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## INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON BAMIDBAR - 5786

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In memory of **Chaim Yissachar z"l** ben Yechiel Zaydel Dov

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YUTORAH IN PRINT Bamidbar 5786

### **Flags Speaking Across the Generations** **Rabbi Daniel Z. Feldman**

The Jewish calendar this year marks **Yom Yerushalayim**, the Torah reading of Parashat Bamidbar, and Shavuot in close succession, in a space of seven days. One of the most recent additions to the holidays of our people, one of the most ancient, and between them the parashah of the flags of the tribes of Israel. Today, it is a flag that proudly stands for the State of Israel in front of the world; it is the flag that so prominently represents Yom Yerushalayim; and it evokes the flags that were central to Shavuot as well.

Shavuot commemorates the giving of the Torah, when, the midrash relates, Mount Sinai was surrounded by angels carrying flags. The Jewish people, witnessing this, desired flags for themselves, and God complied, as conveyed by the verse (Song of Songs 2:4), "He brought me to the house of wine, and his banner over me was love" (Bamidbar Rabba 2:3).

Rav Kook, writing decades before the independence of the modern State of Israel, explained the significance of Sinai being termed "the house of wine" in conjunction with flags. Wine removes inhibitions, and allows one's true personality to emerge, unobscured. The Sinaitic moment was not only a transmission of information: it was the creation of a national identity, of a people, of individuals who merged their identity to become a collective. They became greater than the sum of their parts, no longer defined by details but by a shared essence. A flag, a symbol that speaks more than a thousand words, becomes a most fitting vessel.

That collective essence does not erase the individual; it demands individuality. Rav Chaim Yaakov Goldwicht, citing the Sfat Emet (Avot 1:14), reads "if I am not for myself, who will be for me; and when I am only for myself, what am I" as the very mechanism by which the people of Israel is constituted. If one does not develop his own unique capacities, no one else can do so in his place; yet those capacities are meant to be brought into the service of the larger whole. He extends this to the midrash of the flags at Sinai. The angels whose flags inspired the Jewish people were beings entirely devoted to a mission, and the request for flags was a request to share in that mission-centered identity. The declaration of na'aseh venishma reflects the same posture (Shabbat 88a), a readiness to be defined by one's purpose even before one fully understands its details.

Rav Yissachar Shlomo Teichtal, in Mishneh Sachir, takes up the same theme from another direction. The haftarah of Bamidbar describes the people of Israel as "the number of the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured nor numbered" (Hoshea 2:1), an image that seems to contradict the careful counting and ordered placement of the camp in the parashah itself.

Chazal note that sand carries a particular blessing: it passes through fire and emerges as glass, clear and beautiful and strong. So too the Jewish people endure through fire and come out as something transparent to its purpose, something that holds together while remaining open to the light. Rav Teichtal lived this image; he passed through the Holocaust and wrote the Eim HaBanim Smeicha out of that fire, and the image of sand becoming glass speaks not only to the survival of the people but to the building of the State that received those who emerged.

The culture that was formed at Sinai matters, and is expressed not only through laws and practices but through the formation of an entire canvas on which to paint its

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### **Rabbi Eliezer Melamed**

#### **The Obligation of Genizah in the Age of Recycling**

There is no need to place the 'Revivim' articles in genizah • It is permissible to place the newspaper in recycling bins, or in the trash • It is Biblically forbidden to erase any of the Names by which God is called • There is no need to place in genizah the pages of sacred books that were printed for the purpose of proofreading • Regarding sacred books that contain no holy Names, according to all opinions, the prohibition against destroying them is rabbinic • Ideally, source sheets and pamphlets whose purpose is Torah study should be placed in genizah • Shabbat pamphlets that remained in the synagogue and

were never opened at all have the same status as proofreading pages, and do not require genizah

Must the 'Revivim' Articles Be Placed in Genizah?

Q: Must the 'Revivim' articles and other articles containing Torah content in the newspaper 'Besheva' be placed in genizah?

A: Although there are many opinions on this matter, the practical ruling is that they do not need to be placed in genizah, and it is permissible to place the newspaper in recycling bins or in the trash, while taking care that the newspaper not be open to the Torah articles.

In order to explain the halakha properly, I will also clarify related issues.

**The Prohibition Against Destroying Holy Names and Sacred Books**  
It is Biblically forbidden to erase any of the Names by which God is called, as it says regarding the idols of idol worship: "And you shall destroy their names from that place" (Deuteronomy 12:3), and immediately afterward it says: "You shall not do so to the Lord your God" (Deuteronomy 12:4) meaning, it is forbidden to destroy His Name. One who intentionally erases any of the Names that were written in holiness — even a single letter of the Name — transgresses a Biblical prohibition and is liable to lashes (Shevuot 35a; Rambam, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 6:1; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 276:9). Therefore, our Sages said that a Torah scroll, tefillin, and mezuzot that have worn out require genizah (Megillah 26b; Shulchan Aruch, Yoreh De'ah 282:10; Orach Chaim 154:5).

It is also forbidden to destroy sacred books that contain no holy Names, and therefore, they must be placed in genizah — however, the prohibition against their destruction, and consequently the obligation of genizah, is rabbinic (Rambam, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 6:8; Chinuch 437; Tashbetz 1:2, and many others). Pages of Chumashim and Siddurim Printed for Proofreading  
This brings us to a question that the later poskim (Jewish law decisors) have discussed extensively: Before printing a book, one must first print a single sheet for the purpose of proofreading, in order to verify that the pages came out straight and in order. In earlier times, this was also done in order to perform final corrections on the book. Sometimes an error occurred and additional sheets had to be printed. Print shops were accustomed to throwing these sheets into the garbage, and many times the sheets would be scattered in a disgraceful manner near the print shop, and non-Jews would take them and treat them with great disrespect — such as using them for wrapping food, and wiping in the outhouse. In order to prevent this disgrace, some suggested burning these pages (called "korrekting"), and the poskim disagreed as to whether it is permitted to burn them in order to prevent their disgrace. According to the Ikarei HaDa"t (Orach Chaim 8:12), it is forbidden to destroy them by hand, and they must be placed in genizah. And according to the Magen Gibborim (Orach Chaim, Shiltei Gibborim 154:2), there is even a Biblical prohibition in doing so.

On the other hand, according to many authorities, since the pages were printed in order to proofread the book for printing errors — they possess no sanctity, because their purpose is not for study but for proofreading, and therefore they were never consecrated (Responsa Ein Yitzchak 5–7 by Rabbi Yitzchak Elchanan of Kovna; Rabbi Elyashiv, Kovetz Teshuvot 2:6). The Netziv likewise ruled this way (Meshiv Davar 2:80) for an additional reason: since they were printed for short-term use, they were never consecrated, and it

is permitted to destroy them. And some ruled that even regarding proofreading pages of Chumashim and Siddurim that contain many Names, the same law applies (Meshiv Davar *ibid.*; Zaken Aharon 2:70; Yechaveh Da'at Chazan 3:10).

In the Responsa Avnei Nezer (Yoreh De'ah 376), the ruling is even more lenient. In his opinion, even sacred books, as long as one has not yet begun to study from them, sanctity has not yet taken effect upon them, and there is no prohibition to destroy them.

In practice, the accepted ruling is that there is no need to place in genizah the pages of sacred books that were printed for the purpose of proofreading, as written in the Responsa Tzitz Eliezer (3:1), that it is permissible to burn the proofreading pages, but not to throw them into the garbage in a disrespectful manner. And it appears from the words of the poskim that if one places them in recycling bins or in the trash when they are wrapped in a bag or box in order to preserve their dignity, this is not considered a disrespectful manner.

