



לזכות השליח יצחק בן שיינא
 לרגל יום הולדתו ביום י' סיון
 לשנת ברכה והצלחה בעבודת
 השליחות, לחיזוק ההתקשרות
 לנשיא דורינו, ולנחת רוח
 רב מכל יוצאי חלציו.

נדבת על ידי משפחתו שיחיו

Counted In

IN HONOR OF 60 YEARS SINCE THE REBBE INTRODUCING HIS REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING RASHI, 5725—5785, THIS MONTHLY COLUMN FEATURES AN ADAPTATION OF ONE OF THE REBBE'S "RASHI SICHOS."

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וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי בְּאַהֲלֵ מוֹעֵד בְּאַהֲדָ לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשֵּׁנִי וְגו'. שָׂאוּ אֶת-רֹאשׁ כָּל-עֵדֶת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל וְגו' (א, כ-ב)
 "וַיְדַבֵּר. בְּמִדְבַּר סִינַי בְּאַהֲדָ לַחֹדֶשׁ וְגו': מִתּוֹךְ חֲבֵתָן לִפְנֵי מוֹנֶה אוֹתָם כָּל שְׁעָה — כְּשִׁי צֵאוּ מִמִּצְרַיִם מִנְּאֵן, וְכִשְׁנִפְלוּ בְּעֵגֶל מִנְּאֵן לִידַע מִנֵּן הַנּוֹתְרִים, כְּשֶׁבָּא לְהַשְׁרוֹת שְׂכִינֹתוֹ עֲלֵיהֶם מִנְּאֵם..."

And Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai Desert, in the Tent of Meeting on the first day of the second month... Take the sum of all the congregation of B'nei Yisroel...

"[Hashem] spoke...in the Sinai Desert...on the first day of the [second] month: Because [the Yidden] are [so] dear to [Hashem], He counts them at every point: When they left Mitzrayim, He counted them, and when [some of them] fell during the [incident of the] *egel*, He counted them to know how many remained, [and now,] once He came to rest His *Shechina* among them, He counted them..." (Rashi)

Rashi's commentary requires explanation:
 1. Rashi's opening words imply that Hashem's counting of the *Yidden* stems solely from his love for them, and not for any other reason. However, Rashi seems to contradict this later by stating that the census following the *chet ha'egel* was "to know how many remained," suggesting multiple reasons for the countings, not just one.
 2. If the purpose of the census following the *chet ha'egel* was "to know how many remained," why was it delayed until after Yom Kippur (Rashi, Ki Sisa 30:16), almost three months after the *chet ha'egel* (which had occurred on *shiva asar b'Tammuz*)?

The explanation is as follows:
 Rashi's words, "He counts them at every point" do not mean that Hashem constantly counts the *Yidden* for no particular reason, but rather that whenever the *Yidden* experienced significant growth, Hashem's love for them was reinforced and He counted them.

This explains why Hashem counted the *Yidden* after *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and after the construction of the *Mishkan*, since both of these events marked significant advancements for the *Yidden*: With *Yetzias Mitzrayim*, the *Yidden* were transformed from Pharaoh's slaves into servants of Hashem; and with the construction of the *Mishkan*, the *Shechina* began to reside among them.



However, what positive development—warranting another count—could possibly have arisen from the *chet ha'egel*!?

Rashi addresses this question with the words, "וּכְשֶׁנֶּפְלוּ הַנוֹתְרִים בְּעֶגְל מִנְּאֹן לִידַע מִגֵּן הַנוֹתְרִים" —when [some of them] fell during the [incident of] the *egel*, He counted them to know how many remained":

The word "הַנוֹתְרִים" is also found in the Torah regarding Aharon's sons, Elazar and Isamar (Shemini 10:12). There, Rashi explains that the word "הַנוֹתְרִים" (translated there as "[his] *surviving* [sons]") implies that they, too, deserved to die due to Aharon's role in the *chet ha'egel*, but Moshe's *tefilla* reduced the sentence, allowing them to survive.

In other words, the word "הַנוֹתְרִים" applies to individuals who were meant to die, but remained alive due to a specific reason.

This is why Rashi here uses the word "הַנוֹתְרִים," since, initially, after the *chet ha'egel* it was decreed that all the *Yidden* would be punished with death, *Rachmana l'tzlan*. Ultimately, however, Hashem forgave them and the remaining *Yidden* were spared.

We can now understand why Hashem counted the *Yidden* following the *chet ha'egel*: If an event like *Yetzias Mitzrayim* warranted a census due to its momentous nature (as explained above), how much more so does an event in which the entire Jewish people were saved!

This is why this specific census took place only after Yom Kippur, since it was on Yom Kippur that Hashem granted forgiveness for the *chet ha'egel*, sparing the lives of the remaining *Yidden*.



The inner meaning of these counts, which, as explained earlier, are rooted in Hashem's love for the *Yidden*, is as follows:

By its very nature, a census treats everyone equally, disregarding unique characteristics, social status, or achievements. Every individual, from the humblest to the most exceptional, is counted as a single unit.

Similarly, the love that Hashem has for *Yidden* (as ex-

pressed by counting them) is not based on individual merits or virtues, which, inevitably, vary from person to person. Rather, it stems from a core identity shared equally by all, namely the "*pintele Yid*"—the essential and intrinsic bond between *Yidden* and Hashem which transcends all of our differences.

By nature, the "*pintele Yid*" is hidden, concealed within the innermost recesses of a *Yid's neshama*. The purpose of the census is to reveal it and bring it to the fore.

This lends new meaning to Rashi's statement, "Because [the *Yidden*] are [so] dear to [Hashem], He counts them at every point" (an expression that cannot be understood in the literal sense, since such a census happened only a few times): With these words, Rashi is alluding to the purpose of the census, which is to reveal the essence of *Yidden* so that it has a lasting and constant effect on their behavior ("כל שעה").

Takeaway:

The word "נוֹתֵר" has two interpretations: 1. The remaining minority (the more common interpretation). 2. The remaining majority (Vayakhel 36:7). In spiritual terms, the latter interpretation connotes a loftier state of being, where Elokus is more tangible (*avoda* of the *tzaddik*). The former interpretation describes our current state—*galus*; a time in which all we have is a "remnant," so to speak, of the *zman habayis* (*avoda* of the *baal teshuva*). However, through our *avoda* in *galus*—redeeming the sparks of *kedusha* which are trapped in the hands of the *kelipos*—we attain a connection to Hashem that is even greater than the *zman habayis*! At that time, the Midrash says, Hashem Himself will count us one final time, with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, may it take place speedily in our days!

(Adapted from *Likkutei Sichos* vol. 8, p. 2; *Toras Menachem* vol. 40, p. 276)