surveying my home, one of the officers asked me, "How come the Rav does not have a television?" In France it is rare to find a house without this despicable device.

"What do I need this machine for?" I replied, "In order to see all kinds of abominations? Killing and idolatry and immorality which corrupt and destroy the soul? You, in your position as police officers, are surely intimately familiar with how many criminals and dangerous people are lurking around, while it is clear that picked up their despicable ways from all kinds of repulsive and offensive programs that they watch."

The officers nodded their complete agreement. Some of them even had tears in their eyes and with great distress told me about the difficult issues that they were facing

with their own children as a result of all the programs that they constantly watch on this detestable device.

I was handed a questionnaire and asked to fill in a declaration about the items that had been stolen. I told them that thank G-d, nothing was taken.

One of the officers turned to me in disbelief: "It is the first time that I am witnessing this phenomenon. Someone experienced a break-in yet is declaring that nothing was stolen! You have the opportunity to claim that many valuable objects were stolen from you, and you can receive full compensation from the insurance company."

"This is the common practice," he added ...

I was astounded by this prospect and said, "Do you think that for the sake of a bit of money I will lie?! G-d forbid that I will do such a thing! Our holy Torah forbids us to lie. In addition, this shameful act can result in a terrible chilul Hashem. The thieves will be questioned and they will deny taking anything, as is really the case. In the end it will be evident that my claim was fabricated. How can I do this to G-d?!"

The officers could not hide their great amazement at my instantaneous rejoinder, and Baruch Hashem I merited sanctifying Hashem's Name. In fact, this was not a challenge for me, for one who conducts his life according to the Torah and mitzvot, knows that this is the correct way to behave. It is neither silver nor gold that stands in front of our eyes, but the will of Hashem alone. We believe with full faith that even in concealed places the Eye of Hashem looks and sees him. Therefore a person is overcome with fear of sin. But one who has not yet merited this level and is far from living a life of Torah and mitzvot - every slight challenge appears to him as something enormous, and he requires almost superhuman strength in order to overcome the test. A person who does not possess Torah, does not have the necessary tools to handle the evil inclination.



Words of our Sages

Why Did the Avreich Stop Learning With the Lawyer?

"Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Wilderness of Sinai" (Bamidbar 1:1)

What difference does it make where Hashem spoke to Moshe? Chazal explain that the idea is to teach us "With three things the Torah was given: with fire, water and desert - just as these are free for all mankind, so too the words of Torah are free."

The sefer 'Ke'ayal Ta'arog' brings a powerful story about an avreich from Ponivezh Kollel who was hard-pressed with parnassah. Since he possessed the talent of being able to teach Torah in an appealing manner, he used his time between his learning sessions to tutor children from the higher grades, and also studied with Yeshiva Ketana students.

One day he was told about a religious lawyer who wished to give shiurim in the Beit Haknesset, but since he didn't know how to learn he was prepared to pay someone to help him prepare the shiurim. Of course, the lawyers' concept of payment was on the lines of a lawyer's remuneration, not an avreich's...

This avreich decided to learn with him for two hours once a week, and from that one time he earned much more than what he received from the avreichim with whose sons he used to learn the entire week. He was happy that he was able to utilize his intermission to learn Torah, and no longer had to 'waste his time' tutoring young children.

At the end of the first month he received his due wages. That night, he placed his glasses next to his bed as he always did, but they somehow fell and broke. Since he had very expensive lenses, the cost of replacing them amounted to the exact sum that he received from the lawyer!

In actual fact, he didn't have a good feeling about learning with the lawyer; he was perturbed by his approach to Torah. Each time the avreich would explain, for example, the Rambam's words, the lawyer would say: "It is not possible that this is what the Rambam had in mind, nevertheless this idea that you are putting into the Rambam's words is excellent, and I will repeat this in my lecture."

Another month passed and once again the avreich received a nice amount in cash. He arrived home and was greeted with the news that while his wife had been trying to remove one of the window shutters in order to clean it, it had fallen right down to the ground floor and only by a miracle didn't kill someone. The cost of replacing the shutter was the same amount that he had received from the lawyer!

He saw that things were getting more complicated - this incident involved danger to life - and he decided to go and speak to his Rosh Kollel, Maran HaRav Steinman zt"l, and ask him for his insight on what was happening. Maran listened to the story, weighed up all the details including the lawyer's approach, and then explained to the avreich:

"When one teaches someone Torah, it can be for one of two reasons. Sometimes it benefits the one who is learning, even though it might seem that the one teaching is not gaining anything. This could be the case when learning with a child or a beginner ba'al teshuva. In this case, one should teach and Hashem rewards him that he will grow through a different avenue. Sometimes, the learning is of benefit to the one who is teaching, for example when giving a shiur to people who are not concentrating so well, or to people who could learn just as well on their own. Here the one who is teaching is the one who benefits because through his preparation he clarifies the material for himself. This is also a reason to teach.

But if there is no benefit, neither for the one learning nor for the one teaching, and the only gain is money - for money alone one doesn't teach Torah. In your case, the lawyer does not believe that it is Torat Emet, he does not believe in the truth of the Torah, so he cannot derive any benefit from this kind of learning, and for you too there is no benefit. This being the case, you should stop teaching him."

The Haftarah

"Yet the number of the Children of Israel will be" (Hoshea 2)

The connection to the parsha: The Navi Hoshea announces that the number of the Bnei Yisrael will increase and will be like the grains of sand on the seashore which cannot be counted due to their great number. The beginning of 'Sefer Hapekudim' (Bamidbar) also talks about the counting of the Bnei Yisrael.



Guard Your Tongue

Caution Against Damage

Even though accepting lashon hara (believing in one's heart that the matter is true), is forbidden according to Torah law, nevertheless Chazal tell us that one is permitted to be cautious.

The one who hears the report is forbidden to believe the facts but he may take precautions to protect himself so that he shouldn't be harmed in case this information is indeed true.



Pearls of the Parshah

It's All In the Name

“Take a census of the entire assembly of the Children of Israel according to their families, according to their fathers’ household, by number of the names, every male according to their head count” (Bamidbar 1:2)

It seems like the words “by number of the names” are redundant, after the verse has already said “Take a census of the entire assembly of the Children of Israel?”

Rabbi Aryeh Leib Tzintz zt”l answers this question in his sefer ‘Meloh Ha’omer’, by quoting the Chazal (Vayikra Rabba 32:5), that in Mitzrayim the Jewish people did not change their names. This prevented them from assimilating with the goyim, for their names demonstrated that they were Jewish, and reminded them not to approach the defiled Egyptians.

This is why the verse mentions “according to their families, according to their fathers’ household”, to stress that the lineage of the Bnei Yisrael is considered. What gave them the power to remain faithful to their families and fathers’ household and not assimilate with strangers? The answer lies in the continuation of the verse “by number of the names” - since they kept their fathers’ names whilst in Egypt.

Harav Yosef Berger shlita, adds in the name of the Admor of Mishkoltz shlita, that he is accustomed to say the following explanation at a brit milah:

We bless the infant “Just as he has entered the covenant so may he enter into the Torah, the marriage canopy, and good deeds.” The implication of this blessing is: “שם” – in the merit of the Jewish name that the baby just received, “so may he enter into Torah, the marriage canopy, and good deeds” – this will stand for him as a reminder at all times that he is a true Jew; he has a Jewish שם (name) taken from our holy forefathers. It will serve as an incentive for him to continue in the way of Torah and yirah, and enter into Torah, the marriage canopy, and good deeds...

