



MESILOT

Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly Parsha
of Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel Zt"l

From the weekly lessons of his son
Rabbi Yisrael Abargel Shlita

Dedicated to the hatzlacha of
Manuel Saba and his Family

...*~* PATHWAYS TO THE SOUL *~*...

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Parshat Bamidbar

From Omission to Redemption

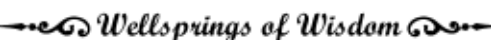
In Kraków lived a fine Jew named Isaac.¹ G-d granted him success in all that he did and blessed him with seven children. From infancy he ensured they received a pure Jewish education, sending them to devout, upright teachers who instilled them with the warmth of Torah and mitzvot. The children loved their studies and brought him much nachas, pride and joy.

Isaac was a devoted Husiatyn Chasid, deeply connected to Rebbe Yisrael of Husiatyn, and active among the Rebbe's followers in Kraków. His happiest days were the Rebbe's occasional visits, when the city took on a festive air. Crowds thronged the house where the tzaddik stayed, a line stretching through the courtyard and into

the street, each person waiting to enter his room. Those emerging were pressed for what they had seen inside.

During one visit, a townsman who was not a Husiatyn Chasid handed in a kvitel (petition note). The Rebbe lifted his eyes and asked him as to his occupation. "Good Jews help me," the man said. The Rebbe reached into the pile of contributions that was placed before him, scooped up as much as his hands could hold, and gave it to him: "Take this. I also want to be a *good Jew*."

On another occasion, the Rebbe's nephew, the great genius Rabbi Moshe of Boyan (may G-d avenge his blood), who headed Yeshivat Chachmei Lublin, visited his uncle's



1. This story is brought in *Imru Tzaddik* (Husiatyn edition, p. 191) by Rabbi Meir Tzvi Gruzman.

Parshat Bamidbar - From Omission to Redemption

lodging. They plunged into a halachic discussion, pulling Torah book after book to marshal sources. Afterward, the nephew emerged astonished: “I always knew my holy uncle was great in Torah and had extraordinary genius, but I did not realize the great extent of it until now.”

During visits, everyone felt the tzaddik was their guest, and the Husiatyn Chasidim in particular acted as proud hosts; Isaac was first in organizing the festivities.

When the Rebbe resided in Vienna, Isaac collected “ma’amad” donations from the Kraków Chasidim and sent them on, especially before holidays. He also sent brief personal kvitels: his and his mother’s names, his wife’s and her mother’s, then he added “our offspring,” with short requests for health, ample livelihood, and abundant nachas, no more than a dozen words.

Isaac’s eldest, Eidel, was bright and quick. As she grew, she developed a strong talent for music. Influenced by the Polish aristocratic fashion, Isaac’s wife sought a musical education

for her, which meant at that time, piano lessons. Isaac, a pious Jew, refused to hire an ordinary Polish teacher and carefully chose a non-Jewish woman of good repute, hoping to shield his daughter from the Enlightenment’s secular winds.

Eidel excelled. She learned to read music and mastered the piano, and she was soon the teacher’s star. At each year-end recital, she had a lead role, and the applause was thunderous. Inevitably, she drifted from her old circle and drew close to the gentile girls of the local music salons.

To her parents’ sorrow, Eidel began absorbing the irreligious atmosphere of her teacher and friends. Though always well-mannered, she now voiced radical ideas at home with unnerving openness, criticizing Judaism and its commandments. The family was torn apart; arguments flared into painful confrontations.

At last Eidel left home for a small apartment at the city’s edge, within the aristocratic

milieu that dazzled her. She widened her circle among the musicians; visits home grew rare and brief. She changed her dress and speech, and even her name: no longer Eidel, she called herself Adela.

Heartbroken, Isaac thought of writing to the Rebbe, who had by then moved to the Land of Israel, living in Tel Aviv. Shame stopped him. How could he ask for a blessing for a daughter whose downfall, he felt, he had enabled by allowing her piano lessons? He berated himself.

When the time came for his seasonal kvitel, he made one change. He listed each child by name and added a request for blessing after each, “for fear of Heaven,” to safeguard them from following their sister’s wayward ways. At Eidel’s name he hesitated. If he wrote down her name, he felt obliged to add a request for a blessing for her to perform “complete teshuvah,” an admission he was ashamed to make. To include her without writing it would be

to hide the truth. After much inner struggle, he resolved to omit her entirely.

The kvitel reached the Rebbe in Tel Aviv. During a walk, the Husiatyn Rebbe turned to his attendant, Reb Kalman Shaul Wilner: “Could it be that Isaac left one of his children out of his kvitel?” The aide, unsure how many children Isaac had, answered that perhaps there were only six. The Rebbe said, “Write to Isaac at once and ask why he omitted one of his children.”

Two weeks later, a detailed reply arrived from Kraków. Isaac poured out his heart, describing all that had happened with Eidel, even writing that he no longer considered her to be his daughter after she had betrayed the G-d of her ancestors.

The Rebbe read the letter and instructed: “Write back to Isaac that no one appointed him master over his children; he has no right to push any of them away or nullify their belonging to their ancestors and Jewish

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roots. To remove a child from one's kvitel is to remove that child from under the wings of the Shechinah – he has no permission to do such a thing. Tell him he must send a new kvitel including all of his offspring. “How does he know from which child he will yet have true Jewish nachas?”

Then came the war. The years of darkness and unspeakable tragedy descended. The Nazi oppressors annihilated Polish Jewry. When the nightmarish storm passed and the survivors began to gather, Isaac learned that he alone remained; he found no trace of his family and understood that they had all perished.

With help from a rescue committee he reached the United States and began life anew in Brooklyn. On his first Shabbat he was assigned to be

hosted by a hospitable family for the Friday-night meal. After synagogue prayers he went to their home.

Upon seeing the hostess who greeted him at the door, he gasped and fainted. It was his daughter Eidel.

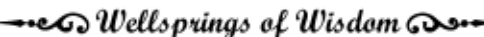
She had escaped to America before the war, taken spiritual stock of herself, and returned fully to the traditional Jewish faith of her ancestors. She had married a devout Jew and ran an exemplary Jewish home known for its warm hospitality. From that day Isaac lived with his daughter and drew pure, abundant nachas from her and her children. In the end, it was from this very daughter that he received true Jewish pride and joy until his last day...

We will share yet another story...

Honest Words, Enduring Blessings

Rabbi Yitzchak Huberman, the “Tzaddik of Ra’anana,” of

blessed memory, told the following story:²



2. Ben La’ashri – Berachah Meshuleshet, vol. 3 (“Stories of Holiness,” p. 63).

Parshat Bamidbar - Honest Words, Enduring Blessings

Once, two young Torah scholars came to see the holy Rebbe, Rabbi Tzadok of Lublin. The Rebbe received them graciously and heard them out. Then he turned to one and asked: “Have you finished Shas (the entire Talmud) and the Shulchan Aruch?” The young Torah scholar replied, “Thank G-d, I have been privileged to indeed finish them.”

The attendant, astonished, later asked: “Rebbe, why was it so important to know whether that young man had completed Shas and the Shulchan Aruch?”

The Rebbe replied: “That young man’s father was first a Chasid of my teacher, the holy Rabbi Mordechai Yosef of Izbica. He traded in oxen by profession. Then, after some time he left Izbica and began traveling to another Rebbe. Then a plague struck his herds, and they began to die. Twice he went to his Rebbe and poured out his heart, but received no answer.

“When he saw that his fortune was lost and, worse, that he would default on money of

others—including dowries of young Torah scholars who depended on their investments with him—he traveled once more to his Rebbe and wept bitterly over the disaster that befell him and over the loss of others’ funds. His Rebbe answered: ‘What can I do? Go to the holy Rebbe of Izbica, whom you used to frequent, and he will help bless you with salvation.’

“This journey was very hard for him. Had it been only his own money, he would have let the fortune go rather than travel to Izbica. He was a true Chasid, and since the Izbicer’s path did not find favor in his eyes, he was ready to sacrifice life and wealth for his current position and affiliation; but he could not stand by and watch harm befall the investments of others, young men whose funds would allow them to diligently study Torah. So he overrode his preferences and begrudgingly traveled to the Izbicer Rebbe.

“When he came before him and told his concern, the Rebbe asked: ‘If I save you, will you

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return to being my Chasid?’ He answered, ‘In all sincerity, no. My heart is full of questions about your conduct.’

The Rebbe asked: ‘If so, what will you say when you are miraculously saved through me?’

‘I will say you worked a magic spell for me.’

“My holy teacher was struck by his sincere honesty and that his intent was merely for the sake of Heaven. He promised

that from that day his animals would live, and that within the year his fortune would increase tenfold, and he blessed him with a son who would be a great Torah scholar.

“That young man whom I asked whether he finished Shas and Shulchan Aruch is in fact that man’s son. I asked about his accomplishments to see how my holy teacher of Izbica’s blessing had been miraculously fulfilled.”

Now, let us begin our talk...

The Censuses of the Jewish People

In the Midrash (*Bamidbar Rabbah*, 2:11), it is explained that the Jewish nation was counted ten times:

1. When they descended to Egypt, as it is said: “*With seventy persons your ancestors went down to Egypt*” (Deuteronomy 10:22).

2. When they went up from Egypt, as it is said: “*The Jews set out from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men aside from children*” (Exodus 12:37).

3. Once after the episode of the Golden Calf, as it is said: “*When you take a census of the Jewish people according to their numbers...*” (Exodus 30:12)...

4. Once in the formation of the banners (at the wilderness camp), as it is said: “*All who were counted came to 603,550*” (Numbers 1:46).

5. Once by the division of the land, as it says: “*These were the enrollments of the Jewish people: 601,730*” (Numbers 26:51).

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6. Twice in the days of Saul, as it is said: “*Saul gathered the people and counted them in Telaim—200,000 foot soldiers and 10,000 men of Judah*” (I Samuel 15:4).

7. Furthermore, it says: “*He gathered them in Bezek, and the Jewish people were 300,000, and the men of Judah 30,000*” (I Samuel 11:8).

8. Once in the days of David, as it is said: “*Joab reported to the king the number of the people: the Jewish people consisted of 800,000 able-bodied men who drew the sword, and the men of Judah, 500,000*” (II Samuel 24:9).

9. Once in the days of Ezra, as it is said: “*The entire assembly together numbered 42,360*” (Ezra 2:64).

10. Finally, once in the future to come, as it is said: “*Again shall the flocks pass under the hands of one who counts them—said G-d*” (Jeremiah 33:13)...”

Before we delve deeper, let us refresh our memory:

As is known, there are 54 Torah portions in the Chumash. The first parashah is *Bereshit* – which begins with the creation of the world. The last parashah is *Vezot HaBerachah* – which concludes with the passing of Moses.

Moses passed away on the 7th of Adar (or Adar I) in the year 2488 from creation, thus, the events written in the Torah occurred over 2488 years, in the following general sequence:

Parashat *Bereshit* encompasses within it ten generations: Adam, Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalalel, Yered, Chanoch, Metushelach, Lemech, and Noach. It also covers the first 1500 years of creation, approximately.

