

Bamidbar

In Memorial to
Golda bat Yitzchac David
and
Rochel Ruth bat Azriel

Ceaser

Bamidbar Overview

- In the Sinai Desert, G-d says to conduct a census of the twelve tribes of Israel. Moses counts **603,550** men of draftable age (20 to 60 years); the tribe of Levi, numbering 22,300 males age one month and older, is counted separately. The **Levites** are to serve in the Sanctuary, replacing the **firstborn**, whose number they approximated, who were disqualified when they participated in the worshipping of the Golden Calf. The 273 firstborn who lacked a Levite to replace them had to pay a five-shekel "ransom" to **redeem** themselves.

Bamidbar Overview

- **When the people broke camp, the three Levite clans dismantled and transported the Sanctuary, and reassembled it at the center of the next encampment. They then erected their own tents around it: the Kehatites, who carried the Sanctuary's vessels (the ark, menorah, etc.) in their specially designed coverings on their shoulders, camped to its south; the Gershonites, in charge of its tapestries and roof coverings, to its west; and the families of Merrari, who transported its wall panels and pillars, to its north. Before the Sanctuary's entranceway to its east were the tents of Moses, Aaron and Aaron's sons.**

Bamidbar Overview

- Beyond the Levite circle, the **twelve tribes** camped in four groups of three tribes each. To the east were Judah (pop. 74,600), Issachar (54,400) and Zebulun (57,400); to the south, Reuben (46,500), Simeon (59,300) and Gad (45,650); to the west, Ephraim (40,500), Menasseh (32,200) and Benjamin (35,400); and to the north, Dan (62,700), Asher (41,500) and Naphtali (53,400). This formation was kept also while **traveling**. Each tribe had its own *nassi* (prince or leader), and its own **flag** with its tribal color and emblem.

Rambam

- Maimonides in his *Laws of Torah Study* (3:1) states: "With three crowns was Israel adorned—
 - the crown of Torah,
 - the crown of the priesthood
 - and the crown of royalty.
- The priesthood was the privilege of Aaron...
- royalty was the privilege of King David...
- the crown of Torah is there ready and waiting for all of Israel...
- **and it is the greatest crown of all."**

The Tree

Talmud, Taanit 5b

- A man was travelling through the desert, hungry, thirsty, and tired, when he came upon a tree bearing luscious fruit and affording plenty of shade, underneath which ran a spring of water. He ate of the fruit, drank of the water, and rested beneath the shade.
- When he was about to leave he turned to the tree and said: 'Tree, oh, tree, with what should I bless you?'



The Tree

Talmud, Taanit 5b

- "Should I bless you that your fruit be sweet? Your fruit is already sweet.
- "Should I bless you that your shade be plentiful? Your shade is plentiful. That a spring of water should run beneath you? A spring of water runs beneath you."
- "There is one thing with which I can bless you: May it be G-d's will that all the trees planted from your seed should be like you..."



Haftorah

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

- This week's haftorah reveals Hashem's indescribable love for His people. The prophet Hosheia opens with warm words of blessing and says, "The Jewish people will be likened to the sand of the sea that cannot be measured or counted." Hosheia digresses then and says, "And in place of not being recognized as My nation, they will be regarded as 'the sons of Hashem.'" This passage indicates that, prior to this prophecy, they experienced serious rejection.
- In truth, the preceding chapter reveals that they temporarily forfeited their prominent status of Hashem's people. Scriptures state, "Declare them no longer My nation because they are not Mine and I am not theirs" (1:9) Yet, one passage later we find Hashem blessing His people in an unlimited capacity conveying upon them the elevated status of "sons of Hashem." We are amazed by this sudden, drastic change of attitude from total rejection to full acceptance in an unparalleled way. What brought about this change and what can we learn from it?

Haftorah

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

- Chazal address these questions and answer with the following analogy. A king was enraged by his wife's atrocious behavior and immediately summoned a scribe to prepare her divorce document. He calmed down, shortly thereafter, and decided not to carry out his original plan. However, he faced a serious dilemma because he was unwilling to cancel the scribe and reveal his drastic change of heart. He finally resolved his problem and ordered the scribe to rewrite his marriage contract doubling its previous financial commitment.
- Chazal conclude that the same was true of Hashem. After instructing Hosheia to deliver sharp words of reprimand Hashem retracted them. However, instead of canceling the initial prophecy Hashem tempered it with warm words of blessing. These words were so uplifting that they reflected the Jewish people in a newly gained status of "sons of Hashem". (Sifrei, Parshas Balak)

Haftorah

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

- We can attempt to uncover Chazal's hidden lesson in the following manner. When studying the analogy of the king and his wife we sense the king's deep affection for her. Although he was angered to the point of total rejection this anger was short-lived. He was appeased within moments and his true affection immediately surfaced. In order to compensate for his initial rash response, he strengthened his relationship with her by doubling his expression of affection.
- The queen undoubtedly understood her husband's compassionate response to her outrageous behavior. Instead of totally rejecting her he actually increased his commitment to her. She sensed this as his way of securing their relationship even after her previous conduct. This unbelievably kind response evoked similar feelings from her and she reciprocated with her fullest expression of appreciation to him.

Haftorah

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

- This analogy reveals Hashem's deep love and affection for His people. The Jewish people in Hosheia's times severely strayed from Hashem's will and engaged themselves in atrocious idolatrous practices. Hashem was enraged by their behavior and summoned the prophet Hosheia to serve them their rejection papers. This severe response elicited Hashem's counter response of unlimited compassion for them and He immediately retracted His harsh decree. However, Hashem did not stop there but saw it appropriate to intensify His relationship with His cherished people. He therefore elevated them from their previous status of merely His people to the highly coveted status of His children.

Haftorah

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

- We now understand Chazal's message to us. Hashem was sincerely angered by the Jewish people's conduct and sent Hosheia to reject them. Yet, even this angry response could not interfere with Hashem's boundless love for His people and He immediately retracted His harsh words. The Jewish people however, needed to understand the severity of their actions. Hashem therefore instructed Hosheia to reveal the entire story, their intended rejection and ultimate acceptance. Hosheia's prophecy served its purpose well and the Jewish people sensed Hashem's boundless love for them. Although their actions called for total rejection Hashem's compassion for them would not allow this. Instead of rejecting them Hashem actually increased His display of affection towards them. This undoubtedly evoked their reciprocal response which ultimately produced their side of their newly gained status of "sons of Hashem". They previously enjoyed the status of Hashem's people but after this they would be known as His cherished Children.

Haftorah

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

- We find a parallel to the above in this week's sedra which describes the Jewish nation's encampment. They were previously stationed at the foot of Mount Sinai for nearly a year. During that time they developed a special relationship with Hashem receiving His Torah and witnessed many revelations. This intimate bond, however, was interrupted by their inexcusable plunge into idolatry. Hashem was enraged by their atrocious behavior and immediately summoned Moshe Rabbeinu to deliver their rejection papers.
- Hashem informed His loyal prophet of His intention and Moshe Rabbeinu pleaded on their behalf. Moshe subsequently sensitized the people to their severe wrongdoing and they returned from their shameful inappropriate path. Hashem accepted their repentance and reclaimed His nation. But Hashem's compassion extended far beyond forgiveness and He therefore consented to dwell amongst them resting His Divine Presence in the Mishkan.

Haftorah

RABBI DOVID SIEGEL

- In our sedra we discover that even the Mishkan was insufficient expression of Hashem's love for His people. He therefore acquiesced in their request and permitted them to camp around the Holy Ark and encircle His Divine Presence. This special opportunity created an incredible feeling of affection, tantamount to embracing Hashem Himself. Indeed Shlomo Hamelech refers to this unbelievable experience of intimacy in the following terms, "And His flag was for me an expression of love". (Shir Hashirim 2:4) Although Hashem initially rejected His people this did not interfere with His boundless love for them. After rededicating themselves to Him they deserved all of His warmth and affection, even the sensation of embrace itself. We learn from this the unbelievable love
- Hashem possesses for His people and that even during moments of rejection Hashem's true affection for us is never effected.

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- The Book of Numbers begins with— 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?

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- 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?

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- 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.

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

■ 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.

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- "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.

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- "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.

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- 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 Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- 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?

Numbers Game

RABBI MORDECAI KAMENETZKY

- 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.

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



- one nite i dream of a buterfly
- an i hear a wisper soft as can be

- i look at it
- an touch the wing
- an agin a wisper come to me

- i lift my eys an see a lite
- an i no the wisper is in the lite

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



- i lisen as the voice is as soft
- as the wings of a buterfly

- i see the hand with tinie torah wrap rond his arm
- an so manie time he is say soon, soon

- i wrap you in wite an bring you home
- i ask if time be now i go, he say no

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



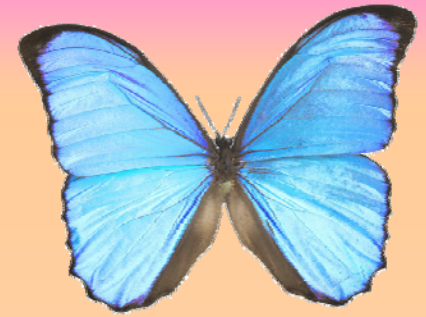
- you have a lesson to learn
- if it is be ok

- i like share my lesson
- crissie were is hashem?, torah hand ask
- i say he in me, he in all his kids

- torah hand ask, how i no this?
- an i say i feel hashem an see his spark

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



- torah hand ask
- do you think hashem feels all you feel an nos all you thinks?
- oh yes i no he do

- i will tell you the leson you must lern little one
- i ask let me get paper as i wana be sur i get it rite
- as i sur is gona be a lot

- torah hand say
- forgive you self
- i keep lisen and i ask, what is leson i need lern?

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



- little one
- hashem is the spark in your neshama
- each time you hold on to thing you think you may have do rong you hurt hashem
- you hurt you neshams, you hurt you
- look deep inside an forgivded your self
- ever day my litel one, you wake an imbrase you neshama
- you say the prayer an thank hashem

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



- it is a powerful prayer and it has a great lesson
- feel the words, listen to them like you never listen before
- wow i think this gonna be easier, and i gonna go hashem right way
- i have say it turn out not be so easy
- is harder than anything i ever do in my life
- i know in my heart i am forgiving crissie
- i will sleep the sleep of peace
- and now i have almost done with forgiving me

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



- an i feel the love of hashem
- hashem is in us all
- so many of you have touch my life
- an you have bless me
- an help me do mitva by sayin hi
- an i hapie i can say hi

Butterfly

Crissie's Prayer



- thank you for allow me be part of familie
- for all i be, you is a part of me
- for this i thank you, i fite hard to live an lern

- an wene he come an wrap me in wite
- an takded me to hashem
- i will no in my heart
- i am redie as it is in hashems time no mine...

- this be crissie

Final Thoughts

- This week our Rabbi Elirok was not able to be here. He and his family are mourning the loss of Golda bat Yitzchac David. She was in her own right a Torah Sage who raised many fine Torah observant children including our Rabbi's wife, Rabbi Elirok's Mother-in law.
- While our Rabbi is away, Torah learning has continued here in the Jewish Home. This week we have read and have learned a little of the Torah Portion. We all know that there is much more to learn.

Final Thoughts

- We listened and learned something about Emunah from Rabbi Tatz. We learned that Emunah emanates from Knowledge, transcends into Understanding and flowers into Wisdom. Emunah is a faithfulness of what we know about our Creator.
- Rochel Ruth bat Azriel, Crissie to all of us here, possessed as much Emunah as anyone I have ever known.

Final Thoughts

- I have just read a two Torah commentaries. One explaining the love of Hashem to His People Bnei Israel. The other describing the importance of each and every soul.
- Is there anyone who loved Hashem more then Crissie? The one thing we do know is that Hashem loves all of His creations as much as he loves Crissie. This includes all of you.

Final Thoughts

- We also have read a story of the man and a tree.

"There is one thing with which I can bless you: May it be G-d's will that all the trees planted from your seed should be like you..."

- The seeds are the seeds of Torah Knowledge. Every seed that is planted will transcend into an Understanding and sprout forth Wisdom. Each of you are in some way and at some level, a seed of Torah knowledge. Each of you can use this seed of knowledge to build yourselves and to inspire others to do as many Mitzvaot as possible.

Final Thoughts

- I have read and read again and again, Crissie's Prayer. Every time I read this prayer, I see something new, something fresh and something incredibly clear in her thoughts of Hashem.
- The simple mitzvah of saying "Hi", the only thing that she was physically able to do should inspire all of us to work on ourselves and fill our lives with as many mitzvait as we can do.
- All of our lives are a difficult journey. Crissie, in spite of her physical difficulties, transcended these difficulties to become a real Torah light.

Final Thoughts

- Tomorrow we once again celebrate HaShems creation of our Universe.
- Light a few candles, bake some Challah, make a nice kosher dinner. Get the kids cleaned up and put on something appropriate for Shabbat. Open a bottle of kosher wine and say a few blessings.
- “Remember the Sabbath day and to keep it Holy.” This is one Mitzvah that we all can do. It’s not hard, but it is so very important. This is our celebration of Hashem’s creation of the material world that we see, and the spiritual from where we came and to where we are all destined to go.

Final Thoughts

- The Torah is not just the blueprint to creation and a collection of laws, it is also the road map to our Spiritual Journey to come closer to the Creator.
- Of all the precious souls who have learned with us Crissie understood how to come close to Hashem.

“May it be Your Will, HaShem, that the Holy Temple be rebuilt speedily in our days and grant us our share in Your Torah....”

Shabbat Shalom