

DVAR TORAH STRIVING FOR PERMANENCE

Rashi opens his comments about the census that begins the book of Bamidbar with a glowing description of how God's love for Israel reflects itself in His constantly counting them. Rashi ends his comments in a strange way: "When He wanted to rest His Shechinah (Divine Presence) upon them He counted them. On the first of Nisan the Mishkan (Tabernacle) was established, and **on the first of Iyar** He counted them." Why not count the people on the first of Nisan when He the Shechinah rests in the Mishkan? Why wait a month for the count?

The Maskil LeDavid and the Gur Aryeh answer based on a halachic principle: A vow prohibiting a person from deriving benefit from "the people of the city," only relates to people that have resided there for thirty days (Bava Batra 8a). Similarly, outside of the land of Israel, a renter is not obligated in mezuzah for the first thirty days of his stay (Menachot 44a). Thirty days of residence is referred to as dirat **keva**, but less than that is referred to as *arai*. What do *keva* and *arai* mean?

Keva, in Hebrew, refers to something permanent, fixed, or established, as opposed to temporary, transient, fleeting. *Achilat keva* is a meal, not a snack; *sheinat keva* is a slumber, not a nap; and *dirat keva* is permanent residence, not just temporary lodging. God wanted to express His love for His people by counting them just as His Shechinah finds its permanent dwelling place in the midst of His people, Israel.

Out of God's love for us, His Presence has never left the people of Israel. It revealed itself in the Mishkan, then in the Beit Hamikdash, and (see Megillah 29a) accompanies the people of Israel to exile and back. Even after the destruction of the Temple, the Shechinah has never left the Western Wall, the Kotel Hamaaravi (based on the Zohar II p. 116a and Shir Hashirim Rabbah 2:26).

"Imitate God," says Abba Shaul on Shabbat 133b. "Just as He is merciful and benevolent, so should you." And just as He created a permanent relationship with the people of Israel, so should we strive for permanence in our own relationships – both with God and with other people. But living with permanence, stability, and rootedness is not so simple in our age of mobility and multiple options. We pray for the ability to open up our own lives to becoming a *dirat keva* for the Divine Presence.



Shapell's / Darché Noam at the Kotel Hamaaravi, the Western Wall – 5769 / 2009

Also in this week's Daf Keshet: • [The Netziv on the Book of Bamidbar](#) • Rav Farber: What is Kedushah?

THE NETZIV'S INTRODUCTION TO BAMIDBAR: THE TWO COUNTS

Rabbi Naftali Tzvi Yehudah Berlin, of blessed memory (known by his acronym as the "Netziv", Lithuania 1816-1893), Rosh Yeshivah of Volozhin, left us a number of monumental introductions to the books of the Chumash in his commentary Haamek Davar. His introduction to the Book of Bamidbar presents a major theme of this Chumash, that he later develops in the commentary itself. Here are a number of key passages from that introduction.

The Name of this Chumash

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| <p>Introduction to the Book of Bamidbar: This book is referred to by the Mishnah (Yoma 7:1, Sotah 7:7, Menachot 4:3) and by Rabbi Chanina son of Gamliel (Sotah 36) as "The Chumash of the Counts." That is also how the Halachot Gedolot (from the period of the Geonim) refers to it. The two times the census was taken seem to have made more of an impression on the minds of our Sages than the many other unique episodes – like that of the spies or Bilam - that appear in the Sefer.</p> | <p>פתיחה לספר במדבר: זה הספר נקרא בפי המשנה יומא פרק ז' ועוד, ורבי חנינא בן גמליאל סוטה דף ל"ו חומש הפקודים. וכן כתב בעל הלכות גדולות. ונרשם בדעת רבותינו עניין שני הפקודים שבזה הספר, יותר משארי דברים שמיוחדים בזה הספר, כמו המרגלים וברכת בלעם ועוד הרבה.</p> |
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Compare

· Compare this with the Netziv's other introductions where he explains the alternate names attached to other Chumashim: "Sefer Hayashar" – Bereishit, "Chumash Sheini" – Shemot, and "Mishneh Torah" – Devarim.