Parashat *Noach* also encompasses ten generations: Shem, Arpachshad, Shelach, Eber, Peleg, Re’u, Serug, Nachor, Terach, Avraham, and it includes within it the next 523 years.

Then, from the third parashah – Parashat *Lech-Lecha* – until the end of Chumash *Bereshit*, there are 10 parashiot, and in

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them the Torah speaks of five generations, namely: Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, his 12 sons, and their children. This covers the next 308 years.

Now we move to Chumash Shemot:

The first two chapters of Parashat *Shemot* encompass all the years of the enslavement in Egypt.

Then, from the third chapter of *Shemot* until the end of Parashat *Bo*, the ten plagues and the Exodus from Egypt are described – events that spanned one year.

Then, from Parashat *Beshalach* until the end of Chumash Shemot, everything that happened to the Jewish people in the first year of their journey in the wilderness is described.

In that year they both received the Torah – and descended to sin with the Golden Calf.

At the beginning of the second year, on the 1st of Nissan, the

Mishkan was erected, as stated in Parashat *Pekudei* (the last parashah in Chumash Shemot): “*In the first month of the second year, on the first of the month, the Tabernacle was set up*” (Exodus 40:17).

Now we move to Chumash Vayikra:

Chumash Vayikra deals almost entirely with the laws of sacrifices and the laws of ritual purity and impurity, the dietary laws, and the laws of forbidden relationships.

In *Beit Elokim* by the Mabit (Gate of the Foundations, ch. 32), it explains that the entire Chumash Vayikra was related to Moses in the span of one month – from the 1st of Nissan until the 1st of Iyar.

Next, Chumash Bamidbar begins on the 1st of Iyar of the second year, when the Holy One, blessed be He, counted the people of Israel.

The first five parashiot of Chumash Bamidbar: *Bamidbar*, *Naso*, *Beha’alotcha*, *Shelach*,

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and *Korach* – all occurred in the first half of the second year.

From then on and for the next 38 years of the sojourn in the wilderness, nothing of what transpired in the desert is described or written in the holy Torah at all!

Then, from the sixth parashah of Bamidbar, Parashat *Chukat*, until the end of Chumash Bamidbar (for the span of five parashiot), the Torah describes the events of the 40th year of the Israelites' journey in the wilderness.

The final Chumash, Devarim, was entirely spoken during Moses' last 36 days in the wilderness: the first seven parashiot (*Devarim* through *Ki Tavo*) were stated over 35 days, and the last four parashiot (*Nitzavim*, *Vayelech*, *Ha'azinu*, and *Vezot HaBerachah*) Moses said on his last day, the 7th of Adar.

After we have arranged the chronological order of the Torah portions, we now return and examine the words of the Midrash we quoted earlier...

Among the ten times that the Jewish people were counted are the time of the Exodus from Egypt, the count after the incident of the Calf, and the count at the banners (i.e., the census in our parashah).

Thus, within the span of 11 and a half months, the people of Israel were counted no less than three times!

Furthermore, in total, in the first year and a half after the Exodus from Egypt, their number is mentioned five times:

1. In Parashat Bo it is stated: *"The Jewish people journeyed from Rameses to Succoth, about six hundred thousand men aside from children"* (Exodus 12:37).

2. In Parashat Pekudei it is stated: *"A beka per head, half a shekel by the holy weights—for each one who is counted from the age of twenty years and up: 603,550"* (Exodus 38:26).

3. In Parashat Bamidbar it is stated: *"All who were counted came to the sum of 603,550"* (Numbers 1:46).

Parshat Bamidbar - Peace: The Key to Receiving Torah

4. Again in Parshat Bamidbar it is stated: *“These are the records of the Jewish people by their ancestral houses... all the counts of the camps by their troops: 603,550”* (Numbers 2:32).

5. Finally, in Parshat Beha'alotcha it is stated: *“Moses said: Six hundred thousand men are the people in whose midst I am, yet You said, ‘I will give them meat and they shall eat for a month’”* (Numbers 11:21).

In summary: the number of the Jewish people is mentioned five times: twice the number “600,000” is mentioned, and three times the number “603,550” is mentioned.

The question presents itself: Why and to where did 3,550 people disappear?

This question has been asked by Rabbi Yitzchak Eizik Katz,³

and in answer, he explained the final Mishnah that concludes the Talmud (Uktzin 3:12):

“Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The Holy One, blessed be He, in the future will award each righteous person 310 worlds, as it is said: ‘to bequeath to those who love Me (שׂ - numerically equal to 310) and I will fill their treasuries’ (Proverbs 8:21).

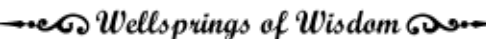
Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta said: The Holy One, blessed be He, found no vessel that can hold blessing for Israel except for peace, as it is said: *‘G-d will give strength to His people, G-d will bless His people with peace’* (Psalms 29:11).”

But before we present his explanation, we digress and bring an excerpt of a talk by Rabbi Yoram Abargel, on this last statement of the Mishnah.

Peace: The Key to Receiving Torah

To quote from *Imrei Noam* (Bamidbar – Discourse 1):

“In most years, Shabbat Parashat Bamidbar is adjacent to



3. In *Brit Kehunat Olam* (Ma'amar LeShekalim – ch. 8).

Parshat Bamidbar - Peace: The Key to Receiving Torah

Shavuot, the time of the giving of the Torah, and therefore this Shabbat is called by our early sages ‘Shabbat Kallah’, since it precedes the Jewish people’s marriage to their lovely bride, the holy Torah, on the day of Shavuot, Matan Torah.

The sermons on this Shabbat would delve into the significance of Matan Torah and the preparations required to merit receiving the crown of the Torah. Additionally, ‘Shabbat Kallah’ can also be read as ‘Shabbat HaKol’ (שבת הכל, ‘Shabbat of everything’), since one can achieve during this Shabbat all of the preparations necessary in order to receive the Torah.

In our parashah’s opening, ‘And G-d spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai’ (Numbers 1:1), a primary such preparation is hinted at. ‘Bamidbar Sinai’ (במדבר סיני, ‘in the wilderness of Sinai’) has the same gematria as ‘b’shalom’ (בשלום, ‘in peace’), teaching that in order to merit the holy Torah, one must cleave to peace and interact with every Jew with love.

In fact, one of the Names of G-d is ‘Shalom’, and therefore, G-d permits His holy Name to be erased in water to make peace between husband and wife (Sotah 17a), for the very essence of His Name is to increase peace.

The holy Zohar explains that the entire Torah consists of the Names of the Holy One, blessed be He (Zohar, Mishpatim 124a), and since His holy Name is ‘Shalom’, it follows then that the Torah’s very essence is to bring peace to the world. As it says: ‘Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace’ (Proverbs 3:17).

It follows that anyone who wishes to merit the crown of the holy Torah must hold fast to its attribute, peace, and walk in its path. But one who clings to machloket (מחלוקת, strife) will not be a fitting dwelling for the Torah.

It is for this reason that we say at the end of the morning prayers, before Aleinu (end of Tractate Berachot): ‘Rabbi Elazar said in the name of Rabbi Chanina: Torah scholars increase peace in the world.’

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The meaning of this is clear: a true Torah scholar conducts himself by the Torah's ways and increases peace in the world.

To quote the saintly Rabbi Chaim Palagi (Kaf HaChaim, §17:19):

We say this passage because it contains the words 'peace' and 'serenity' eight times, and it serves to counter the eight wings of the angel of evil, and one should recite it word by word with intent so that his prayers will be accepted.

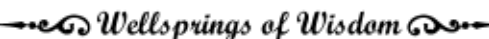
As the Maharal of Prague writes in several places in his holy works,⁴ the natural order is encompassed by the number seven, and what is beyond nature is represented by the number eight. Thus, the attribute of peace can draw down that which is above nature and enables a person to merit receiving the holy Torah, which is itself above nature.

In daily life, there are endless pretexts for quarrel, but if a person insists upon his honor, he may constantly live in strife. Only if he conducts himself with humility, yields his claims, and foregoes honor, can he hold fast to peace with everyone.

Peace is the key to meriting Torah. When Moses ascended on high, the angels opposed giving the Torah to mortals. G-d told him, "Grasp My Throne of Glory and answer them" (Shabbat 88b). On the surface, they protested to guard the Torah's purity, and the Throne shielded Moses from their fiery breath.

Rabbi Nachman of Breslov offers a deeper view (Likkutei Moharan II:1-2): A Jew is meant to rule over angels. The Sages teach that the righteous will one day stand above them (Jerusalem Talmud, Shabbat 6:9), since the Jewish souls are rooted above the angels.

When a person purifies himself and rises through Torah,



4. *Chiddushei Aggadot of the Maharal (Nedarim 33a), Ner Mitzvah (p. 87).*

Parshat Bamidbar - Peace: The Key to Receiving Torah

he can subdue them, and that ascent provokes their jealousy and a drive to cast him down. The safeguard against them is to bind oneself to the souls of Israel.

The angels' protest was born from jealousy of the Jewish people, who through Torah, would surpass them.

G-d's command: "Grasp My Throne" meant that by attachment to the Jewish people's root, hewn from beneath the Throne of Glory, Moses would be safe from their jealousy.

Thus, one who lives in peace truly merits the Torah. Torah elevates a person above the angels, and it is by attachment to all other Jewish people that the Torah's power can in fact protect him.

With this we can also understand what is told in the Gemara (Chagigah 14b) of the four Tannaim who entered the Pardes. The first three were harmed, and

only Rabbi Akiva 'entered in peace and left in peace.' Later (Chagigah 15b) the angels sought to push out Rabbi Akiva, but G-d said: 'Leave this elder alone, for he is indeed worthy of making use of My glory.'

The angels sensed that the Tannaim who ascended would attain perceptions beyond their own and would come to rule over them; therefore, in jealousy, they harmed them and cast them down.

Rabbi Akiva, however, could not be harmed because of his attribute of peace that he had with every Jew. He famously taught, 'Love your fellow as yourself' is 'a great principle of the Torah' (Genesis Rabbah 24:7). Thus, he was bound to the Throne of Glory through unity with the souls of the Jewish people, and this saved him from the angels' jealousy."⁵

Let us expand a bit more on the topic of peace...

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

5. As the Jerusalem Talmud states (Chagigah 2:1): "Rabbi Akiva entered in

peace and left in peace." That is to say, because Rabbi Akiva "entered in

Peace: The Cornerstone of Life

In a discourse delivered by Rabbi Gedaliah Greenboim, he said the following:⁶

“Shalom” (peace) – means to live in peace and harmony with a person who is different from me. A person whose nature is different, who has habits different from mine, different customs and perhaps even different demands. All these contrasts by nature can drive a wedge between a person and his fellow.

However, when people focus on what they have in common, seek the mutual points of agreement between them, concentrate on those, and base their neighborly relations, their acquaintance, and their shared life on the identical and equal points – they discover that the aspects in each of them complement one another. Thus, specifically through their differences, they actually complete each other.

Peace means accepting others as they are, even when their outlook or tradition clashes with mine. It is the ability to forgive, let go, and hold back in times of conflict, to choose reconciliation and live at peace—outwardly and inwardly—even with those who hurt or opposed me.

For one who values peace, the highest goal is unity: to be one people, whole and complete. It is thus no wonder that the Sages taught, “The Holy One, blessed be He, found no vessel that holds blessing but peace.” Strife destroys every good part, while peace binds, preserves, and becomes the vessel that carries G-d’s blessing. That is why we pray: “Grant peace, goodness, and blessing.”

Let us continue further in our discussion...

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

peace”—meaning, he possessed the attribute of peace and love to others—in that merit he was saved

from the jealousy of the angels and was thus able to “leave in peace.”

6. HaMevaser HaTorani (issue 291, p. 23).

The Dual Crowns of Marriage

I have had the opportunity to meet, listen to, and connect with thousands of individuals across the land of Israel. It is clear to me that the chief cause of issues with shalom bayit (domestic harmony) is the inability of spouses to accept and lovingly tolerate one another.

Anyone who truly seeks to be accepting of their spouse must master two things: (A) recognizing the psychological difference between man and woman; (B) investing thought and cultivating the desire to meet their spouse's emotional needs.

We bring here the following excerpt from *Chelev Ha'aretz*, vol. 7 (p. 375):

G-d created the human being male and female, as the Torah says: "Male and female He created them, and He blessed them and called their name Man" (Genesis 5:2). He formed each with distinct qualities and assigned each a role, yet the aim of both is one: to complete

each other in the service of G-d. The male completes the female by fulfilling his role, and the female completes the male by fulfilling hers. G-d designates for each man the woman suited to him, according to the root of his soul and the nature of his traits, as the Gemara teaches (Sotah 2a): Rabbi Yehuda said in the name of Rav, "Forty days before the formation of the fetus, a heavenly voice goes forth and proclaims: 'The daughter of so-and-so is destined for so-and-so...'"

Rabbi Eliyahu Ki Tov describes it in the following manner (*Ish U'Beito*, Chapter 8, p. 94):

"Man and woman are two sovereigns who serve under two crowns, and their kingdoms are two separate worlds of their own. Thus, they are two subspecies within the human species.

They have two distinct roles and two different, exalted virtues. One sovereignty does

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not infringe upon the other even the slightest.

Man is the plain face of the world; woman is its secret. Man conquers, but woman gives him the strength to succeed. He is

the trunk of the tree; she is the spring of water beneath it, giving it life. His work is broad and visible, while her strength endures and leaves an eternal mark.”⁷

...*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*...

7. In *Ish Tzaddik Hayah* (p. 69) we read the following about the righteous Rabbi Aryeh Levin, who was known as the “father of the prisoners”:

People usually notice “big” things, not the “small” and insignificant ones. That is where the difference lies between physical and spiritual strength. Physical strength is measured by size and quantity. Spiritual strength is measured by the ability to see the small, the hidden, the silent. Loud voices anyone can hear, but only one with spiritual sensitivity hears a quiet sigh or feels a hidden tear. Truly great people see the small things as well.

One such man was Rabbi Aryeh Levin. Despite illness, hunger, and personal suffering, he always carried a smile and words of encouragement. He lifted spirits and comforted the broken. From his youth he pursued charity and kindness, seeking out the downtrodden with a heart overflowing with compassion. He had no possessions of his own, yet he was among the richest of men, for he gave of himself, and he scattered and divided love and respect wherever he went.

His son, Rabbi Chaim Yaakov Levin, recalled:

“I always tried to understand the root of my father’s greatness. What was the source of the admiration he inspired among the masses, far beyond many others?

Finally, I realized—one trait stood at the core of his refined attributes and crowned all of his deeds: humility. His humility was beyond human measure.

We usually interpret the Mishnah (*Avot* 4:10), ‘Be humble before every person,’ as meaning even before the lowliest. But in truth, it is not hard to be humble before someone clearly greater or clearly lesser. The real test is to be humble before one’s equal, for it requires a person to lower himself and acknowledge the other as greater, and this is very hard.

Yet, I can testify that my father was truly humble before every person. He bowed before the great, deferred to the small, and most exceptionally, even yielded before his equals.”

Parshat Bamidbar - The Dual Crowns of Marriage

Since men and women differ by nature, one must learn to accept their spouse's personality. Every person longs for his or her individuality to be accepted, respected, and valued. The first step in marriage is this awareness. When one rises above pride and unites with a spouse, one learns to feel the other's heart. My father, Rabbi Yoram Abargel, often said that the measure of a marriage's perfection is how clearly each feels the other's heart. He would tell of Rabbi Aryeh Levin, who once came with his wife to the doctor and said, "Our foot hurts." When asked to explain, he replied, "My wife's foot hurts us, because I feel her pain."

I once studied with a Torah scholar who kept his phone off during our sessions. One day, he paused and called his wife: "Does your left knee hurt?" She confirmed it did. He explained that he had suddenly felt pain and was unsure if it was his or hers—it turned out to be hers.

This depth of connection is not a gift from Heaven, but the

fruit of steady work and investment. Shared outlook, sensitivity to emotional needs, clarity about men's and women's roles, sacrifice, and deliberate thought for the other create unity until two souls truly become one.

I carry vivid memories of my father. Despite the crushing weight of Torah study, leading institutions, and tending to people's needs, he fixed daily time to study with my mother. Together they learned systematically, a joint chavruta that enriched them and gave us children a living example. He urged us to do the same, stressing that joint learning is to taste true sweetness and enjoy lasting quality time—a long-term investment that is requisite for the next generation's success.

By contrast, when a marriage is only technical, the household may inevitably break down. A crooked foundation grows more and more crooked until it collapses, with dire consequences, G-d forbid.

Parshat Bamidbar - Education Through Example

But when parents treat marriage as they would a business—investing into it their entire being—they build a home on the foundations of Torah and

holiness, rooted in faith, sound understanding, and a healthy life outlook. Such a home conveys and passes onward pure Jewish education to the children.

Education Through Example

In our parashah, Parshat Bamidbar, the paternal role explained above is emphasized even more. As the verse states: *“And they assembled the whole congregation together on the first of the second month, and they established their genealogy by their families, by their fathers’ houses, according to the number of names from twenty years old and up, by head count”* (Numbers 1:18). Thus, with regard to family lineage, we follow the father, not the mother.

To quote the Mishnah (Kiddushin 3:12):

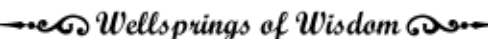
“Wherever the marriage is valid and there is no transgression, the child follows

the male. Which case is this referring to? A kohen’s daughter, or a Levite’s [daughter], or an Israelite [daughter] who is married to a kohen, or to a Levite, or to an Israelite.”

Rashi explains:⁸

“If a Levite married a kohen’s daughter or an Israelite woman – her son is a Levite. If a kohen married a Levite’s or an Israelite’s daughter – her son is a kohen. If an Israelite married a kohen’s daughter or a Levite’s daughter – the offspring is an Israelite. For it is written, ‘by their families, by their fathers’ houses.’”

That is, the future status of the child – whether he will be a kohen or a Levite or an Israelite –



8. Kiddushin 66b.

Parshat Bamidbar - Education Through Example

depends on the father; according to the father's lineage, so will the child's be.

However, aside from the plain meaning, there are many deep layers of meaning here. One of them is the concept of 'personal example,' specifically, the personal example and conduct of the father.

Let us explain:

Today, the word *chinuch* (חינוך, education) is used broadly for everything done with children—affection and criticism, teaching knowledge and preaching morals, punishing and rewarding, discipline and encouragement. All of this is lumped into the term "education."

But this is not the true meaning.

Chinuch is not giving orders or commands.

Chinuch is not drills or routines.

Chinuch is not filling a child's head with information.

Chinuch is not about shaping behavior in the moment with punishments, rewards, or discipline—those may work in the present but vanish once the child stands alone, no longer fearing punishment or seeking reward.

Chinuch is something else entirely: it is the creation of desire. The task of the educator is to plant in the child's heart a will and longing to serve G-d and walk an upright path. This is achieved through patient explanation, gentle words, and above all, by personal example—until the heart softens and connects.⁹

—*~* Wellsprings of Wisdom *~*—

9. In the book *Malchut Shelomo* (p. 158) by Rabbi Shlomo Tzofiyoff, the following story is recorded:

It was Friday, the eve of Shabbat Chanukah in the year 5750 (1989), at the

onset of Shabbat. Rabbi Yehudah Tzadkiah, of blessed memory, prepared the Chanukah candles and lit them with a blessing at the entrance to his home on the outside, as was his custom on each

Parshat Bamidbar - Education Through Example

Rabbi Yisrael Kleiner would say:¹⁰ “True education begins with oneself. If a person does not educate himself, no method will help his son.” He told of

the Rav of Brisk: When asked when to begin educating a newborn son, the Rav replied, “You are too late—you should have begun with yourself.”¹¹

—*~* **Wellsprings of Wisdom** *~*—

day of Chanukah. He then turned and went on his way to the Shaul Tzadkah Synagogue to welcome the Shabbat. Meanwhile, children were playing near the courtyard of his home. One of them, while running, overturned the menorah; the candles were extinguished, and all of the oil spilled...

When he returned from the synagogue after the prayer, he immediately noticed that the menorah had been overturned, yet he did not utter a single word. Quietly, in his usual manner, he entered his home, sat at the table to recite Kiddush, and began the holy Shabbat meal in calm and tranquility, as though nothing had happened.

The father of the mischievous child, upon learning what had occurred, took his son and brought him to Rabbi Tzadkah, of blessed memory, to ask from him forgiveness. The rabbi gently stroked the child’s head and received him warmly. He explained to him in simple language the meaning of Chanukah—the significance of the miracle and why we light the candles. Then he offered him sweets and showered him with blessings.

The child, who at first had been fearful of the rabbi’s displeasure, was utterly surprised by the warmth and love that he received. From that day onward, the young boy became attached to Rabbi Yehudah Tzadkah throughout all of his days. This incident moved him to examine his actions and strive to follow the path of the righteous.

10. Kovetz Kol HaTorah, vol. 84, p. 67.

11. A certain Torah scholar related: We were small children, and on Shabbat our father would take us with him to the morning prayer. After the prayer, our father approached Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian and began conversing with him at length.

Since we had nothing to do, we started playing with stones on the floor. Our father reminded us that today is Shabbat and stones are muktzeh, and not to be handled...

We left the stones, but later, when our father wasn’t looking, we started playing with the stones again... Again our father reminded us that it’s Shabbat... This happened several times.

Parshat Bamidbar - Peace: The Vessel That Holds Blessing

He explained further: “A child quickly grasps what is truly important to his father without being told. Has your son ever relieved himself in the middle of the house? Of course not—he knows it matters to you.

So too, if the truly important things are important to you, your son will not transgress them.”

