

Shiur L'Yom Sh'lishi¹

[Tuesday's Study]

READINGS: ***Torah Pinchas:*** **Numbers 26:2-56**
 Haftarah: **I Kings 19:3-8**
 B'rit Chadasha: **John 2:17**

Lift up the head of the full witness throng of B'nei Yisrael.
[Numbers 26:2]

Today's Meditation is Psalm 69:1-9;

This Week's Amidah Prayer Focus is Petition #13, *Modim Anachnu* [An Expression of Thanks]

Se'u et-rosh kol-adat B'nei-Yisra'el – Lift up the head of the entire witness throng of B'nei Yisrael ***miben esrim shanah v'malah*** – from 20 years of age forward ... ***l'veyt avotam*** - according to their father's house ... ***kol yotzei tzava b'Yisrael*** – all who will go out with the host/army of Israel. **Numbers 26:2a.**

We recently emerged from a long season of testing in the desert to model the ‘more excellent way’ of life the Creator had taught us. We were ready to offer the Creator’s inspiring message of *shalom on earth* and *goodwill toward men* to anyone who would listen. To our chagrin, however, we quickly discovered that by and large the nations wanted no part of any of us, our God, or anything having to do with either. They loved the darkness, so they waged war against the Light. They loved deception, so they pulled out every occult trick in the serpent’s playbook to obfuscate the Truth. They gnashed their teeth at us. They raised their fists. They pulled their swords. They shouted us down. They surrounded us with hostile intent like bulls of Bashan. One after another they gaped upon us with their mouths like a raging and roaring lion. We came in peace, calling humankind as a species on a journey of return whose destination was Eden – but we ran headlong into a crossfire hurricane, fed by men whose endgame was Holocaust. The elites of the nations want nothing to do with us or our message. They thrive on conflict, so they want nothing to do with peace. They profit from sowing fear, distrust, offense, and division among people. They have no use whatever for messengers of goodwill. They control their minions by initiating them from the womb into a humanistic/animalistic ‘nature-worshipping’ cult. They want them to go on forever regurgitating their profane ‘newspeak’, believing their false narratives, embracing their paranoid delusions, indulging their perversions, and stirring up the fear, envy, jealousy, offense, outrage that their talking heads promote. The elites of the nations depend on the masses responding on cue, like a kennel of pre-programmed Pavlovian dogs, to the post-hypnotic effect of the fearmongering, hatemongering,

¹ All rights with respect to this publication are reserved to the author, William G. Bullock, Sr., also known as ‘*the Rabbi's son*’. Reproduction of material from any *Rabbi's son* lesson without permission from the author is prohibited. Copyright © 2025, William G. Bullock, Sr.

class-envy inciting, ethnic-cleansing/culture canceling sentiment sowing, racial-, sexual-, and generational-offense triggering, lust provoking, greed stimulating, and pseudo-science balderdash-peddling spiels that their focus-groups devise in smoke-filled back rooms to be polished by pseudo-intellectuals in ivory towers.

Why Do the Nations Rage?

The reason the nations rage, of course, is because they have swallowed the serpent's lies, hook, line and sinker. Having bought into his vain imaginations, his subtle manipulations, and his sensuality, sophistry, and sentimentality, they – or at least the elites who enslave them – have decided they want nothing to do with either the Creator, shalom, or goodwill. They have responded to our overtures of peace with indignation and outrage. The Edomi approach relied on saber-rattling and threats of genocide. The Aradi assailed us with guerilla warfare tactics and targeted our children for human-trafficking. The Emori attacked us with the full force of their militaries – much as Pharaoh had done at the Sea of Reeds. The Moavi tried to assail us with curses and spells; the Midyani with the seductive beauty of the female form and the promise of a mixture of spiritual [actually, blatantly occult] enlightenment with a smorgasbord of unfettered sensual and sexual indulgences.

