



# Ohr Yerushalayim News

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## News This Week

### Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following Davening, sponsored by the Rov in honour of the Yahrtzeit of his mother. The Rov will make a Siyum immediately following Davening, followed by the Kiddush

### Chaim Aruchim

We regret to inform of the Petira of David Coren, late father of Lauri Black. She is sitting Shiva until Monday morning at 23 Princess Court Leeds LS17 8BY

Shacharis 7.45am, Mincha/Maariv 8pm. No visitors between 6 - 7.30pm. Sunday Shacharis time TBC

We wish Chaim Aruchim to the following who have Yahrtzeit this week:

Shabbos, 29th Iyyar - The Rov for his mother

Weds, 4th Sivan - Michael Brandeis for his mother

### Lost Property

A reminder that personal property left on the Shul premises will be disposed of every Rosh Chodesh.

### Numbers Game

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

The Book of Numbers begins with – of course – numbers. In fact, it begins with many numbers! Moshe is told by Hashem to "Count the entire assembly of the Children of Israel.. by number of the names, every male according to their headcount." (Numbers 1:3) but no apparent reason is offered. There was no road infrastructure that had to be built, they were in a desert. There was no housing development plan that had to be assessed, they lived in sukkos. And there was no need to calculate agricultural concerns, food was sent from Heaven. So why did Hashem want them counted?

And the recorded numbers seem to have no bearing on any moral issue that is necessary for us as Twentieth Century Jews. Does it truly matter that the tribe of Gad had 45,650 males over twenty or or that the tribe of Menashe had 32,200? And the customary Haftorah for this week\* tells us that "the number of the Children of Israel will be like the sand of the sea, which can neither be measured or counted" (Hosea 2:1). So why count?

At the outset of his career as a journalist, Walter Cronkite worked as a copy editor for the Houston Chronicle. His boss, city editor Roy Rousell, was a stickler for detail and accuracy, who would raise a ruckus for the slightest error or inaccuracy. There was a price to pay if a Mr. Smythe was spelled as Mr. Smith.

Cronkite was responsible for a two-line item carried every day on the front page of the final edition, "Bank Clearings." Each day a small line simply read, "Today's Houston bank clearings were," followed by a large monetary figure.

One day Rousell called him into his office. He was clearly enraged. "You had the bank clearings all wrong yesterday," he snarled. His jaw was clenched. Cronkite had the clearings at \$3,726,359.27, the correct amount was \$3,726,359.17. He was off by ten cents, but the city editor was adamant, and visibly distraught.

"Such a stern reaction to a ten-cent mistake on a multi-million dollar figure?" thought Cronkite. Perhaps this outrage meant that this line of work was truly not for him.

When the young Cronkite walked back toward his colleagues, they looked grim. "How you're gonna fix this one?" they jeered. "So, are you getting bodyguards?" they taunted. Cronkite was baffled and finally exploded.

"What's all this fuss about a ten-cent error on a 3 million dollar clearing!?" He exclaimed. "What's the big deal?"

The other reporters looked at him in shock when then realized he truly did not understand the severity of his trivial mistake, their shock turned to pity.

Finally, the local columnist explained. "Do you think anybody really cares about the bank clearings? The numbers racket in Houston pays off using the last 5 digits of the bank clearing. Well, yesterday they paid off based on your number." He paused. "The mob don't like paying off on a bad number."

For the next few weeks, Walter Cronkite lived in literal fear of his seemingly insignificant ten cent error.

Numbers, no matter how irrelevant they seem to the unenlightened, are not meaningless. To us in a modern society we may read that Yehuda had 74,600 males over twenty and Naftali 53,400. But they are not mere numbers. Rav Naftoli of Ropshitz comments that each Jew mentioned brought immense spiritual greatness to this earth. Each person counted was a cherished gem whose existence impacted eternally. We often cite numbers and statistics without realizing the tremendous impact of their importance. We teach our children the significance of the destruction of European Jewry, but can they fathom the significance of 6,000,000 Jews lost? Does a Jew harmed in a terrorist attack or an Israeli soldier killed become a statistic, or is he mourned as a soul who graced this world with tremendous significance?

The Torah's reiteration of the importance of counting each and every member of our nation remains with us to this very day. We do not have to be counted for any socio-economic reason. We are counted for the inherent value of each and every soul. And ultimately each soul can alter the course of our history. Because each and every Jew's two cent's worth is worth more than millions.