Now let us return to the original question we asked: Where did the 3,550 people in the Torah censuses disappear to?

Peace: The Vessel That Holds Blessing

Rabbi Yitzchak Eizik Katz explained the last Mishnah of the Talmud in the following esoteric manner:¹²

The first word of the Torah is the word “Bereshit,” and it can be divided into two parts: “Barata yesh” (בראת יש, “You created substance”).

In these two words is hidden the secret of drawing down the

divine flow of abundance from its source:

The word “barata” (בראת) has the numerical value of 603, which is exactly equal to “bracha shalom” (ברכה שלום, “blessing, peace”). Thus, the bracha (ברכה, blessing – which is the shefa, the flow of abundance) cascades and enters into the shalom (peace – which is the vessel).

—**Wellsprings of Wisdom**—

Suddenly we heard Rabbi Eliyahu say to our father: ‘Is this chinuch (education)? ... They are little and have no understanding at all of what muktzeh is. One thing they are learning from your mussar (reproof) – that when our father isn’t watching, we don’t need to obey him...

‘True chinuch is regarding something the child can understand. As for things he doesn’t understand – chinuch is

when he sees his father’s example and behavior. That imprints in his heart true, pure and fundamental education.

The overwhelming rule in education is personal example...’” (Otzar HaSipurim leMechanchim u’Martzim, vol. 1, p. 293, by Rabbi Yeshaya Horowitz).

12. *In his book Brit Kehunat Olam (Ma’amar LeShekalim – ch. 8).*

Parshat Bamidbar - Peace: The Vessel That Holds Blessing

The root of the bracha cascades from the inheritance that is destined for the people of Israel in the future: “to bequeath them yesh (310) worlds.” Yesh (310) is ten times the Name El (אֱלֹהִים, which has the numerical value of 31), and it is itself drawn from the supernal root that flows from the “two inseparable friends” – the supernal and divine attributes of chochmah and binah – “kneh chochmah, kneh binah” (“acquire wisdom, acquire understanding”) – and twice *kneh* (קנה, 155) indeed equals 310.

To summarize: in the word “Bereshit” is hidden the secret of the process of drawing down the divine flow: the letters yesh (שׁ, 310) from “Bereshit” flow to the remaining letters – which form “barat” (בְּרֵאת, 603) – which are “bracha and shalom.”

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi, in concluding the Mishnah, wanted to connect the end of the Mishnah to the beginning of the Written Torah. Therefore, he brought these two sayings:

“Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi said: The Holy One, blessed be He, in the future will award each righteous person 310 worlds, as it is said: ‘to bequeath to those who love Me (שׂ - numerically equal to 310) and I will fill their treasuries’ (Proverbs 8:21).

Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta said: The Holy One, blessed be He, found no vessel that can hold blessing for Israel except for peace, as it is said: ‘*G-d will give strength to His people, G-d will bless His people with peace*’ (Psalms 29:11).”

The saying of Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi deals with the root of the shefa (“yesh”), and the saying of Rabbi Shimon ben Chalafta deals with its manifestation and vessels – and all three together (“yesh,” “bracha,” and “shalom”) create the word “Bereshit.”

Rabbi Yitzchak Eizik continues:

“The number of the Children of Israel depends on the number of the Name of the Holy One, blessed be He, as it is said: ‘*He*

who brings out their host by number, He calls them all by name' (Isaiah 40:26).

Among the Names of the Holy One, blessed be He, are two Names. One is called Shem HaEtzem (שם העצם, the Essential Name) – and this is the Name Havayah (הו-י-ה-י). The second is called Shem HaHeichal (שם ההיכל, the Name of “the Palace”) – and this is the Name of Adnut (אדני). And it is from these two Names – from each Name independently – that the number of the people of Israel is drawn.

Rabbi Yitzchak Eizik goes on at length to explain in detail how the number of the people of Israel is drawn from the Shem HaHeichal (look there for the many specific details). However, relevant to our discussion, we will provide his explanation on how the number of the Jewish people is drawn from the Essential Name of G-d:

“As stated above, the Essential Name of G-d is the Name Havayah, the Tetragrammaton.

The quarry of the souls of the Jewish people is in Tiferet, which is the letter Vav (ו) of the Divine Name, and the Vav draws down from the head of the Vav, which is the letter Yud (י) of the Name. Therefore, the essence of the quarry is represented by the value of Vav times Yud ($6 \times 10 = 60$).

The following letter, Hei, is the mystery of the very concept of number and calculation, thus, the Hei indicates that one must multiply the values of the quarry of the souls five times. That is, to multiply Vav by Yud, and then multiply the result again by Yud four more times, for a total of Hei – five.

In this way: 60 is multiplied to 600, 6,000, 60,000, and finally 600,000.

Thus, the number 600,000 represents the first three letters of the Name Havayah (י-ה-ו).

The final Hei of the Tetragrammaton includes the ten ineffable attributes—sefirot, and when we add ten times

Parshat Bamidbar - Peace: The Vessel That Holds Blessing

the numerical value of ‘sefirah’ (ספירה), we reach the number of 3,550.

Now, when the census of the Jewish people refers to the male aspect – the drawing down of their Divine light from above, it is hinted at by the first three letters of the Name Havayah (י-ה-ו) – and then the number of the Jewish people amounts to 600,000.

However, when the census refers to the female and receiving aspect of the Jewish people – then one also adds the Hei, the ten ineffable sefirot, and then their number is 603,550.