We are weary of fighting – both on the field of battle and in the wet markets of temptation – but alas, it turns out we are far from done. The nations have been triggered, and are riding the freight train of knee-jerk reactions and vain imaginations into a feeding frenzy of genocidal rage. Their elites conspire to quiet the eternal truth to which we testify by killing our bodies and corrupting our souls; their talking heads collude to blame us for all the world's problems; their brainwashed minions clamor to drink long and deep of our blood.

Oh how we would prefer peace – but those who hate us will have none of it. They want us dead. They want our children for their human trafficking operations. They have left us no other way forward. It is either them ... or us. So, Psalm 120 has become our song of the summer every bit as Psalm 27 is our song of the autumn.

War is not our preference, but it is our lot. A dangerous adversary - the wily, stealthy, desert warfare-wise Midyani - has tasted our blood – and had no intention to call off the fight. Though we wish there was another way, they will have none of it. It is them ... or us. And the Covenant the Holy One made with Avraham for the good of mankind as a species and Creation as an ecosystem is with us.

What does the Holy One decree regarding the Midyani? The Holy One is not calling for a knee-jerk reaction to a little propaganda or provocation. We are not

vigilantes, and the disciplined kind of war that He mandates is not a war of passion or outrage. We are not to operate under any illusion of either cultural, ethnic, or moral superiority. He knows what stands in the way of the Kingdom of Heaven coming to earth. He knows that a disease is wreaking havoc through the Midyani, and will continue to do so unless a surgical operation is conducted. Are we washed up, gloved, and ready for the O.R.?

Lift Up Your Heads!

The Holy One keeps telling Moshe to have us *lift up our heads*. There must be something to it! If we just lift up our heads what might we see? If we just took our eyes and focus off the mundane ‘ground clutter’ of life, what fields of vision – and what higher priorities, perspectives, and possibilities – might open up to us? We might see how far we have come – and how we have changed.

Farther Along!

We have had a remarkable, miraculous, unprecedented, and world-changing journey. We have traded bondage for freedom. We have traded offense for relevance. We have graduated from *matzah* to manna from Heaven. We have traded a cruel taskmaster’s whip for a trustworthy Covenant Partner’s gentle guidance. Following our King’s pillar of fire and cloud we have traversed desert after desert, hill after hill, and wadi after wadi. We have overcome so many obstacles. We have dealt with enemies from without bent on genocide and with enemies from within bent on division and self-destruction. We have overcome Amalek, shaken off the pseudo-intellectual mind-fog of Yitro, stared down Edom, and fought off vicious attacks by Arad, Sichon, Og. We have survived two dastardly Moavian/Midyani plots: one to drive us into the sea, and the other to seduce us away from our Covenant with the Glorious Creator of the Heavens and the earth. We have scaled the heights of Moav, and have set up a camp on the high plain from which we can actually see the Jordan River – and the city of Jericho beyond. **Numbers 26:3**. After all these years. After all the challenges. After a generation died in the desert. After all that, we are ‘almost there’- almost HOME! Do we still *love – and trust - our King?*

Lift up your heads indeed, Beloved! Look over yonder! Just across that narrow silver sliver of gently flowing water called *Ha-Yordan* (i.e. the ‘Jordan’) lie the hills and the valleys, the pastures, vineyards, orchards, and homesteads of our destiny; spreading out from Jericho to the North, the South, and the West lie the places where Avraham and Sarah, Yitzchak and Rivkah, and Ya’akov and Leah (and for a short while, Rachel) walked and conversed intimately with the Maker of the Heavens and the earth, and learned His ways, even as they went about normal life activities like raising children and tending flocks. Just across the Rift Valley spreading out before us lies the place where we will co-labor with our Bridegroom-

King to build a model society with the Torah as our constitution – a place to which Messiah will one day come forth. If we lift our heads, that land’s hills and valleys – and the wells our ancestors dug and frequented - call out to us like long lost lovers. If we lift up our heads *qana* – i.e. mature, disciplined wonderfully impassioned zeal to do the will of the Holy One – will begin to stir within us. So, yes, Moshe, please, please, *lift up our heads!* We suddenly cannot wait to cross that river and start building our new lives – and an earthly embassy for the Kingdom of Heaven - in that land.

But we do have some questions. When we cross that river, how will it feel? When our feet touch the other side, what will we do to commemorate the event of our return, and set the tone for our new epoch in the land? How will we displace the Kena’ani warlords who occupy the cities and cleanse the land of the perversions of human sacrifice, the oppression of the widow, the fatherless, the poor, and the foreigner, and the abominations of rampant rape, incest, and sexual bondage? How will each family know where – on which hill, or in which valley, or near which city or village - to settle? How will we know what specific parcel of that land is intended for, and entrusted to, each bloodline? How will the land be divided amongst our tribes, our clans, and our households? How will specific tracts be assigned to specific people? And how will the land be passed down from generation to generation? Until we reached this point in our journey questions such as these had never even entered our minds. But now, the land we have been promised is so close! And now we need – or at least would really like to have - some answers. Where can we go to get those answers? Moshe does not have them. Y’hoshua does not have them. Kalev does not seem to have them. Our new high priest Eleazar does not have them. His son Pinchas, who has suddenly burst onto the leadership scene, does not have them either. None of us have the answers we seek. But the Holy One does. The Holy One has an *‘app*’ for this. He has a Glorious Master Plan. He is our glory - and the lifter of our head! And in today’s aliyah He intends to reveal the next phases of His Grand plan – to anyone with eyes to see and ears to *sh’ma!*

Perspective Is a Wonderful Motivational Tool

It has been 40 years since Moshe’s dramatic burning bush encounter. His stunning moments of standing in sandal-less awe kicked off the greatest adventure sequence the world has ever known. First came the amazing deliverance sequence we call *the Exodus*. The skillful work of an Unseen Hand strategically and systematically dismantled the economy, the military might, the empty forms of religion, and the dark, death-obsessed worldview of the most powerful nation on earth. Hundreds of Thousands of that nation’s captives were set gloriously free.

Those redeemed slaves quickly discovered, however, that getting gloriously *set free* is one thing, while learning to humbly *live free* in the face of life's challenges is something else altogether. They learned that living free required *a revolution in the way they thought about the Creator's precious gifts of life, cognition, emotion, speech, energy, passion, and influence*. Slavery had not just put visible shackles on their bodies; it had also put *invisible shackles* on their minds, their aspirations, their appetites, their urges, their hopes and fears, their emotions, and their attitudes. Freedom from the visible shackles of the body did not automatically result in freedom from the other, invisible shackles. Freedom from the shackles of the enslaved mind, appetites, urges, and attitudes required them to catch a vision of and a superior hunger for something or someONE majestic and glorious at a level far beyond anything the person could ever have thought, hoped, or dreamed possible – something or someONE worth living for, suffering for, even dying for – *voluntarily*. That someONE, of course, was the Holy One; and that something was the role He offered them in His Grand Plan for the Redemption of Mankind and for the Restoration of Creation to its intended Edenic levels of beauty and fruitfulness.

Quite a dramatic *transformation* was necessary, however, if a gaggle of shell-shocked slaves was going to become joyful partners in redemption and restoration with the Creator of the Universe. I have called this dramatic transformation the 'Ultimate Extreme Bridal Makeover'. 'Living free' was going to require the former slaves of Egypt to redefine their sense of identity, mission, and destiny – both individually and collectively – in light of their relationship with the Creator and the role they were to play in the Grand Redemptive Plan. It was going to require them to reconsider – and dramatically adjust - their priorities. It was going to require an honest re-evaluation of the relative importance of self-interest *vis-à-vis* the interest of the poor, the oppressed, the disenfranchised, and the bereaved, and the lonely. It was going to require a reassessment of what speech, behavior, reaction, and interaction was appropriate *vis-à-vis* the community, *vis-à-vis* other ethnic groups, and as these things affect the planet. It required them to develop a sense of, and a dedication to, the 'common good'. It required them to develop a way of first acquiring, then stewarding, material possessions.

Living free requires a drastic restructuring of the way one responds to everything from bodily appetites, urges, and drives to the psychological desire for favor from and influence upon men, to experiences of loneliness, aggravation, irritation, provocation, intimidation, inadequacy, and overwhelm.

Living free requires finding and yielding wholeheartedly to a new, higher, inspirational *hierarchy of delights*. See **Psalm 1:2** [*his delight is in the law of the Holy One, and in His law he meditates day and night*], **Psalm 40:1(a)** [*I delight to do Your will, O*

my God.], and Song of Songs 2:3 [Like an apple tree among the trees of the woods, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down in his shade with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste.]

Living free requires the cultivation and skillful exercise of a free heart, a free mind, a free tongue, and a free hand. Living free requires active, vibrant, passionate participation, day by day, month by month, year by year, in the freedom-nurturing protocols of the Covenant made with us by the Wonderful, Worthy One Who set us free in the first place.

Living free also requires a radical reformation of the way one employs the amazing gift of speech. Living free requires *abandonment of old clichés* and replacement of *old models of expression* with *new patterns of blessing with vision, exhorting with kindness, and edifying with wisdom*. Living free requires embracing from one's Deliverer a *fresh new vocabulary, a bright new tone of voice, and a powerful new song of hope, joy, and destiny*.

Living free does not come naturally – or easily - to human beings. There is a lot of resistance in the flesh, in the mind, and in the culture to be overcome. Witness the generation of the Exodus. Getting the shackles off their arms and legs was the easy part. The difficulty came with getting them to voluntarily co-labor with the Holy One in the renewing of the mind, the subjugation of fleshly appetites, the rejection of human opinion and political theory, and the embracing of a new, glorious identity, mission, and destiny. Clinging instead to the mental, emotional, and philosophical shackles of Egypt caused them to roam the Wilderness for forty years – and lay down and die in the deserts of Paran and Tzin. Every single member of that generation except Kalev, Y'hoshua, and for now at least, Moshe, has succumbed. But the Covenant the Holy One made with Avraham is still sure. The beautiful, atmosphere-shifting Torah lifestyle is still waiting for sons and daughters to embrace it. And it is beginning to happen.

A New, Passionate, Empowered People Is Arising – the People of the Lifted Head

A whole new generation now stands before Moshe, Y'hoshua and Kalev. New faces now gather manna each morning. Fresh minds now contemplate the Mercy, the Wisdom and the Ways of the God of Avraham, of Yitzchak, and of Ya'akov daily as they prepare to enter and possess the Great Land in which the patriarchs sojourned. As the last vestiges of the prior generation dies out the bulk of the wilderness wandering – that epic journey of man chronicled by three and a half books of Torah – nears its conclusion. *Eretz Yisrael* beckons from just across the Jordan Valley. A new breed watches enthusiastically each morning to see if this will be the day that the Pillar of Fire and Cloud that led their fathers out of Egypt

will lead them to the Land of their forefathers. It will not be long now until Hebrew feet step into the river, its waters part, and the next phase of the destiny of sons and daughters of the Covenant – the only truly free men and women on earth – at last begins to manifest in real time.

You know, Dear Reader, it sounds like this would be a really good time for a *God-encounter*. And the Holy One does not disappoint. Our Bridegroom-King is about to step out of the realm of eternity into the realm of time once again. As our aliyah begins, the Glorious Deliverer appears to Moshe and to Elazar, the new High Priest. And then the most beautiful Voice ever heard exhorts :

Se'u et-rosh kol-adat B'nei-Yisra'el
Lift up the head of all the full B'nei Yisrael witness throug
miben esrim shanah v'malah l'veyt avotam
from twenty years old and upward, by their fathers' houses,
kol-yotze tzava b'Yisra'el
all who are able to go forth in the host of Yisra'el.
[Numbers 26:2]

This is not about numbers. This is about the lifting of the head. Our destiny lies before us. Our reason for being alive at such a time as this – and the reason we have faced and endured the challenges of this season of wilderness testing – is calling to us.

What lies ahead? The first thing on the Kingdom agenda is ... well ... *war*. Don't freak out now. War, it seems, is something we just need to get used to. War is part of – perhaps the culmination of – every season of testing. But please take notice that the imminent war that the Bridegroom-King is presently mustering us to fight is not a defensive war for survival. We have fought those wars, of course. We were attacked by the screaming hordes of Amalek at Refidim. We were ambushed by the charging armies of Sichon, and set upon by the raging hordes of Og. We have faced certain death. We have gone head-to-head with, and by the grace of the Holy One somehow avoided, annihilation. This war will be different. This will be the first war of Kingdom advancement. This will be the first war requiring the mobilization of ***tzava b'Yisrael*** - *i.e. the host of Yisrael – to go forward to do the will of the Bridegroom-King.*

This should give us pause. Did we sign up for this? Is the King's agenda our agenda? Are we in this for HIM and His Plan of Redemption – or are we just in it for ourselves, for a chance to go to Heaven, and for the promise of material blessing?

How about you, Dear Reader? Where is your heart - and where is *your head*? Are

you ready to be numbered as part of *ha-tzava*² *b'Yisrael* – i.e. *the hosts of Israel*? Whatever the need, whatever the cost, whatever the common good of the Covenant Community requires, as directed by the Bridegroom-king, at whatever level of personal sacrifice, are you 'in' - or are you 'out'? Are you truly in love with the Bridegroom-King? Are you seriously committed to whatever He says is necessary to advance His Kingdom's agenda? Are you part of the arising *people of the lifted head*?

This is, of course, not Moshe's first rodeo round-up. At the Holy One's direction, Moshe conducted his first 'lifting of the head' census thirty-eight and a half years ago – while we were still encamped at Sinai. That is when the Holy One had us organize and rearrange our camp in preparation for departing the Mountain of Betrothal for the Promised Land³. That is when we reconnected with our tribes and reunited with our clans. That was when the Holy One turned the hearts of the children to their fathers, and the hearts of the fathers to their children. Hmmm. Perhaps these 'censuses' the Holy One keeps telling Moshe to take are not about numbers after all. Perhaps one day we will realize that the Holy One does not need human beings to count heads in order to know how many people He has available at His beck and call. Indeed since the Holy One knows every hair on every head the counting that is about to occur is most definitely not for the Holy One's benefit. It is instead *for us*, His people, and for all the generations that will follow. Humans want heads *counted* – our King just wants them *lifted*.

This time there is no need now to rearrange the camp. We are already arranged in tribes, clans and families according to the Word of the Holy One. We are an army majestic with banners. How lovely are our tents!

The Reason for the Final Lifting of Heads of the Great Wilderness Journey

The final lifting-of-the-head' census of Torah is for the purpose of determining and fixing our attention upon the inheritance that awaits us in Eretz Yisrael. The generation that will take possession of the land absolutely must know *from what clan they come* as well as from what tribe they are descended. This census will provide the basis on which the land of promise is to be apportioned by Y'hoshua [Joshua]. It is taken in order that everyone alive *will know what part of the Promised Land rightfully belongs to him and his kin*. The land of Avraham, Yitzchak and

² Rabbi Samuel Raphael Hirsch [1808-1888, from pre-Nazi Germany] defined the Hebrew noun *tzava* as "*a multitude united for a communal service under the command of a higher authority*." Only 12,000 of the 600,000 or so men in the Camp over age 20 [1,000 from each tribe] will actually be called to fight in the coming war against the Midyani. But every person in the Camp will be called to support the war effort tactically and thus participate in the overall war effort.

³ See Numbers 1-3 for all the details of the Sinaitic census.

Ya'akov is, you see, not to be subjected to a 'land rush'. It is to be divided unto us *b'mispar shemot* 'according to the names' recorded in this census.