### Desire For Intimacy

Rabbi Yochanan Zweig (Torah.org)

"...and an alien who approaches shall die" (1:51)

The Talmud relates a story concerning a gentile who, while passing by a house of study, overheard the description of the Kohein Gadol's garments. He then went to the great Sage Shammai requesting to be converted so that he may become a Kohein Gadol. Shammai, unimpressed with the motivations of this individual, sent him away. The gentile then appeared before Hillel with the same request. Hillel converted him, but informed him that before becoming a Kohein Gadol, a person must study all of the laws pertaining to the High Priest position. When the convert reached the verse which records the prohibition of a "zar", literally "stranger" to perform the Priestly service, he inquired as to the type of person to which the Torah is referring. Hillel answered that even King David, ruler of Israel, was prohibited from serving in the Beis

## Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.20pm
Candle Lighting	7.24pm-7.45pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.06am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
Mincha	6.00pm / 9.05pm
Motzei Shabbos	10.10pm
ראש חודש	7.00am / 8.00am / 9.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.45am / 7.10am / 8.00am
Tues / Wed / Fri	6.45am / 7.20am / 8.00am
Mincha & Maariv	7.25pm
Late Maariv	10.10pm

Hamikdash, for he was not of Priestly lineage. The convert realized that if the monarch of Israel could not perform the Service, for a convert to perform the Service would be inconceivable. The Talmud concludes the story by stating that this individual praised Hillel for his tolerance and expressed his gratitude for being accepted as a member of the Jewish people.

The Rambam rules that a conversion is only permitted if the person wishing to convert is not motivated by any external factors. If a person requests to convert for honor, wealth, or marriage, his request should be denied. Therefore, asks the Maharsha, since the gentile was motivated by his desire to become a Kohein Gadol, how could Hillel have converted him based upon his initial request?

The Mishna in Pirkei Avos states that we should not behave as servants who work for reward. However, Rav Chaim Velozhiner points out that Hashem's purpose in Creation was to benefit mankind. The system of rules to which man is subject serves to allow man the sense that he has "earned" the right to Hashem's benevolence. How then, can the Mishna say that the basis for our service of Hashem should not be reward? Furthermore, there appears to be a contradiction between the above Mishna and the following Mishna: "One should perform the mitzvos that have the appearance of being less stringent with the same care as one would perform those that appear more stringent, for the reward of each mitzva is not known." The implication is that if we would know with certainty which mitzvos have greater reward, then performance of those mitzvos would be stressed. How do we reconcile this implication with the message of the first Mishna which states that our motivation to serve Hashem should not be reward?

There are two different and opposite reasons to give reward. One reason to give reward is as an incentive or compensation, as in a business setting. In such a case there exists an adversarial relationship; the business owner requires a task to be performed, and his employee, although he would prefer not to, performs the task because he is motivated by the money that he will receive. The owner would prefer not to part with his money, but then his employee will not do the job. Therefore, the money symbolizes the adversarial nature of this relationship. The second reason to give reward is to signify the closeness and appreciation that the person giving it feels for the person receiving it. In this case, the person receiving the reward is not motivated by it, rather, he uses the reward as a method of calibrating the relationship.

The first Mishna uses the term "peras" to express reward. "Peras" refers to an object which is broken off from its source. If reward is used in an adversarial relationship, there is a separation between the two parties and the reward reflects this separation. It divides rather than binding the two parties, and is therefore, described as "broken off". The reward mentioned in the second Mishna is called "sechar" This term reflects the closeness of a relationship. The desire to receive "sechar" is not viewed with disdain; on the contrary, since the motivation that a Jew should have in serving Hashem is to become close to Him, "sechar" is the manner by which we gauge that this goal has been achieved.

Shammai perceived that the convert's only motivation to become a Jew was the honor connected to being a Kohein Gadol. Therefore, he dismissed him abruptly. Hillel realized that the gentile was seeking to serve his Creator in the greatest possible manner. His desire to be a Kohein Gadol was motivated only by his wish to be close to Hashem. Therefore, he was an appropriate candidate for conversion.

## **H-E-C-T-I-C**

**Rabbi Yisroel Ciner (Torah.org)**

Life is just so busy. Traveling to work, back home, family responsibilities, household responsibilities; the days seem to go by in a blur-like fashion. My wife and I find this pace to be the most difficult adjustment of living in the States.