Indeed, the primary census is from the female aspect. Therefore, in the word ‘Bereshit’

(which hints to the purpose of creation – the Jewish people), this second number is hinted at as follows:

The word ‘Bereshit’ includes the term ‘Barata’ (בראת), which has the same gematria as ‘Bnei Yisrael’ (בני ישראל, the Children of Israel) and has the numerical value of 603 – which hints at the 603,550 count of the Jewish people.

And as explained above, Bereshit also hints at the cascading source of blessings, Yesh, which refers to the supernal wisdom and understanding of G-d (‘El’).

May G-d bless the Jewish people, and grant us unity and harmony, Amen!”¹³

~ Wellsprings of Wisdom ~

13. *On the subject of unity and love of a fellow Jew, we relate the following story (Vayaged Moshe – Haggadah shel Pesach, p. 174):*

In the study hall of Yeshivat Tiferet Yerushalayim served Rabbi Moshe Feinstein as Rosh Yeshivah. He would always ask after a certain beggar’s well-being, listen to his tales, encourage him, and bless him warmly.

One Friday, the beggar came to the yeshivah and saw the crowd gathering to hear a lecture from his “friend,” the Rosh Yeshivah. If he wanted to collect a few coins, he would have to wait until the shiur was over. So he sat down and gave his weary legs some rest.

Then his ‘friend’ entered, and the entire room rose in honor. The Rosh Yeshivah

Summary and Practical Conclusions

1. The Shabbat preceding the festival of Shavuot is called “Shabbat Kallah,” since it is the Shabbat before the marriage of the people of Israel with their bride – the holy Torah – on the day of the Giving of the Torah. On this Shabbat, a person is required to prepare his soul well to receive the great light of the holy Torah!
2. A primary preparation for receiving the Torah is making a

commitment to live in peace and harmony with others. Peace is the only vessel capable of containing within it the light of the Torah.

3. “Peace” is accepting others despite the many differences, despite the fact that he perhaps has an outlook that is opposite to my own and my traditions. The ability to accept the other as he is – there is nothing greater than that. Peace is the ability

❧ Wellsprings of Wisdom ❧

began to teach, and the beggar could not follow a single word. Suddenly, questions flew from every side; voices rang out, arguments flared, debates swirled. The Rosh Yeshivah deflected one challenge, and praised another answer.

A pang of jealousy struck the beggar. After all, the Rosh Yeshivah was his friend. He conversed and confided in him. Yet here these others were talking with him, arguing with him, engaging him—and completely ignoring him.

He felt he had to make his presence known, to prove who the Rosh Yeshivah’s real friend was. Rising from his seat, he suddenly called out:

“What’s the parashah of the week today?!”

He triumphed. The proof? At once the room fell completely silent. All eyes turned to him.

The Rosh Yeshivah, who had been dividing his attention among many, now focused solely on him:

“This Shabbat,” he said warmly, “we read Parashat Beshalach.”

The beggar pressed the moment, savoring it, and stretching it out:

“What?! I didn’t hear.”

Patiently, the Rosh Yeshivah repeated, “This Shabbat, with G-d’s help, we will read Parashat Beshalach.”

“Ah,” the beggar exclaimed, sitting back down with satisfaction.

Now all could see, and perhaps envy, the closeness and the deep bond between them.

Parshat Bamidbar - Summary and Practical Conclusions

to forgive, to forget and to restrain oneself in quarrel and conflict, in times of sorrow and pain, disturbance and difficulty. It is to be willing to reconcile, to be at peace, in practical behavior and in one's heart, with the other person who may have perhaps hurt and pained me, who disagreed with me and caused internal division. All this is possible when a person who seeks peace places before his eyes only one thing – to be one united people, whole and complete.

4. In today's common usage, the term "chinuch" (education) has come to include everything that is done in relation to children's education – expressions of affection and also voicing of criticism, imparting knowledge and also preaching morals, administering punishment and also giving reward, enforcing discipline and also granting encouragement.

However, true "Chinuch"— does *not* mean to give orders, directives and commands! Chinuch – does *not* mean to routinely drill the student into doing certain actions. It does *not* mean merely conveying information to the child and filling his head with facts about the world.

Influencing the child's current behavior by means of punishments,

discipline, or rewards is a means that does not leave a lasting positive influence on the future. In the future – when the student stands on his own – he will no longer fear punishment, be subject to discipline, or look forward to reward. Thus, he will have no reason to continue the behavior that was imposed on him in his youth.

Instead, "Chinuch" – is something else entirely. Chinuch is the creation of desire! The educator must implant in the heart of the student the will and desire to serve G-d and to walk in the upright path.

And this is accomplished through heartfelt explanation and by personal example – explaining and clarifying with pleasant speech, and with patience – until the listener's heart softens and connects...

5. True education begins with the person himself. If a person does not educate himself, "educational methods" alone will not enable him to educate his offspring.

A child understands very quickly what is important to his parents, even without it being explicitly stated. When a child understands what is truly important to his parents, he will respect their directives and instructions...

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Shabbat Times Bamidbar

29th of Iyar ,5786



City	Candle Lighting	Shabbat Ends	Rabbeinu Tam
New York	7:48 pm	8:54 pm	9:19 pm
Miami	7:42 pm	8:37 pm	9:12 pm
Los Angeles	7:30 pm	8:31 pm	9:01 pm
Montreal	8:00 pm	9:12 pm	9:32 pm
Toronto	8:18 pm	9:27 pm	9:49 pm
London	8:28 pm	9:51 pm	9:59 pm
Jerusalem	7:14 pm	8:05 pm	8:58 pm
Tel Aviv	7:11 pm	8:03 pm	8:55 pm
Haifa	7:12 pm	8:06 pm	8:59 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:09 pm	8:03 pm	20:56 pm

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