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Bamidbar | Enduring The Dark Times Of Exile





MESILLOT Pathways to the Soul

Illuminating teachings and insights on the weekly parasha by Rabbi Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l

From the weekly lectures of his son, **Rabbi Israel Abargel shlita**

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Parashat Bamidbar - The Sunken Etrog



The Sunken Etrog

The holy Kabbalist, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli zt"l, may Hashem avenge his death,¹ told the following...²

In the month of Elul, I saw the *yetzer hara* walking down the street looking very sad and gloomy.

1. In the book Nitzotzei Shimshon (On the life of Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli, p. 13), the following is told...

On Tuesday, the 1st of Av, in the year 1648, the Ukrainian Cossack army arrived in Polonne, and besieged the city.

The city of Polonne was fortified with two walls, and water surrounded it. It was only possible to enter it from one side. The Polish leaders stationed their strongest slaves to guard the opening. But the slaves, who were Ukrainians, betrayed their masters and helped the enemies enter the city.

On Thursday, the 3rd of Av, the city was captured, and within a few moments, thousands of soldiers entered the city and began slaughtering the people. About ten thousand Jews were viciously murdered, may Hashem avenge their blood.

According to the testimony of Rabbi Neta Hannover, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli was in Polonne at that time. He most likely fled there with all the Jews who fled from their towns to the fortified cities. When the enemies besieged the city, he entered the synagogue with three hundred other Jews, all of them great sages dressed in shrouds and with a tallit on their heads. They engaged in intense prayer until the enemies entered the city, and they were all slaughtered in the synagogue, may Hashem avenge their blood.

HaRav Yoram Michael Abargel zt"l once said that Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli was the *gilgul* of Shimshon HaGibor, and he knew that. Thus, he gave all his books titles related to Shimshon HaGibor (Dan Yadin, Machane Dan, etc.).

And just as Shimshon HaGibor weakened the persecutions of the Philistines through his death, so too, Rabbi Shimshon of Ostropoli weakened the Cossack riots (*Tach VeTat*) through his death.

2. Maamar Mordechai – Sippurim (p. 500) by Rabbi Mordechai Chaim Slanim

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I turned to him and asked, "Why the long face?"

He replied, "Ugh, I hate the month of Elul! I struggle the entire year to cause Am Israel to sin, and then the month of Elul comes, the Jews do teshuva, and destroy all my efforts..."

I saw him again after the conclusion of Rosh Hashanah, but this time he had a huge smile on his face.

I said to him, "Just to remind you, we're in the midst of the Ten Days of Repentance, in which all of Am Israel do teshuva..."

He replied, "On Rosh Hashanah, I stood before the Throne of Glory and argued, 'It's not fair! I worked so hard all year long, and in the end, I received no compensation!' They agreed and paid me."

I asked him, "What did they pay you?"

He revealed, "As you know, etrogim don't grow throughout the surrounding regions. Thus, they're imported from another country. This year, they loaded all the

etrogim onto one ship, and as my reward, I received permission to make a hole in the ship... Yes! This year, the Jews of the surrounding countries won't fulfill the mitzvah of *Arbaat Haminim*!"

He finished relishing in his words and continued on his way while dancing...

During Sukkot, I encountered him for the third time. This time he looked mortified...

I approached him and asked, "You managed to sink the ship, so why are you depressed?"

He sighed, wiped away a tear, and said, "I brought about my own demise. When the ship was close to the shore, I approached it and made a large hole. The ship's passengers weren't harmed, they managed to reach the shore, but, to my delight, the etrogim suffered significant damage, almost all of them sank into the sea...

Out of utter joy, I raised my hands and thanked Hashem for helping me be a nuisance... But then it became clear to me that I

Parashat Bamidbar - The Farmer's Secret

had brought about my own demise!

One of the passengers managed to save a box of etrogim and bring them ashore...

Word spread like wildfire that there were only a few etrogim. Their price was absurd.

In every city, the Jews gathered and placed a barrel in the center of the synagogue and announced, "We need to buy an etrog. Everyone who can donate, please put money in the barrel..."

The Jews hurried and threw their silver and gold, their last pennies, into the barrel. Even the

women sold their jewelry to raise money to put in the barrel...

When the holiday arrived, because there was only one etrog in the whole city, the entire congregation passed one by one and stood on their feet from morning to evening, all in order to merit the opportunity to shake it for a quick second."

The *yetzer hara* ended bitterly, "Every time they shook it, they broke all my bones..."

Sometimes a person thinks that their situation is difficult, but they don't realize that this is precisely their secret to success...

The Farmer's Secret

Rabbi Elchanan Wasserman zt"l stood in his holy yeshiva and shared the following parable to those around him a few days before they were led to sanctify Hashem's name...³

There was once a man who understood nothing about agriculture. He met a farmer and

asked him to demonstrate his craft. The farmer happily agreed and invited him to go out to the field with him. Upon their arrival, the man saw vast green land, spectacular in its beauty. To his surprise, the farmer took a plow and plowed up the soil, uprooting the magnificent carpet of grass. "Are

Parashat Bamidbar - The Farmer's Secret

you out of your mind?" asked the man, "The field was so green and beautiful, and now you've turned it into a wasteland!"

The farmer reassured him. "Wait patiently, and you'll understand."

The next day, the farmer took a sack full of ripe wheat kernels, ready to eat, and began sowing them throughout the field. "What are you doing?" cried the man, "You're spoiling perfect grain for nothing!"

The farmer reassured him, "Wait patiently, and you'll understand."

He wasn't satisfied with sowing the seeds, rather he plowed the field a second time in order to deepen the seeds in the ground and cover them with soil. Thus, it was no longer possible to retrieve them!

However, within a few days, the seeds began to sprout. Tall stalks began to grow, loaded with grains. "Now I understand," thought the man. Patience paid off. But how great was his astonishment when the farmer took a reaping

hook and began to harvest the wheat, which had fallen in piles across the field! "Why did you toil so hard if you're just going to destroy everything with your reaping hook?" the man questioned.

The farmer answered, "Wait patiently, and you'll understand."

The farmer made many brought them to sheaves, threshing floor, and began stomping on the grain and throwing it into the wind to separate the chaff from the grain. He placed the grain into a millstone and ground it to a fine powder. He then sifted the powder and poured water onto it, turning it into mud. The man wondered, "What's your deal? When are you going to finish abusing the grain?"

But the grain's agony wasn't over! The farmer began kneading the mud until it became a lump. He then took the dough and beat the pulp out of it repeatedly. But he wasn't satisfied with that. He heated an oven to a very high temperature and threw the dough inside...

"Stop!" the man couldn't take it any longer, "When you

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crushed it, when you flung it, when you pulverized it, when you sieved it, when you turned into mud and pounded it with rage, I remained silent. But now, you're about to burn everything in the fire, to eradicate it completely! Have you lost your mind?!"

The farmer responded, "If you've already been patient until now, if you've waited thus far, why don't you wait a few more moments, and you'll understand everything?!"

Rabbi Elchanan concluded his words by saying, "The farmer is a parable for Hashem, and we, the

Jewish people, are like that ignorant man standing to the side. We look at what we went through throughout the thousands of years of exile. How many troubles and hardships? They plowed over us, trampled and stomped on us, crushed and pounded us into the dirt, ground us to dust... With all that, we restrained ourselves. We waited patiently and accepted the suffering with love. And now... now we're being thrown into the fire. This is a sign that we're at the end. This is a sign that our salvation is near and our righteousness is to be revealed..."4

But we learn another thing from his words...

4. In a lecture by Rabbi Yaakov Aryeh Neiman zt"l, he said the following (Darkei Musar – Parashat Haazinu)... One doesn't need much wisdom to believe that Hashem created the heavens and the earth, for common sense necessitates one to believe that.

The greatest level of *emuna* is to believe in Hashem when things are contrary to one's intellect and cause serious questions about His ways.

If a person has doubts, yet ignores them entirely and believes in Hashem with

the recognition that it's impossible for the creation to understand the Creator, that's the greatest level of *emuna*.

We were commanded about such *emuna* in the verse, "The Almighty's works are flawless, for all His ways are just. A faithful G-d and there is no injustice. He is righteous and upright" (Devarim 32:4).

True *emuna* is *emuna* that says "there is no injustice," even though, by the looks of things, one can be mistaken and think that injustice has been done.

Parashat Bamidbar - Meaning in The End

Meaning in The End

The farmer toiled and labored, plowed and sowed, harvested and threshed, all in order to reach

his goal of holding a loaf of bread in his hands (to eat it or sell it).

Not many years ago, we went through such a test when a third of our people were slaughtered by German cruelty; tzaddikim, rabbis, innocent men, women, and children, entire towns were displaced, families were severed, and no trace of them remained...

Yet, we are obliged to believe with complete faith that "there is no injustice" and that "*Kol Ma De'avid Rachmana LeTav Avid!*" (Everything Hashem does, He does for the good).

In the heart of one with true *emuna*, there is no shadow of a doubt that there is an account of justice above...

I once heard a parable from the Chazon Ish zt"l...

A man once saw a tailor taking a beautiful cloth and cutting it into pieces! The man approached and shouted at him, "Have you lost your mind? Why are you cutting such beautiful cloth into pieces?"

The tailor didn't answer his question. He only said to him, "Wait and see."

The man waited and saw how the tailor made a very beautiful garment from those pieces.

The Chazon Ish continued, "We just saw in the Holocaust how Hashem took scissors and

cut the fabric into pieces, but in the future, we'll merit seeing the wonderful garment that Hashem sewed from those pieces!"

A person must have humility and know that it's not within their power to understand Hashem's ways. They must know that they weren't given the capacity to know Hashem's ways, it's beyond their attainment.

The primary aspect of *emuna* is to believe in Hashem when things negate reason. Therefore, the *akeida* was the greatest of Avraham's tests because it negated reason and understanding, for Avraham Avinu was commanded to commit the act of idol worshippers, to sacrifice a person on the altar, something that he himself struggled all those years to eradicate from the world. Moreover, Hashem promised him that his offspring would continue through Itzchak, and now Hashem was telling him to slaughter him!

Yet, Avraham Avinu didn't ask questions. He believed in Hashem with simple, innocent faith, even though everything contradicted common sense...

That's the essence of *emuna*, to believe that everything Hashem does with us is only for our good...

Parashat Bamidbar - Meaning in The End

But we would like to ask a question. What would've happened if, after all that process, the dough had entered the oven, and then burned? What if instead of a hot, fresh loaf of bread, he took out a large chunk of charcoal?

Then that whole long process would've been meaningless!

But the farmer also knows that. Therefore, before he puts the dough into the oven, he carefully checks that everything is okay...

The baking process is what gives meaning to all the work done before it. Thus, the baker looks to that stage with hope...

We are privileged to live in the "baking" generation, in the intermediate generation between exile and redemption. Therefore, we possess great importance in heaven, and the eyes of all creation look to us in admiration!⁵

About that in our discussion...

5. Rebbe Nachman of Breslov zt"l writes...

All the troubles, suffering, and exile are only to the extent of one's lack of knowledge. When one's knowledge is complete, all that is lacking is complete, in the aspect of, "If you have acquired knowledge, what do you lack?" (Nedarim 41a), and it says, "Therefore My people have been exiled, for they lack knowledge" (Yeshayahu 5:13).

The primary aspect of this knowledge will be in the future, as it says, "For the earth shall be full of knowledge" (Yeshayahu 11:9), and because of this knowledge, nothing good will be lacking, and everything will be good.

[In the future, when the Mashiach arrives, we'll understand how all world events in general, and every individual occurrence in particular, were solely for our good!]

Not only Am Israel will know this, but even the nations of the world (that will remain then) will know that all their glory and sovereignty, honor and wealth, were given to them only for the benefit of the Jews.

Even though it's difficult to understand this as of now, for it's difficult to deny the reality we perceive: the long, arduous exile, the physical and mental suffering that are harsher than ever before, nevertheless, we must know that every turn of events in which Hashem conducts His world, whether on the large scale of the world or in our daily personal lives, Hashem only thinks about us,

His beloved children, and for our good.

"Then our mouths will be filled with laughter" (Tehillim 126:2)...

- Likutei Moharan I (Torah 21:11).

Parashat Bamidbar - Before Shavuot

Before Shavuot

The Shulchan Aruch rules,⁶ "Parashat Bamidbar must always be read before Shavuot."

In order to clarify his words, we'll need three introductions...

1. The Jewish calendar is based on the lunar year, which comprises 354 days and a few hours. Since the year is divided into 12 months, each month is 29 days and twelve hours (approximately).

But since there can't be a month that comprises half a day, we round the months. One month becomes 29 whole days, and the following month becomes 30 whole days.

Thus, we can lead our lives according to Judaism.

However, there's another system in Jewish life, the holidays, which is based specifically on the solar year (we won't get into detail now) and is 365 days long (11 days more than the lunar year).

To make the two systems work together, we add another month every few years, comprising the difference of days between the and lunar years. solar That year which includes the extra month (creating a 13-month year), called a leap year8 and comprises approximately 383 days.

2. There are 54 parashot in the Torah.⁹

- 6. Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 428:4).
- 7. That's why this period of time is called in Hebrew a "שָׁנָה" (year), for if we consider the extra few hours as one day, it turns out that there are 355 days in a year, which in gematria is "שנה" (year).
- **8.** In a cycle of 19 years, there are 12 regular years and 7 leap years... the 3rd, 6th, 8th, 11th, 14th, 17th, and 19th.

9. In several places in the Zohar, it is written that there are 53 parashot in the Torah.

This is a known question, for there are 54 parashot... We found a few answers.

Rabbi Moshe Zacuto, the Ramaz, writes that parashot Nitzavim and Vayelech are considered one parasha (see his reason in his commentary to the Zohar - Vayakhel 206b).

Parashat Bamidbar - Before Shavuot

3. Moshe Rabbeinu instituted that Am Israel should read the Torah publicly on Shabbat morning.¹⁰

But what should be read is a subject of debate. We find in the times of *chazal* a difference in customs between Eretz Israel and Bavel regarding the reading of the Torah.

In Eretz Israel, they would finish the entire Torah reading cycle once every three years¹¹ or three and a half years.¹² Whereas in Bavel, they would finish the entire Torah in one year.

Following the destruction of the settlement of Eretz Israel by the Crusaders, while most of the residents (the Jews of Jerusalem and

Chevron) were brutally murdered, and some (the Jews of Haifa) perished in the war against the Crusaders, the rest fled to neighboring countries. Thus, the tradition in Eretz Israel of reading the Torah once every three years ceased, and no trace of it remained, except for in the synagogue of the Jews who fled to Cairo and other places in Egypt.

Then, following its conquest by Saladin, Jerusalem was resettled, mainly by Jewish French immigrants who brought with them their country's customs, including the completion of the entire Torah once a year.

Since then, this custom has been accepted by the entire Jewish nation.

Rabbi Shmuel Abuhav writes that the Zohar enumerates the parashot read only on Shabbat. Therefore, parashat VeZot HaBeracha, which is read on Simchat Torah (which also falls on a weekday) and not specifically on Shabbat, isn't counted. Thus, there are only 53 parashot.

The Chida writes that parashot Terumah and Tetzaveh are considered one parasha in honor of Moshe Rabbeinu, whose name isn't mentioned in Parashat Tetzaveh.

Therefore, parashat Tetzaveh is considered one parasha with parashat Terumah.

- Shem HaGedolim (Maarechet Sefarim, Kuntres Acharon 3:6).
- **10.** Bava Kamma 82a; Mishne Torah (Hilchot Tefillah 12:1). See also what the Kesef Mishneh writes there.
- **11.** Megillah 29b.
- 12. Masechet Soferim 16:10.

Parashat Bamidbar - Moshe's Immense Humility

The Shulchan Aruch writes that the parashot must be divided in such a way that we always read parashat Bamidbar before Shavuot.

From this, we learn that parashat Bamidbar is the parasha that constitutes an introduction

to the Giving of the Torah. One of the reasons for this is that right from the beginning, we learn about the virtue of humility...

But before we speak about that, let's return to parashat Shemot...

Moshe's Immense Humility

Israel went through Am many, many years of suffering, tears, pain, and agony while in the Egyptian exile. Where the pen ceases to record, their sorrow and grief begin...

Then, as the years passed, the due date for Hashem's promise to Avraham Avinu began to approach, "But also that nation whom they shall serve I will judge, and afterward, they shall leave with great wealth" (Bereshit 15:14).

At Moshe that time. Rabbeinu, who was eighty years old, sojourned in the desert, tending to the herd of his father-in-law. Yitro. While the herd grazed, Moshe engaged in his incredible, classified avodat Hashem.

We incapable are comprehending even a fraction of his immense avodah, but it's enough for us to know that his starting point was higher than we'll ever be able to achieve in our entire lives! When he was born, divine light emanated from his body and filled the whole house with light!

If we can't grasp his starting point, how can we try and grasp his tremendous avodah when he was eighty years old?!

One day, 13 while Moshe was tending Yitro's herd, one of the goats ran away. Moshe ran after

Parashat Bamidbar - Forty-Four Days of Travel

it until it happened upon a pool of water and stopped to drink.

Moshe finally managed to catch up to it. He approached it and apologized, "I didn't know you ran away because you were thirsty. You must be exhausted! Come, I'll carry you on my shoulders."

As he was carrying the goat on his shoulders, he came to a mountain (later known as Mount Sinai), and there, he saw a bush burning with fire, but the fire didn't consume the bush.

Moshe was astounded by the sight. He wondered why the bush wasn't being consumed... He approached to get a closer look.

Hashem then appeared to Moshe from amidst the burning bush and said, "Moshe! The terrible suffering of the Jews in Egypt has come to an end. That's it!

This is the end of the beatings and the tortures, the end of the murders and cruelty. Am Israel will no longer suffer shame, degradation, or the burden of slavery... The time has come for redemption! Go as my messenger to Paraoh and take the Jews out of Egypt!"

Moshe listens attentively to Hashem's words... and refuses! Moshe Rabbeinu, the man with the most extraordinary *Ahavat Israel* in history, refuses to go and redeem Am Israel!

Thus, he asked for forgiveness... Master of the world! I'm neither worthy nor adequate, "Please, Hashem, send someone else" (Shemot 4:13).

Hashem tried to convince him for seven days (168 hours), but Moshe Rabbeinu refused. Until "Hashem became angry with Moshe" (Shemot 4:14), and he accepted the mission...

Forty-Four Days of Travel

Moshe carried out Hashem's mission with complete *mesirut nefesh*, and a year later, Paraoh surrendered, and Am Israel was redeemed from the Egyptian exile.

On the 15th of Nisan, Am Israel left Egypt and began to walk "through the great, awesome wilderness of snake, serpent, scorpion, and thirst where there is no water" (Devarim 8:15).

Parashat Bamidbar - Forty-Four Days of Travel

Each day they got closer to the desired goal, the Giving of the Torah! And after 44 days, on the 1st of Sivan, they finally reached the foot of Mount Sinai.

Our holy sages revealed to us that during those 44 days, Am Israel was in vexation and discord, and only when they stood at the foot of Mount Sinai did they merit unity.

Thus, it says, "They journeyed from Rephidim and came to the Sinai desert, and camped in the wilderness. Am Israel encamped there opposite the mountain. And Moshe went up to Elokim" (Shemot 19:2-3).

Rashi comments, "Am Israel encamped there" – As one man, with one heart, but all their other encampments were made in vexation and discord.

The Torah then continues and explains that the reason they were united was because they were "opposite the mountain."

Obviously, we need to understand what kind of reason that is... Moreover, we need to understand why the Torah attached these words to the verse, "And Moshe went up to Elokim..."

Rabbi Chaim Yosef David Azulai zt"l, the Chida writes (paraphrased)...¹⁴

Am Israel walked through the desert for 44 days, each tribe independently. During their journey, they hardly interacted with each other. But the moment they set up camp in the desert, the tribes intermingled, which caused them to criticize each other. ¹⁵

Then, on the 1st of Sivan, Bnei Israel stood at the foot of Mount Sinai, and there, they learned that on that mountain, they would receive the Torah from Moshe Rabbeinu.

Bnei Israel stood and observed the time (the month of Sivan), the place ("opposite the mountain"), and the person (Moshe Rabbeinu), and

^{14.} Nachal Kedumim (Yitro 2:14).

^{15.} This is why Rashi said, "All their other encampments were made in vexation and discord."

Parashat Bamidbar - Three Channels

then, at once, the lofty, sublime light of Jewish unity entered their hearts! Thus, after the light was absorbed, they merited being as one man, with one heart! **We'll** explain further...

Three Channels

Am Israel learned humility from the time, place, and person.

The time was the month of Sivan, as it says at the beginning of the chapter, "In the third month (the month of Sivan) of Bnei Israel's exodus from the land of Egypt, on that very day they entered the Sinai desert" (Shemot 19:1).

And the Chida writes¹⁶ that the month of Sivan teaches humility, for the word "סִינְוְן" (Sivan) has the same gematria as the word "עָנָו" (humble).¹⁷

Furthermore, the month of Sivan has the *mazal* (zodiac sign) of twins, which teaches unity, like twins that developed in the same womb, as well as humility, for one should not feel superior to

another, but rather the same as them.

The place was "opposite the mountain." Bnei Israel stood and observed Mount Sinai, the unimpressive, small mountain devoid of fragrant plants, surrounded by sand, sand, and more sand...

They understood that Hashem didn't desire tall, haughty mountains like Mount Carmel and Tavor, but rather a simple, low, humble mountain.

The person was Moshe Rabbeinu. The only person who merited humility to its perfection, as the Torah testifies, "The man, Moshe, was extremely humble, more than any other person on the face of the earth" (Bamidbar 12:3).¹⁸

16. Ahavat David (Derush 16).

17. The Chida writes that Hashem's name א-ד-נ-י when written out (like this: א-ד-נ-י) has the same gematria

as the word "עָנָו" for a humble person is a chariot for the Shechina.

18. When a disciple of the Ruzhiner Rebbe, Rebbe Yisrael Friedman zt"l, once

Parashat Bamidbar - It's Good to Be Simple

Now we'll explain why precisely after they were humbled,

it says, "And Moshe went up to Elokim" (Shemot 19:3)...

It's Good to Be Simple

Hashem said to Moshe Rabbeinu, "Moshe! Come up to Mount Sinai." Moshe heard Hashem's command and immediately went up!

But it doesn't seem to make sense...

The first time Hashem wanted to send Moshe to redeem Am Israel, He had to convince him for 168 hours, which still

didn't help. Moshe thought he wasn't worthy, until Hashem became angry with him, and only then did he accept the mission.

Now, at Mount Sinai, Hashem said to him only once, "Come up to Me to the mountain" (Shemot 24:12)¹⁹ and Moshe immediately ascends?

Why didn't Moshe refuse then as well?

traveled through Premishlan, he took the chance to meet Rebbe Meir of Premishlan. Rebbe Meir welcomed the visitor with honor and respect after learning that he was a chassid of the revered Rebbe of Ruzhin.

After their meeting, Rebbe Meir said to the disciple before parting ways, "Tell your Rebbe that I have concrete evidence that I am superior to him. I've come to realize that my blessings are much more powerful than his."

His words, especially coming from Rebbe Meir, whose humility was legendary, quite surprised the chassid. Rebbe Meir noticed his perplexity and grinned while as clarified, "During our last encounter, your Rebbe blessed me that I should merit progressing in *avodat*

Hashem, and I returned the blessing. My blessing has been most effective, the holy Rebbe Israel progresses daily in saintliness and piety, while his blessing has produced scant results..."

19. It says in the verse, "Hashem said to Moshe: Come up to Me to the mountain and be there" (Shemot 24:12). Why does the verse need to add the words "and be there" for as soon as he goes up to the mountain, he will surely be there?

From this, we learn that it's possible to ascend and climb, to reach lofty heights and stand before Hashem, and yet, not be there! To stand at the top of the mountain and yet one's head is in a completely different place...

Parashat Bamidbar - It Pays Off To Be Humble

The Torah thus attached the verse, "And Moshe went up to Elokim..." (Shemot 19:3) to the previous verses to reveal to us why Moshe didn't refuse this time.

The first time, Moshe Rabbeinu thought that only prominent individuals with a sense of importance could be able to

redeem others. With his immense humility, Moshe didn't feel that way, and therefore refused.

But now, after it became clear to him that Hashem was looking for simplicity, innocence, and humility, he said to himself, "If so, I am worthy, because I'm a simple person!"²⁰

All this we learn in our parasha...

It Pays Off To Be Humble

The Book of Vayikra concludes with the verse, "Hashem commanded these mitzvot to Moshe for Bnei Israel on Mount Sinai" (Vayikra 27:34), and the Book of Bamidbar begins with the verse, "Hashem spoke to Moshe in the Sinai desert, in the Tent of Meeting" (Bamidbar 1:1)...

Rabbi Issachar Dov Rubin zt"l writes (paraphrased)...²¹

These verses were attached to teach us that Hashem only

chose to give Am Israel His Torah because of their humility.

That is, why is it that "Hashem commanded these mitzvot to Moshe for Bnei Israel" because "Hashem spoke to Moshe" – who was humble, "in the Sinai desert" – on the humble, lowly Mount Sinai, which caused Am Israel also to become humble and lowly, and in this merit, they received the Torah.

And those who are humble and lowly are always at peace

The Torah comes to teach us that the main thing isn't the ascension, rather it's the fact of actually being there, only there, and not being above and below at the same time...

- Imrot Chochma (Shemot, p. 260).
- **20.** See Nachal Kedumim (Yitro 2:14) and MeOtzarenu HaYashan (Vol. 3, p. 54).
- **21.** Talelei Orot Shnayim Mikra (Bamidbar, p. 3).

Parashat Bamidbar - The Last Generation

with each other. This is hinted at in the words, "אֶל מֹשֶׁה" (to Moshe)
– gematria "שָׁלוֹם" (peace), and
"בְּמִרְבַּר סִינַיי" (in the Sinai desert) –
gematria "בְּשָׁלוֹם" (in peace).

For the day they left Egypt, Am Israel was in vexation and discord until they saw the humility of Moshe and came to the Sinai desert and saw the lowliness of Mount Sinai. Then they themselves became humble and lowly, made peace among themselves, and became as one man with one heart, and in this merit, they received the Torah.

However, the nations of the world, who aren't humble, didn't merit receiving the Torah, as it says, "He expressed His commands to Yaakov; His statutes and judgments to Israel. He didn't do so with any other nation, and as for His ordinances, they don't know them" (Tehillim 147:19-20). "יַדְעוּם" (know them)²² – gematria "עַנֵּוֹה" (humility).

But although all of Am Israel merited humility, Moshe Rabbeinu merited greater humility than everyone. Why?

The Last Generation

In one of Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn's maamarim, he gave a wonderful explanation for why Moshe merited humility to perfection. First, we'll quote his words, and then explain them, with Hashem's help.

These are his holy words...²³

"The man, Moshe, was extremely humble, more than any other person on the face of the

earth" (Bamidbar 12:3)... Moshe Rabbeinu looked into the Book of Adam HaRishon. He saw every generation and its sages and leaders. He also saw that the people of the generation before the coming of Mashiach wouldn't possess any attainment of *Elokut* (G-dliness). That is, their attainment won't be considered attainment at all, especially in comparison to the attainment of Moshe Rabbeinu.

^{22.} Including the *kolel*, meaning, plus another 1 for the actual word.

^{23.} Sefer HaMaamarim (5710, p. 237).

Parashat Bamidbar - The Soul of Life

Moreover, their *avodah* in their minds and hearts won't be considered *avodah* at all, rather, they will focus on physically observing the Torah and its mitzvot [with simplicity], and this will also be with complete *mesirut nefesh*, both because of their own struggles and because of their surroundings. Nevertheless, they will withstand the test!

He then witnessed the power of the immense satisfaction and joy that the innocent avodah [of these simple people] would bring about in the heavens above. It was the witnessing of this that exceedingly humbled Moshe Rabbeinu.

In order to explain his words, we'll need a few introductions...

The Soul of Life

On the sixth day of creation, Hashem created man's body from the ground, as it says, "Hashem Elokim then formed man, dust from the ground" (Bereshit 2:7), and after He finished creating his body, He inserted a soul into him, as it says, "He blew into his nostrils a soul of life" (Bereshit 2:7).

The verse doesn't explain what this "soul of life" that Hashem inserted into Adam HaRishon is. However, the Arizal revealed to us²⁴ that this soul was a general soul that included all the

souls of Am Israel that were to be born throughout all generations!

The Alter Rebbe adds²⁵ that this general soul is in the form of the human body. Just as the human body is composed of the head, body (from the neck to the hips), and legs, so is the form of this general soul.

And in each generation, a group of souls is sent into the world from this general soul.

Let's move on to the second introduction...

🗝 Wellsprings of Wisdom 🗫--

^{24.} Shaar HaGilgulim (Introduction 11).

^{25.} Tanya (Likutei Amarim, Ch. 2).

Parashat Bamidbar - Feel Hashem in Everything

Feel Hashem in Everything

As mentioned, the general soul is in the form of the human body – head, body, and legs. The souls that derive from the head or body are considered lofty souls, while the souls that derive from the legs are considered lower souls.

The general difference between lofty souls and lower souls is essentially their ability to feel *Elokut*.²⁶

That is, the virtue of the lofty souls isn't (only) that they're gifted with greater abilities than other human beings, such as the

difference between people in general, some being greater minds than others.

Likewise, their virtue isn't (only) in their exalted, refined *middot*, like the difference we find in people in general, some who are naturally good-tempered and gentle, and others who were born with bad *middot* and need to put up a strong battle to refine their *middot*.

Rather, their virtue is their lofty level itself. Their source is higher, making it easier for them to

26. The meaning of this is difficult to describe in words, for after all, it's a feeling, not philosophy. But if we try to describe it, the meaning of "feeling *Elokut*" is the genuine feeling of true love and awe for Hashem. Such an intense, lucid feeling that inevitably changes the way the person thinks and acts, for the truth becomes so tangible and clear. Feeling Hashem at all times and in everything. Feeling Hashem so intensely to the point of "seeing" Him, so to speak. Funny as it may sound, Hashem becomes real... All this is feeling, not knowledge...

To understand this a little better, when one is angry, truly angry, and feels anger

throughout their whole body, that tangible, powerful, real feeling, not knowledge or intellect, rather feeling, is what we mean when one "feels Elokut," i.e., genuinely feels true love and awe for Hashem, senses Hashem in their bones, only that that is a sin and this is a mitzvah, that is a feeling of instability and distress and this is a feeling of security, calmness, joy, and sometimes breathtaking, depending on which channel one is primarily connected to at the time. The feeling is obviously very different, but real... Those lofty souls feel that way continuously, yet outwardly, we perceive them as being regular people...

Parashat Bamidbar - Expulsion from The Inner World

feel *Elokut* (and thus to attain higher levels of G-dliness)...²⁷

Lofty souls tangibly feel *Elokut*, while for the lower souls, the feeling of *Elokut* is obscured

(but with much effort, one can reveal the concealed *Elokut* on their personal level)...²⁸

Let's move on to the last introduction...

Expulsion from The Inner World

Rabbi Elazar HaKappar says,²⁹ "Jealousy, lust, and [a desire for] honor remove a person from the world."

From the words of Rabbi Elazar HaKappar, we learn that

every Jew lives in a pure world, full of delight.

For a person doesn't live in the visible, outside world, rather a person dwells entirely within their own, inner world.

27. Chassidut Mevoeret – Tanya (Vol. 1, p. 93).

28. However, in times of pressure, *Elokut* manifests in a huge revelation even for people with lower souls, even without any preparation or effort on their part. Rather, it emerges spontaneously from the depths of their souls!

On this matter, the Previous Rebbe, Rebbe Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, told...

During the war, as the bombing of Warsaw intensified, I found cover in a particular building where a few hundred people took shelter. Among them were Jews who saw themselves

as having absolutely no connection to Judaism.

Suddenly, we heard an enormous, terrifying explosion, and a river of fire surged in. Everyone was sure that those were the last seconds of their life. At that moment, everyone cried out in unison with all their strength, "Shema Israel, Hashem Elokenu, Hashem Echad!"

The Previous Rebbe finished by saying, "A "Shema Israel" like that, from the mouths of people with such different world views, I have never heard, and I pray to Hashem that it be preserved in my memory forever!"

- Torat Menachem (Vol. 9, p. 44).

Parashat Bamidbar - The Early Generations

How a person experiences the world, environment, and people around them depends entirely on their perception...

When a Jew merits refining their *middot* and purifying themselves, their inner world is a bright, distinct world.

Rabbi Elazar HaKappar comes and teaches us that there are three things that "throw" a person out of their bright, pure inner world, into a new, dark world...

Jealousy, lust, and honor...

After these introductions, we can now move on...

The Early Generations

As we explained earlier, the general soul that was in Adam HaRishon has a head, body, and legs.

The souls of the Avot (forefathers), Avraham, Itzchak, and Yaakov, were souls that originated in the head of the general soul. Therefore, they were extremely holy, detached from all the matters of this world, reached sublime spiritual levels, and ultimately merited becoming the *Merkava* (chariot) for the Shechina!³⁰

But then their descendants were enslaved in Egypt, and there, their strength deteriorated...

However, when they stood at Mount Sinai, they were purified, all the filth that had clung to them throughout history was removed, and the Shechina rested upon them without any barriers.

Even after the Giving of the Torah, their ascension didn't cease, for Moshe Rabbeinu was their rabbi, and through him, they merited attain unknown levels...

As the verse says, "There was a king in Yeshurun" (Devarim 33:5) – Moshe, and during the reign of Moshe, he brought the entire nation of Israel to the level of "head," "When the heads of the

^{29.} Pirkei Avot 4:21.

^{30.} Likutei Sichot (Vol. 30, p. 254).

Parashat Bamidbar - The Last Generation

people assembled, the tribes of Israel together" (ibid.) — That entire generation was at an incredibly supreme level, as the supremacy of the head over the body.

From that time on, groups of souls continued to descend from the head, and therefore we call each group of souls a "generation." For the word "דּוֹר" (generation) comes from the word "מְּתְרַרְרֵּר" (descend), that is, since the generation of Moshe onwards, the souls continue to descend, moving further away from the head.

After some period, all the souls from the head of the general soul finished descending to this world. Thus, souls of the body, which were the aspect of the heart, and in whom intense feelings of yearning and

longing for Hashem were also revealed, began their descension.

Throughout all those generations (both from the head and the heart), all the Jews were on inconceivable levels. Their hearts absorbed all that was holy, and all feelings of *kedusha* — love and awe, *emuna* and *bitachon*, innocence and humility—intensely illuminated within their hearts with an enormous light!

Their inner world was a world of divine pleasure!

Thus, when faced with the test – convert or die – they didn't hesitate even for a moment and gave up their lives for the sanctification of His name.

But ultimately, this period also ended, and a new period began...

The Last Generation

The third period is when the groups of souls that were in the legs of Adam HaRishon descended.

The legs are divided into several (general) parts — hips, calves, and heels. Thus, the loftier souls originated from the hips, etc.

Parashat Bamidbar - The Last Generation

Rabbi Israel Eliyahu Weintraub zt"l writes...³²

The third period began in the generation of the Arizal.³³

But although they were part of the third period, their inner world was still bright and full of *Elokut*.

But the souls continued to descend, and the *kelipot* increased...

In the year 1770 (approximately), Jews who threw off the yoke of heaven began to roam Europe and desecrate all that was holy. They began degrading observant Jews in general and Torah scholars in particular...

But in truth, they didn't have much to offer. For what pleasures were there in those days? And even the pleasures they had, weren't so available... For most Jews, and for those who learned Torah in particular, their inner world continued to be illuminated by the holy light of the Torah, and *Elokut* continued to permeate them.

About a hundred years later (approximately 1870), Rabbi Yerucham Levovitz zt"l stood up on the platform at the Mir Yeshiva and said, 34 "Our generation is dark. There's no visible light, and the *Maskilim* only look to severely

32. Nefesh Eliyahu (Maamar B'Pitchei She'arim, p. 71)

33. Once, I asked my teacher z"l (Rabbi Chaim Vital asked the Arizal), "Why do you always tell me that my soul is so lofty? The simplest man of the earlier generations was a great tzaddik. I don't even reach his heels!"

He answered, "Know, that the greatness of one's soul isn't dependent on one's deeds, but rather only on the spiritual level of the generation. For one small mitzvah in this generation (450 years ago!)

is equal to many great mitzvot in earlier generations! For the *kelipot* have greatly increased in these past generations, which is not the case in earlier generations."

He told me that if I lived in those generations, my deeds and wisdom would be superior to many of those great tzaddikim... Thus, I shouldn't be dejected at all, for without a doubt, my soul is superior to several tzaddikim from the periods of the Tannaim and Amoraim.

- Shaar HaGilgulim (Introduction 38).
- **34.** Daat Torah (Bamidbar, p. 146).

Parashat Bamidbar - The Last Generation

degrade Torah scholars. But despite this, the Bnei Torah are standing their ground."

Rabbi Yerucham went on to talk about the extent of the *mesirut nefesh* of the yeshiva students...

He then concluded by saying, "Today, in our dark generation, despite our minute greatness, we are complete tzaddikim! Today (more than a century ago!), yeshiva students are greater than the greatest of the previous generations!

Therefore, precisely from our generation, can the Mashiach come!

The Mashiach didn't come in the previous generations, from the choicest of the greatest of generations, rather he will come specifically from our generation, from a generation of obscured darkness. For the Gedol HaDor of the darkest of generations, is worthy of being the Mashiach!"

We'll move on to today...35

35. The difference between the previous generations and our generation is enormous!

Thus, testified Rabbi Shalom Meir Volach shlita who said, "I heard from the Rebbe of Shomrei Emunim, who said the following..."

My father, the tzaddik, the Shomer Emunim zt"l, established a group of holy men who served Hashem in Hungary and ascended to the Holy Land, where he united his group through the *avodah* of prayer. The Second World War broke out, and every night he was informed in a dream of what was happening in the anguished diaspora: the persecutions and atrocities, the ghettos and death camps.

Every morning he would get up and tell us who had perished, may Hashem avenge their blood.

He once told me (to his son, the Rebbe of Shomer Emunim), "This holocaust was decreed many generations ago, but Hashem didn't bring it before consulting with the tzaddikim. The tzaddikim's mercy overflowed over their generation, saying, "Master of the world, not this generation!" He heeded their voice and delayed the decree. He brought it before the tzaddikim of the next generation, and they delayed it like their predecessors. Thus, it was delayed from generation to generation until it reached the tzaddikim of our generation.

When they were shown the decree, they wanted to request that it be delayed to

Parashat Bamidbar - Beyond Imagination

Beyond Imagination

The year... 2021.

Yossi... A talented yeshiva *bachur* with great aspirations and fervor, is sent home.

"Covid" is in full swing, and public gatherings are prohibited.

Yossi arrives home, puts his things away, and goes to the Beit Midrash. He arrives, but the Beit Midrash is locked.

A small ember burns inside him, "I want to learn." But the wind blowing outside wasn't ready to give up, "We're going to put out the ember! We'll throw him out of his inner world!"

Lusts run rampant... Sleep, food, looking at everything tempting to the eyes...

Yossi wanders the streets more than usual and encounters a

hostile atmosphere directed at him, "The charedim are the ones who spread Covid!" His dignity is trampled...

He feels numb. The weight is beginning to take its toll. Getting up in the morning becomes difficult. Opening a Gemara seems beyond his abilities...

Then, one day, he awakens. He rebukes himself, "What's going on with me? I'm a Jew!"

He accepts upon himself the yoke of heaven and encourages himself to serve Hashem with enthusiasm. He prays and learns, but doesn't taste any joy (and not because he has Covid). Yet he continues!

He learns, but doesn't understand anything. Yet he still continues!

The "wind" realizes that he has "escaped" from them. They attack

the next generation. But they saw that the next generation wouldn't be able to withstand it. Thus, they had nothing to claim..." **Whoever** understands our generation, its weakness, its feebleness, its fragility, understands...

- Maayan HaEmuna (Vol. 4, p. 12).

Parashat Bamidbar - In Their Merit

him with enchanting temptations. Everything is quick and available. Everything is so close and enticing...

But Yossi, although his inner world is drawn after the temptations of this world, nevertheless accepts

upon himself the yoke of heaven with love and awe...

True, Yossi is a fictional character, but thousands of years ago, Moshe Rabbeinu already foresaw such people...

In Their Merit

Now we'll return to the words of Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn...³⁶

"The man, Moshe, was extremely humble, more than any other person on the face of the earth" (Bamidbar 12:3) — Moshe Rabbeinu looked into the Book of Adam HaRishon. He saw that the people of the generation before the coming of Mashiach wouldn't possess any attainment of *Elokut*. That is, their attainment won't be considered attainment at all, especially in comparison to the attainment of Moshe Rabbeinu.

Moreover, they won't possess true *avodah* in their minds and hearts, rather, they will focus on physically observing

the Torah and its mitzvot with simplicity.

Their *avodah* will also be performed with complete *mesirut nefesh*, both because of their own personal struggles, whether physical or spiritual, and in complete Divine concealment. Nevertheless, they will stand up against all obstacles and tests, and fulfill the mitzvot with *mesirut nefesh*!

In their *avodah*, in their complete *bitul* and fulfilling of mitzvot without any feeling, from an inner point of the simple acceptance of the yoke of heaven, there, he saw the most profound connection to the *Ein Sof*, and this brought him to complete humility, "They are far greater than me!"

Parashat Bamidbar - Shabbat Shalom!

In their merit, in the he attained humility to its merit of the last generation, perfection!

Shabbat Shalom!



Parashat Bamidbar - The Pathway...

The Pathway...

- 1. One doesn't need much wisdom to believe that Hashem created the heavens and the earth, for common sense necessitates one to believe that. The greatest level of *emuna* is to believe in Hashem when things are contrary to one's intellect and cause serious questions about His ways.
- 2. If a person has doubts, yet ignores them entirely and believes in Hashem with the recognition that it's impossible for the creation to understand the Creator, that's the greatest level of emuna. We were commanded about such *emuna* in the verse. Almighty's works are flawless, for all His ways are just. A faithful G-d and there is no injustice. He is righteous and upright" (Devarim 32:4). True emuna is emuna that says "there is no injustice," even though, by the looks of things, one can be mistaken and think that injustice has been done. In the heart of one with true emuna, there is no shadow of a doubt that there is an account of justice above...
- **3.** A person must have humility and know that it's not within their power to understand Hashem's ways. They must know that they weren't given the capacity to know Hashem's ways, it's beyond their attainment.

- **4.** The primary aspect of *emuna* is to believe in Hashem when things negate reason. Therefore, the akeida was the greatest of Avraham's tests because it negated reason and understanding, for Avraham Avinu was commanded to commit the act of idol worshippers, to sacrifice a person on the altar, something that he himself struggled all those years to eradicate from the world. Moreover, Hashem promised him that his offspring would continue through Itzchak, and now Hashem was telling him to slaughter him! Yet, Avraham Avinu didn't ask questions. believed in Hashem with simple, innocent faith, even though everything contradicted common sense... That's the essence of *emuna*, to believe that everything Hashem does with us is only for our good...
- **5.** The general soul is in the form of the human body head, body, and legs. The souls that derive from the head or body are considered lofty souls, while the souls that derive from the legs are considered lower souls. The general difference between lofty souls and lower souls is essentially their ability to feel *Elokut*.
- **6.** The meaning of "feeling *Elokut*" is the genuine feeling of true love and

The Pathway...

awe for Hashem. Such an intense, lucid feeling that inevitably changes the way the person thinks and acts, for the truth becomes so tangible and clear. Feeling Hashem at all times and in everything. Feeling Hashem so intensely to the point of "seeing" Him, so to speak. Funny as it may sound, Hashem becomes real... All this is feeling, not knowledge...

7. To understand this a little better, when one is angry, truly angry, and feels anger throughout their whole body, that tangible, powerful, real feeling, not

knowledge or intellect, rather feeling, is what we mean when one "feels *Elokut*," i.e., genuinely feels true love and awe for Hashem, senses Hashem in their bones, only that that is a sin and this is a mitzvah, that is a feeling of instability and distress and this is a feeling of calmness, joy, security, and sometimes breathtaking, depending on channel one primarily which is connected to at the time. The feeling is obviously very different, but real... Those lofty souls feel that continuously, outwardly, vet perceive them as being regular people...







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	Candle	Shabbat	Rabbeinu
City	Lighting	Ends	Tam
New York	7:51 pm	8:59 pm	9:23 pm
Miami	7:43 pm	8:40 pm	9:14 pm
Los Angeles	7:32 pm	8:34 pm	9:04 pm
Montreal	8:04 pm	9:18 pm	9:36 pm
Toronto	8:22 pm	9:33 pm	9:54 pm
London	8:36 pm	9:59 pm	10:05 pm
Jerusalem	7:16 pm	8:07 pm	9:01 pm
Tel Aviv	7:13 pm	8:04 pm	8:58 pm
Haifa	7:14 pm	8:05 pm	8:59 pm
Be'er Sheva	7:12 pm	8:02 pm	8:55 pm

Pathways to the Heart

From the Words of HaRav Yoram Abargel zt"l

Already at the age of three, educate your sons to wear a kippah and not to take it off by any means.

Even if it falls off, immediately call your son and tell him, "Come tzaddik, put on a kippah, You're a big boy now."

You should also make sure your sons sleep with a kippah. I've seen many holy children, and after a lot of investigation, I concluded that it's because their parents made sure that they slept with a kippah on their heads...



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