

whY I Matter

בשבילי נברא העולם (סנהדרין לז)

Edited by Yedidye Hirtenfeld

כה' אייר - ב' סיון ה'תשע"ז

May 21 to 27 '17

Volume 18 #30

Bamidbor

במדבר

זמנים

Weekdays

Shachris	
Sunday	6:50 8 & 8:30
Weekdays	5:50, 6:50, 7:30 & 8:30
Weekday Rosh Chodesh	5:40, 6:40, 7:30 & 8:30
Sunday Rosh Chodesh	6:30, 8:00 & 8:30
Mincha	8:00
Maariv	after mincha & 9:15

שבת במדבר

Light candles	7:58 PM
Mincha	7 & 8:08 PM
Shachris	7:30, 8:50 & 9:00 AM
Mincha	1:45, 6:30 & 7:50 PM
Maariv	9:06 PM
Shabos Ends	9:06 PM

THESE ZMANIM ARE DETERMINED BY THE GABBOIM AND ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THEIR DISCRETION

וידבר ה' אל-משה במדבר סיני באהל מועד
באחד לחדש השני בשנה השנית לצאתם
מארץ מצרים לאמר

Jewish law teaches that once something has been counted it can never be nullified, even if it is only one out of a thousand. G-d likewise counted the Jewish people, so that although they are far outnumbered by the nations of the world, they can never be nullified. (Chidushei Harim)

In the Wilderness of Sinai (1:1) In communication, the choice of setting is very important. What does the choice of the desert teach us? 1. The Torah belongs to each Jew. Like the desert, the Torah doesn't belong to any particular individual. (As Sifri states "the crown of the Torah is set aside, waiting, and ready for every Jew ... whoever desires, may come and take it".) 2. We must remove the constraints holding back our commitment to Torah. As our Sages teach, a person must "make himself like a desert, relinquishing all concerns" (i.e., he must remove the constraints which hold back his commitment to Torah). Thus, in order to approach Torah, we must step beyond ourselves and accept a different framework of understanding. (This is exemplified by our ancestors' pledge: "We will do and [then] we will

listen".) 3. Torah transcends ordinary existence. The revelation of the Torah was too great to be confined within ordinary existence. 4. A declaration of dependence. In the desert, the Jews depended on Hashem, not natural resources, for their existence. Despite its barrenness and desolation, our ancestors entered the desert with loving trust, for which Hashem responded with loving care (providing them with food, clothing and all of their other needs, thereby allowing them to devote themselves to Torah). While today we have "natural" means of deriving our own livelihood, nature itself is still a series of miracles (unfortunately, because of their constant reoccurrence, we no longer see these miracles as special). But, we must use each "reoccurrence" as a reminder that we still rely on Hashem, giving precedence to the Torah rather than our material concerns. 5. The opportunity for a spiritual connection to Hashem. Although a person may feel empty and desolate - living in a spiritual desert - there is no need to despair. Hashem descended into the desert to give the Torah; the same is true today - regardless of a person's spiritual level, Hashem offers the opportunity of establishing a connection through the medium of the Torah. 6. Preparation for Shavuot. Parshat Bamidbar is always read before Shavuot. The Jewish holidays do not merely commemorate past events, but also provide us with an opportunity to relive them. To relive the Sinai experience, we must first pass through the "desert" and its lessons - at least in a spiritual sense. (In The Garden Of The Torah)

And the L-rd spoke to Moses in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the Tent of Meeting (1:1) "In the wilderness of Sinai" teaches that a Jew should be as humble as Mount Sinai, the smallest of all the mountains; "in the Tent of Meeting" teaches that he should be joyous, as the word for "Meeting," "Moed," also means festival. The greater one's humility, the more genuine joy he will experience at having merited to be able to serve G-d. (Rabbi Elimelech of Lizhensk)

In the Wilderness of Sinai, in the

כבודו האי גברא ובי"ב הרוצים בעילום שמם
על הסיוע שמושיטים לי בעין יפה
להמשיך את הגליון עוד הפעם בשנה זו
שהיה לזכותם ולזכות כל משפחתם
הקב"ה יברך אותם בכל מילי דמיטב
בעושר ואושר ואריכות ימים בבריאות
מיט ידישע נחת בזה ובבא עבגצב"ב

Tent of Meeting (1:1) All of the Divine utterances that were said during the Jews' first year in the desert, before the Sanctuary was erected, are referred to with the words "at Mount Sinai." However, once the Sanctuary was built, the Torah uses the words "in the Wilderness of Sinai, in the tent of meeting," as from that point on this was where the Divine Presence rested. (Rashbam)

שאו את ראש כל-עדת בני-ישראל למשפחתם
לביית אבתם במספר שמות כל-זכר לגוללתם

Take a census of all the people of Israel (1:2) Moses' counting of the Jews caused the Divine Presence to rest among them. Every Jew realized that he was part of an exact number, and that he, the individual, had the power to influence the fate of the entire nation. Similarly, Maimonides writes (Laws of Repentance): "Every person should consider himself...half innocent and half guilty, and the whole world as if half meritorious and half culpable. If he does one mitzva, he tips the balance to the side of merit and brings salvation to himself and entire world." Thus by arousing them to repentance, the census caused G-d's Presence to dwell among the Jews. (Shnei Luchot HaBrit)

Precious count

"פקוד כל בכור זכר לבני ישראל" - משל
לאדם שהיתה לו פרגמטיא [סחורה] של
אבנים של זכוכית. והיה מוציאן לשוק ולא
היה מבחין במנין, שלא היה מוציאן במנין,
ונכנס להניחן ולא היה מניחן במנין לפי שלא
היה משגיח עליהן שהיו של זכוכית. והיתה לו
פרגמטיא אחת של מרגליות נאות, והיה נוטלן
ומוציאן במנין ומניחן במנין. כך כביכול אמר
הקב"ה: לעכו"ם לא נתתי מנין, שאינם
חשובים לפני, אבל אתם בני, חשובים אתם,
ולכך מונה אותם בכל שעה.
[במדבר רבה ד', ב']

Take a census of the entire assembly of Bnei Yisrael (1:2) Rashi comments: "Because of G-d's love for the Jewish people, He counts them repeatedly. Here, He counted them in honor of His resting His Shechinah among them in the Tabernacle." [In chronological order,

this parashah belongs earlier in the Torah, shortly after the dedication of the Mishkan.] **R' Raphael Baruch Sorotzkin z"l** (1917-1979; Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe) observes that this may be understood in light of the Talmudic teaching that the first ten men who come to davening receive reward equal to the combined rewards of all the other men who come. Why? The commentary Maharsha explains that it is these ten men who cause the Shechinah to rest on the congregation; therefore, they deserve special reward. The Shechinah rested on the Mishkan in the merit of all the Jewish people. In order to emphasize this, Hashem counted Bnei Yisrael after the Mishkan's dedication. (Ha'Binah Ve'haberachah)

Early intervention

וּיִפְקֹד אֹתָם מִשָּׁה עַל פִּי ד' כֹּאשֶׁר צִוָּה - אמר משה לפני הקב"ה: אתה אומר לי שאמנה אותם מן חדש, יכול אני להיות מחזר ומסבב בחצרותיהם ובתוך בתיהם ולספור כל אחד ואחד, שאתה אומר לי: "כל זכר בן חדש תפקדם". אמר לו הקב"ה: אתה עשה את שלך ואני אעשה את שלי, אמר ר' יהודה הלוי בר' שלום: היה משה הולך ועומד לו על פתח אהליהם של הלויים, והשכינה מקדמת ואומרת לו: חמשה תינוקות יש בבית הזה, שמונה תינוקות יש באהל הזה, עשרה תינוקות יש באהל הזה, וזהו שנאמר: וּיִפְקֹד אֹתָם מִשָּׁה עַל פִּי ד' ... (במדבר רבה ג, ט').

מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה כל-יצא צבא בישראל תפקדו אתם לצבאתם אתה ואהרן

From twenty years of age and up - everyone who goes out to the legion among Yisrael - you shall count them according to their legions. (1:3) Many have wondered at the incredible fact that every single tribe had a population that was divisible by ten. **R' Meir Simcha Cohen of Dvinsk z"l** (died 1926) suggests the following explanation for this phenomenon: As our verse indicates, the purpose of counting the Jewish people was to organize them for war. We learn from several verses in Tanach and from the Talmud Yerushalmi that each brigade in the army of Yisrael had either one hundred men or ten men. Thus, if any tribe had a number of soldiers that was not a multiple of ten, the remaining were not counted because there was no place for them in the army. (Meshech Chochmah)

From twenty years old and upward, all who are able to go

forth to war (1:3) The count included only those Jews who were both over 20 and fit for military service, excluding the elderly and infirm. In truth, however, not one Jew was insufficiently robust to be able to serve. (The Vilna Gaon)