Emissaries of Kindness Merit Special Mercy

“The Children of Israel shall encamp, each man by his banner according to the insignias of their fathers’ household, at a distance surrounding the Tent of Meeting shall they encamp” (Bamidbar 2:2)

Rabbeinu Yosef Chaim zya”a, in his sefer ‘Ben Ish Chai’, writes that the above verse hints to a wonderful concept: Those who occupy themselves with the mitzva of tzedaka and are gracious to others by helping to support poor and hungry people, are promised that Hashem will be gracious to them and will bring them close to Him.

This is accordance with what we are told in masechet Shabbat (104a), concerning a hint derived from the names of the letters ‘gimmel’ (גימל) and ‘dalet’ (דלת), in that these two letters are a reference to ‘one who performs kindness with the poor’ (גמול דלים). In this vein we can explain the above verse. “מנגד” – this word is made up of the words “מן-גד” meaning that in the merit of this great mitzva of doing kindness “גמול דלים”, he will be – “סביב לאוהל מועד יחנו” – Heaven will be gracious and merciful to him, always.

Rounding Up the Count

“Their count, for the tribe of Reuven: forty-six thousand, five hundred” (Bamidbar 1:21)

We find an interesting phenomenon concerning the numbers of Bnei Yisrael which are recounted in this parsha and in other places in the Torah. The numbers are always a complete unit, and do not contain single digits. Sometimes the final number is in the hundreds and other times in the tens, but it never finishes with a single unit. This is surprising - how can it be that the sum total of each of the shevatim was always a round number?

Rabbi Yeshaya Datrani zt”l writes that it is not the way of the Torah to be particular on this matter, as we see from the fact that the Torah writes: “You shall count, fifty days”, whereas in fact we count forty nine days. Also when the Torah talks about forty lashes it in fact means thirty nine.

In his sefer ‘Ta’ama D’kara’, Maran Rabbi Chaim Kanievsky shlita writes that the head count of each of the shevatim is written as a complete hundred, besides the tribe of Gad whose head count, we are told, numbered “...and fifty”.

The reason is that with this counting they did not reckon individual numbers - if the tribe numbered more than fifty, they reckoned it to the next hundred; if they were less than fifty they reckoned it to the previous hundred. However the tribe of Gad numbered exactly forty - five thousand, six hundred and fifty, that is why they are the only ones whose count ends with fifty.

In Our Fathers Footsteps

Nuggets of guidance culled from the teachings of Hagaon Hatzaddik Rabbi David Chananya Pinto shlita, on masechet Avot



The Degree of Suffering and Self-Sacrifice

“With ten utterances the world was created”

It is possible that the reason why the world was created with ten utterances, even though it could have been created with one utterance, was in order to make known to mankind that in the future Hashem will give great reward to His righteous ones who sustain the world, for a person cannot know this (degree of reward) in advance, as the Navi says, “no eye had ever seen a god - except for You” (Yeshaya 64:3).

Just as Hashem created the world with several utterances, even though He could have included them in one utterance, so it is with the reward of tzaddikim. There can be a single mitzva for which they receive great reward, for it can sometimes include many things, but this is only known to Hashem. Everything depends on the trouble and mesirat nefesh of the one who is performing the mitzva, and according to the outcome that results from his effort.

An example of this could be a rich man who gives a poor person a coin for tzedakah. The poor person then goes and buys a loaf of bread. When he comes home, he and his family wash their hands before partaking of the bread. They recite the appropriate blessing for the washing of hands and for eating the bread. After they finish their meal they recite birkat hamazon. All these opportunities were made available to them only because of the coin that the rich person gave the poor man.

The opposite is also true. A rich person can give a thousand gold coins to tzedaka, and at the same time a poor person gives just one coin. Yet the poor person’s offering is more valuable to Hashem.

Why is this? Because the poor person gave with self-sacrifice, whereas for the rich person this was not a difficult act. This is in accordance with the dictum of our Sages, “According to the pain is the reward” (Avot 5:23).

