



OD YOSEF HAI NEWSLETTER

ROSH YESHIVAH AND COMMUNITY RABBI
DAYAN ABRAHAM DAVID SHLI"TA

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Thoughts on BAMIDBAR Year 25 by Dayan Abraham David

This week's Parasha gives the count of the Bnei Yisrael after the construction of the Mishkan. They were counted according to the tribes of their fathers, each tribe with its own banner. It is interesting to note that this command to encamp according to their tribes and under their tribal banner was given in the second year of their coming out of Egypt and not immediately on their departure. Our Rabbis tell us that just tribal divisions even when based on customs and differences in characteristics is not commendable in Am Yisrael as we are one people and must be united. But here the tribes under their individual banner were encamped around the *'Mishkan'* and the *'Aron Hakodesh'* containing the *'Luchot Habrit'* with the *'Shechinah'* hovering above it. Only when the command of building a Tabernacle was fulfilled then were the tribes allowed to receive their own banners and symbols for the Torah and the *'Shechinah'* would unite them around the *'Mishkan'*. Our customs and traditions can only be valid if they are centred around the Torah and the service of G-d otherwise they can be divisive. That is why the banners were the colours of the stones of the tribes on the breastplate of the *'Cohen Gadol'* to

stress this. If G-d and the Torah are not in the midst of the equation then our differences, if accentuated, could become tribal rivalries and cause hatred and division as we see in the wars taking place in the world now. But if we understand that our differences and characteristics are to enhance the service of G-d by keeping the Torah, which was given by Moshe to all of us at Sinai, then we are compared to the celestial hosts who in their different ways say *'Kadosh'*. One army with its different regiments and weaponry enhance the glory of the King not competing with each other but doing their best in their own way. In fact the *'Mishkan'* was called the Mishkan Haedut and centred around the Aron which contained the *'Luchot Habrit'*, a witness that our connection with G-d and the *'Shechinah'* comes through Torah and unity as it was in Sinai for there we received the Torah: *'Ke ish echad belev echad'*. This is what the Bnei Yisrael yearned for when they saw the hosts of Angels surrounding the *'Mercavah'* the *'Throne of Hashem'*, different from each other but in harmony with one another each one with its own talent, ability and service but all in the name of G-d.

With this understanding we can answer a difficulty. We know that we are not allowed to make a head count of our people because of *'kitrug'* and *'ayin harah'* that is why the counting of the Bnei Yisrael was done through the half

shekalim they gave. If so, why does it mention 'Gulgelotam' (a head count) here and not half shekalim? Even though Rashi tells us it really means a count with shekalim as in the previous counting's, many '*meforshim*' disagree and explain it as a direct count. Why was it different here? We can say that since this count was to position us in relation to the Torah and the service of G-d it was all spiritual and it elevated us to the level of '*Tzivot Hashem*', the celestial hosts, where there is no '*kitrug*' or '*ayin harah*', not bringing division as individuals which causes '*kitrug*' and '*ayin harah*' but unity which raises us above it all.

SHAVUOT

The Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah with the words '*Naase Venishma*' we will do and we will listen, a complete and unconditional acceptance for which they were praised and given two crowns one for '*Naase*' and one for '*Nishma*'. They had shown complete faith in G-d without even asking what the Torah contained or wanting to know if it would be too difficult to keep.

A Sadducee once scoffed and derided Rava for not noticing his (Rava's) bleeding finger having wounded it on the chair while engrossed in the study of Torah with the words 'you are like your forefathers who accepted the Torah in haste without thinking of their physical limitations or the sacrifice involved and here again, you are so engrossed to the extent of not caring for your physical being'. Rava answered him that our forefathers did not act in haste but out of love

and having faith in G-d that He would not give them any impossible mitzvot but only a prescription for a better life. As it says in Mishli '*tumat yesharim tanchem*' – for those who behave trustingly with me I will lead in goodness but '*veselef bogdim yeshadem*' but those who scheme, I will trip up. Because of the faith Am Yisrael showed at Sinai G-d revealed Himself as never before with the words '*Anochi*' and '*Lo Yeheye*' and His dictating to Moshe before their eyes to confirm his appointment as their emissary to receive the Torah. As G-d had promised Moshe at the '*Sney*' the burning bush '*Ve Ze lecha Ha-ot Ki Ani Shelachticha Ta Avdum HaElokim Al HaHar Haze*' - and this will be a sign that they will believe you are my emissary when they serve me on this mountain.

And at Kabbalat Hatorah '*Baavur Yishma Ha Am Bedabri Emach Ve gam Becha Yaminu leolam*' – so that the people should hear me speak to you and believe in you forever. Matan Torah brought divine revelation to the Jewish people and our belief in Moshe Rabenu and all the Torah he conveyed to us from G-d forever. We may ask, since we already had that belief in Moshe after the parting of the Sea as it says in Beshalach before the Shirah '*veYa'amenu BaHashem VuMoshe avdo*' – and they believed in G-d and Moshe his servant, what was added here? Our Rabbis tell us that the belief after '*Kiryat Yam Suf*' was belief based on miracles which might be open to interpretations and doubts as the Rambam says: Of all

faiths based on miracles people can doubt them and say it was magic or tricks but at Matan Torah their belief was complete and forever, since their belief in Moshe was because of what they heard and saw with their own eyes and ears, that Hashem appointed him as *'Shaliah'*. This belief in Moshe would be perpetuated through the Torah and mitzvot – which we are promised – would never be forgotten.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

It was a custom of Rabbi Mordecai Eliyahu z"l after the Shaharit Services to receive the people with their *'Sheelot, Kabalat Kahal'*. There was a long queue waiting their turn, in the corner sat a man with a terribly disfigured face, awaiting his turn in the queue. He waited in the corner dejectedly trying to hide himself from the gaze of the crowd, but he was noticed by people who discreetly turned their gaze away from him, but he still felt embarrassed and tried to bury himself in his corner. When there were only a few left he got up from his corner and joined the last few. I was standing by the Rabbi when he brought his question written on a piece of paper to the Rabbi, trying to avoid the gaze of the Rabbi. I was surprised at the Rabbi who, after taking his paper, looked straight at him and asked him: "How did this happen to you?" The man seemed to become even more uncomfortable at the Rabbi's question, but he answered telling

the Rabbi that he was disfigured due to an accident with boiling water when he was a child. To our consternation the Rabbi continued: "You must be very embarrassed by it, you must suffer a lot from it?" The man answered, "yes!" "All these years you have suffered?" said the Rabbi. He answered: "yes, yes!" The Rabbi then told him: "After all this suffering you will not suffer *'Gehinnom'*". The man's face began to relax, the Rabbi then wrote the answer to his question and handed it to him. The man then turned to me and asked me: "did you hear what the Rabbi said, I will not suffer *'Gehinnom'*". I said "yes" and could discern a look of confidence in his face. He went to someone else further down and repeated what the Rabbi said: "I will not suffer *'Gehinnom'*". He took a few steps further and returned to the Rabbi: "You said I will not suffer *'Gehinnom'* in the world to come". The Rabbi answered: "Yes, I did say you will not suffer *'Gehinnom'*!" The man's face began to glow with confidence and happiness. He kept on repeating happily to those he met on the way out. "The Rabbi said I will not suffer *'Gehinnom'*, I will not suffer *'Gehinnom'*". This is how the Rabbi healed a hurting soul.

Shabbat Shalom

HALACHOT

1. It is most important to stay up and be *'Osek'* in the Torah on Shavuot night and if one does without interrupting with

idle chatter, he can atone for a punishment of 'karet'.

2. If someone has not slept all night, even though he can make the 'Berachot HaShachar' after midnight he can only make 'Berachot HaTorah' after dawn. He does not make the Beracha 'Al Netilat Yadayim' when he washes in the morning.

3. If someone did sleep at night, even though he wakes up before dawn, he can make 'Berachot HaTorah' then.

4. The accepted minhag is to eat milky food on the first day of Shavuot. Many reasons are given for this custom. We have the custom to eat kahi, a pastry which is made with butter and 'halek' date juice to fulfil the pasuk referring to the Torah 'Chalav Vudevash tachat leshonech', milk and honey on your tongue, depicting the sweetness of the Torah.

5. Even though we eat a meal of milky food we should at least eat a meaty meal in honour of Yom Tov.

6. One should take care of the laws of milk and meat as one would normally. If you wish to eat meat after milk or light cheese.

a. clean the table or change the tablecloth as you normally do.

b. rinse your mouth and eat some bread.

c. clean your hands of any residue.

d. make either berchat hamazon or the after beracha as applicable.

Before eating meat after milk or cheese, it is advisable to wait an hour but after very mature cheese, one needs to wait six hours. The Ben Ish Hai used to wait an hour for each month the cheese took to mature.

7. But for milk after meat or chicken, even for food cooked with meat one should wait six hours, change the tablecloth and make a 'Beracha acharona'. If one finds meat or chicken between his teeth after the six hours one should just remove it, cleans one's

mouth before drinking milk. There is no need to wait again.

8. One must not bake bread with milk or meat fat unless it looks different from normal bread and is recognisable for what it contains. If it is not different the bread becomes assur even to eat with milk, if it contains milk or visa versa.

Do not forget to count sefirat ha'omer after nightfall every day

We have started last week to say Pirkei Avot every Shabbat. We are now in the sixth perek.

**Maal tov to
Aslan Raymond & Shifra Sirotsky
on their engagement
and mazal tov to
Moses & Barbara Raymond and
Yosef & Drora Sirotsky**

**Mazal tov to Igal and Rita Levy
on their son Solly's barmitzvah
and to all the family**

SHABBAT TIMES

Shabbat commences 8:41 pm

**We should not light candles before
7:17 pm**

Shabbat terminates 10:06 pm

Shabbat :Latest Shema

Magen Avraham 8:21 am

Shabbat Latest Shema Gra 8:57 am

**PLEASE FOLLOW ALL THE
GUIDELINES AND WARNINGS
CONCERNING COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**VUSHMARTEM MEOD
LE'NAFSHOTECHEM**

VEAHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA