בס״ד

SHAILOS L’CHAZARA

Review Questions

Likkutei Sichos Vol. 2

לקוטי שיחות · חלק ב

Parshas Bamidbar

פרשת במדבר

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2 sichas in this booklet

Sicha 1: Every Jew Counts! · Bamidbar, p. 293, §§1–12

Sicha 2: Love Every Jew: The Key to Matan Torah · Bamidbar, p. 297, §§13–19

Name: _____

Class: _____

★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

Each sicha has questions, a true chassidishe story, and a lesson for you.

SICHA 1 OF 2 · VOL. 2 · P. 293 (HEB. ED. P. 1) · §§1–12 · BAMIDBAR 5714 & 5717

Every Jew Counts!

שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Bamidbar, p. 293 (Hebrew edition pp. 1–5), sections 1–12. §§1–10 from the sicha of Shabbos Parshas Bamidbar 5714 (1954); §§11–12 from a letter to Neshei uBnos Chabad, Motzei Shabbos Bamidbar 5717 (1957).

The point: *The first mitzvah in Bamidbar is counting the Jews, and the Gemara calls the whole book "Pekudim". But counting says nothing about what is counted: big and small each count as one, and even "twenty years old" comes by itself with time. So why is it the basic mitzvah of the book? The halacha "a counted thing is not nullified" shows that being counted points to importance, but only as a sign, not a cause; that is why only a thing that is ALWAYS counted is not nullified. Nothing is by chance: a sign of importance must be connected to the importance itself. When counting is attached to something important, its importance rests on the counting too, outwardly. And how can quantity express quality? Because the Jews are "one nation in the land": they make even earthly things "one", joining quantity and quality. So more quantity brings more quality: ten Jews, whoever they are, bring the Shechinah and can say a davar sheb'kedushah; three make a zimun, ten say "Elokeinu", a hundred (some say) "Hashem Elokeinu". Someone busy with a mitzvah, even the lightest, is exempt from other mitzvos and from Torah study at that time. Matan Torah needed exactly 600,000; if even the lowest from the tribe of Dan were missing, Hashem wouldn't have given the Torah even to the greatest. The degalim, which the Jews longed for when they saw the angels' camps at Sinai, also needed their exact numbers. The lesson: now quantity matters more than quality: bring as many Jews as possible into the camp of Israel without looking at their level, and quality will grow. But don't forget yourself: at Matan Torah everyone was healed, so fix your own "seeing" and "hearing". And even in a spiritual desert we can and must build a Mishkan and carry it forward until the Geulah, especially women, who gave first for the Mishkan, and especially by educating young children from the start.*

Name:_____ Date:_____

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What is the first mitzvah in Sefer Bamidbar, and what does the Gemara call the book?

2. ★★ Why is it hard to understand that counting is the "basic" mitzvah of the book?

3. ★★★ What does the halacha “a counted thing is not nullified” prove, and why isn’t that enough?

4. ★★★ How does the Rebbe explain that counting itself is important?

5. ★★ How can quantity express quality for the Jews?

6. ★★ Give examples from halacha that more quantity brings more quality.

7. ★★★ How does “someone busy with a mitzvah is exempt from another mitzvah” show the same idea?

8. ★★ What does Matan Torah teach about quantity?

9. ★★ What is the connection between the degalim and Matan Torah?

10. ★★ What is the practical lesson about bringing Jews close, and what about yourself?

11. ★★ What is the lesson of building a Mishkan in the desert?

12. ★ Why does the Rebbe turn especially to women here, and what does he stress?

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

The Tenth Man

Dnepropetrovsk, 1935. The Soviet secret police watched every Jewish activity. One night at 11 PM, an older woman knocked on the door of the city's rabbi, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak Schneerson, the Rebbe's father. "Rabbi," she whispered, "at midnight my daughter and son-in-law will come. They hold high government jobs, and coming here is very dangerous for them. But they promised me a kosher chuppah, and only in your home."

At midnight the couple arrived and hid in a side room. Now a minyan was needed. It was after midnight, the streets were empty, and only Jews who could keep a secret would do. Within half an hour there were nine. One more was missing.

In the building lived a young Jew whom the government had made head of the housing committee. His job was to spy on the rabbi and report any religious ceremony. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak sent for him. "I need you to be the tenth man for a chuppah." "Me?!" He jumped back as if bitten by a snake. "Yes, you!"

The young man ran to the windows, closed every shutter, and sat quietly through the chuppah. Afterwards, two of the men took out their Communist Party cards and told the rabbi: "From now on, we are with you. These cards are worth nothing to us next to you."

Source: *From the memoirs of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson, "A Tenth Man for the Minyan" (Kehot; chabad.org)*

Think: How does this story show "bring every Jew into the camp, without looking at his level"?

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Every Jew counts! Bring as many Jews as you can closer to Yiddishkeit, without judging their level, and work on yourself too. Even in a "desert", build a Mishkan.

For example: Be the one who completes the minyan, even when you'd rather sleep. Invite the boy who doesn't usually come to shul. And keep your own eyes and ears clean, so you're "healed" for Matan Torah.

My turn: A Jew I can help "count" this week:

SICHA 2 OF 2 · VOL. 2 · P. 297 (HEB. ED. P. 5) · §§13–19 · MEVARCHIM SIVAN & SHAVUOS 5713

Love Every Jew: The Key to Matan Torah

ויחן שם ישראל כאיש אחד בלב אחד

Likkutei Sichos vol. 2, Parshas Bamidbar, p. 297 (Hebrew edition pp. 5–8), sections 13–19. §13 abridged from the sicha of Shabbos Mevarchim Sivan 5713 (1953); §§14–19 from the sicha of Chag HaShavuos 5713.

