

נדפס ע"י ולזכות
משפחת ברונשטיין שיחיו
להצלחה רבה ומופלגה

דעם רבינ'ס א ווארט

A Word
on the
Parsha

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במדבר

שאו את ראש כל־עדת בני־ישראל... (במדבר א, ב)

Count the sum of all the congregation
of the B'nei Yisroel...

Sefer Bamidbar is also called *chumash ha'pekudim*—the Book of Numbers—since the command with which the *sefer* opens is to count the *Yidden*.

Counting is, seemingly, an action that does not consider the value of each object. The act of counting *ignores* the aspects unique to each object, even when they are completely different from one another. In other words, the definition of counting means to group different things into one sum while ignoring the unique aspects of each.

The same was true when it came to taking a census of the *Yidden*, as described in our *parsha*: The census did not distinguish between those of more importance and those of less; all *Yidden* are counted as one.

Why, then, is an entire *sefer* in the Torah named after such a superficial event?

The answer lies in a principle often found in Halacha, which expresses the intrinsic connection between quantity and quality: An increase in quantity can sometimes cause an increase in quality as well.

An example of this is a *minyan*: The mere presence of ten Jews—notwithstanding differences in their social or personal standing—creates the new “quality” of a *minyan* upon which the Shechina resides, and in whose presence *devarim sheb'kdusha* (e.g. *Kaddish*, *Borchu*) may be recited. Similarly, the presence of three Jews creates the possibility to recite *birkas hamazon* with a *zimun*; the presence of 600,000 Jews requires one to recite a special *brocha* (“*Chacham Harazim*”).

The same is true of counting: Although the act of counting in itself is, indeed, an external act, it *also* serves as an expression of the *value* and *significance* of the objects being counted. This is expressed in another halachic principle: “דבר שבמניין לא בטל”, meaning that something which is typically counted is considered significant and therefore does not be-

come nullified when mixed with other things (as is often the case in Halacha).

We can now answer our original question: Since counting the *Yidden* is a testament to their significance and stature, it is quite appropriate that the entire *sefer* should begin with such an event.

Takeaway: In our times, when there are so many *Yidden* crying out for more *Yiddishkeit*, it is our duty to give as many *Yidden* as possible opportunities to perform *mitzvos*—even at the expense of our spiritual growth. The main emphasis should be on quantity, and the greater quantity will eventually lead to a qualitative improvement as well.

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 11, p. 273)

נשא

נשא את־ראש בני גרשון גם־הם... (ד, כב)

Make a count of the sons of Gershon, of them too...

The Medrash comments that even though Gershon was the oldest of Levi's sons—and we see that the Torah always accords extra honor to a firstborn—nevertheless, the Torah first discusses the family of Kehos (previously in Parshas Bamidbar) since they had the *zechus* of carrying the Aron which held the Torah. It is only later, in our *parsha*, that the family of Gershon is discussed.

Now, if the family of Kehos is more important than that of Gershon, Parshas Naso should have begun with the family of Kehos (rather than placing it in the middle of a *parsha*) and thereby have an entire *parsha* in Torah named for Kehos! Instead, it is the family of Gershon which is placed at the beginning of the *parsha*, and which thereby has an entire

parsha in Torah named for them (the opening word of the *parsha*—“נשא”—refers to בני גרשון).

The explanation is based on another statement of the Chachomim: “Torah study is greater (than action), because study *leads* to action.” In other words, the greatness of Torah study is due to the fact that it doesn't remain in the abstract realm of study, but results in tangible actions. Only when learning results in the actual application and performance of that which was learned can we say that “Torah study is greater”, since this is the true definition of Torah study.

While בני קהת have a unique association with Torah study (they carried the Aron, which held the Torah), בני גרשון are uniquely associated with the performance of *mitzvos*.

Now we can understand why the name of our *parsha*—Naso—is attributed to the family of Gershon: How can we tell if the “Naso” (which can also mean “elevation” and “greatness”) of B'nei Kehos (i.e. Torah study) is at its proper level? It is only when it results in the “Naso” of B'nei Gershon (i.e. *mitzvos*).

Takeaway: Q: How does one know if they are studying Torah in the true and correct manner? A: If what has been learned is translated into practical, day-to-day conduct—“תלמוד גדול, שהתלמוד מביא לידי מעשה.”

(*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 33, p. 46)

בהעלותך

דַּבֵּר אֶל־אַהֲרֹן וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו בְּהַעֲלֹתְךָ אֶת־הַנֵּרוֹת... (ח, ב)

**Speak to Aharon and say to him:
“When you light the lamps...”**

Rashi explains why the Torah discusses the Menorah right after discussing the *nesi'im*: When Aharon saw all the presents and *korbanos* that the *nesi'im* had brought for the dedication



of the Mishkan, he felt distressed (“חלשה דעתו”) over not joining them in this dedication. So Hashem said to him, “By your life, yours is greater than theirs, for you will light and prepare the lamps [of the Menorah].”

The expression that Rashi uses to describe Aharon’s dejected—“חלשה דעתו” (lit. his mind weakened)—is uncommon. In fact, we do not find this expression anywhere else in Rashi’s *pirush* on Chumash.

The explanation according to *chassidus*: The purpose of a person’s intellect (*da’as*)—which is what differentiates him from, and makes him superior to, all other creatures—is *avodas Hashem* (“אני נבראתי לשמש את קוני”). Aharon’s primary *avodas Hashem* was to serve in the Mishkan (“לעמוד לפני ה’”), hence his *da’as* was devoted primarily to the *avoda* of the Mishkan.

For this reason, when Aharon saw that he was not allowed to participate in the dedication of the Mishkan, “his *da’as* (mind) became weak”: Since his *da’as* was bound with the *avoda* of the Mishkan, the very fact that there was an aspect of the *avoda* which was done without his participation (i.e. without the utilization of his *da’as*) was enough to cause a weakening of Aharon’s mind as a whole.

Takeaway: Just like Aharon, every *Yid* needs to utilize his *da’as* for the *avoda* in his inner Mishkan. When one sees other *Yidden* engaged in activities which are “dedicating the Mishkan”—such as Jewish education and teaching others about Torah and *mitzvos*—and he isn’t a part of it—that should cause him to have חלישות הדעת; he should feel *distressed*!

To prevent this from happening, one must try as much as possible to participate—even in a small way—in these activities, and thereby be a part of dedicating the Mishkan!

(*Toras Menachem - Hisva’aduyos 5748 vol. 3, p. 487*)

שלה

בָּלָם אַנְשִׁים רָאשֵׁי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל הָמָּה... וַיִּקְרָא
 מֹשֶׁה לְהוֹשִׁיעַ בֶּן־נּוּן יְהוֹשֻׁעַ (יג, ג-טז)

All of them were men of distinction; they were the heads of the B’nei Yisroel... and Moshe called Hoshea bin Nun, Yehoshua...

“**All of them were men of distinction:** Whenever [the word] אַנְשִׁים [is used] in Torah, it denotes importance. At that time, they were virtuous.”

“**And Moshe called Hoshea...** He *davened* on his behalf, “May Hashem save you from the counsel of the spies.” [The name יהושע is a compounded form of יהושיעך—May Hashem save you.]” (Rashi)

This requires explanation: If the *meraglim* were initially righteous, why did Moshe see the need to daven for Yehoshua that Hashem would save him from their plans? And if Moshe indeed had reason to fear that the *meraglim* would go astray, why did he daven only for Yehoshua and not for *all* of them?

Chassidus explains as follows:

There are two types of *tzaddikim*: 1. *Tzaddikim* who dedicate their lives to self-refinement and personal elevation while detaching themselves from the world and material affairs. 2. *Tzaddikim* who are the leaders of their generation. They do not focus on self-perfection but devote themselves to the needs of their generation, even if that entails engaging in matters that are inferior relative to their spiritual standing.

Moshe Rabbeinu was of the second type: He gave up his spiritual perfection for those who sinned with the *egel ha’za-hav*, and was even buried in the desert, so that at *techias ham-eisim*, his generation—the “*dor hamidbar*”—would arise with him. This is the definition of a leader; a person who sacrifices his personal spiritual perfection for the sake of the people.

The *meraglim*, on the other hand (even when they were

still righteous), belonged to the first category of *tzaddikim*; those who are detached from worldly affairs and engaged in spiritual elevation alone. And it was precisely this that eventually caused them to fail in their mission; their natural tendency was to stay in the desert, where physical needs and considerations did not interfere with their *avodas Hashem*, and not enter Eretz Yisroel.

Yehoshua—like Moshe—belonged to the second category: He was destined to be the leader of the next generation, and therefore had to be the type of *tzaddik* who does not strive to withdraw and live in isolation from the physical world, but rather descends to the people, works for them, and devotes himself to their needs.

This is the meaning of Moshe's *tefila* for Yehoshua, "Hashem should deliver you from the counsel of the spies": The path of the *meraglim*—even when they are righteous and good—is not *yours*. You, as the future leader of the *Yidden*, must devote yourself to the people and their needs, and not be content with serving Hashem in isolation and detachment from the world.

Takeaway: Every one of us is tasked with doing our part to assist our fellow *Yidden*. Instead of making *cheshbonos* how this or that task can be done by somebody else, we must break free from all such considerations and fulfill our mission in accordance with the directives given to us by the “Moshe Rabbeinu” of our generation—the Rebbe—who gives himself up entirely for *klal Yisroel*.

(*Toras Menachem* vol. 14, p. 155)

קרח

The choice of the word “Korach” as the name for the *parsha* requires an explanation: 1. Why is the *parsha* not named for its opening word—“Vayikach” (just like the *parshiyos*

of Vayera, Vayetze, Vayishlach etc.)? 2. How can it be that a *parsha* in the Torah is named for a *rasha* such as Korach, contrary to the *possuk*, “The name of the wicked shall rot” (Mishlei 10, 7) (as explained in the Gemara (Yoma 38b))?

The explanation is as follows: Korach's rebellion stemmed from his ambition to become the Kohen Gadol—an ambition which, in itself, is a good and worthy one (as Rashi relates that Moshe himself told Korach's men: “You are asking for the position of Kohen Gadol? I also want it!); it means the desire to ascend to the lofty spiritual level of a Kohen Gadol.

Korach's wrongdoing was, therefore, not in his ambition *per se*, but rather in his *actions*; in that he attempted to *implement* this ambition, contrary to the will of Hashem, by rebelling against Moshe and Aharon.

That is why the name of the *parsha* is specifically “Korach”, and not “Vayikach”: The word “Korach” actually has a positive symbolism and connotation—the desire and longing for spiritual elevation; a desire that every person should have. The word “Vayikach”, however, is a reference to the negative aspect of the story—the rebellion which Korach orchestrated against Moshe and Aharon (Targum Onkelos translates the word “Vayikach” as “ואתפלג”, meaning “divided”).

Takeaway: When you meet a *Yid* whose outward appearance is that of “Korach”—an undesirable *ruchniyus'diker* state — you might think, “What do I have in common with such a person...?” But the truth is that every *Yid*, no matter their outward appearance, is in constant possession of a “חלק אלוהים ממעל ממש”! Your job is to peel away the layers and uncover their true identity.

(*Likkutei Sichos* vol. 18, p. 187; *Sichas Shabbos Parshas Korach* 5740; *Toras Menachem - Hisva'aduyos* 5748 vol. 3, p. 536).