

THE COMMUNITY Parasha Sheet



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RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

DIRECTOR
TAL



POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Moshe was told to count the Jewish nation. "Take a census of the entire assembly of the Children of Israel according to their families... From twenty years of age and up...everyone who goes out to the legion..." (Bamidbar 1:2-3).

This count included every tribe except that of Levi. They were reserved for a separate count. And their count was not of men aged twenty and up. Theirs began with a much younger crew.

"Count the sons of Levi ... every male from one month of age and up shall you count them" (Bamidbar 3:14-15).

Our Sages ask why was there a difference when it came to the tribe of Levi?

Why did the infants, one month and above, get counted? Surely the count should have started at a later age like the rest of the tribes?

When Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky founded the Yeshiva of South Shoreback in the late 1950s, he invited his illustrious father Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky zts'l, to visit the school. After an impressive tour, in which he interviewed teachers and tested the students of the fledgling institution, Rabbi Benjamin Kamenetzky showed his father the pre-school program, which imbued the youngest children with a love for Judaism.

On the portal of the classroom, there was a colourful mezuzah. Normally a mezuzah is supposed to be placed

at the bottom of the top third of the doorpost. This one was not. It was placed lower - at the bottom third of the doorpost. The teachers explained to both Rabbis the reasoning for the downward adjustment. "This way, the children will be able to reach the mezuzah, and kiss it." Rabbi Yaakov Kamenetzky zts'l smiled. "We must not lower the mezuzah, for the children to kiss it. Instead, we must raise the child, to reach the mezuzah at its proper level. What we must do is put a step stool in order for the children to reach higher -- to the proper level of the mezuzah! Raise the child at an early age to reach the height of the mitzvah, instead of lowering the mitzvah to the child!"

The difference between the counting of the Levites and the rest of the nation is very clear. The nation was, as a whole, counted "according to their legions," - their task was to defend the people. The Levites were counted for their job of "guardians of the charge of the sanctity." They were stationed to watch over the Holy Temple.

Though legions are counted at a fighting age, our children, guardians of the sanctity of our nation, must be counted as early as possible.

The Torah teaches us that we must teach our children from an early age, we must invest in their education and ensure the continuity of our heritage.

It is important to invest in our youth - for they are the future.

There is another lesson to be learnt from our children. One might think that when taking care of children we are only investing in the 'future'.

In actual fact we could be investing in the present too!

Children are amazing, we enjoy their young spirit and invest a great deal ensuring that they have the best education and turn out successful. Yet there is a side benefit to children apart from the wonderful Nachat they provide. ►

> MAZAL TOV TO

Ortal Cohen & Simon Gold
on their wedding

” THE WEEKLY QUOTE

"What we achieve
inwardly will change
outer reality"

> UPCOMING EVENTS

30TH MAY - SHAVUOT EVENING @NW11

4TH JUNE - YMC PROGRAM & BBQ EVENING

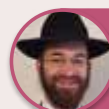
@NW4 (see more info online)



DVAR TORAH

Positive Attitude
RABBI JONATHAN TAWIL

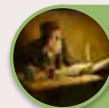
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Rav Wolbe zts'l writes (Sefer Alei Shor): "There is no greater factor in improving one's character than having children."

Children can help influence our own path in life.

A person might be able to live with their own poor character, but to see his own children with improper character traits is a different matter. He views it more as a disadvantage, and this could in time force him to clean up his own act and improve himself.

There's an interesting Mechilta (Parshat Yitro) that states: "The 10 Commandments were given, 5 on one tablet and 5 on the other tablet". The Mechilta implies that the Ten Commandments are not only read downwards as in a list, but can also be read across the two tablets. (1st together with 6th commandment, 2nd together with 7th commandment)

The Mechilta continues and shows a connection between the parallel commandments on the two tablets.

For instance, the Mechilta says the first command is "I am the L-rd your G-d" and the parallel sixth command is "You shall not kill". This implies, that one who commits murder is not only sinning against his fellow man, but he is -- as it were -- diminishing the Divine image, for man was created in the Divine image.

All of the examples of the Midrash seem to make sense...until the last one.

It is written "Honour Your Father and Mother" and the parallel commandment is "You Shall Not Covet". The Midrash continues: "Any person who is jealous will ultimately give birth to a child who will curse his own father and who will give respect to someone who is not his own father".

