



Ohr Yerushalayim News

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F NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Kiddush This Shabbos

The Kehilla is invited to a Kiddush after Davenning at the home of Mr & Mrs Simcha Shadmi, 56 Upper Park Road, to mark the recent birth of their granddaughter, born to Mr & Mrs Chaim Gruzman - Mazel Tov!

Rov's Ladies Shiur

The Rov's ladies Shiur continues this Tuesday evening at 8.30pm at his home, 48 Waterpark Road.

F NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Don't count on me!

Jeff Horwich

At the beginning of the Sedra, Moshe Rabenu is commanded to take a census of the B'nei Yisroel. The guidelines are specific - "according to their numbers, every man shall give an atonement for his soul - so that there will not be a plague among them"

R' Zalman Sorotzkin comments that it is not appropriate to count the B'nei Yisroel in the same manner as one would count another nation. Instead an alternative methodology was to be used to reflect the elevated status of the nation. The census was not merely to measure the quantity – it was to reflect the supreme qualities of the people.

If the census was merely a count of heads then it would appear impossible for the B'nei Yisroel to survive - a tiny "lamb among seventy wolves". The reason that we are able to survive, and stand up to the other nations, is because we are counted/measured according to an alternative criterion namely the number who give "an atonement for his soul" ie prepared to sacrifice their lives in order to perform a Kiddush Hashem.

When measured by this higher spiritual criterion the B'nei Yisroel will emerge supreme.

The count itself was performed in an indirect manner as it was the coins that each participant had contributed that were tallied rather than the individual donors.

A similar indirect method of tallying was used in the rein of Shaul who needed to know the number of soldiers present and rather than a simple head count he asked each of the soldiers to bring a kid goat which were counted instead.

On the other hand Divrei Hayomim relates when Dovid Hamelech performed an actual head count to ascertain the number of Jews "from Beersheva to Dan." On that occasion when the count was finished the population was afflicted by a severe plague.

The navi Hoshea concludes that the the B'nei Yisroel "shall neither be measured nor counted".

Why should we refrain from counting?

Rabbeinu Bachayei explains that we do not count separate individuals, since we do not want to spotlight them and cause a judgement to be brought upon them. An individual may not have enough merits to get him over the line to receive a favourable judgement but when the assessment is made on a wider basis there is a greater likelihood that a large group or community will possess enough merits collectively to illicit a favourable judgement.

Additionally R' Zalman Sorotzkin, in Ozneyim LaTorah, observes that spiritual

atonement is necessary after any census to protect from Ayin hora.

Practical Solution: A difficulty occurs when attempting to verify whether a minyan is present.

A common solution is to count those present by using a posuk (Tehillim 28:9) which comprises 10 words so rather than count numerically a word is allocated to each person.

There are regional variations and I recall davening in Dublin on one occasion when the start time for davening had passed and although there appeared to be a quorum present -seemingly over a dozen- there seemed to be no urgency to start. I assumed that some of those present may not have been halachically Jewish and enquired of the Gabbai who started to point to those present whilst singing the above posuk.

הושיעה, אֶת-עַמֶּיךָ; וַיִּבְרַךְ אֶת-נַחֲלֶיךָ; וַיִּרְעַם וַיִּרְעַם וַיִּרְעַם וַיִּרְעַם וַיִּנְשָׂאֵם, עַד-

"As I thought.." he proclaimed having pointed to the fourteenth congregant – "still one short".

From Rags to Riches

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

Parshas Ki Sisa describes the tragic downfall of the Jewish people at the very pinnacle of their spiritual achievement.

The people encamped as one around Har Sinai in their zeal to receive the Torah. Hashem's voice thundered off the mountain tops, proclaiming the Aseres Hadiboros, the Ten Commandments, and designating the Jews as His chosen people for accepting His eternal covenant.

From the lofty heights of those wonderful intoxicating days, the Jewish people spiraled downwards. Moshe had ascended to Heaven to bring down the Luchos, the stone Tablets, and in his absence, the nation had strayed far. The Torah describes how, only forty days later, the people embraced the worship of the Golden Calf and were dancing around it in wild abandon.

Hashem revealed to Moshe in Heaven exactly what was taking place down below, and instructed him to go down and take control of the tragic scene.

Moshe grabbed the Tablets and made his way down the mountain. He was

The Week Ahead

פרשת תשא

Candle Lighting	5.02pm
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	5.07pm
Seder HaLimud	8.40am
Shacharis	9.00am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.55am
Mincha 1st Minyan	1.30pm
Rov's Pirkei Ovos Shiur	4.20pm
Mincha 2nd Minyan	4.50pm
Motzei Shabbos	6.10pm
Ovos uBonim	7.25pm
Sunday	7.15am / 8.20am
Monday / Thursday	6.45am / 7.10am
Tuesday / Wednesday / Friday	6.45am / 7.20am
Mincha & Maariv all week	5.15pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm
Mincha & Maariv Next Shabbos	5.20pm (Shabbos 5.15pm)

greeted by Yehoshua and by the crescendo of noise emanating from the camp.

As he approached the camp and saw the people dancing to musical instruments around the golden calf, Moshe took the miraculous Tablets of stone and smashed them at the foot of the mountain.

The commentaries ask why Moshe waited until he descended the mountain to shatter the Luchos. Did he not believe Hashem when He told him the Jews were worshipping a golden calf?

The Tablets transcended the laws of nature; the letters penetrated the stone through and through, yet one could read the holy text on them from either side. The Tablets were a reflection of the divine connection that the Jewish people had with their creator-but which, by worshipping the golden calf, they had lost. The Jewish people, after this serious breach of faith, were no longer worthy of being the recipients of the Luchos. So why did Moshe wait? Why didn't he leave them in Heaven instead of smashing them at the foot of the mountain?

The commentaries explain that although Moshe knew beyond any doubt that the Jewish people had worshiped the golden calf. Yet he rationalized that it was surely just a temporary lapse, not done willfully or with enthusiasm. Perhaps they had succumbed to their base urges momentarily and could still be restored to their previous lofty stature.

But when he saw the people brazenly dancing around the calf, with musical accompaniment and great gusto and excitement, he realized the truth: they could never again be worthy of those heavenly Tablets.

It is one thing to abandon G-d out of fleeting temptation while all the while experiencing pangs of guilt. It is another to abandon Him without compunction, with relish and merriment. After such debasement, the disconnect is complete and absolute.

When not acting in consonance with the inner vibrations of our conscience, we often feel stirrings of guilt and remorse. We may wonder why we need to be plagued with misgivings and confusion about our behavior. Why can't we feel whole and happy with what we are doing?

In truth, Jewish guilt is a gift from Hashem. It doesn't allow us to re-define our priorities and our character, based on our "fall from grace." That little voice inside of us that is telling us we shouldn't be here, we shouldn't be doing this, this is not me-is making sure that our substandard actions do not define our essence. It is ensuring that we regain our grip and give genuine expression to our innermost aspirations.

Open for Business

Rabbi Chaim Dovid Green (Torah.org)

"And the Children of Israel shall keep the Shabbos - to make it a day of rest for (all) of their generations as an eternal covenant. Between Me and the Children of Israel it is a sign forever that G-d made the heaven and the earth in six days, and on the seventh day He ceased working and rested." (Exodus 31:16-17)

Shabbos is called a sign between G-d and us. What is the function of a sign? The Chofetz Chaim (d. 1933) provides us with an analogy which illustrates the answer to this question.

A man wishes to open a business. He finds a good location, and prominently hangs a sign for all to see. As long as the sign is hanging we can assume that the man is still in business. Even if the man would need to leave town for some time, and his business is closed for the duration, as long as the sign is hanging, we can assume he is still in business.

If we notice that the sign has been removed, then we can assume that the business is defunct, assuming that he didn't move his business somewhere else in which case the sign will be hanging there.

This is what the Torah is telling us about Shabbos and G-d's covenant with us. Shabbos is a sign. As long as the sign is prominent - even if the store is closed for a little while, the connection with G-d is still strong. That means to say that even if a Jew sins - he closes his store - if the sign is still hanging - Shabbos is still on his schedule - it is still clear that his connection is not severed. However, when the sign comes down it appears that the business is closed.

Shabbos is our way of demonstrating our belief in G-d having created the world. Through observance of Shabbos we actively give testimony that we are believers. We believe in the creation, and we believe that just as G-d can create the world, He can give us the livelihood which we need even if we don't engage in pursuing it on Shabbos. It is a positive statement manifest in our actions. Our actions say "G-d is the boss. I'm not in charge here."

To the uninitiated, Shabbos seems like a time of great restriction. You can't do anything! To those who observe Shabbos, though, it is very different. Ideally, Shabbos is quality family time, when meals are eaten together at a nicely set table, and we sing songs of Shabbos. We speak about what the children learned regarding the Parsha of the week, we read dvartorah :, and share time together. The restrictions create an environment, a sort of island, when I don't have to drive car pool, and I don't have to answer the phone, and I don't have to deal with monetary matters, or work. It's a time when I can sit back and think about what I'm here for in this world. It is the true essence of our existence.

Someone once said that more than the Jews have kept Shabbos, Shabbos has kept the Jews. It is our time of recharging and refocusing. It's when we remind ourselves that when we go back out into the world after Shabbos, that we are spiritual beings with a spiritual purpose. We carry that into our workday and we are elevated by that knowledge. It is a great ennobling force. Shabbos is the source which the other days derive blessing from. Let's schedule Shabbos on our calendars, and hang up our signs prominently!

Tefillah Nuggets

Dani Epstein

שמונה עשרה - אבות - תפילה

זוכר חסדי אבות

and He recalls the kindnesses of the forefathers

A straight reading of this text suggests that this phrase implies that the אבות somehow benefitted Hashem with kindnesses, which seems a little implausible, since what benefit could a mere mortal grant to Hashem?

Yet Rabenu Dovid Abudarham points us towards two verses in what would appear to support such a contention.

In ויקרא we read as follows:

וְזָכַרְתִּי אֶת בְּרִיתִי יַעֲקֹב וְאֶת בְּרִיתִי יִצְחָק וְאֶת בְּרִיתִי אַבְרָהָם אֲזַכֵּר

And I will remember the covenant of Yaakov, and also the covenant of Yitzchok and also the covenant of Avrohom.

The absence of a kindness of any description in the verse appears to render it immaterial to the discussion at hand.

Let us examine the second verse from Yirmiyohu 2:2, in which Hashem instructs the prophet to announce to the Jerusalemites:

זָכַרְתִּי לְךָ חֶסֶד נְעוּרֶיךָ, אֲהַבְתָּ כְּלוּלֵתֶיךָ לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרַי בְּמִדְבָּר, בְּאֶרֶץ לֹא זְרוּעָה

I remember the the kindness of your youth, the love of your nuptials, your following me into the desert in a land not sown.

Whilst this appears to be somewhat closer to the topic in that it mentions חסד, the absence of the אבות would appear to render it irrelevant, since they are the subject matter at hand, and not the inhabitants of Yerushalayim..

What the verse in Yirmiyohu does demonstrate is the concept of a kindness being performed by humans to benefit Hashem. The "following me into the desert" is regarded by Hashem as a "kindness of your youth". With this concept established, we can return to examine the verse in Vayikroh.

At a glance, three points stand out, and these are: the individual mention of each covenant; the reversed sequence of the אבות; the "full" spelling of יעקוב with a ו, something that occurs only in five places in the Torah.

Rashi notes that these are paralleled by five instances in which אליהו is spelled in the "reduced" form, which he explains as Yaakov having removed the the letter "vov" from Eliyohu as a security, in order to ensure that he will will eventually bring us the news of the Redemption. Parenthetically, the Gur Aryeh observes that these five instances represent the fingers of one hand, signifying that the deal was "sealed with a handshake" as opposed to having been forced onto Eliyohu by Yaakov.

The reverse order, explains Rashi, represents an escalating scenario. Yaakov's merits alone ought be sufficient to warrant the Redemption. Should that not prove to be the case, then the addition of Yitzchok's merits will suffice. If, however, that proves not to be the case, then the combination of all three forefathers will surely accomplish this.

Inasmuch that the Bnei Yisroel were able to perform a "kindness" to Hashem by following Him into the desert, so did the אבות perform "kindnesses" by following Hashem at a time when they were alone in promoting Him to Man.

It is this merit we call upon with the phrase of זוכר חסדי אבות.