The point: *This Shabbos blesses Sivan, the month of Matan Torah, so the preparation begins now. The preparation and vessel for the Torah is peace and unity: "Israel camped there like one man with one heart." When they left Egypt they were divided; at Sinai they became one group, and Hashem said, "The whole Torah is peace; I will give it to a nation that loves peace." The unity must be about Torah and mitzvos ("camped opposite the mountain"). Unity alone can achieve a lot (even the builders of the Tower of Bavel), but such peace doesn't last, and it isn't the way to "force" blessing from Above, especially Matan Torah, which reaches the essence of the soul. So ahavas Yisrael must show itself in bringing Jews closer to Torah. From now until Shavuos, especially on Shabbos, explain to every man and woman how ahavas Yisrael prepares for Matan Torah (the Alter Rebbe: say before davening "I accept upon myself the mitzvah of v'ahavta l'rei'acha kamocha"); "love your fellow" is the vessel for "love Hashem", and love of Hashem, Torah and Israel are one. "Know what is above: it all comes from you": one act can tip the world, even bring Matan Torah. Why 600,000, all equal? People differ only in their individual powers; in the essence of the soul all are equal, and at Matan Torah Hashem bound His essence with the essence of the Jews. Ahavas Yisrael awakens that essence. The Frierdiker Rebbe repeated the Baal Shem Tov's teaching: the Jews are Hashem's tefillin; the hand-tefillin (simple people who do good deeds) come before the head-tefillin (scholars). The Maggid told R' Elimelech: in Heaven they say ahavas Yisrael means loving a complete rasha like a complete tzaddik. The Alter Rebbe: love like real brothers, "kamocha": self-love, beyond calculation, "love covers all sins". How can love for another be like love for yourself? Love of Hashem, Torah and Israel are one, and you love what your Beloved loves; and deeper: all Jews are one essence, one body. "Kamocha" is not even measured like "as a tzaddik". Through this love, "like one man", we awaken the essence of the soul and receive Hashem's essence through the Torah.*

Name:_____ Date:_____

QUESTIONS ★ easy ★★ medium ★★★ harder

1. ★ What is the preparation and vessel for Matan Torah, according to the Mechilta and the Yalkut?

2. ★★ Why must the unity be about Torah and mitzvos?

3. ★ What does the Alter Rebbe write in his Siddur to say before davening?

4. ★★ Explain “Know what is above: it all comes from you” in this context.

5. ★★★ Why did Matan Torah need 600,000 Jews, all on an equal level?

6. ★★ Why is ahavas Yisrael specifically the preparation for Matan Torah?

7. ★★ What teaching of the Baal Shem Tov did the Frierdiker Rebbe repeat about simple Jews?

8. ★★ What did the Maggid tell R’ Elimelech, and what did he add to the Baal Shem Tov?

9. ★★★ What does the Alter Rebbe say about ahavas Yisrael, and what does “love covers all sins” mean?

10. ★★★ How can love for another be like love for yourself? Give the two explanations.

11. ★★★ What does the Alter Rebbe’s “kamocha” add to the Maggid’s words?

12. ★ Your turn: how can you show ahavas Yisrael to someone you find hard to love?

A CHASSIDISHE STORY

Kol Nidrei with the Tenth Jew

Before Yom Kippur, the tzaddik Reb Leib Sarah's, a talmid of the Baal Shem Tov, came to a small village. There were eight Jews there; with him, nine. The two Jews from the forest had been thrown into jail on a false charge. "Is there no other Jew?" he asked. "Only the paritz," they said, "the squire. Forty years ago he left Yiddishkeit for money and an estate. He is cruel to the Jews."

Reb Leib took off his tallis and ran to the mansion in his white kittel. The paritz wanted to call his servants, but the tzaddik's shining face softened him. "There is nothing that can stand in the way of teshuvah," Reb Leib said. "Some earn their World to Come in one hour, and now is that hour! The Jews of your village need a tenth man. Come and be the tenth."

The door of the little shul burst open. In came Reb Leib, and behind him the paritz, his eyes full of tears. They gave him a tallis and a Sefer Torah, and Reb Leib began: "Al da'as haMakom… we permit praying with the sinners." All night and all day the paritz davened and cried, and everyone cried with him.

At Ne'ilah he put his head into the Aron Kodesh and cried "Shema Yisrael!" and then "Hashem Hu HaElokim!" seven times. At the seventh, his soul left him in holiness. For the rest of his life, Reb Leib said Kaddish for him every Yom Kippur.

Source: *Yerachmiel Tilles, "The Tenth Jew" (chabad.org), from Sippurei Chassidim (R' S. Y. Zevin)*

Think: How does Reb Leib Sarah's show the Maggid's ahavas Yisrael, "love a complete rasha like a complete tzaddik"?

THE LESSON FOR YOU

Love every Jew like a brother, "kamocha": simple Jews, scholars, even those far away, and show your love by bringing them closer to Torah. That is how we get ready for Matan Torah.

For example: Before Shacharis, say "Hareini mekabel…". Then live it: make up with the friend you fought with, and invite the boy nobody sits with to learn with you before Shavuos.

My turn: My act of ahavas Yisrael before Shavuos: