



## פרשת במדבר-שבועות

Numbers, חומש הפקודים, is the name Chazal give the fourth Sefer of the Chumash. The two countings in the Sefer – here in Parshas Bamidbar and later in Parshas Pinchas – are the reason for this title. These two computations don't seem to add up – pardon the pun – being that the first count had already been performed earlier in Sefer Shemos (Ki Sisa 30:11) by way of the requisite Machatzis Hashekel. Rashi already notes this and brings a heartwarming Chazal, מתוך חיבתן לפניו מונה אותם כל שעה, because of Hashem's love for them He counts them all the time. He counted when they left Mitzrayim, after the עגל to determine how many had remained, and now when He came to rest His Shechina upon them, He counted them again. Hashem counts us out of love, as Mefarshim try to convey this lofty idea with a sorry Mashal, כביכול to a miser counting his money – simply because he loves his money so much. We should note that in order to send us this message, the Torah uses so many Pesukim, so many עמודים in the Sefer Torah, where brevity is the standard preference; highlighting His fondness for Klal Yisroel and its every individual.

Similarly, the first Rashi in Shemos explains the counting of those who went down to Mitzrayim, once again quoting Chazal, להודיע חיבתם שנמשלו לכוכבים שמוציא ומכניסם במספר ובשמותם, to make known how precious they are to Him as they are compared to stars which He brings out and brings in by number and by their names, as stated (Yeshaya 40:26) See Radak (ibid) that the name given to each star refers to its specific mission and purpose; to control a small portion of the earth. (This is not as heavenly as it sounds – pardon the pun again – it can be understood with both feet on the ground as well.) There is a fascinating Chazal (BR'R 10:6) which teaches that every blade of grass is under the supervision of an "Mazel" which urges and commands it to grow – גדל! That "Mazel" is originates in a star, since

Hashem knows the designated task of every star. This encourages us to look towards the heavens – שאו מרום עיניכם - and realize His Control of everything. Rashi brings this to highlight the חיבה to every יחיד as well; just as Hashem appreciates every star for its definite purpose, He also appreciates every individual and their subsequent Tafkid.

We now turn to the Mishna (Avos 3:14) that teaches, חביב אדם שנברא בצלם וחיבה יתירה נודעת לו שנברא בצלם וכו' חביבים ישראל ; שנקראו בניו למקום חיבה יתירה נודעת להם שנקראו בניו למקום חביב, and Yisroel are dear because they are called sons. The Mishna emphasizes this, because what is especially prominent in these "gifts" is the fact that Hashem made it KNOWN TO US – נודעת להם. Without that knowledge, a Yid can think that he is so distant from Kadosh Baruch Hu that whatever he does would not have an impact. We could live our entire life without being aware of how close we are to Hashem, without experiencing our relationship, without savoring that eternal bond.

Rabeinu Bachayeh, in his last piece in Sefer Vayikra teaches us how to connect Sefer Vayikra to Sefer Bamidbar, and it becomes crystal clear when paired with the opening piece of Rav Shamshon R. Hirsh in Bamidbar. The Pasuk states, אלה המצות אשר צוה ה' את משה אל בני ישראל בהר סיני . Rabeinu Bachayeh explains the Medrash on this Pasuk as saying that אלה indicates something which is eternal – לשון עמידה – as stated (Beraishis 2:4) וקיום לעד - the world will stand AND ALSO YISROEL as it says – in our Parsha – (2:32) אלה פקודי בני ישראל לבית אבותם (2:32). Rav Hirsh illuminates the Inyan, and I quote, " The concluding chapter which deals with נדרי הקדש , allows room, within the framework of Halacha, for one who might feel the need to express his personal relationship to the sanctuary by a symbolic dedication of man's value etc. It opens with the command to take a census of the nation as an עדה, a community united by its common calling. All the





independent members of the nation are to be counted, one by one. A census of this nature... at the same time, every individual is made aware that he personally counts as an important member of the community... The third book concludes with the dedicatory counting of the flocks which pass in groups under the staff of their owners. The fourth book now opens with the counting of the nation as "G-ds flock" for its Shepherd... The census is conducted in the wilderness. This proves that... is neither economic nor political – because economics and politics have no relevance to life in the wilderness... is to be made in the service of the Torah which was given on Sinai etc." The חביבה, the love of Hashem for us, as a whole and as individuals, is immutable and will never change despite our behavior.

This idea is masterfully taught, with perhaps the greatest words of Chizuk possible, by the Ozrover (Baer Moshe end of Bechukosai). The end of Vayikra teaches the laws of תמורה, that one may not exchange an animal that was designated for a Korban for another animal to be bought in its stead. Says the Ozrover – Mamash Ah Gevalt – this follows the Parsha of the Tochacha, of horrific punishments for a litany of sins where one might think that Hashem is ready to trade us in for another nation, given our track record. So Kadosh Baruch Hu teaches that once there is Kedusha vested – even in an animal – it can NEVER BE EXCHANGED. The Gemara (Gittin 57b) teaches us that Hashem was באומה אותנו מעביר, swore that He will never trade us in for another nation. Throughout our history, we have long been plagued by that thought – after EVERY חורבן that we lived through – we thought כביכול Hashem had lost hope in our ever achieving our purpose. The Mitzvah of Temura is here to reinforce our belief in ourselves and reject that corrupt line of thought. Following this thread, במדבר with the counting done מתוך חביבה after the devastating Tochacha, dispels any notion of being out of Hashem's grace – Hashem still loves us.

This idea would also explain the Haftora of Parshas Bamidbar; some background is called for. The Gemara (Pesachim 87a) tells that the Navi Hoshea suggested that Hashem finally get rid of Klal Yisroel who regularly disregarded all the Nevi'im which were sent. Hashem sends him on a bizarre mission; to marry a woman of ill-repute, have children with her and then divorce her. After Hoshea says that he would never be able to desert children, Hashem says NOW you understand why I can't cast away and abandon Klal Yisroel. The Haftora continues with the estranged Yisroel returning with Teshuva and renewing their vows with Hashem of וארשתיהם לי לעולם. That חביבה, which we must remember, נודעת לנו, will never be exchanged.

How desperately are we looking for a tangible sign of that חביבה right now. We are still reeling from Meron, which came on the heels of a year and a half of COVID, and now the צרה of Yishmael rising and putting Yisroel under fire to the likes of which we have never experienced. We still need to pay attention to, and heed Hashem's messages to us, to Daven and Daven again to spare Yiddishe Neshamos in the coming days and לנצח. The Gaon says that אתה בחרתנו refers to Pesach and אהבת אותנו refers to Shavuos. The greatest sign of Hashem's love for us was His Giving us the Torah. Let us appreciate that love and that gift.

We should all be Zocheh in the Zechus of our learning on Shavuos that the Yeshua for all of us – one by one – should come במהרה.

Among those who are מצפים לישועה.

אמני דאנקה חיים טובים איתך