The Dispute is in Rabbinic Law, and Therefore the Lenient Opinion is Followed

Beyond the fact that most poskim ruled leniently regarding the burning of proofreading pages, the dispute concerns rabbinic law. For even regarding a holy Name that was written or printed out of belief and recognition of its sanctity in order that people study from it — such as the Names in Chumashim and Siddurim — the poskim disagree as to whether the prohibition against erasing it is Biblical. The majority opinion among the poskim is that since it was not written explicitly for the sanctity of the Name in the manner that Sta"m (Torah scrolls, tefillin, and mezuzot) are written, the prohibition against erasing it is rabbinic (Machaneh Ephraim, Hilchot Sefer Torah, p. 54a; Seder Mishnah, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 6:1; Ein Yitzchak 1, Orach Chaim 5; Melameid LeHo'il 2:88; Achiezer 2, Yoreh De'ah 48. And Rabbi Herzog in Psakim UKetavim 4, Yoreh De'ah 107, wrote that this is the opinion of the majority of poskim). When it comes to sacred books that contain no holy Names, according to all opinions, the prohibition against destroying them is rabbinic (Rambam, Hilchot Yesodei HaTorah 6:8). And this is how the poskim have treated all books of the Oral Torah — such as volumes of Gemara — as books containing no holy Names (Avnei Nezer, Yoreh De'ah 376:4; Har Tzvi 231; Igrot Moshe 4:39; Aseh Lecha Rav 3:28). And although it is known that the Gemara contains holy Names, apparently, because the Names within them are few and are not an essential part of the book as they are in the Tanach or in the Siddur, the intent of the one who brings it to press and the printer is not upon them, and therefore, we follow the majority and primary content which constitutes sacred books containing no holy Names — and accordingly, the prohibition against their destruction is rabbinic. Since the dispute regarding proofreading pages concerns rabbinic law, the ruling follows the lenient opinion.

**Shabbat Pamphlets That Were Never Opened**

It appears that the same law that applies to proofreading pages likewise applies to booklets of Torah content that are attached to newspapers or sent by mail, whose recipients do not intend to study from them — as well as Shabbat pamphlets that remained in the synagogue and were never opened at all. For it is known to those who bring them to press that some of them will never be studied, and therefore as long as they have not been studied, they have the same status as proofreading pages, and do not require genizah.

Weekly Torah Portion Pamphlets and Source Sheets

The status of weekly Torah portion pamphlets, booklets of Torah articles, and source sheets is more stringent than that of proofreading pages. For they are intended for Torah study, whereas proofreading pages are not intended for study at all — and therefore according to many, pamphlets and source sheets require genizah (this was the inclination of Zaken Aharon 2:70; Minchat Yitzchak 1:18; Minchat Asher, Talmud Torah 9. And likewise, all those who hold that Torah articles in newspapers require genizah, as cited below).

However, some hold that since the study from them is one-time — they were never consecrated and need not be placed in genizah, but rather it is permissible to place them in recycling bins (Yechaveh Da'at Chazan, Part 3, Orach Chaim 10), or in the trash wrapped in a bag (Teshuvot VeHanhagot 1:553; Siach Nachum 74).

And although the entire discussion concerns rabbinic law, the accepted ruling is that ideally, source sheets and pamphlets whose purpose is Torah study should be placed in genizah. Those who are lenient and place them in recycling bins or in the trash wrapped in a bag have valid authorities upon whom to rely.

#### A Secular Newspaper That Contains Torah Content

The status of Torah content printed in newspapers and religious pamphlets whose majority is secular material is lower than that of weekly Torah portion pamphlets and source sheets, since most of the newspaper or pamphlet deals with secular matters, and accordingly the primary intent of their printing is for secular purposes.

Nevertheless, some are stringent and hold that the Torah content must be cut out and placed in genizah (Rabbi Greenfeld in Yerushat Platah 29; Halichot Shlomo, Tefillah 20:72; Rabbi Shlomo Man HaHar, Techumin 3, in response to the article of Rabbi Dasberg; Chevel Nachalato 10:38). And some ruled thus ideally, while permitting in after-the-fact situations to recycle them (Rabbi Elyashiv, Kovetz Teshuvot 2:6; Aseh Lecha Rav 3:28; BeMar'eh HaBazak 5:89).

However, some hold that we follow the primary nature of the newspaper or pamphlet: if its primary nature is secular — it was printed with that intention, and there is no need to place in genizah the Torah content within it (Minchat Yitzchak 1:18. And similarly in Shevet HaLevi 5:162). And these may be added to those who are lenient even regarding weekly Torah portion pamphlets and source sheets — because they are intended for one-time study, as explained in the previous paragraph.

Therefore, it is permissible to place them in recycling bins or in the trash in a manner where the secular pages cover the page containing Torah content. It goes without saying that there is no need to place in genizah Torah articles in secular newspapers, for even though one side may have Torah content printed on it, the other side may contain things that are completely contrary — and it is specifically by placing them in genizah that disgrace would result.

#### Care Regarding the Printing of Holy Names

However, the writers of articles and the printers of newspapers and the preparers of source sheets must be careful not to write holy Names, for even though according to the majority of poskim sanctity does not take effect upon them, there is disgrace in writing them outside the framework of a sacred book that will endure for many years.

As we learned in tractate Rosh Hashanah (18b), the Greek kingdom decreed against Israel that they may not mention the Name of Heaven. When the Hasmoneans prevailed and defeated them, they

saw a need to strengthen the faith by mentioning the Name of Heaven, and they instituted that it be written in all legal documents. And so, they would write: “In such-and-such year of Yochanan the High Priest of God Most High.” But this practice caused a problem, for after a person would pay his debt, he would many times discard the document without placing the Name in genizah, and the Name of Heaven would end up lying in the garbage. Therefore, our Sages abolished this practice, and even established the day of its abolition as a holiday.

From here the poskim learned that one must be careful not to write the Name of God in newspapers or in letters, or even in greeting cards that may sometimes come to disgrace. Likewise, one must avoid writing them in decorations hung in the synagogue when there is concern that they will wear out and become disgraced (Sha'arei Teshuvah, Orach Chaim 11:3). However, when there is no concern that they will be disgraced, it is permitted to write the Names or engrave them — such as on the Holy Ark, or before the prayer leader (Mishnah Berurah 1:4). Nevertheless, if the printers of source sheets or articles made an error and printed holy Names, since they did not intend to do so, the status of the articles and source sheets is as explained above.

#### Tests and Workbooks

Q: Must tests, worksheets, and notebooks from Torah and Oral Torah classes be placed in genizah?

A: Since their primary purpose is to engage the students and not for them to study from them — they were never consecrated, and one may treat them according to the lenient opinion and place them in recycling bins or in the trash wrapped in a bag. However, notebooks containing Torah content that a person intends to keep in order to review and study from again — these require genizah.