The Main Theme of the Sefer

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| <p>This is because the main theme of this Sefer is the contrast between the ways the nation of Israel lived in this world once they reached the land of Israel, and the previous path they took through the desert. For in the desert they acted according the Middah of Tiferet, living aside Moshe, totally above the ways of nature. Whereas in the land of Israel they lived according to nature, where the Divine Providence of the kingdom of Heaven, may He be blessed, was hidden.</p> <p>This transition took place while they were still in the desert, in the fortieth year, as we explained in Parshat Chukat. Based on this change, the wars against the Canaanites and Sichon were waged in a natural fashion, and even the staff was not in Moshe's hands at all times, only in times of need, as we explained there.</p> | <p>משום דעיקר זה הספר הוא מחליף ומשנה הליכות עם ה' בחיי העולם מאז שהגיעו לארץ ישראל מן הדרך שהלכו במדבר: שבמדבר היו מתנהגים במדת תפארת שהלך לימין משה, שהוא לגמרי למעלה מהליכות הטבע, ובארץ ישראל הלכו בדרך הטבע, בסתרי השגחת מלכות שמים ברוך הוא.</p> <p>וזה השנוי התחיל עודם במדבר בשנת הארבעים כמו שביארנו בפרשת חקת. על פי זה השינוי נעשו מלחמות ישראל עם הכנעני ועם סיחון בדרך הטבע, וגם המטה לא היה עוד ביד משה תמיד אלא לעת הצורך לפי ההכרח, כמו שביארנו שם.</p> |
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Further learning:

- See the Netziv's comments on Bamidbar 21:2 (war), and 20:8 (the staff).
- Compare the war against Sichon with the war against Amalek (by Yehoshua in Parshat Beshalach).

How does the Midrash refer to the Book of Bamidbar?

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| <p>Based on the transition that is highlighted in this Sefer, our Sages said (Bereishit Rabbah 3:5): 'God divided between the light and the darkness' (Bereishit 1:4) – this refers to the book of Bamidbar, that divides between those who left Egypt and those who came into the land." For those who left Egypt went with the light of the Divine Providence that appeared before all, the honor of God and the goal of creation. In contrast, the path of those who came to the land was with hidden Providence. Only through looking carefully</p> | <p>ועל זה השינוי המצויין בזה הספר אמרו חז"ל בבראשית רבה פרשה ג': " (בראשית א ד) : 'ויבדל אלהים בין האור ובין החושך' - זה ספר במדבר, שהוא מבדיל בין יוצאי מצרים ובין באי הארץ", דבהליכות יוצאי מצרים היה אור השגחת ה' מופיע לעין כל, שהוא כבוד ה' ותכלית הבריאה</p> |
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could one sense it, similar to someone walking in the dark of night. Only periodically was the Divine Providence felt by all, like a lightning bolt that illuminates the dark of night.

משא"כ בהליכות באי הארץ היתה
ההשגחה מכוסה ורק המביט בעין יפה
היה מרגיש בה כמו ההולך בחשכת
לילה, או רק לפרקים היה נרגש
ההשגחה לעין כל, כמו אור הברק
המאיר חשכת הלילה.

Alternate Explanations:

· For alternate explanations of that Midrash, see the comments of the Yefeh Toar and the Maharzu on Bereishit Rabbah 3:5.

Preparation:

· To fully appreciate the next section it is best to learn the first three chapters of Bamidbar, where the complete account of the first census is recorded, as well as chapter 26 in Parshat Pinchas, where the second census appears.

The Two Counts

But this difference [between the more overt Divine Providence of the beginning of Israel's travels through the desert, and the hiddenness that begins as they near the land of Israel] is most noticeable through the contrast between the two censuses. The core of both acts was the same (counting the people) whereas the way they were done differed based on the difference in Israel's path with God. Therefore, the first time they were counted it was based on the order of the camps and flags, divided by the four directions as a "chariot" for the Divine Presence, the Shechinah. In addition, Efraim, who was the leader of his of the four camps, preceded Menasheh. That is not the case for the count in Parshat Pinchas in the fortieth year, as I wrote in the commentary (Bamidbar 2:20). Furthermore, in the count taken in Parshat Bamidbar, it was necessary that the heads of tribes come from those tribes, whereas that was not the case in the count in Parshat Pinchas in the fortieth year, as I wrote in the commentary (Bamidbar 1:2). Therefore, this matter was highlighted, to the degree that Chazal referred to the entire book as Chumash Hapekudim, the Chumash of the Counts.

אכן עיקר ההפרש הזה היה ניכר בשני
הפקודים שהיו שני עניינים שונים
בחומר המעשה, ונשתנו בצורת
המעשה לפי הליכות ישראל, משום
הכי בפעם הראשונה היו על פי סדר
הדגלים מארבע רוחות כמרכבה
לשכינה, והיה אפרים ראש הדגל
וקודם למנשה, ולא כן בפקודי פרשת
פינחס בשנת הארבעים, כמו שכתבתי
בפנים ב' כ'. ועוד בפקודי פרשת
במדבר היו הראשים מוכרחים להיות
מאותו השבט, ולא כן היה בפקודי
פרשת פינחס בשנת הארבעים, כמו
שכתבתי בפנים א' מקרא ב', משום
הכי רשום זה הענין מאד, עד שראו
חז"ל לקרוא שם להספר חומש
הפקודים.

Clarity:

· How many differences does he list between the two censuses and what are they?
· See his comments on Bamidbar 2:20 to understand why the order of Efraim and Menasheh is significant and see his comments on Bamidbar 1:2 where he shows how in the second count some of the heads of tribes were not actually from those tribes.

Additional learning:

· See the rest of his introduction where he pinpoints where in the Sefer the division takes place and outlines the Sefer's different units. He also adds how the two types of Divine Providence reflect themselves in punishments that appear in Bamidbar. See especially the Netziv's discussion of the spies in Bamidbar 14.

Themes and applications:

· Is the ideal – in the Netziv's eyes – the direct Divine Providence of the Exodus, or the more hidden Divine Providence of the land of Israel? What message might the Sefer Bamidbar have – according to the Netziv – for Jews in 5774?

WHAT IS KEDUSHAH? BY RABBI MENDEL FARBER

[Part I of a two-part series: "The Shavuot-Shabbat Connection"]

We have a tradition that if we wish to discover a concept's meaning, we should look at the first time it is mentioned in the Torah. Kedushah is first mentioned in connection with Shabbat in the creation story (Bereishis 2:3). "Vayevarech Elokim et yom hashevi'i **vayekadesh** oto . . ." – "Hashem blessed the Seventh day and made it **Kadosh** . . ." The source of Kedushah is Shabbat. In order to come to a true understanding of Kedushah (that is more accurate than 'holiness,' the way it is most frequently translated into English), we must understand Shabbat.



Rabbi Mendel Farber

What is the Kedushah of Shabbat? What did Hashem do when He was "Mekadesh" Shabbat?

While the world was being created during the six days of creation its purpose was hidden. On Shabbat Hashem revealed the purpose. On Shabbat the natural world was refined to the point where its essence and purpose surfaced and was perceptible to man, the one the world was created for. During the week the physical world is opaque, hiding its essence; on Shabbat the physical becomes refined, permitting its essence and purpose to rise to the surface. That is what Kedushah means. When it is clear that the natural world is only the means to achieve Hashem's ideal, and that its sole purpose is to express that ideal, the world is Kadosh. Anything that represents or expresses the Divine ideal is Kadosh.

Shabbat is "Meein Olam Haba". Shabbat is a microcosm of what the real world will ultimately be like. That is why it is the source of all Kedushah. Shabbat reveals the goal, what the world will be like when creation is complete and it will be the perfect environment for "Man" to receive the good that Hashem wishes to bestow upon him. Ultimately all there will be is Shabbat. As the Mishnah says, "On Shabbat we say 'Mizmor shir leyom shekulo Shabbat' – 'A song to the day that is all Shabbat.'" That is what Kedushah is. When one's life and his very being is an expression of the Divine ideal for which the world was created, he is said to be Kadosh.

[Next week's Daf Keshet will follow, b'ezrat Hashem, with Part II of this article: "How to Acquire Kedushah" and "The Shabbat-Shavuot Connection."]

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in loving memory of
Alexander ben Ariel z"l

