

CHEVRAH TORAH...5777

With HEART in MIND

MUSSAR Teaching to Transform the Text & Our Lives

BaMID'BAR—Numbers 2:1-17;32-34

MA'AMIDO AL HaEMET—Leading Others to Truth

...Key KOSHI...

*WHAT does the tribes of Israel's wilderness walk teach us about the journey's aim?
HOW does the journey help lead us/the tribes of Israel, to Truth?*



P'SHAT...Studying Torah—Encountering The Word—The Will—The ONE

The truly wise individual is not one who has achieved wisdom but a *talmid chacham*—a wise student...one who is constantly learning—including by observing and reflecting on what can be learned from other people.

<p>2:1] The Eternal One spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying: 2] The Israelites shall camp each man with his standard, under the banners of their ancestral house; they shall camp around the Tent of Meeting at a distance. 3] Camped on the front, or east side: the standard of the division of Judah, troop by troop. Chieftain of the Judites: Nahshon son of Amminadab. 4] His troop, as enrolled: 74,600. 5] Camping next to it: The tribe of Issachar. Chieftain of the Issacharites: Nethanel son of Zuar. 6] His troop, as enrolled: 54,400. 7] The tribe of Zebulun. Chieftain of the Zebulunites: Eliab son of Helon. 8] His troop, as enrolled: 57,400. 9] The total enrolled in the division of Judah: 186,400, for all troops. These shall march first. 10] On the south: the standard of the division of Reuben, troop by troop. Chieftain of the Reubenites: Elizur son of Shedeur. 11] His troop, as enrolled: 46,500. 12] Camping next to it: The tribe of Simeon. Chieftain of the Simeonites: Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai. 13] His troop, as enrolled: 59,300. 14] And the tribe of Gad. Chieftain of the Gadites: Eliasaph son of Reuel. 15] His troop, as enrolled: 45,650. 16] The total enrolled in the division of Reuben: 151,450, for all troops. These shall march second. 17] Then, midway between the divisions, the Tent of Meeting, the division of the Levites, shall move.</p>	<p>¹ וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל־מֹשֶׁה וְאֶל־אַהֲרֹן לֵאמֹר : ² אִישׁ עַל־דִּגְלוֹ בְּאֵתֶת לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם יַחְנוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִנֶּגֶד סָבִיב לְאֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד יַחְנוּ : ³ וְהַחֲנִים קִדְמָה מִזְרָחָה דָּגֹל מַחֲנֵה יְהוּדָה לְצַבְאֹתָם וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי יְהוּדָה נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן עֲמִינָדָב : ⁴ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם אַרְבַּעַה וְשִׁבְעִים אֶלֶף וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת : ⁵ וְהַחֲנִים עָלָיו מִטָּה יִשְׁשָׁכָר וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי יִשְׁשָׁכָר נִתְנָאֵל בֶּן־צוּעָר : ⁶ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדָיו אַרְבַּעַה וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת : ⁷ מִטָּה זְבוּלוֹן וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי זְבוּלוֹן אֱלִיאָב בֶּן־חֵלֹן : ⁸ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדָיו שִׁבְעַה וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת : ⁹ כָּל־הַפְּקָדִים לְמַחֲנֵה יְהוּדָה מֵאֵת אֶלֶף וְשִׁמְנִים אֶלֶף וְשִׁשְׁת־אֲלָפִים וְאַרְבַּע מֵאוֹת לְצַבְאֹתָם רֵאשֵׁנָה יִסְעוּ : ¹⁰ דָּגֹל מַחֲנֵה רְאוּבֵן תִּימְנָה לְצַבְאֹתָם וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי רְאוּבֵן אֱלִיצוּר בֶּן־שִׁדְיָאוּר : ¹¹ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדָיו שֵׁשׁ וְאַרְבַּעִים אֶלֶף וַחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת : ¹² וְהַחֲנִים עָלָיו מִטָּה שִׁמְעוֹן וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי שִׁמְעוֹן שְׁלִמְיָאֵל בֶּן־צוּרִישַׁדָּי : ¹³ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם תִּשְׁעָה וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וְשִׁלֹּשׁ מֵאוֹת : ¹⁴ וּמִטָּה גַּד וְנָשִׂיא לְבְנֵי גַּד אֱלִיסָפ בֶּן־רְעוּיָאֵל : ¹⁵ וְצִבְאוֹ וּפְקֻדֵיהֶם חֲמִשָּׁה וְאַרְבַּעִים אֶלֶף וְשֵׁשׁ מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים : ¹⁶ כָּל־הַפְּקָדִים לְמַחֲנֵה רְאוּבֵן מֵאֵת אֶלֶף וְאַחַד וַחֲמִשִּׁים אֶלֶף וְאַרְבַּע־מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים לְצַבְאֹתָם וְשִׁנִּים יִסְעוּ : ¹⁷ ס וְנִסַּע אֹהֶל־מוֹעֵד מַחֲנֵה הַלְוִיִּם בְּתוֹךְ הַמַּחֲנֶת בְּאֶשֶׁר יַחְנוּ בֵּן יִסְעוּ אִישׁ עַל־יָדוֹ לְדֹגְלֵיהֶם :</p>
--	--

As they camp, so they shall march, each in position, by their standards.

32] Those are the enrollments of the Israelites by ancestral houses. The total enrolled in the divisions, for all troops: 603,550. 33] The Levites, however, were not recorded among the Israelites, as the Eternal had commanded Moses.

34] The Israelites did accordingly; just as the Eternal had commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they marched, each man with his clan according to his ancestral house.

32 אֵלֶּה פְּקוּדֵי בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבַיִת אֲבוֹתָם כָּל־
פְּקוּדֵי הַמַּחֲנֶה לְצַבָּאוֹתָם שְׁש־מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף
וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים וְחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת וְחֲמִשִּׁים :
33 וְהַלְוִיִּם לֹא הִתְּפַקְדוּ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה : 34 וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְנֵי
יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְהוָה אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כְּוַחֲנֹ
לְדַגְלֵיהֶם וַיָּבֹאוּ נֹסְעֵי אִישׁ לְמִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ עַל־בַּיִת
אֲבוֹתָיו

REMEZ...*Acquiring Torah*...When Torah penetrates our entire being, not just our *seichel/intellect*, this is the acquisition of Torah. —R' Avi Fertig

- V.2 *The Israelites shall camp each with his standard, under the banners of their ancestral house; they shall camp round the Tent of Meeting at a distance.*
RASHI... Every division shall have for itself a sign, the color of which is unlike any other, yet the colors of each just like the colors of the breast-plate of the *Kohen Gadol*.
RAMBAN...“*round the tent of Meeting at a distance.*” God hedged the Tabernacle in the midst of Israel, as all gathered ‘round about but not touching, a respectable distance, just as the Holy One did at Sinai when the *Shechina* rested on it.
ABARVANEL... “*round the tent of Meeting at a distance.*” The Tabernacle was to be like the heart inside the body, and the tribes would be its limbs.
ETZ HAYIM... The key to the physical deployment of the Israelites as they camped and as they marched was the setting of the Ark at the center of camp. Every individual Israelite was located in relation to the Ark and the Tabernacle. The Tabernacle was the first thing one saw in leaving home and the first thing one looked for in returning home. Gradually, this physical centrality must have led to the Ark’s gaining a central place in the Israelite soul.
R’ AMY ASCHEINERMAN...Each tribe was assigned a position with respect to the Ark, and each camped under the banner of its ancestral house...B’MIDBAR RABBAH tells us that the arrangement of the tribes reflects the arrangements of Jacob’s 12 sons when they brought his bier out of Egypt for burial in the Cave of *Machpelah*...Their positions around the coffin, designated by Jacob, were the banners of their ancestral houses. The banners, the Midrash tells us, are not objects or tangible symbols, but rather positions vis-a-vis *Klal Yisrael*. It is about relationships and the overall unity of *Am Yisrael*.
- V.3 *And those that camp to the very east; the banner of the camp of Judah by its divisions, and the chieftan—Nachshon son of Amminadav*
RAMBAN... The directions here begin with the east, where the sun rises...with the standard of Judah on the east, as the leader of the tribes, setting out first....Reuben was the leader of the southern division, an honor given to him as possessor of the birthright. These first two divisions consisted of Leah’s sons, along with Gad, born on Leah’s knees... The western division consisted of Rachel’s children, and finally the northern one the rest of the handmaids, Zilpah and Bilhah....I have also seen it described in the Midrash:...South is the direction which the blessings of dew and rain Descend; let Reuben, who possesses repentance, correspond to that direction...Next to him Gad, who possesses might; thus Reuben’s repentance and Gad’s might can make atonement for Shimon, who is in between them...
- V.17 *The Tent of Meeting with the encampment of the Levites shall journey, in the midst of the camp. Just as they camp, so shall they journey, every man in his place, by their standards.*
RASHI... “*everyone in his place...*” But literally, “*al-Yado—at his hand.*” In this sense the meaning of the phrase should not depart from its original intent—“*at hand,*” because the direction one walks is “*at hand*” one can reach the hand next to him. When one is “*at hand*” then one can find “*his place.*”
HERTZ... The Levites, bearing the Tabernacle with all of its parts, are to have their place in the center “*b’toch Ha-Machaneh*” to ensure that God’s Presence ever rests in the midst of the people, as it is written: “*Let them make Me a Sanctuary that I may dwell in their midst—b’tocham.*” [Exod 25:8]
- V.34 *Thus the Israelites did, just as the Lord had commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they marched—each with his family according to his ancestral house.*
ALSHECH...The Midrash describes that there was some jealousy between the tribes concerning their positions around the Tabernacle, as well as the order in which they would travel...There are two other areas that may have roused some jealousies: the 4 camps each sharing a single flag between them and the camps marching always in the rear could easily be jealous of the tribes always marching in the front. To avoid such distractions, God said: “*each to his flag,*” meaning that each tribal head had an ensign of his own...Even of the Tribe of Dan who traveled last it is stated that they marched, “*L’diglayhem—according to their flag,*” [v.31-32] as if—because Dan possessed its own unique banner, the other tribes were inferior and Dan was marching in the lead.
LUZZATTO... After the Tabernacle had been erected and they were proceeding toward the promised land, it was desirable for Israel to be divided in accordance with their standards and groupings, so that everyone would know his place and the camp would be properly ordered. God wanted Israel to learn a supreme truth: they are no longer runaway slaves but a people ready to battle whatever they might confront...

D’RASH...*Helping the Heart feel what the Mind understands ...*

ALAN MORINIS...

...For the heart to blossom, it goes without saying that we must speak and act with allegiance to truth. But we learn here that we must also take responsibility to “set others into truth.”...

When you guide people toward their ethical center...you help them establish a solid foundation on which to build a life...

When we see someone do or say something we believe to be wrong, they have veered from the truth, it is our responsibility—not only to them but to our own spiritual growth—to help them find their way back to truth....The task is to lead, and we will only be able to accomplish that goal by being sensitive, patient, humble and caring in the way of a good and effective teacher...[Moses is not “Moses our leader” but rather “Moses our teacher.”]

...When we realize that truth means following a consistent path in life with no contradictions within a person’s essential nature, then we learn that the practice of leading others to truth calls on us to make an effort to bring others to their truth, to assist them to realize their potential on their terms, to teach them how to live their lives in ways that have integrity and are consistent with the unique and individual divine image in which they are fashioned [With heart in Mind, pgs. 210-213]

Rabbi GERSON COHEN...

I think it is fair to say that the people Israel were the only people of antiquity to make their sojourn in the desert a part of their collective memory and to recall that period as a quasi-golden-age...

In a sense, the age of the desert became a paradigm for many ages of Jewish history, for the people liberated from Egypt yet condemned to die in the wilderness.

On the other hand, the age of the desert forever remained in the collective memory of Israel as an age of quest for the fulfillment of the patriarchal promise. It was an age at once blessed and condemned... an age that had to be recaptured and renewed if the covenant between God and Israel was to be restored. Indeed, in the words of the prophet Hosea, the desert was the place from which the bond of love between God and Israel could be renewed...

Thus, the age of the desert was one of contradictory memories—of an untarnished faith in the divine promise and of divine wrath ...Every so often, people consumed by a yearning for renewal of relationship with God would try to re-enact the life of the desert...For all its vicissitudes, it was a period blessed by an active quest for the fulfillment of the promise of the patriarchs, and the Revelation of God’s Truth.

SOD...*Helping the soul-light shine...Practice focuses on recalibrating the soul-traits that are obstructing your soul’s light from shining into your l*

Rabbi DAVID KALB...

The twelve tribes come from ten of the sons of Yaakov and two of his grandsons.

All of the tribes in essence have a common Patriarch. However, they had four possible mothers or two possible grandmothers. Yaakov had two wives Rachel and Leah. Rachel had a maidservant named Bilhah and Leah had a one named Zilpah.

What does this teach us? That what we refer to as *Bnai Yisrael* is not exactly a nation. It is more of a loose confederation of tribes.

In *Sefer Shoftim* (the Book of Judges), Devorah, the Judge, with Barak, the general of her army, wins a war against the Canaanites. *Shoftim* 4:6 points out that only the tribes of Naphtali and

Zevulun participated in the war. *Shoftim* 5:2-31 add that the tribes of Ephraim, Binyamin, and Yissachar fought as well. Devorah seems critical to their lack of participation. In general, *Sefer Shoftim* tells the story of leaders of tribes, not of the entire nation.

Studying these texts is important because they show us that fragmentation has always been common to the Jewish people. There is a tendency when we lament over our disunity to become nostalgic for some mythical time in Jewish history where we were truly one people. The fact is there has always been some level of separatism. Now merely because this is always the way it has been, it does not mean that this is the way it always has to be. We should strive to make our people more unified. To be sure, there is nothing wrong with disagreement. I am not in any way suggesting uniformity in Judaism. We are richer because of our diversity. However, we must understand that disagreement does not mean “I hate you”. A [person can maintain their point of view passionately and intensely without in any way degrading or devaluing someone they disagree with. We are about to celebrate the holiday of Shavuot, the holiday that celebrates Matan Torah, the giving of the Torah. Rashi comments on Shemot/Exodus 19:2 that the people received the Torah “Like one person with one heart.” We should always be “like one person with one heart.”

R' BRADLEY SHAVIT-ARTSON... During the first year following the liberation from *Mitzrayim*, Israel journeyed to and encamped around Sinai. Now, they began to move into the Wilderness. They will spend the next 38 years here, continuing their travels and the intimate dialogue with God that will form the root and essence of our Torah. For the generation of liberation, most of life was spent in the wilderness. Why? Our Sages [in Midrash B'Midbar Rabbah] inferred that “*Torah was given to the accompaniment of three things: fire, water and wilderness.*” Why?

Because just as fire and water and wilderness belong to all humanity, so the words of Torah...

The wilderness, for the Sages, is that territory belonging to no single person or people.

So, too, God's love and concern are not the prerogative of any single people. To claim a monopoly on them is to diminish the grandeur of the Holy One... In the words of R' **Solomon IBN GABRIOL**, wisdom can only come through “a willingness to accept truth from any source.” To be a spiritual seeker means becoming as the wilderness our ancestors wandered; taking in travelers from all directions...God spoke from the “Wilderness of Sinai” to remind us of the need for humility; to urge us to be open to all wisdom, and, finally, to remind us that we must ultimately serve all humanity, working for the redemption of the entire world.

...CONSIDER...

Think of someone who is veering off from a path of truth.
HOW can your reaching out help redirect/help them find
their spiritual compass...to walk in the way of Truth?

REFLECT

HOW is our journey linked to all around your life-table?