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#### Rav Schachter on the Parsha III

Insights and Commentary Based on the Shiurim of **Rav Hershel Schachter** Adapted by Dr. Allan Weissman

<https://tinyurl.com/RavSchachterontheParsha> and at [torahweb.org](http://torahweb.org)

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Parshas Bamidbar

#### Pidyon Bechorim [and The 5-Tier Hierarchy of Rov ]

קח את הלויים תחת כל בכור בבני ישראל ואת בהמת הלויים תחת בהמתם

Take the Levi'im in place of every firstborn of Bnei Yisrael, and the livestock of the Levi'im in place of their livestock. (Bamidbar 3:45)

The Torah teaches that bechorim, both human and animal, have kedushah. Hashem commanded Moshe to count the bechorim among the Yisraelim and to take the male Levi'im as a pidyon (redemption) for those bechorim. Each Levi counted as a pidyon for one Yisraeli bechor. The Torah relates that the 22,273 firstborn Yisraelim outnumbered the 22,000 Levi'im available for pidyon. Therefore, 22,000 of the bechorim were replaced by Levi'im, and the remaining 273 (who were identified by goral) had to pay the usual five shekalim to a Kohen for pidyon haben. Hashem also commanded Moshe at this time to take the animals of the Levi'im as a pidyon for the firstborn among the animals of the Yisraelim. Not all animals were involved in this pidyon, however, as all bechor beheimah tehorah (firstborn kosher animals) whether they belong to Kohanim, Levi'im, or Yisraelim are sanctified from birth and are brought as korbanos (if unblemished). The only firstborn livestock that require pidyon, and which are therefore the subject of the passuk cited above, are pitrei

chamor (firstborn male donkeys). These are assur b'hana'ah (forbidden with regard to benefit) prior to being redeemed with non-sanctified sheep (Bechoros 9b), and the sheep must then be gifted to a Kohen as one of the twenty-four matnos Kehunah.

The Gemara in Bechoros (4b) points out that the Torah records only the number of human Yisraeli bechorim who were in excess of the Levi'im, but not the surplus among the animal firstborn, even though the pitrei chamor of all the shevatim presumably outnumbered the sheep of the Levi'im. We see from this that although one Levi could only take the place of one bechor, "שה אחד" - one sheep of a Levi exempted [from pidyon] many firstborn donkeys of a Yisrael". Unlike the other aspects of the parsha, which were merely hora'os sha'ah (temporary rulings), this is a din l'doros that continues to be relevant. The underlying principle of this din is that a seh used for pidyon does not become imbued with kedushah in place of the petter chamor, as that would preclude it from being used for the pidyon of another chamor. Thus, if a Yisrael gave a Kohen a seh as pidyon for his petter chamor and he then purchased that seh back from the Kohen, he may use it to be podeh another petter chamor. In the pidyon bechorim described in our parsha, the sheep were not given to Kohanim. Instead, they removed the kedushah of the Yisraelim's pitrei chamor through merely being designated as their pidyon. Thus, each seh could effect the pidyon of many pitrei chamor even initially. Regarding the mitzvah l'doros, when pitrei chamor have to be redeemed with sheep that are given to Kohanim, a Yisrael cannot initially use a single seh to be podeh several pitrei chamor, because the pidyon is effected by giving the seh to a Kohen, and the Kohen is entitled to one seh for each chamor. Therefore, one may use a seh for a second pidyon only if he bought it back after giving it to the Kohen.

The Gemara in Bechoros (11a) quotes a Beraisa that discusses a case involving questionable pitrei chamor. A Yisrael had ten donkeys that had never given birth, and each of them produced a set of twins consisting of a male and a female, but it is not known whether the male or the female emerged first. Every one of the newborn males is thus a safeik petter chamor. The Beraisa teaches that in such a case, "מפריש עליהן עשרה שייין ומעשרן והן שלוי" - he sets aside ten sheep [as pidyon] for them; he then tithes [the sheep], and they are his". If we were certain that the male chamorim were firstborn, the owner would not have rights to the sheep used for pidyon; they would be the property of the Kohanim, and the owner would not take ma'aser from them. Since the status of the chamorim is questionable, however, the Halachah differentiates between the issur aspect of pidyon petter chamor and the monetary aspect. As far as the issur hana'ah of a petter chamor prior to pidyon, we follow the rule of sfeika d'oraissa l'chumra (we rule stringently in cases of doubt regarding Torah law). Thus, the owner must perform a pidyon on the questionable pitrei chamor in order to remove the possible issur and to permit working with them. After the owner performs the pidyon, however, he is not required to give the sheep to a Kohen, because the Kohen's monetary right is questionable. When dealing with doubts regarding ownership of property, we apply the principle of "המוציא מחבירו עליו הראיה" - the one seeking to exact property from [the possession of] his fellow bears the burden of proof". Since the Kohen is unable to prove that he is entitled to the sheep, they remain in the possession of the Yisrael, as he is the muchzak (the one who had initial possession). Since the Yisrael is legally entitled to keep the sheep, he is required

to separate ma'aser beheimah from them as if they were definitely his.

The famous sugya of Takfah Kohen (Bava Metzia 6a-7a) utilizes this case involving the pidyon of questionable pitrei chamor to determine the extent of the principle of "המוציא מחבירו עליו הראיה". Specifically, the sugya seeks to answer the question of whether a muchzak, who had the object in question in his possession at the time the safeik arose, continues to keep it b'toras vadai (on definite terms) or only b'toras safeik (on questionable terms). The Gemara presents the question in the following way. If the Halachah views disputed property as definitely belonging to a muchzak, then "תקפו כהן מוציאין" - if a Kohen seized [a questionable bechor or the seh used for pidyon of a safeik petter chamor], we remove it from his possession". However, if the Halachah considers the disputed animal as only questionably belonging to a muchzak and as possibly belonging to the Kohen, "תקפו כהן אין מוציאין אותו מידו"; if the Kohen were to seize the animal, he would not have to return it, since he would then become the muchzak. The Gemara demonstrates from the fact that the Yisrael is obligated to separate ma'aser beheimah from the sheep used for the pidyon that due to the principle of "המוציא מחבירו עליו הראיה", the Halachah considers him the definite owner of the sheep. The requirement to separate ma'aser beheimah only applies when the animal that will be counted as ma'aser is of definite status, not when it will attain only a doubtful status of ma'aser: "עשירי" - Thus, an owner is required to separate ma'aser only from those animals that are definitely his. If the sheep were only questionably owned by the Yisrael, who may keep them only because the Kohen is unable to prove that he is entitled to them, the sheep would be considered like laku'ach (animals that were bought), which are exempt from ma'aser beheimah (Bechoros 55b). Evidently, then, the status of the sheep with regard to ma'aser beheimah, and the identity of their owner, is not in doubt.

Tosfos (Bava Metzia 7a, s.v. mafrish; see Tosfos, Bechoros 4b, s.v. u'podeh) notes that the Beraisa states that the owner must separate ten sheep to redeem the ten questionable chamorim. Given the Gemara in Bechoros we saw above, which states that "שה אחד" - Tosfos wonders why the owner needs ten sheep for the pidyon of the chamorim. Since the Yisrael is the muchzak on the disputed sheep, he is not required to give the sheep to the Kohen after he performs the pidyon. Therefore, he should be able to use the same seh over and over again to be podeh all ten chamorim! Rav Eliezer Kirzner offered a mathematical answer to this question. The Gemara in Bava Basra (92b) teaches the rule, "אין הולכין בממון אחר הרוב" - We do not follow the [principle of] majority in matters involving money". In other words, although rov (likelihood, or ruba d'lesa kaman) is used to determine the halachah in the realm of issura (prohibitory law), in momona (monetary cases), when someone is in possession of disputed property, a rov does not suffice as a basis for exacting the property from him. We allow the property to remain in the possession of the muchzak, even when a rov indicates that he is, in fact, not the rightful owner. Rabbi Akiva Eiger (Teshuvos, Tinyana 103:5,15), however, restricts this rule to cases with a standard rov. In the presence of a 99% rov, the principle of rov is operative; we would follow such a compelling rov to exact money, even from a muchzak. He explains that the reason for "אין הולכין בממון אחר הרוב" is that we say, "סמוך מינוטא לחזקה" - join the minority to the chazakah (the possession of the muchzak)," which

has the effect of weakening the rov. However, if the mi'ut (minority possibility) is so improbable that it is deemed a mi'uta d'mi'uta (a minority of a minority), this argument cannot be made.