The Ramcha"l explains that Paroah's plan to keep the Jews as slaves was to keep them as busy as possible. This wouldn't allow for the introspection and growth which would render them worthy of redemption. Life in Israel seemed to go at a much slower pace. There was more time to focus on what was being accomplished without having to spend so much time and energy on just getting there.

We read the parsha of Bamidbar as we are making our final preparations for Shavuos. As such, Bamidbar must reveal some sort of a game-plan to make our Kabbalas HaTorah a greater reality on Shavuos itself and one that will last throughout the year.

"And Hashem spoke to Moshe in Midbar Sinai. [1:1]" According to the Medrash [Rabbah 1:7], the passuk is stressing that the Torah was given

in the Midbar. Many different explanations are offered but an idea that struck me is the hushed, serene, solitude of a midbar. Time for thoughts. Time for self-awareness, self-understanding, self-assessment. That is what enabled a Kabbalas HaTorah.

And us? Our already busy, hectic lives are incessantly invaded by our cellphones, beepers and all the myriad electronic, multi-tasking devices that provide us with "all noise, all the time." I longingly recall the summers I spent running a sleep-away camp in Israel without a phone in our bungalow. The sweet sounds of silence . . .

When Eliyahu HaNavi witnessed Hashem's presence, we are told that at first a stone-shattering wind passed, but Hashem's presence was not manifested in that wind. That was followed by a clamorous din and then by a blaze but Hashem's presence wasn't found in either of those. Finally, Hashem's awesome presence was evident—in the guise of a soft, gentle voice.

As we prepare for Shavuos, we need to find or create that environment and those moments when that soft, gentle, resonating voice of Hashem can be heard and felt, enabling us to shift our focus from the clutter of our lives to the purpose of our existence.

## **To Count, Or Not To Count** **Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein (Torah.org)**

The Leviim...were not counted among them. Hashem spoke to Moshe, saying, "You shall not count the shevet of Levi...among the Bnei Yisrael." This is confusing, to say the least. Why, in fact, weren't the Leviim counted in the census? If there was some good reason for it, why did Hashem have to follow up on their non-counting with a specific instruction not to count them. They had already been excluded from the count! If the reason for not including them was this Divine instruction, why does the Torah have to mention – before even stating that instruction – that they were not counted? From the instruction alone we would know that shevet Levi had been skipped over.

I heard an ingenious suggestion in the name of R. Shaul, the av beis din of Amsterdam. In listing the census figures for each of the shevatim, the Torah introduces each with "for the bnei Menasheh," "for the bnei Binyamin," "for the bnei Dan," etc. Only with reference to Naftali is the preposition "for" omitted: "the bnei Naftali."

Now, the census described here in Bamidbar was not the first that was taken. More than a half a year earlier, the bnei Yisrael were counted, and their population duly recorded as 603,550 – which is the same as the bottom line figure here in Bamidbar. Rashi and Ramban dispute the nature of the two countings, and the perplexing fact that the population figures coincided over such a long period, without any births or deaths. But this we know. There was a general census right before the work of constructing the mishkan began. People were all counted together, without separating the figures according to shevet. It follows, argues R. Shaul of Amsterdam, that there was no need to count the last shevet – shevet Naftali. The grand total was already known from the first census. By subtracting the numbers for each of the other individual shevatim as they are counted here in Bamidbar, you arrive at the population of the last shevet, even without counting it. The Torah expresses this by simply stating, "The bnei Naftali." This is how many they were, even without having to be counted!

As inviting as this sounds, it only works if the Leviim were not included in the first census. Ramban, however, maintains that the Leviim were part of the original count! Without their number being known, bnei Naftali's number could not be ascertained just by subtracting the numbers of the other shevatim. The argument completely collapses. We will need to find a different way of explaining why the word "for" is omitted for Naftali.

We could preserve a part of the argument, though, and use it to answer our original question. The thing is, that if the Leviim were counted in the first, general census, they would have been treated like everyone else. Only males over twenty would have been counted. There was no reason to think differently. When they now conducted shevet by shevet counting in the second month of the second year, they reasoned that they only needed to do this for eleven shevatim. The twelfth would be known by subtraction. They decided to leave out the Leviim.

Hashem therefore follows up on their decision. "Indeed, don't count them among the other shevatim. You are correct. Their number is already known – if all you are interested in is the population over twenty. By shevet Levi is different from the others. They are the "King's troops." They serve in the mishkan, and their identity and life style revolves around it. They need to be counted from a very early age. So do count them – but do so for all Leviim older than one month."