What is the connection that the Midrash is trying to tell us?

When we are jealous of our friends -- whether it be their wealth or their position in life -- what message are we telling our children?

The message we are getting across is that "the other one has better". If we are constantly jealous of our neighbour's house, car, honour, etc. what we are teaching our children is that what we have never suffices.

The Midrash teaches us, that in addition to this attitude which is inherently wrong, we also have a corrosive effect on our children. A child will learn not to be happy with what he has. And what he really has is parents. This could lead him to be unsatisfied with his own parents, eventually searching for someone else to be his father/mother figure.

Our youth are precious and they constantly take in lessons from their surroundings. They affect our present as well as our future.

May Hashem Bless us and ensure that we bring them up with the right values from birth. ■

RABBI SHLOMO ODZE - SOUTH HAMPSTEAD UNITED SYNAGOGUE

DVAR
TORAH



STAND UP AND BE COUNTED

"And with you shall be one man from each tribe, a man who is a prince of his fathers' house" (Numbers 1:4).

Rashi (1040-1105) comments on the words "and with you shall be" and explains that Hashem is saying to Moshe not to count the people alone but rather in the presence of the prince of each respective tribe.

We generally understand that the counting of the people, particularly at this time, was something technical. It was a simple act which could have been carried out by anyone and did not require any special expertise.

This being the case, what was the significance and purpose of it being

done not only by Moshe but in the presence of the princes as well?

Even more puzzling is that when the Torah wants to describe the greatness of the heads of the tribes who were bringing the offerings at the dedication of the tabernacle, it picks out the fact that they were the ones who stood beside Moshe during the counting of the people by stating "The princes of Israel, the heads of their fathers' household, brought offerings: they were the princes of the tribes, they were those who stand look up artscroll translation this doesn't seem accurate over the counted" (Number 1:7). What greatness was there in this? Why was this particular function chosen as the mark of their greatness?

Dayan Yosef Tzvi Halevi Dunner suggests that the answer to this can be found in the first comment of Rashi to the Book of Numbers in which he explains "Because of Israel's dearness to Him, He counts them at all times. When they departed from Egypt...when they fell at the calf...when He came to rest His divine presence upon them". Rashi is telling us that the counting of

the people was not simply a technicality to know their number for the purpose of providing services, rather there was a deeper purpose - to acknowledge the value and worth of every individual in the eyes of Hashem.

It was for this reason therefore that the counting needed to be carried out by Moshe, Aharon and in the presence of the princes. The fact that they were there demonstrated the value of each individual and also gave them a spiritual lift. It said to each individual – you matter. You are not just a number. You are a person. You are unique and have a unique purpose and mission in life.

This is also the reason why when it comes to singling out the greatness of the princes at the dedication of the tabernacle, the Torah chose specifically their function in the counting. Only great people could have been chosen for this important function.

We spend a lot of time encouraging our children and others to realise their uniqueness, but perhaps we too need to listen to this message. ■

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OUR CHACHAMIM

RABBI EPHRAIM NAVON
THE AUTHOR OF MACHANEH EPHRAIM

The gaon Rabbi Ephraim Navon Zatzal was born in the city of Constantinople, where he and his friend of the same age, the gaon Yaakov Sasson, studied Torah with their teacher Rabbi Alfandri Zatzal. Rabbi Ephraim continuously elevated himself in the rungs of Torah and the fear of Heaven, studying with extraordinary diligence and perceptiveness. When he reached the age of marriage, he married the daughter of the gaon Rabbi Yehudah Irgaz Zatzal, at which time he and his father-in-law left for Eretz Israel and settled in Jerusalem. Rabbi Ephraim remained isolated for 10 years, studying the entire Talmud with tremendous concentration and in great depth. During that time he also studied the works of the Rambam and the Beit Yosef. Thus Rabbi Ephraim's name became famous in the Jewish world.

Sent by Rav Roshehien, Rabbi Ephraim left Israel and returned to Constantinople, where he became the Rav of the city. At the same time, he wrote his famous book Machaneh Ephraim on various Halachot, a book that the Chida described as being incredibly insightful and valuable. In fact his book was acknowledged by the entire Torah world, and even today both Machaneh Ephraim and its commentaries are studied in yeshivot throughout the world.