This is why Hashem is particular with his pious ones like a hairs breadth (Yevamot 121b), whereas with the wicked He is patient. Even though they anger Him greatly, He ignores their deeds. The good deeds of the tzaddikim bring pleasure to Hashem at every moment, and if they stumble with something small, immediately Hashem feels that the light is diminished, and He therefore punishes them. On the other hand, the wicked person does many wicked deeds, therefore Hashem is not exacting with him on each small act. However, in the future, if he does not repent, Hashem will punish him for every single deed and nothing will escape a reckoning.

Because of the tzaddik’s high spiritual level, Hashem is particular with him every time he stumbles, whereas He is not particular with the wicked person who commits the same act, for all his days are full of sin, and in the future Hashem will punish him for everything together.



"LET HER BE PRAISED"

Portrayal of the True 'Eshet Chayil'
In memory of Rabbanit Mazal Madeleine Pinto

"She is like a merchant's ships"

The Chozeh of Lublin, Rabbi Ya'akov Yitzchak HaLevi Horowitz zt"l, was famous for his fiery speeches concerning the care one must take in one's every action. He formulated a profound and original outlook, which he absorbed from his teachers, the Maggid Rabbi Dov Ber of Mezritch and Rabbi Elimelech of Lizensk zt"l, to which he added new dimensions from his own personal experience.

The Chozeh used the following scandalous incident, which took place in Lublin, to teach his followers a practical lesson.

There was a famous jeweler in the town who used to sell the most beautiful, quality, custom-made jewelry. One day an elegant woman, whose sophistication was a clear statement of her wealth, entered his store. She started to pick out different pieces of expensive jewelry.

The jeweler, who realized that she was someone of means, told one of his assistants to help her select the diamonds. As soon as she was satisfied, she started walking towards the door with a bunch of valuable jewelry in her hand.

The assistant turned to her and asked her how she was planning to pay for the merchandise. She promptly replied that there is no need for him to worry; her rich husband, a famous doctor, must first take a look at the jewelry that she chose for herself and, "if he is satisfied he will pay you the full amount that you deserve..."

The jeweler was slightly suspicious about this agreement, but she calmed him by saying, "If you are concerned, come with me to my home, and you will be able to sort out the issue right away. I will be a pledge for you for the amount that my husband owes you. He will certainly be delighted to see these beautiful pieces of jewelry."

The jeweler thought for a moment and then asked his assistant to take care of things until he would return, and he went along with the woman to her home. They arrived at one of the fanciest houses in the town. After

passing through many entrance ways, they entered the house, where the merchant was asked to sit and wait for the husband who would soon finish working... He sat and waited; time passed and nothing happened.

In his distress he turned to one of the servants and asked him where he could find his master. He was shown to a door at the end of the corridor, and the jeweler made his way over to the room. He knocked quietly on the door and was told to enter.

After a few minutes the elderly doctor, who specialized in evaluating the mentally sick, turned to him and asked him why he had come. The jeweler told him the story and made it clear that he was waiting to be paid in full.

"I indeed heard from my wife," the doctor was quick to reply, "that there is a sick person waiting to see me, who invents stories and constantly imagines that people owe him money. He even considers himself rich despite being poor, and he is fantasizing that the doctor's wife owes him a large amount of money... However," the doctor continued, "before I can take care of you, I will need to ask you several questions..."

The jeweler could not believe his ears. He pinched himself to check whether he was dreaming or not, but the doctor didn't give him a chance and continued describing the method of treatment for difficult cases like his. He started to grasp the extent of the woman's deceit and almost fainted...

The tzaddik finished recounting the story, bringing out the following lesson: Every woman has the ability to be an eshet chayil who purchases mitzvot for her husband, but sometimes we fall into the clutches of the woman, and we give over all the precious merchandise that we have acquired, to the evil inclination. He slyly gets us to sell him our achievements in exchange for different promises and questionable guarantees; only after some time do we uncover the deceit.