Given this distinction, Rav Kirzner reasons as follows. After a seh is used to be podedh one safeik petter chamor, there is a 50% chance that the Yisrael still owns the seh ; if that chamor is really a firstborn, the seh used for its pidyon is the property of the Kohen. After a second pidyon, by virtue of the additional safeik, the chances that the Yisrael still owns the seh are reduced to 25%, with a 75% likelihood that he must give it to the Kohen. Nevertheless, the Yisrael need not give the seh to the Kohen at this point, since he is the muchzak, and we follow the rule "אין הולכין בממון אחר הרוב". However, as the same seh is used consecutively to be podedh other pitrei chamor, the chances that the Yisrael remains its owner is reduced further and further - to 12.5%, then to 6.25%, 3.125%, 1.56%, and so on. Eventually, we will reach a point that the overwhelming likelihood is that the seh is owned by the Kohen, and at that point, the Yisrael may not use it for pidyon any longer. Even though he is the muchzak, he will be forced to give the seh to the Kohen, since the chances that he has a right to keep it are only a mi'uta d'mi'uta. As Rabbi Akiva Eiger contends, we may no longer invoke the rule of "אין הולכין בממון אחר הרוב" when the Kohen has a 99% rov in his favor. This is the reason that the Beraisa chooses to speak of a case in which the Yisrael uses ten sheep for the pidyon of the chamorim, rather than using the same sheep repeatedly. Only then does he retain ownership of the sheep and continue to be obligated to separate ma'aser beheimah from them.

Rebbi Akiva Eiger's distinction between a standard rov and a rov of 99% is better understood in the context of a broader discussion addressing the classification of the different forms of rov. When the Torah formulates the principle of "אחרי רבים להטות" - yield to the majority" (Shemos 23:2), it stands to reason that there are different degrees of statistical probabilities. **In fact, we may identify five distinct categories of rov in Halachah.** [Rov was also discussed in recent daf yomi Chulin 11a]

First, the Halachah recognizes a rov that constitutes a mere **51% majority**. We would not follow this type of weak rov in all cases, such as when the rov is in conflict with a chazakah, a legal presumption that the status quo remains unchanged.

The Gemara in Kiddushin (80a) teaches, however, that in the presence of a **stronger rov**, such as a rov in the range of **70-80%** "רוב וחזקה רובה עדיף" - in a conflict between a rov and a chazakah, the rov prevails".

The Halachah gives even more credence to a third type of **rov of 95%**, where the opposing mi'ut is merely a **mi'ut she'eino matzui** (uncommon minority). A practical manifestation of the difference between the latter rov and the previous one can be found in the Ramban, who discusses why we must check animals for sirchos of the rei'ah (adhesions of the lung), but not for each of the other sixty-nine simanim (signs) of treifos that render animals non-kosher. The Ramban explains that this is due to the fact that sirchos of the rei'ah are found in a mi'ut hamatzui (common minority) of animals. Whenever there is a mi'ut hamatzui of the presence of an issur and it is not difficult to ascertain whether the issur is in fact present, one is obligated to check. The Ramban asserts that on a level of d'oraisa, one would have the right to rely on the rov of the second category (70-80%) that the majority of healthy animals do not contain simanei

treifah. There is, however, a requirement midrabbanan to investigate cases in which the frequency of the presence of an issur constitutes a mi'ut hamatzui. In a case of a 95% rov, however, there is not even a rabbinic requirement to investigate. The presence of one of the other sixty-nine simanei treifah is more uncommon than sirchos of the rei'ah, and thus one need not be concerned for the mi'ut she'eino matzui that the animal is a treifah.

As mentioned above, in a **fourth category of rov**, where the likelihood is as great as **99%**, Rabbi Akiva Eiger maintains that we do not follow the principle of "אין הולכין בממון אחר הרוב". In a situation with such a significant rov, the principle of rov is operative, and we rely on it **even to exact money from a muchzak**.

Finally, a **fifth form of rov** is characterized by a likelihood of **99.99%**, and is relevant to the rule, "אין הולכין בפיקוח נפש אחר הרוב" - We do not follow the majority when saving a life is concerned" (Kesubos 15b). **When a person's life is in danger, even if there is only a small possibility of danger, a mi'uta d'mi'uta, the matter is still regarded to be in doubt, and we violate issurim - for example, chillul Shabbos - to save his life.** Nevertheless, the Chasam Sofer argues that if the chance of sakanah is so remote that it is only "אחד מני אלף" - one in a thousand," the average person is not at all concerned about such a risk. In such a case, we may apply the concept known as "שומר פתאים ד'" - Hashem protects the foolish" (Tehillim 116:6), and rely upon Heaven to have mercy and ensure that no mishap occurs. This situation is not labeled as a safeik sakanah at all, and therefore does not override the violation of issurim.

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from: TorahWeb <torahweb@torahweb.org>

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**Rabbi Yakov Haber**

**Yonasan and Dovid, the Two Mashiachs and Jewish Unity**

The haftara of "Machar Chodesh," read when Rosh Chodesh falls out on the day after Shabbos (as it does this coming week), presents an episode in the great friendship between Yonasan and Dovid. Notwithstanding his father, King Shaul's, enmity and threats toward Dovid - who eventually would succeed Shaul as king, thus preventing Yonasan from assuming his father's throne - Yonasan willfully accepts Dovid's eventual reign over Israel and even assists him in fleeing from his father. In Jonathan's moving words as David is about to flee, "Go in peace! [We mutually commit to] that which we have sworn by Hashem's name, 'May Hashem always be between me and you and between my descendants and yours forever!'" (Shmuel 20:42).

This friendship between a descendant of Rachel, through Binyamin, and a descendant of Leah, through Yehuda, with the former pledging to assist and even be subservient to the latter is reminiscent of the reverse situation occurring centuries earlier. Yehuda, although initially responsible for the sale of Yosef, a son of Rachel, pleads before the Egyptian viceroy (Yosef himself!) to save Binyamin, Rachel's other son, from slavery, offering himself in his stead. The initial enmity between the sons of Leah and the son of Rachel was, for a moment in history, replaced with mutual responsibility and concern. This sense of mutual mission repeats itself in the opposite direction with the concern of Jonathan for David. If we should assume that both sons of Rachel, Yosef and Binyamin, to some extent represent the same aspect of Divine service, the

following pattern seems to emerge. Chazal had a tradition that the descendants of Eisav, and specifically Amaleik, would fall into the hands of the descendants of Yosef (see Rashi, beginning of parshas Vayishlach). Indeed, midrashic sources teach that the primary role of mashiach ben Yosef is to destroy Amaleik, whereas the role of mashiach ben Dovid, coming from the tribe of Yehuda, is to build the mikdash and lead the people in the service of Hashem in the messianic era. Some commentaries (see Sheim Mishmuel, Vayeishev 5677) note that the initial plan was that Shaul, a descendant of Binyamin, Yosef's brother, was to fulfill the role of "mashiach ben Yosef" and destroy Amaleik, as indeed he was charged to do. Then, Dovid, the "mashiach" from Yehuda would build the mikdash and lead the Jewish people, with Shaul becoming a viceroy.[1] Disappointingly, this plan failed. Shaul did not totally destroy Amaleik, and, as a result, when king David assumed the throne, he had to subsume in his role the mission of fighting against the enemies of Israel, including Edom, the descendants of Eisav. Consequently, he, who "fought many wars and spilled much blood" (Divrei Hayamim I 22:8) was not able to construct the mikdash, the building of which was delayed until the reign of his son, King Shlomo. Yonasan, realizing that his father's reign was destined to fail, willfully accepted his secondary role as a descendant of Binyamin under Dovid's primary leadership, thus somewhat preserving the original Divine plan of unifying the two main family branches in a joint rule. Unfortunately, this plan, after Yonasan's tragic demise in battle, did not come to fruition either.