In reading Machaneh Ephraim, one can clearly see the author's extensive scholarship and wisdom. It is even said that Rabbi Ephraim could perform wonders, knowing the sacred Names of Hashem and being able to use Kabbalah to save Jews from their hardships and illnesses. Rabbi Ephraim Navon passed away on Nissan 26, 5491, as his soul ascended to the celestial academy. May the memory of the tzaddik be blessed. ■



HALACHOT

RABBI ELI MANSOUR

BORER – IS IT PERMISSIBLE TO REMOVE BONES FROM FISH ON SHABBAT?

The prohibition of Borer forbids separating *Pesolet* – an undesirable substance – from *Ochel* – desirable food – on Shabbat. This Halacha gives rise to the question of whether it is permissible to eat fish on Shabbat. When eating fish, one generally has to remove the small bones from the fish on his plate. Placing the fish in one's mouth before removing the bones can, obviously, pose a serious risk to one's life. Seemingly, it should be forbidden to eat fish on Shabbat, as Halacha forbids removing inedible substances – such as bones – from food on Shabbat.

The Halachic authorities address this question and point to several reasons for allowing eating fish on Shabbat. First, Rabbenu Hananel, cited by the Aruch, was of the opinion that the prohibition of Borer applies only when two substances are mixed together, but not when they are attached to one another. Thus, for example, it is permissible to remove a banana peel in order to eat a banana on Shabbat, and this does not constitute Borer, because the peel and the fruit are not mixed together, but rather attached to one another. Similarly, since the flesh of the fish is attached to the bone, it would be permissible, according to this view, to remove the bone, and this would not violate the prohibition of Borer.

Furthermore, the Be'ur Halacha (Rav Yisrael Meir Kagan of Radin, 1839-1933) cites the view of the Mahara Abulafia that it is permissible to remove *Pesolet* from *Ochel* on Shabbat while eating. This view would certainly allow removing bones from fish on one's plate as he eats. Although Halacha generally does not follow this view, we may take it into consideration along with other factors to allow removing bones from fish. There is also a view that the laws of Borer apply only to food grown from the ground, and not to other foods, such as meat and fish. This view, too, is not generally accepted as Halacha, but it gives rise to yet another *Safek* (Halachic uncertainty) that may be taken into account.

In light of these considerations, Hacham Ovadia Yosef, in *Hazon Ovadia* (vol. 4, p. 196; listen to audio recording for precise citation), rules that it is permissible to remove bones from fish on Shabbat. This is also the ruling of the work *Shemirat Shabbat Ke'hilchatah*, and of many other Halachic authorities. There are those who claim that the common practice among Ashkenazim to eat on Shabbat "gefilte fish," which does not contain bones, stems from the concern for the prohibition of Borer. According to the accepted Halacha, however, this is not necessary, as it is permissible to remove bones from fish on Shabbat.

It should be noted, however, that this ruling applies only to bones that are still attached to the flesh of the fish. When it comes to bones that have already become detached, the prohibition of Borer applies and one may not move them away from the fish on Shabbat.

Summary: It is permissible to remove bones from fish on one's plate on Shabbat, and this does not violate the prohibition of Borer. ■



TEST YOURSELF - Q&A

- ❶ Why did the levi'im receive ma'aser rishon?
- ❷ Which groups of people were counted from the age of one month?
- ❸ Name the first descendant of Levi in history to be counted as an infant.
- ❹ Who assisted Moshe in counting the levi'im?
- ❺ Why did so many people from the tribe of Reuven support Korach in his campaign against Moshe?

Answer

- ❶ 3:8 - Since the levi'im served in the Mishkan in place of everyone else, they received tithes as "payment".
- ❷ 3:15, 40 - The levi'im, and the firstborn of Bnei Yisrael.
- ❸ 3:15 - Levi's daughter Yocheved was born while the Jewish People were entering Egypt.
- ❹ 3:16 - Hashem
- ❺ 3:29 - The tribe of Reuven was encamped for near Korach, and were therefore influenced for the worse. This teaches that one should avoid living near the wicked.
- She is counted as one of the 70 people who entered Egypt.

Y^USSI & Co.