From 20 years old and upward, all that are able to go forth to war in Israel (1:3) A person becomes fully responsible for his acts at the age of 20, when the real battle with the evil inclination first begins. At that age, one is considered sufficiently equipped to be "able to go out to war" against the evil inclination and win. (Admor of Gur)

ואתכם יהיו איש איש למטה איש ראש
לבית-אבתיו הוא

"And with you shall be one ish / man from each tribe; ish / a man who is a leader of his father's household." (1:4) The word "ish" commonly denotes a person of spiritual stature. Why? **R' Chaim Yehuda Meir Hager z"l** (the Vishever Rebbe in Tel Aviv; died 1968) explains: The Mishnah (end of Masechet Uktzin) teaches, "Hashem is destined to reward each tzaddik with 310 worlds." Our Sages also teach that: "One hour of Torah and good deeds in this world is worth more than an entire lifetime of Olam Haba." The gematria of ish equals 311, one more than the number of worlds in the tzaddik's reward. This signifies the Torah and good deeds -- more valuable than Olam Haba -- that the man of stature performs. (Zecher Chaim)

A man of every tribe, a man who heads his family division (1:4) It is easier for a person to be considered great by strangers than by his own family, who know his faults well. If a person is appreciated by his "family division" - those who know him well - it is a sign that he is worthy of being at the head of his tribe. (Otzrainu Hayashan)

לשמעון שלמיאל בן-צורישדי

For Shimon: Shelumiel the son of Tzurishaddai (1:6) People refer to an individual who has bad luck as a Shelumiel. What is the reason? We see that the head of the tribe of Shimon was Shelumiel the son of Tzurishaddai. And we know that "there are no wandering paupers, scribes, or teachers of children except from the tribe of Shimon

(Rashi Bereshis 49:7)." (Chiyucha shel Torah)

"These were the kru'ai / ones summoned by the assembly, the leaders of their fathers' tribes, they are the heads of Israel's thousands." (1:16) The word kru'ai, which should be spelled "kuf-raish-vav-aleph-yud," is in fact spelled with an extra yud instead of the vav, as if it said kree'ai. Why? **R' Eliezer David Gruenwald z"l** (1867-1928; rabbi and rosh yeshiva of Oyber Visheve and other Hungarian towns) explains: The greatest Jewish leaders have also been the most humble. The most obvious example is Moshe Rabbeinu, of whom we read (Bemidbar 12:3), "Now the man Moshe was exceedingly humble, more than any person on the face of the earth." Likewise, King David was very humble and said about himself (Tehilim 22:7), "I am a worm and not a man." At the beginning of the Book of Vaykira, the word "Vayikra" ("He called [to Moshe]") is written with a small letter aleph, as if the word really was "Vayikar" ("He happened [upon Moshe]"). Hashem allowed Moshe to write the Torah this way in deference to Moshe's humility. Similarly, here, writes R' Gruenwald, writing that the leaders of the tribes were "kree'ai" rather than "kru'ai" implies a certain degree of happenstance, in deference to their humility. (Keren L'David)

ואת כל-העדה הקהילו באחד לחדש השני ויתלדו על-משפחתם לבית אבתם במספר שמות מבן עשרים שנה ומעלה לגולתם

"They established their genealogy according to their families . . ." (1:18) The prophet Yechezkel quotes Hashem as comparing the Jewish People to plants, saying (Yechezkel 16:1), "I made you as numerous as the plants of the field; you increased and grew . . ." **R' Yitzchak Isaac Chaver z"l** (1789-1852; rabbi of Suvalk, Lithuania) explains that there are a number of similarities between the Jewish People and the plant world. (1) The more a farmer works his field, the better his plants will grow. Similarly, we read about Bnei Yisrael in Egypt (Shmot 1:12), "But, the more they would afflict it [the Jewish People], so it would increase and so it would spread out." (2) G-d created numerous species of plants, and they continue to reproduce within

their own species. Likewise, we read (in our verse), "They established their genealogy according to their families"--a testament that Bnei Yisrael in Egypt did not intermarry. (3) Most plants have a season when they blossom and a season when they wither. Similarly, the Jewish People have periods of exile and periods of redemption, regarding which we read (Shir Ha'shirim 2:11-12), "For the winter has passed, the deluge is over and gone. The blossoms are seen in the land, the time of song has arrived . . ." [As Rashi z"l explains, "For the winter of bondage has passed, the deluge of suffering is over and gone . . ."] (Haggadah Shel Pesach Yad Mitzrayim)