Since both branches of the tribes, that of Yosef and that of Yehuda, were destined for kingship and leadership in some capacity, the kingdoms eventually split into two: one, the kingdom of Judah, led by Rechavam, Shlomo's son, and his descendants, and one, the kingdom of Israel, led by Yeravam, a descendant of Yosef through Efrayim.

On another level, the battles against the enemies of Israel are part of attending to the physical dimension of the welfare of the Jewish nation. Rav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohein Kook zt"l[2] teaches that just as Yosef primarily tended to the physical needs of the Jewish people, being the "mashbir" in Egypt and facilitating a smooth, comfortable transition into the years of Egyptian exile, so too would his descendant, mashiach ben Yosef, be assigned that task. By contrast, mashiach ben Dovid's more spiritual mission was rooted in the role of his ancestor, Yehuda.[3] This perhaps finds its initial indication in the fact that Yehuda, not Yosef, was charged by Ya'akov to found a beis Talmud in Egypt (Rashi, Bereishis 46:28). The holy city of Yerushalayim, the reunification of which is to be shortly celebrated, is known as "עיר שחברה לה יחדו" - a city joined together within itself" (Tehillim 122:3). In addition to other interpretations of the cohesive nature of Jerusalem, some explain that Yerushalayim also represents the combination of the two aforementioned forces, the physical and the spiritual. It is both mikdash melech, ir melucha, the seat of the royal kingdom, and beis mikdash'cha, the city in which Hashem's dwelling place on earth radiates to the whole world. I once heard from Rav Yoel Schwartz zt"l that this is the reason its name is ירושלים with the plural suffix "ים" as it is meant to combine both aspects.[4]

Rav Kook writes that on the long road to redemption there is a necessity to repair and rebuild both the physical as well as the spiritual destruction caused by the long exile. Unfortunately, these

two forces, rebuilding the physical and rebuilding the spiritual, are oftentimes in conflict with each other rather than working together in harmony as was the Divine plan. In Rav Kook's penetrating words:

When these two forces work at cross purposes as a result of the calamity of exile, shortsightedness and disarray, these are the "birthpangs of Messiah," or to be more exact, the "birthpangs of Messiahs." The Psalmist writes: "That Your enemies have defied, O Lord; that they have defied the footsteps of Your Messiahs." Two footsteps of two Messiahs.

More recently, in the Holy Land, the yishuv having gone through over two years of difficult war and other social upheavals, these two forces continue to be in constant friction with each other. Those for whom only the mission of physical rebuilding is significant often view those for whom the spiritual is their primary focus as pariahs, and worthless members of society. Those who attempt to combine both the physical and the spiritual have, of late, (to my humble mind, painfully and unfairly) been criticized as misrepresenting Torah by some groups who devote more time to the purely spiritual or as "messianic radicals" by the former group. Unfortunately, we continue to witness that which Rav Kook writes in his day: the two forces battle with each other instead of cooperating.

As Rav Kook himself writes: Now the truth is, as long as the nation is fractured and incapable of uniting the powers, at times an attempt at unification will actually result in some theological or moral damage. This deep separation is the source of controversy in Israel. A true unity and symbiosis between these seemingly opposite aspects seems elusive. Nonetheless, with dialogue, mutual respect and the avoidance of harsh rhetoric, we hope and pray that by appreciating the diverse roles and personalities of the many individuals involved in spiritually and physically rebuilding both the city of Yerushalayim and the Land of Israel that the day will come soon, as the prophet Yechezkel states:

Say to them, So says the Lord God: Behold I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim and the tribes of Israel his companions, and I will place them with him with the stick of Judah, and I will make them into one stick, and they shall become one in My hand....And My servant David shall be king over them, and one shepherd shall be for them all, and they shall walk in My ordinances and observe My statutes and perform them. (Yechezkel 37:19,24)

[1] Also see Sheim Mishmuel (ibid.) for the theological, conceptual framework for this division of roles. [2] See Lamentation in Jerusalem, translation by Rav Bezalel Naor, available here. [3] See the above essay in which Rav Kook explains how this duality was manifest in the leaders of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel. [4] He playfully stated that the nations of the world call it "Jerusalem" and not "Jerusalayim" not realizing its dual dimension!

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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org>

date: May 12, 2026, 7:01 PM

Rav Frand on Parshas Bamidbar

By Rabbi Yissocher Frand

To Dedicate an Article click <https://torah.org/support/dedication/>  
**Klal Yisrael: a Role-Oriented Religion & a Role-Oriented Nation**  
 These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly

portion: #1382 The Halachic Issues with Milchig Bread. Good Shabbos.

Klal Yisrael is a Role-Oriented Religion and a Role-Oriented Nation. The pasuk in Parshas Bamidbar says, "The Children of Israel shall encamp, every man at his camp and every man at his division..." (Bamidbar 1:2). During their journey in the midbar (wilderness), there was a specific order in which they traveled. Each of their camps had their own "degalim" (flags). This is how they camped around the Mishkan and this is how they traveled. Rashi quotes (in one of his interpretations) that the signs with which the shevatim (tribes) camped were "the signs given over to them by Yaakov their father." In other words, the arrangement of four units, with three shevatim per unit, was all specified by Yaakov as the configuration in which they were to carry his body up from Mitzrayim (Egypt) (to the Mearas Hamachpelah in Eretz Canaan for burial).

Rashi brings the same idea in Parshas Vayechi, where the Torah describes the actual transport of Yaakov's body from Mitzrayim to the Mearas Hamachpelah: He specified positions for them; three to the east, three to the south, three to the west, and three to the north. Rashi there mentions that their eventual travel in the midbar after Yetzias Mitzrayim was established back then. For example, Levi was instructed not to carry Yaakov's coffin, just as his shevet would not take part in the travel configuration in the midbar (because Shevet Levi had the separate job of carrying the Aron). Likewise, in the transport of Yaakov's body back to Canaan, Yosef did not participate in the carrying because he was a king (i.e. – Egyptian royalty), so his sons Menashe and Ephraim took his place.

The Medrash (Medrash Rabbah Bamidbar Parsha 2 Os 7) explains that this is the meaning of the phrase in the pasuk "ish al diglo b'osos" – using the "osos" (signs) that their father (Yaakov) gave them for carrying his coffin, they gathered under their respective "degalim."

At first glance, it seems rather strange that there is such serious concern as to how they travelled in the midbar. We must remember that the transport of Yaakov's body to Canaan happened hundreds of years earlier! Why was there such hakpada about the order of the shevatim's travel upon leaving Mitzrayim?

I saw in a sefer that this was much more fundamental than just the idea of positioning. When Yaakov Avinu gave his deathbed instructions to his sons regarding how to travel when they transport him from Mitzrayim, he was also conveying to them something far more basic. When the shevatim gathered around Yaakov's deathbed, he told each of them their strengths and their weaknesses, and he also assigned to them their future roles in Klal Yisrael. Shevet Levi would have the kehuna. Yehuda would be the melech. Shevet Yissocher would devote themselves to learning and Zevulun would support them, etc. etc. In other words, Yaakov was not just assigning east-west north-south positions. He was defining their roles in Klal Yisrael.

Judaism is a role-oriented religion and Klal Yisrael is a role-oriented nation. The only way to have a successful nation is if everyone's roles are defined. "Vayehi b'Yeshurun melech, b'hisasef roshei am yachad shivtei Yisrael." Achdus (unity) is necessary. In order to have achdus, it is necessary to establish "mi b'rosh?" (who will lead?). Someone needs to be the chief, and the others need to be the Indians. When all the Indians want to be the chief, there will be trouble!

So, when Yaakov Avinu assigned the positions in which they would travel, included in that assignment was their roles and their hierarchy. That is why when they finally became a nation and began travelling in the midbar, it became incumbent to establish the roles of each shevet.

This is not unlike the armed services of the United States. The Navy needs to take care of the ocean. The Air Force needs to take care of the sky. The Army needs to take care of the ground. Each of these roles are defined. When one service wants to usurp and take over the "territory" of another branch of service, it causes division and arguments.

Therefore, the importance of how they travelled was not merely about travelling. This is what Chazal wished to emphasize: They had this configuration from the Zeida Yaakov, who had the vision of what Klal Yisrael would look like. He recognized that in Klal Yisrael, not everyone could be the king, not everyone could be the learner, and not everyone could be in charge of the avoda in the Beis Hamikdash (Temple Service). Everything had to be defined. That definition was established by Yaakov Avinu, and that is why it was so important to maintain that same configuration while they travelled in the midbar.

Klal Yisrael is a Role-Oriented Religion and a Role-Oriented Nation

I would like to point out another insight on this very pasuk, but with a totally different emphasis:

**"Every man at his camp and every man at his division..."** (Bamidbar 1:52)

Another very interesting Medrash (Medrash Rabbah Bamidbar Parsha 2 Os 2) seems to be saying disparate things that may actually be related.

By making every shevet have degalim, Hashem expressed his love for the Jewish people. The Medrash cites the pasuk "He has brought me into the wine cellar and diglo (his flag) is upon me as a demonstration of His love" (Shir HaShirim 2:4). The Medrash quotes various interpretations of the pasuk:

One interpretation of this Medrash is: Even if a person is sitting and learning and skips around (m'daleg) from place to place, from pasuk to pasuk, and from halacha to halacha, the Ribono shel Olam's reaction is 'This person is dear to Me, v'dilugo Alai ahava (his skipping is upon Me for love). The Tanna makes a very interesting play on words, switching from v'diglo (and his flag) to v'dilugo (and his skipping). "I like the fact that he skips!"

Another interpretation of the Medrash is: At Kabalas Hatorah (Revelation), thousands upon thousands of malachim (angels) descended with the Ribono shel Olam. The pasuk indicates that the malachim were each carrying degalim, as it is written, dagul m'revava. When the Jews saw that the malachim were each carrying degalim, they began to strongly desire their own degalim. They said, halevai that we too should have degalim like the malachim do.

Therefore, the pasuk states: He has brought me into the wine cellar and diglo (his flag) is upon me, as a demonstration of His love.

The Sefas Emes points out that there is a common denominator to the theme of these interpretations: Normally Yiddishkeit is a religion of hadraga (taking things in steps). A person cannot suddenly jump from the lower to the higher rungs of spirituality. A person must go step by step over a long period of time. This is the normal way of doing things. Usually, if someone goes overnight from eating

neveilos and treifos to wearing rabbinic garb, such growth does not last. But this Medrash is saying, according to the Sefas Emes, that sometimes the Ribono shel Olam lets you skip. When the Ribono shel Olam sees your passion to grow and become greater and sees that you have a burning desire to improve, then the Ribono shel Olam says “Yes. I can accept that and I will let you skip and I will even help you skip.”

That is the meaning of skipping pesukim and perakim. Here is a person who says “I want to learn. I want to know. But it is just too hard for me so I skip it!” The Ribono shel Olam sees his desire and passion. He says “That is what I like. I like the passion.” Therefore, even though you may be skipping this and skipping that, your feelings are in the right place and I appreciate that. “V’dilugo Alai ahava” – His skipping is dear to Me (because his skipping comes from a place where he really wants to learn, but it is just too hard for him).

This, says the Sefas Emes, is the same message as that of the malachim. Klal Yisrael sees thousands and thousands of malachim descending and they all carry degalim. They have a passion to become like malachim. Wait a minute! You can’t be a malach, you are a human being! Why do you have a passion for that? It is beyond your scope. The Ribono shel Olam says, “Yes, I see it is beyond your scope but I see your passion. I see your desire. That is what I like.” Therefore, the two interpretations of “dilugo Alai ahava” are intertwined. There is a common denominator between the person that skips and Klal Yisrael that had a passion for the degalim. There is an element there that the Ribono shel Olam appreciates and loves, and in fact, He will sometimes let a person skip a couple of steps along the way, in order to fulfill that strong desire.

This is the meaning of the pasuk “He has brought me to the wine cellar and diglo (his flag) is upon me with love.” Sometimes it is dilugo (allowing you to skip) which demonstrates His love because He sees your passion to grow and become a better Jew.

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem

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### **Rabbi Yehuda Zev Klein**

[A National Call to Shabbos]

By now, we all know about President Donald Trump’s proclamation. In honor of the 250th anniversary of American independence, and during the weekend of “Rededicate 250,” he encouraged Jewish Americans to observe a national Sabbath. Such a statement is unprecedented. Never has a sitting leader or the President of the United States, the leader of the free world, publicly encouraged the Jewish people to observe Shabbos. Even more striking was his call

for all Americans to draw inspiration from the Jewish day of rest. From sundown on May 15 until nightfall on May 16, he invited Americans to experience a 25-hour period of rest modeled after the Shabbos faithfully observed by Jews each week.

More than fifty years ago, another moment captured the attention of the American public and became one of the greatest modern examples of Kiddush Hashem. In 1965, Sandy Koufax, the legendary pitcher for the Los Angeles Dodgers, chose not to pitch Game 1 of the World Series because it fell on Yom Kippur. Koufax is widely regarded as one of the greatest left-handed pitchers in baseball history. He won three Cy Young Awards and became the youngest player ever inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. He was the marquee star of the sport, and the entire nation anticipated seeing him take the mound on baseball’s grandest stage.

Yet despite the immense pressure and expectation, Koufax made the courageous decision to place faith before fame. Though not fully observant and despite having played on Yom Kippur in earlier years, he chose that night not to stand before millions in a packed stadium, but instead to fast and attend Yom Kippur davening in shul. Decades later, despite all of his athletic accomplishments, Koufax is remembered most significantly for the game he did not play. That singular act ignited Jewish pride throughout America and became an enduring symbol of Jewish conviction and identity. The twentieth century’s most prominent Shabbos-observant political figure was Joseph Lieberman.

Early in his career, while serving as a Connecticut State Senator in 1971, the Senate delayed a Friday evening vote because Lieberman needed to leave in order to observe Shabbos. He would later go on to serve with distinction in the United States Senate and, in the year 2000, came within mere hundreds of votes of becoming Vice President of the United States.

In 2011, Lieberman authored a book titled *The Gift of Rest*, in which he reflected on the beauty and necessity of Shabbos. He wrote that every generation has its own form of bondage, its own “slave masters,” shaped by the spirit of the age. In our generation, he argued, those forces are often the endless distractions of technology: phones, tablets, computers, and devices that consume hour after hour of our lives. Shabbos, he explained, liberates us from that tyranny. For twenty-five sacred hours, we are freed from the constant noise and pressure of the modern world.

And now, in the twenty-first century, the most powerful man in the world, a leader with unparalleled reach and influence, is publicly encouraging Klal Yisrael to embrace Shabbos. “Lev melech b’yad Hashem—The heart of a king is in the hand of Hashem” (Mishlei 21:1). Perhaps Hashem is sending us a message.

Perhaps this is a call for the Jewish people to strengthen their shemiras Shabbos, and He has placed that message specifically in the mouth of someone capable of reaching millions. Chazal teach: “If the Jewish people would keep even one Shabbos properly, Mashiach would come immediately” (Yerushalmi Taanis 1:1; Shemos Rabbah 25:12). (See Shabbos 118b which states that if the Jewish people would keep two Shabbos properly, they would be immediately ‘redeemed’; cf. Rashi, Bamidbar 15:30). How fitting that this message emerges specifically now, in the days leading up to Shavuos. The mitzvah of Shabbos itself preceded Har Sinai. Chazal teach, “Shabbos b’Marah nitztavu—The Jewish people were

commanded regarding Shabbos already in Marah,” before the giving of the Torah (Shemos 15:25; Rashi, ad loc.; Sanhedrin 56a).

Rav Menachem Mendel of Vorka once posed a fascinating question. What should we call the Shabbos before Shavuos? The Shabbos before Yom Kippur is known as Shabbos Shuvah. The Shabbos before Pesach is called Shabbos HaGadol. So what is the Shabbos before Shavuos called?

He answered: it is called Shabbos Derech Eretz. Because derech ertz kadma l’Torah—human decency, refinement of character, and moral sensitivity must precede Torah itself. Before receiving the Torah, a person must first become a vessel worthy of carrying it. Perhaps today we may add another dimension to that idea. Before receiving the Torah anew on Shavuos, we must demonstrate that we are truly the children of Hashem. Shabbos is the eternal sign between Hashem and Klal Yisrael, a gift uniquely entrusted to the Jewish people. Chazal teach, “Nochri she’shavas chayav misah—A nonJew who observes Shabbos is liable to the death penalty” (Sanhedrin 58b). The covenant of Shabbos belongs uniquely to Am Yisrael. Thus, before Kabbalas HaTorah, we reaffirm who we are through our embrace of Shabbos itself.

And so, as America commemorates 250 years of independence, perhaps Jews throughout the world should welcome this Shabbos by lighting a candle in honor of its sanctity. Remarkably, the word “ner” has the numerical value of 250.

May it be the will of Hashem that in the merit of Shemiras Shabbos, the promise of Chazal be fulfilled: If Klal Yisrael would keep even one Shabbos properly, Mashiach would come immediately. May it be this Shabbos. Have a beautiful and uplifting Shabbos.

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from: **Michal Horowitz** <michalchorowitz@gmail.com> date: May 14, 2026, 8:03 AM

### **Bamidbar 5786: Unity Before Sinai**

By Michal Horowitz on May 14, 2026 Parshas Bamidbar is always read the Shabbos before Shavuos, the yom tov that commemorates Matan Torah. Chazal teach us that this juxtaposition is not incidental. The Torah reading that precedes Shavuos carries within it an essential message about the preparation necessary to receive the Torah.

At Har Sinai, the Torah states: וַיִּחַן שָׁם יִשְׂרָאֵל נֶגְדַת הָהָר - And Israel encamped there opposite the mountain (Shemos 19:2). Rashi famously notes that the Torah uses the singular form וַיִּחַן, “and he camped”, rather than the plural וַיִּחַנו, “and they camped,” teaching that Bnei Yisrael stood at Sinai אחד בלב אחד - like one man with one heart.

Unity was not merely a beautiful ideal surrounding Matan Torah. It was a prerequisite for receiving the Torah itself.

Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski z’l develops this idea in a profound way. Reflecting on the encampment of Bnei Yisrael in the wilderness, he notes that the Torah repeatedly emphasizes that every individual and every shevet had a specific place within the nation. The Torah states: אִישׁ עַל דְּגֻלּוֹ בְּאֶתֶר לְבֵית אָבִתָּם יִחַן בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל - The Children of Israel shall encamp, each person by his banner according to the sign of his father’s household (Bamidbar 2:2).

Each tribe had its role. The Leviim had their responsibilities. The Kohanim had their avodah. Every individual had a unique place within the structure of Klal Yisrael.

Rabbi Dr. Twerski explains that genuine unity does not mean sameness. On the contrary, unity emerges when each person recognizes his own unique mission and respects the role of others. Much conflict and jealousy arise when people attempt to occupy someone else’s “time and place,” rather than appreciating the distinct role that Hashem has given them.

He cites the teaching of Pirkei Avos: “אֵין לָהּ אֶדָּם שְׂאִין לוֹ שְׂעָה, וְאֵין לָהּ דָּבָר שְׂאִין לוֹ מְקוֹם” - There is no person who does not have his hour, and there is no thing that does not have its place (Avos 4:3).

Every person has a purpose. Every soul has significance. Every individual contributes something unique to the greater whole.

Rabbi Dr. Twerski compares Klal Yisrael to a symphony orchestra. An orchestra achieves harmony not because every musician plays the same instrument, but because each one contributes his own distinct sound at the proper time and in the proper way. If one musician becomes focused on another’s role, the harmony is lost. But when each person fulfills his own assignment, the result is something beautiful and complete (Twerski on Chumash, The Shaar Press, p.268).

This understanding also helps explain why the Torah was given in the desert. The Midbar belongs to no individual and no tribe. It is open and ownerless, reminding us that Torah is not the possession of any one group or segment of Klal Yisrael. Every Jew has a portion in Torah, and every Jew stood at Sinai. The ability to receive Torah requires the recognition that we stand before Hashem not only as individuals, but as part of a greater nation united in purpose and destiny.

This idea carries particular significance as we approach Shavuos.

The Torah could only be given to a nation capable of standing together in unity. But that unity was not built upon uniformity. It was built upon mutual respect, shared purpose, and the recognition that every member of Klal Yisrael has value and importance.

Perhaps this is one of the impactful lessons of the reading of Bamidbar before Matan Torah.

Very often, people measure themselves against others. One person’s success can become another person’s source of frustration or insecurity. We compare accomplishments, talents, positions, and recognition. In doing so, we can lose sight of the truth that Hashem did not create any two people with the exact same mission.

The Midbar itself reflects this message. The wilderness appears empty and vast, yet it became the place where the Jewish people were formed into a nation and received the Torah. In that setting, external distinctions faded, and what mattered was the willingness of each person to stand together before Hashem.

True achdus (unity) emerges not when everyone becomes identical, but when each individual brings his own strengths into the service of something greater than himself.

This perspective also transforms the way we view others. When we recognize that every person has a unique tafkaid (role), we become less threatened by the success of others and more capable of appreciating their contribution. Another person’s accomplishments do not diminish our own purpose. On the contrary, the strength of Klal Yisrael depends upon the contribution of every individual.

As we prepare for Shavuos, this message becomes especially meaningful. Receiving the Torah is not only an individual experience; it is a national one. We receive the Torah together, as one people standing before Hashem.

May we merit to approach Shavuot with greater humility, greater unity, and greater appreciation for the unique role that each person plays within Klal Yisrael.

May we learn to value both our own mission and the mission of others.

And in this merit, may we once again stand כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד בְּלֵב אֶחָד, like one man with one heart, united in our commitment to Toras Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and Am Yisrael.

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### **Yerushalayim – A City the World Cannot Ignore**

By **Rabbi Moshe Taragin**

In the Moreh Nevuchim (3:45), the Rambam addresses the striking absence of Yerushalayim from the Torah. Though Tanach later overflows with references to the city, the Torah itself never names it explicitly, even when describing visits to it. The Rambam explains that this omission is deliberate. Had the Torah clearly identified the site of the Mikdash and the resting place of the Shechinah, it would have drawn the attention and hostility of surrounding nations, who might have seized or desecrated it. The city would have been engulfed in violence.

Evidently, not every element of this plan, as described by the Rambam, has unfolded as envisioned. From as early as 500 BCE, Yerushalayim has stood at the center of relentless struggle, fought over, claimed, and reclaimed across generations. That struggle has not faded. To this day, we continue to grapple with asserting a fully recognized and internationally accepted Jewish sovereignty over our city.

Though the name Yerushalayim does not appear explicitly in the Torah, each of our Avot encountered this mountain. Avraham's journey to the Akeidah already traces the future path and trajectory of our city.

#### **A Moral City**

In truth, Avraham had already visited Yerushalayim long before the Akeidah. After defeating the four tyrants who had imposed a reign of terror across the region, Avraham arrives at the city then known as Shalem. There he encounters a mysterious religious figure, Malki Tzedek, a priest-king who presides over the city.

Something about this place stands apart. Unlike Sedom, already marked by corruption, unlike the culture of Egypt which seizes women from their husbands, and unlike the empires of the four kings who ruled with brute force, this city carries a different tone. They offer bread and wine to a war-weary Avraham and extend hospitality and shelter as he recovers.

This behavior is not incidental. The city is called Shalem, suggesting a human striving toward moral wholeness, guided by a religiously attuned leader who seeks to shape a city worthy of that name.

It is also not incidental that the first moral city in Sefer Bereishit emerges on this mountain of Hashem. There is an instinctive recognition of a divine moral presence, and an attempt to shape human life in that image. Chazal identify this figure as Shem, the son of Noach, who had already grasped a form of monotheism even before Avraham's discovery.

#### **Without Transcendence**

This encounter between Avraham and Malki Tzedek shows what had already been achieved. It also shows what still remained beyond

reach and begins to point toward what Avraham himself would later introduce. They had built a moral city and were striving for ethical refinement. Yet their vision of shleimut was limited. They could not grasp that full religious perfection cannot be achieved on human terms, through human logic or moral intuition alone.

Religious perfection requires transcendence, an encounter with the Ribbono Shel Olam, a presence that does not conform to human categories. That encounter arrives in Parshat Vayeira, when Avraham is summoned up the mountain to meet Hashem on His terms, beyond human comprehension and beyond moral instinct, to perform a command that defies understanding.

#### **Hospitality, Not Sacrifice**

This is why the Torah spotlights the bread and wine. Rashi comments that this gesture foreshadows the korbanot that Avraham's descendants will one day bring upon this mountain, particularly the menachot, composed of flour and wine. There is a quiet contrast embedded in this moment. Malki Tzedek does not offer these items as sacrifice. The bread and wine remain gestures of hospitality and expressions of human courtesy. They are noble gestures, but they remain within the human sphere. One day, Avraham and his children will take these same materials and place them upon a mizbe'ach, redirecting them toward a Higher Being and transforming them into a korban. The same bread and wine will be lifted from the human sphere of courtesy into the divine realm of avodat Hashem. From morality to divine encounter.

The meeting between Avraham and Malki Tzedek becomes a quiet transfer, a passing of the baton. Malki Tzedek and his community introduced moral aspiration into a violent and fractured world. But transcendence had not yet entered the picture. Avraham, by returning to this mountain for the Akeidah, acknowledges and absorbs what they achieved, yet recognizes that something deeper still lies beyond it.

#### **Seen, But Not Seeing**

At the Akeidah, Avraham hears the mountain named as the site where Hashem "sees," or "be'har Hashem yera'eh." It is not a place where human beings come to see or comprehend Hashem. That remains beyond reach. Hashem cannot be grasped, and His commands, as the Akeidah so sharply illustrates, do not submit to the limits of the human mind. This is not a mountain we ascend to see Hashem, but to be seen by Him.

Eventually, the city carries both original names, preserving the achievement of Malki Tzedek alongside Avraham's breakthrough. It is formed from the joining of Shalem and Yir'eh, becoming Yerushalayim.

For generations, we retraced Avraham's steps, ascending to Yerushalayim three times a year, not to behold Hashem but to stand before Him. "Shalosh pe'amim yera'eh kol zechurecha et pnei Hashem Elokecha." We came without expecting to understand, without expecting to see, but ready to stand there before Hashem.

#### **1967, Beyond Logic**

In 1967, we returned to this city in a manner that echoes the Akeidah, beyond calculation and beyond logic. In the weeks and months leading up to the war, fear dominated. The prospect of returning to Yerushalayim did not enter the imagination. It was a war for survival. A dark joke captured the mood: "the last one out should turn off the lights at Ben Gurion Airport."

What followed defied expectation. In a sudden and astonishing turn, Hashem restored us to His city. The victory unfolded with a swiftness and scope unlike anything familiar in military history. Just as the natural world was formed in six days, so too, after thousands of years, the world of geulah took shape in six days. Not through the steady logic of history, but in a moment that stood beyond comprehension.

#### Intuitive Attraction

The story of Malki Tzedek reveals a second dimension of Yerushalayim. Even without direct divine instruction or an explicit compass, humanity is drawn to the mountain upon which human history was launched. Hashem formed man from the earth of Har HaMoriah, and something within the human spirit recognizes that origin. People gravitate to this mountain and attempt to build upon it. There is something subliminal about this site. Humanity senses it, even without the language to explain it. That was true then, and it has remained true across history. There is an intuition that this is where history begins and where it will ultimately find its resolution. And for that reason, whenever Jews return to this place, it stirs the world. They recognize that when we return to Yerushalayim, history moves forward.

As we crossed the Yam Suf, far from Yerushalayim, there was already an awareness that our arrival there would unsettle the world. During the song of Az Yashir, we gave voice to that awareness: “The nations will hear and tremble; the inhabitants of the surrounding lands will be seized by fear; the leaders of Edom and Moav will panic; the residents of Canaan will melt away. And then we will be brought and planted upon the mountain of Hashem’s inheritance, the place He established as His dwelling, the sanctuary fashioned by His hands.”

When the people of Hashem return to Yerushalayim, the world reacts. History does not stand still. It begins to move forward in a visible way, and that movement unsettles. It stirred then, and it stirred again in 1967.

#### 1948 vs. 1967

In 1948, the world did not respond in the same way. A fractured parcel of land was granted. In part, this reflected a world still burdened by the memory of the Holocaust and confronted by a Jewish refugee crisis. It was a necessary act, even a moral gesture, but it did not yet carry the weight of history shifting course.

1967 was different. The response was sharper and more charged. Some embraced it, and many religious non-Jews continue to support our presence with conviction. Others recoiled. This return signaled more than survival. It suggested that history itself was advancing, that Hashem’s presence was reentering the world in a more visible way.

In Shir HaShirim, the nations of the world are described as the daughters of Yerushalayim. The Midrash teaches that in the future, every nation will stand in relation to Yerushalayim, as branches extending from a central city that reclaims its place at the heart of human experience, under the gaze of Hashem.

People sense, even if they cannot explain it, that Yerushalayim will one day stand at the center of history. That is why events in and around the city draw the attention of the entire world. Not everyone can articulate it. Malki Tzedek himself could not fully give it language. But the intuition remains.