

פרשת במדבר אייר תשפ״ג שבת מברכים סיון שנת הקהל



HAKHEL IN THE PARSHA

Parshas Bamidbar begins with Hashem addressing Moshe in Midbar Sinai - the desert of Sinai, the site of Matan Torah.

The Rambam writes that at Hakhel, the people would listen to the words of the Torah with awe... like on the day the Torah was given at Har Sinai. Hakhel was a reexperiencing of the covenant at Sinai.

In addition to hearing the words of Torah, one of the messages of Hakhel is the gathering and unity of the Jewish people.

The Jewish people arrived in Midbar Sinai on Rosh Chodesh Sivan. Based on the use of the word in in singular form, the sages teach that they camped at Sinai in absolute unity; like one man with one heart.

Chassidus explains that the key to achieving unity is humility. The trait of humility is represented by Har Sinai, which was chosen by Hashem because it was the smallest mountain.

The desert also represents the quality of humility. The desert is a place that is Hefker, which no one owns and the lowly dust of the desert is trampled and tread upon by all.

The oneness and unity of Midbar Sinai was also experienced at Hakhel.

A collection of Torah thoughts produced by Kollel Menachem



אין בית המדרש בלא Chiddush

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The Sublime Source of Every Jew

Sefer Bamidbar is also called Chumash Hapekudim, because it begins with the count of Bnei Yisroel by Moshe and Aharon.

שָּׁאוּ אֵת־ראשׁ כָּל־עַדֵת בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֶל לְמִשְׁפָּחֹתָם ֹלְבַית אֲבֹתֶם בְּמִסְפָּר שֵׁמוֹת כָּל־זָכָר לְגַלְגְלֹתֶם: ... וְאִתְּכֶם יִהְיוּ אֵישׁ אֵישׁ לַמַּטֶה אֵישׁ רָאשׁ ֹלְבֵית־אֲבֹתֵיו הוּא:

Count the entire congregation of Bnei Yisrael by their families, to its ancestral houses, listing the names, every male, head by head ... Together with you shall be a participant from each tribe, each one the head of his ancestral house.

There are many explicit words in Lashon Hakodesh for counting that the Torah could have employed. So why does the verse employ the cryptic phraseology which literally translates, which literally translates as "lift up the heads of the Jewish people"?

Further, every detail in Torah is of eternal relevance and is a lesson for all times. What is the relevance or lesson to us from this command to Moshe and Aharon to count Bnei Yisrael? Seemingly it was a one -off command that applied only at that time?

The Chassidic masters teach that these words allude to a deeper meaning and directive, beyond just a command to perform a head count. Hashem's directive to Moshe and Aharon, is a perpetual command to the leaders and Tzaddikim of Klal Yisroel, to lift up the Jewish people and elevate them. This is why the counting is described as "lift up the heads".

Based on this understanding, the Tiferes Shlomo of Radomsk explains the inner meaning of the Posuk; ואתכם יהיו איש איש למטה איש ראש לבית אבתיו הוא - "with you shall be a man from each tribe, each one the head of his ancestral house."

Literally the verse means that when Moshe and Aharon went to count the Jewish people, they had to be accompanied by a representative member from each tribe. The names of these individuals are enumerated in the following verses.

ואתכם יהיו can be read as saying "they shall be with you". Since Tzaddikim have the power and responsibility to spiritually uplift the Jewish people, Hashem

tells them that Bnei Yisrael shall be with you - that you must reach out to all of the Jewish people and draw them close.

איש איש למטה, which literally means :a man from each tribe", can be read as "every man who is lowly" (למטה). Hashem is telling the Tzaddikim that even if they see a Jew who appears to be on the lowest of spiritual levels and may think of giving up on them, they are obligated to reach out and draw them closer as well.

Why is this?