And they registered by families

(1:18) When one of the children of the **Rizhiner Rebbe** got engaged, the other father began recounting at great length about his illustrious ancestors. The Rebbe interrupted him saying: "In our family, pedigree is not established merely based on our forebears. Rather, it also includes the lineage of our descendants. The Maggid would attribute his prominence to his son the 'malach.' In turn the 'malach' would ascribe his eminence to his son, my father. Similarly, I pin our distinction on my son. That is the meaning of the following verse (Tehillim 45:17): 'Instead of your fathers shall be your children,' i.e., rather than speaking of the heredity of one's predecessors, one will talk about the family tree of one's offspring." (Chiyucha shel Torah)

אך את-מטה לוי לא תפקד ואת-ראשם לא תשא בתוך בני ישראל

But you shall not number the tribe of Levi, nor take the sum of them among the Children of Israel.

(1:49) Rashi cites the Midrash that one of the reasons why the Tribe of Levi was not counted was that G-d foresaw that everyone over 20 years of age would die in the 40 years the Israelites were in the wilderness. Therefore He said, "The Levites should not be counted among the others in order not to be included with them. They are Mine since they did not transgress in the sin of the Golden Calf." However, the decree of dying in the wilderness was for the transgression of accepting the spies' negative report. Rashi should have

said that the Levites did not transgress in the sins of the spies, rather than they did not transgress the Golden Calf. The answer, wrote the Sifsai Chachomim, is that the Levites also accepted the negative report of the spies. But, the decree of dying in the wilderness was because of the double transgressions of the Golden Calf and the spies. Since the Levites were not guilty in the former, they were not included in the decree.

Rabbi Baruch Sorotzkin

commented that we see from here the dangers of listening to loshon hara, a negative report about others. Even though the Levites had the strength of character not to sin when others did with the Golden Calf, they still fell prey to accepting the lashon hara about the land of Israel. From here we should lean how far we need to keep from listening to lashon hara. (Growth Through Torah)

ואלה תולדת אהרן ומשה ביום דבר ה' את משה בהר סיני

"These are the offspring of Aharon and Moshe on the day Hashem spoke with Moshe at Har Sinai. These are the names of the sons of Aharon: the firstborn was Nadav, and Avihu, Elazar and Itamar."

(3:1-2) Rashi z"l comments: It mentions only the sons of Aharon, but they also are called the sons of Moshe because he taught them Torah. This teaches that whoever teaches Torah to the son of his fellow man is regarded as though he had fathered him. **R' Mordechai Banet** z"l (1753-1829; rabbi of Nikolsburg, Moravia--today, Mikoluv, Czech Republic) asks: Didn't Moshe teach Torah to all of the Jewish people; why aren't they all called his children? Furthermore, what is added by "on the day Hashem spoke with Moshe at Har Sinai"? He explains: We read (Devarim 9:20), "Hashem became very angry with Aharon to destroy him, so I prayed also for Aharon at that time." "That time" was when Aharon made the Golden Calf, "on the day Hashem spoke with Moshe at Har Sinai." Hashem intended to kill Aharon's sons at that time, but Moshe prayed for them and saved two of them (Elazar and Itamar). (Nadav and Avihu could not be saved because they added their own sin, as verse 4 explains.) Thus, Moshe had a special bond with Aharon's sons, more so than with his other students.

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(Machshevet Mordechai)

And these are the offspring of

Aaron and Moshe (3:1) Why does the Torah treat Aaron's children as if they belong to Moshe as well? The Talmud (Sanhedrin 9b) states that Moshe used to use Aaron's children Torah. From here we learn that whoever teaches his friends' children, it is as if he was involved in raising them himself. (Tell It From the Torah)

ושמרו את-כל-כלי אהל מועד ואת-משמרת בני ישראל לעבד את-עבדת המשכן

And the charge of the Children of Israel (3:8) The function of the Levites, which is to "guard the honor of G-d," also serves to protect the Jewish people as a whole, as it states, "G-d is your guardian, G-d is your shadow." Why a shadow? Because G-d conducts Himself with man in the very same manner as He is served. (Kiflaim L'Toshia)

ואני הנה לקחתי את-הלויים מתוך בני ישראל תחת כל-בכור פטר רחם מבני ישראל והיו לי הלויים

Behold! I have taken the Levites from the midst of Bnei Yisrael (3:12) R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld z"l (rabbi of the Edah Ha'charedit in Yerushalayim; died 1932) notes that whenever the Torah speaks of the fact that the Levi'im were counted separately from the other tribes, it also says that they were taken "from the midst" of Bnei Yisrael. The Torah wishes to emphasize that, despite being different in some ways, the Levi'im remain an integral part of the Jewish people. R' Sonnenfeld notes that this is alluded to in the very words "Levi'im" and "Yisrael". "Yisrael" is spelled: "Yud, sin, raish, aleph, lamed." If the names of each of those letters is written out, and we take the middle letter (for example, "Yud" = "Yud, vav, dalet") "from the midst" of each of those "words", we have the letters of the word "Levi'im." (Chochmat Chaim)

פקד את-בני לוי לבית אבתם למשפחתם כל-זכר מבן-חדש ומעלה תפקדם

Count the sons of Levi ... every male from one month of age and up shall you count them (3:15) Why were the Levi'im counted from such a young age, while other Jews were counted from age 20? R' Isaac Sher z"l (Rosh Yeshiva of Slobodka) explains that this was in recognition of the fact that the Levi'im willingly performed many dangerous tasks in the mishkan. [The work was dangerous because failure to treat the mishkan and its vessels with

proper respect could cause the Levi's death at the hands of G-d or man.] Such mesirut nefesh / self sacrifice does not come to a person unless he is trained in it from his infancy. (Lekket Sichot Mussar)

כל פקודי הלויים אשר פקד משה ואהרן על-פי ה' למשפחתם כל-זכר מבן-חדש ומעלה שנים ועשרים אלף

All that were numbered of the Levites ... were twenty-two thousand (3:39) The tribe of Levi was the smallest in population of all the Jewish tribes. Not subject to the Egyptian enslavement with the rest of the Israelites, the Levites increased in a natural manner. The other tribes, by contrast, were blessed with a supernatural fertility, and the more Pharaoh tried to annihilate them, the more Jews were born. (Ramban)

ונתנו עליו כסוי עור תחש ופרשו בגד-כליל תכלת מלמעלה ושמו בדיו

They shall place upon it a tachash-hide covering and spread a cloth made entirely of turquoise wool over it, and place its poles (4:6) Tosfot (Yoma 72a) asks: What is the meaning of the instruction that the kohanim should place the poles on the Ark? The Torah commands (Shemot 25:15) that the poles never be removed from the Ark! Tosfot quotes R' Yaakov of Orleans, who answers that "place its poles" means "... on the shoulders of the Levi'im." "Were I not afraid of what my friends would say," says Tosfot, "I would say that the Ark had two sets of poles. One set was permanently installed on the Ark. The other set was installed when Bnei Yisrael traveled."

Rabbeinu Moshe ben Maimon (Ramban - Maimonides) Horav Moshe was born in Cordoba, Spain, on the 14th of Nissan (the eve of Passover) of the year 4895 (1135 C.E.). His father Maimon, a direct descendant of King David, was a judge in the city's rabbinical court. His mother passed away when he was yet a small child, some suggesting that his younger siblings were born after Maimon remarried. At the age of thirteen, his family was forced to flee Cordoba when a fanatic Islamic sect took control of the city; the Jews were attacked by rioters and many synagogues were destroyed. Horav Moshe and his family traveled from place to place looking where to relocate. Not finding anything suitable in Spain, he and his father and younger brother, David, moved to Fez, Morocco, for five years. In 4925 (1165 C.E.), he visited the land of

Israel and then moved to Alexandria, Egypt. Later, he settled in Fustat, today known as Old Cairo, where he lived until his passing. In Egypt, Maimonides was supported by his brother David, a merchant who imported diamonds from India. His financial support gave Maimonides the ability to devote himself to the study of Torah and to author his scholarly work on the Mishnah, the 2nd century seminal work on Jewish law. Tragedy befell him when his father, wife and two of his sons died within a span of two years, starting in 1166. Several years later, in 1171, his brother David drowned when his ship sunk en route to India. Without the support of his brother, he began practicing medicine and struggled to support himself and his brother's family. In his mid-fifties, Maimonides was appointed as a personal physician by a royal courtier and then to Saladin, the sultan of Egypt and Syria. His new appointments and duties gave him financial stability and more – albeit still very limited – time to devote to his writing. His son and faithful student, Abraham, was his only remaining immediate family member. Maimonides passed away on the 20th of Tevet of the year 4965 (1204 C.E.) and was buried in the city of Tiberias in the Holy Land. (Chabad.org)

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקי ואלקי אבותי שתשלח מהרה רפואה שלמה מן השמים רפואת הנפש ורפואת הגוף לחולים

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