



Volume II Issue #5

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On the Parsha

“And the countings amounted to 603,550. But the Leviim were not counted among them. (BaMidbar 1:46-47)”

The count of the Leviim amounted to 22,300. We have seen throughout the Chumash, the remarkable benefit of Achdus – unity. When describing the encampment the singular conjugation is employed. Chazal tell us that the reason is *K’ish echad b’lev echad* – like one person with one heart. Indeed, even the shma itself is conjugated in the singular form of the word, “Hear” to bring home the complete unity of the nation of Israel. If this is the case, we have a blaring question here: Why were the Leviim not counted among the rest of Klal Yisroel?

Yoseph Ben Yitzchok, author of the Bechor Shor (a 12th century student of Rabbeinu Tam) provides an enlightening answer. The basis of each of the two countings was different. The census of the Bnei Yisroel was from the year twenty and up. But the census of the Leviim was from one month and up.

The Bechor Shor, in essence, is telling us that the reader would, thus, not get an accurate view of the real numbers. We are not comparing apples to apples, so to speak. The pasuk is warning us to stay away from this type of misinformation.

We can ask another question as well. The information of the different counting protocols is readily available in the parsha. Anyone can easily obtain the information. Why then should we be concerned with the Bechor Shor’s point?

We see from here an extraordinary chiddush, insight, regarding everyday emes. When information is provided together with subtle differences, people can get an incorrect and or distorted view of the real situation. This is especially true when the different protocols of the information are relegated to a

footnote, endnote or even an appendix. Sometimes, it can make for an entirely different conclusion.

According to the Bechor Shor – the Torah is teaching us this important life-lesson. We should value truth in all that we do, even in the relaying of numbers. We see from here that it can even be more important than imparting the value of unity itself.

Chizuk - Inspiration

Paul Reichmann was a businessman born in Vienna in 1930 to Samuel and Rene Reichmann. The family escaped the Nazi occupation of Austria in the merit of the fulfillment of *Kibud Av v’Aim*. They had left the country on the day of the Anschluss to visit Paul’s grandfather in Hungary who had suffered a stroke.

The Reichmanns had to make their way from Hungary to Paris. But how were they to be able to get their money out of Nazi-occupied Europe? They wrote checks of \$100,000 each to some ten observant Jewish businessmen who happened to have been perfect strangers. These strangers did not know who the Reichmanns were.

Out of the ten businessmen, who received the checks, however, only ten of them returned the money. No there is no mistake here. Ten out of ten were completely honest and truthful. [The “however”, and the “only” might have thrown off some of the readers here, but it was designed to enhance the “inspirational nature of the story].

Later, the Reichmanns fled to the neutral city of Tangier. After the war, Paul Reichman attended the Yeshivos in Gateshead, Ponovezh, and Mir in Israel. Paul and his brothers eventually founded “Olympia and York Developments” which was not only the largest developer in the world, but it had a reputation of absolute honesty in business – down to the penny.

OVER

Halacha – Jewish Law

“GLASS INSIDE: HANDLE WITH CARE” – is a very popular sticker that people put on packages – whether it contains glass or not. The question is whether it is permitted to purposefully place such a sticker on your package. It seems that the issue may be the subject of some halachic debate. The issue may be particularly pertinent when it comes to shipping Matzos, as one wants to make sure that the customer receives them in the best possible condition.

Rav Elyashiv zt”l’s response indicated that one may not write GLASS INSIDE, but one may write GLASS as the person is not specifically lying, but rather is misleading for the laudable purpose of being concerned for the financial well-being of others.

The Toldos Aharon Rebbe ruled that it is permitted because there is a universal intent that it means, “Please handle it as if it is like glass,” and not that it is actual glass.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l ruled that it is permitted and based his ruling on the Talmud in Yevamos 115b where we can assume that something found in a box with the word “Trumah” on it is not actually Trumah, because someone probably wrote it to keep people away from it.

Dayan Fisher zt”l disagreed with Rav Chaim Kanievsky because in the case of the Talmud, the person is merely placing it in a pre-existing box that had the word, “Trumah” on it. There is no proof, however, that one may actually write something false on the outer box.

So how should people conduct themselves?

One should always speak to one’s own Posaik who is attuned to the nuances of that area of Halacha. [Or call the Emes Halacha Hotline at 718-200-5462.]

[Titein Emes L’Yakov 5:13].

Mussar – Introspection

Please see below for a translation of Rav Chaim Kanievsky zt”l’s selection on Emes from his Mussar Sefer Orchos Yosher (courtesy of Orchotyosher.org)

[In last week’s column, a Midrash states that Shimon Ben Shetach was praised by a regretful thief for making him swear not to lie. After the thief had actually stolen everything from his neighbor, he put everything back in order not to violate his oath not to lie. Rav Kanievsky zt”l then proceeds to cite the Chida who quotes a pasuk, “The remnant of Israel shall do no evil, and they will speak no deceit.” [Since they do not engage in evil, they will not have to resort to deception. The thief discussed in the Midrash is thus to be understood as a complete anomaly].

The Gemorah in Sanhedrin 97a discusses the town of Kushta - where its residents devoted themselves to utter only truth. They never died before their time. The Sefer Chassidim (new edition Siman 1195) explains that one who speaks only truth, and wishes not to even think falsehood, and is desirous not to even think of speaking falsehood even an unintentional one – his thoughts and words – become true, as it says (Iyov 22:28), *‘vatigzar omer vayakam lach - You will also declare a thing, And it will be established for you; So light will shine on your ways.* It explains that one who is careful not to lie – his blessings become reality. Just as he is careful not to lie, in Heaven they are careful as well that everything he says will be true and will be fulfilled.

From Our Readers

Regarding the story of the Machon Sara TAG student who told her lab professor that her lab coat was borrowed – and promptly received a zero, perhaps she should have asked from whom she had borrowed the lab coat to get it as a *matana al means l’hachzir* – a conditional gift – if she gives it back. If it works for lulav v’Esrog it can work here. - **A Lakewood Reader**

POSSIBLE ANSWER: The Sma (CM 249:4) holds that the rationale behind, *“soneh matanos yichyeh* – one who hates gifts shall live” is because one who takes gifts must always kowtow to others. Perhaps she held that this applies to a conditional gift as well.