Because איש ראש לבית אבותיו הוא - "each one the head of his ancestral house". These words could also be read as saying that each man is a "head" and belongs to "their fathers' house". Every Neshama, even those which appear so lowly and fallen, are really a "head" - originating from the most lofty levels, rooted in the very essence of Hashem Himself. And every Jew is a descendant belonging to the "house of the Avos" Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

The lesson of the Tiferes Shlomo is not limited to Tzaddikim. We all have a responsibility to have Ahavas Yisrael to every Jew and to reach out and draw them close to us. We may feel that someone is too lowly and undeserving of our attention, our Kiruv and our concern. The Torah is telling us to look beyond the external expression and the lifestyle that they are projecting and to see their inner essence - a pure and holy soul, a fellow descendant of our Patriarchs, which also makes them our brother.

On Rosh Chodesh Sivan, the Jewish people stood at Har Sinai in complete unity - כאיש אחד בלב אחד. This was the ultimate preparation for Matan Torah. This message, from the Parsha that we will read on Erev Rosh Chodesh, is a powerful application of the unity and love that is demanded of us.

- 1. Maaseh Ray Siman 70
- 2. 489:11
- 3. 489.6
- Haggadah Likutei Taamim on 4. Hallel Hagadol Tehillim 119:164
- Gedulah is Chessed and Ki Kol

Bashamavim Uvaaretz is Yesod

- 7 Sefer Avodas Hakodesh
- Minhag Hagr"a. Minhag 8. Yerushalaim as recorded in Kaf Hachaim
- 9. Chazon Ovadiah Yomtov p235, brining proof from Ray Hai Gaon.

10. 13 Nissan 5712

The Weekly Halacha Analysis

Tefillos After Sefiras Haomer - part 2

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

In last week's edition we discussed the Tefillos of Harachaman, Lamnatzeach and Ana B'koach that are customarily recited after counting Sefiras Haomer. In this week's edition we will explore additional Tefillos that are recited by many communities after Sefiras Haomer.

Ribono Shel Olam

The Ribono Shel Olam is a Kabbalistic prayer. It describes how through Sefiras Haomer the souls of the Jewish people become purified. In the merit of the Sefiras Haomer of each night, we ask that any blemishes that we have created in the Divine Sefiros should be corrected. Each night, we insert the corresponding Sefira for that night.

The concept of the Divine Sefiros is a central Kabbalistic idea. For the purposes of this article, the Divine Sefiros are the energies created by Hashem, through which He created the worlds and through which He sends Hashpaah (flows) to the world. The seven emotional Sefiros are Chessed, Gevurah, Tiferes, Netzach, Hod, Yesod and Malchus.

Each of the seven Sefiros comprise subsets of the elements of all of the other Sefiros, giving rise to a total of 49 aspects.

Whilst it is clearly a Kabbalistic practice, the Ribbono Shel Olam is not recorded in the writings of the Ariza"l or in Mishnas Chassidim. However, it is found in Siddur HaAriza"l and it is printed in many Siddurim, including the Siddur of the Alter Rebbe.

It is brought in Seforim that one should say this Tefillah with great Kavanah and with a broken heart and one should cry if they are able to.

The opponents

Whilst these Tefillos are printed in most Siddurim. However, not all of the Halachic authorities supported their recital.

According to the Vilna Gaon³¹, no Pesukim or prayers, other than the Yehi Ratzon for the Beis Hamikdash, should be recited either before or after Sefiras Haomer. This would include the Hineni Muchan recited by many communities before Sefira and the Lamnatzeach, Ana B'Koach and Ribbono Shel Olam recited afterwards.

The Chok Yaakov³² writes a scathing piece in his commentary on Shulchan Aruch. He be-

moans the new custom of printing the Nusach of Sefiras Haomer according to the esoteric teachings (Sod) and the Kavanos of the Sefiros, which has become widespread amongst the masses. As a result, anyone who wants can assume the 'name' of being a Kabbalist!

He quotes a Teshuvah of the Maharsha"l who criticises those who follow the Kabbalistic practise of sitting when putting on the Tefillin Shel Yad.

"They wish to be counted amongst the group of the Kabbalists... they have not looked into the Zohar and do not know the Kavanos. My teachers and ancestors - Geonei Olam, never practised this, they followed only the Talmud and Poskim. Were it required, surely it would have been brought in the Bavli, Yerushalmi, Pesikta or Sheiltos. Do not go in these ways... you have no business in the hidden matters as though one knows the secrets of Torah. Halevai they would know the revealed teachings!".

Chok Yaakov concludes that the same is true with the Kabbalistic Tefillos of Sefiras Haomer. They should be reserved for select individuals who are known to be pious and masters of the hidden teachings. Even then, it should be done in private.

Aruch Hashulchan³³ notes that great scholars (referring to the Chok Yaakov) spoke strongly against the reciting of these passages, but concludes that nowadays it is commonplace to recite them and the masses do so with great spiritual fervour.

In his Siddur, the Alter Rebbe writes instructions for the Kavanos for these Tefillos, "one should have Kavana on the Sefira of the particular night and also on the word of Ana Bekoach, the word of Mizmor Elokim and the letter from the Posuk Yismechu".

Accompanying the Sefiras Haomer entries for each night, the Siddur includes the words and letter that one should have Kavana for when saying the additional Tefillos on that night.

The Rebbe³⁴ notes that the Alter Rebbe generally did not include Kavanos in his Siddur. The fact that he brings a few select Kavanos is because the Alter Rebbe maintains that they are equally applicable to everyone - שוה לכל שייכת לרבים... שוה לכל - and should be followed.

Other Tefillos

In addition to these Tefillos, some have the custom of reciting the Posuk שְׁבַע בֵּיּוֹם הַכְּלְתֵּיך עָׁל וי משְׁפְּטֵי צִרְקֵך I praise You seven times each day for Your just rules"³⁵, connecting the 'seven times' to the seven weeks of Sefira.

Some also include the Posuk לְרָ ה' הְגָדַלָּה וְהַגְּבוּרָה וְהַתִּפְאָרָת וְהַגִּצַח וְהַהוֹד כִּי־כָל בְּשָׁמֵים וּהַצַּחַרְאָרָ ה' הַמַּמְלָרָה וְהַמִתְנַשָּׁא לְכָל וּ לְרָאש "To you Hashem are; greatness, might, splendour, triumph, and majesty— for all that is in heaven and on earth; to You, Hashem belongs kingship and pre-eminence above all". This is because this Posuk alludes to the seven Sefiros³⁶.

The Chid"a³⁷ writes a Nusach for a Tefillah to be recited on the last night of each week. In this prayer we ask that if we have failed to use the corresponding Middah of that week in our service of Hashem, thereby blemishing any of the 7 subsets of that Middah Above, may we draw down the Divine Middah to atone for us.

The Tefillah invokes the merit of the "seven shepherds" of the Jewish people; Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, Yosef, Dovid, who correspond to the seven Sefiros. Each week invokes the merit of the corresponding leader.

Rabbi Yaakov Emden included these Tefillos in Siddur Yaavetz.

Kaddish

There are different customs as to where in the davening Sefiras Haomer is counted. Some have the custom of counting Sefiras Haomer after Aleinu³⁸. Others count Sefira before Aleinu, after the Kaddish Tiskabel³⁹. This is the Chabad custom.

In many Kehillos where Sefira is counted after Aleinu, the Minhag is to recite an additional Kaddish after Sefira.

In a letter⁴⁰, the Rebbe writes that if he could do so, he would instruct those Shules who count Sefira after Aleinu, to only say one Kaddish and to do so after Sefira and not in between Aleinu and Sefira. This is so as not to increase the number of Kaddeishim. Nonetheless, if one is saying Kaddish in such a Shule, they may recite Kaddish after Aleinu and again after Sefira as per the Minhag of the Shule.

For those who count Sefira after Kaddish Tiskabel, after counting we immediately recite Aleinu, with one Kaddish at the end.