L'eleh techalek ha-aretz b'nachalah

Among these [people] you shall divide the land as an inheritance,

B'mispar shemot

following a number of names [recorded].

Larav tarbeh nachalato

To a larger [group] you shall give a larger inheritance

v'lam'at tam'it nachalato

while to a smaller group, you shall give a smaller inheritance

ish lefi f'kudav yutan nachalato

Each one shall thus be given his hereditary property according to its tally.

Moreover this census is not for natural descendants of *Ya'akov* [Jacob] alone. It is also for the "foreigners" – those people from the nations who "*join themselves to the Holy One, to minister to him, and to love the name of the Holy One, to be his servants, everyone who keeps the Shabbat from profaning it, and holds fast my covenant*" [See **Isaiah 56:6-7**] and who decide to sojourn among us, and father children among us - for according to the Holy One such goyim shall be to us "*as the home-born among the children of Yisra'el*", and "*shall have inheritance with [us] among the tribes of Yisra'el.*" See **Ezekiel 47:22-23**. For these "foreigners", the census taken in today's aliyah provides the details of the inheritance *into which* they are engrafted and adopted.

Crunching the Numbers

Thirty-nine years ago when we left Egypt the total number of men 20 and older [together with Levi 'im] was 625,850. This time the tally will be only 624,530⁴. The many plagues we have endured and well as the loss in battle of the presumptuous ones who attacked the Emori at Kadesh have taken a great toll on this people who had grown exponentially each generation they dwelt in bondage. Freedom, it seems, did not equate with expansion.

The Most Decimated Tribe: Shimon

Among the tribes *the biggest loss* was posted by the tribe descended from *Sh'mon*, Ya'akov's second son by Leah. One whole clan of Shimon has now disappeared [there being 6 clans at the prior census, and only 5 at this one], and *Sh'mon's* tribe – the one of which Zimri was a prince – was devastated by plagues of the Holy One so badly

⁴ In the census of the people at the beginning of Numbers men over 20 years of age, including Levites, totaled 625,850. In parsha *Pinechas* the total is listed as 624,530 (see **Numbers 27:51, 62**). Thus, the total reduction of population was 1,120. Included in this were also the blasphemer and the Shabbat desecrator, who were killed for their own sins. Thus the actual final number reduced by the 'plague' was 1,118.

that its numbers diminished by 37,100 men. This has caused the tribe of Sh'mon to fall in rank from the third largest tribe all the way down to the smallest tribe⁵.

The Most Elevated Tribe - Menashe

Menashe on the other hand managed to *prosper supernaturally*, and was the biggest gainer. It actually increased during the wilderness wandering by 20,500 men. In one generation – and a traumatic one at that – the tribe of *Menashe* went from smallest tribe to the sixth largest.

Gainers and Losers in General

Other tribes ascending in population ranking between the two censuses were *Issachar* [fifth to third] and *Asher* [ninth to fifth]. Tribes descending in the population ranking other than Sh'mon were *Reuven* [seventh to ninth], *Gad* [eighth to tenth], *Efrayim* [tenth to eleventh], and *Naftali* [sixth to eighth].

The two largest tribes remained *Y'hudah* and *Dan* (both posting small increases in numbers); *Zevulun* retained its ranking as the fourth largest tribe by posting a similar gain.

Rachel's progeny ascended prominently [Benyamin and the net growth of the two tribes descended from Yosef], but this was offset by the ascendancy of one child of Leah [Yissakhar], and of one child of Leah's maid Zilpah [Asher].

The Final 'Shepherd's Accounting' of Moshe

Rashi comments on this passage that the census the Holy One required at the end of the desert wanderings was “*like the case of a shepherd to whom an owner entrusted his flock by number; when the shepherd came to the end of his time, on returning them, he had to number them again.*”⁶ When Israel went out of Egypt, the Holy One entrusted them to Moshe by number. **Exodus 12:37**. As the Redeemed Community was preparing to leave Sinai the Holy One required a second accounting. **Numbers 1:1**. Now Moshe is about to die. Before he dies however he is required by the Holy One to make a *final accounting* of the flock entrusted to him.

⁵ The commentaries explain this large reduction in Shimon's population as due to the fact that the Sh'monim were the major culprits in the worship of Pe'or with the daughters of Midyan, Many Sh'monim were executed for their crimes (as per **Numbers 25:5**) and they constituted the greater part of the 24,000 who perished in the plague (**Midrash Tanchuma; Rashi**).

⁶ The comment by Rashi translates into English more or less as follows: “*This can be compared to a shepherd whose flock was intruded by wolves who killed some of them [his sheep]. He counted them to know how many were left.*”

Another interpretation is: “*When they left Egypt and were entrusted to Moshe, they were delivered to him with a number. Now that he was close to death and would soon have to return his flock, he returns them with a number.*” **Mid. Tanchuma Pinchas 4, Num. Rabbah 21:7**.

So what do we make of this “final accounting”? Was Moshe a “good shepherd” of the flock entrusted to his care? At first glance the numbers are less than impressive. The flock *diminished* in size - albeit by less than one half of one percent. But what the numbers do not tell us is that under Moshe the flock entrusted to him 39 years ago has been *totally transformed spiritually*. It started as a rag-tag band of runaway slaves. It has become an army majestic with banners. The people regarding whom Moshe makes his final accounting are far from perfect – but they are now betrothed to the Holy One and are well on their way to being prepared to enter into and possess the bridal chamber.

How did the Holy One see them? Not by the numbers Beloved. We saw last week how the Holy One saw the flock under Moshe’s care. The Holy One spoke it through the mouth of the pagan prophet Bila’am. He looked upon them and declared:

Mah-tovu ohaleicha Ya'akov

How lovely are your tents Ya'akov,

Mish'kenoteicha Yisra'el

Your tabernacles Israel!

* * *

El motzi'o miMitzrayim

Since He brought them out of Egypt

keto'afot re'em

they are like His Highest Expression of strength.

[Numbers 24:5, 8]

Men look at numbers. But the Holy One looks *upon the heart* – and sees in each man and each woman more than enough capacity for the fulfillment of the destiny for which Avraham was chosen. In every soul descended from or engrafted into Avraham, Yitzchak, and Ya'akov the Holy One sees a *light to the nations*. Every time we pass under His rod *His heart leaps for joy* at the sight of His ***am segulah***. From every marriage and family unit in which we are found - however messed up we may appear to the world - He sees a *goy k'dosh* waiting to burst forth into the glorious destiny He has planned for it from the foundation of the world. In every squalid village or putrid city in which we live He sees a *kingdom of kohanim* ready to rule with Messiah. We are the Apple of His Eye, and the joy set before Him. In every lost and confused soul among us He sees a wayward Bride returning to His side. Do not *ever*, ever, ever, let either the numbers or the current outward circumstances fool you. His covenant is sure. His redemption is certain. His zealous love endures forever.

Do You Know Your Family History – and the Issues Regarding Which Your Bloodline is In Need of Redemption?

Tucked away within the numbers of today's aliyah are a few strategically chosen nuggets of family/clan history. The first such nugget has to do with the tribe of Reuven. When Reuven's clans are being numbered, the writer of Torah reminds us that two of the leaders of Reuven – namely Datan and Aviram – took part in the great rebellion of Korach, and perished with all their household, and 250 co-conspirators. But, as the text reminds us, the Holy One performed a great miracle, such that somehow the sons of the sons of Korach (the leader of the coup attempt) did not die! **Numbers 26:10-11; also see Numbers 16 for the back story.**

The second nugget of family history has to do with the tribe of Yehudah. While numbering the clans of Yehudah, the Writer of Torah reminds us that Yehudah's oldest sons – Er and Onan – were perverse, and died infamous deaths in the land of Kena'an. **Numbers 26:19; also see Genesis 38:6-10 for the back story.**

The third nugget of family history given pertains to the tribe of Menashe. We are told that one of Menashe's clans was left without a patriarch, when Tzelofechad died with five daughters but not a single son. **Numbers 26:33.**

The fourth nugget of family history embedded in this narrative has to do with the tribe of Dan. We are reminded that Dan, unlike his brothers, only had one son. **Numbers 26:42.**

These little nuggets of family history are important. They remind us that each of our families has a history of trauma, tragedy, and failure – but also a legacy of survival, overcoming, and transcending. Human life on earth – even for people of the Covenant – is fraught with challenges. We all have to deal with life – its temptations and its traumas - every day. We are not to accuse any other tribe or clan of being 'privileged', or judge the road they have traveled. Much less are we to be jealous of what they have achieved. The Holy One has chosen our bloodline for us; our job is to co-labor with Him, and follow His directions, to bring redemption, not judgment, to that bloodline. Do you know what, in your bloodline, are the areas of trauma, pride, addiction, toxic attitudes, speech, reaction, and behavior, and/or susceptibility to temptation and sin, that the Holy One is calling you to work with Him to redeem? Every bloodline has a story and some nasty skeletons in it; and every bloodline needs a healing and a fresh start. Don't judge other people's bloodlines; just humbly work to heal your own – and speak a blessing, never a curse, over all the others that you encounter.

Questions For Further Study

1. Let's begin our study of the final census of the desert wanderings with a few basic questions:

[A] Who was to help Moshe with this census?

[B] What age groups of *B'nei Yisrael* were counted in this census?

[C] According to what divisions were the numbers of people in each tribe recorded for us this time. How does this format differ from the format of recording the census taken in Numbers 1? [You can see this if you compare, for example, Numbers 1:20-21 with Numbers 26:6-9 (the recording of the numbers of the descendants of Reuven)]

[D] Explain in a one-page essay the different purposes the Holy One had for each of these two censuses.

2. On a separate sheet of paper, make three columns. In the first column write the twelve tribes of Israel in order from the tribe with the most people [according to the census described in Numbers 26] to the tribe with the least. In the second column, write the number of Israelites in each of the tribes you have listed. In the third column, write the number of Israelites in each of those tribes as of the time of the first census [See Numbers chapter 1].

[A] Which tribes grew in size during the years in the wilderness?

[B] Which tribes became smaller in number during these years?

[C] What was the total number of descendants of Ya'akov numbered in the 40th year census (the one described in today's aliyah)?

[D] What was the total number of descendants of Ya'akov numbered in the first-year census (the one described in Numbers 1)?

3. In verses 52-56 the Holy One instructs us as to how Eretz Yisrael was to be divided up between the tribes.

*The Holy One spoke to Moshe, saying, **To these the land is to be divided for an inheritance according to the number of names.***

To the more you are to give the more inheritance, and to the fewer you are to give the less inheritance: to everyone according to those who were numbered of him is his inheritance to be given.

Notwithstanding, the land is to be divided by lot: according to the names of the tribes of their fathers they are to inherit. According to the lot is their inheritance to be divided between the more and the fewer.

[A] How was it to be determined which tribe received the largest areas of land in Eretz Yisrael?

[B] How was each tribal allotment to be divided among the members of the tribe?

4. Moving to the Haftarah for today we see *Eliyahu ha-navi* [Elijah the prophet] in flight for his life, desperately fleeing the threats of Jezebel. After depositing his servant in *Yizreel* [Jezreel], he is off again.

*When he saw that, he arose, and went for his life,
and came to Be'er-Sheva, which belongs to Y'hudah, and left his servant there.
But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness,
and came and sat down under a juniper tree:
and he requested for himself that he might die, and said,
It is enough; now, O HOLY ONE, take away my life;
for I am not better than my fathers.*

*He lay down and slept under a juniper tree;
and behold, an angel touched him, and said to him, "Arise and eat."
He looked, and, behold, there was at his head a cake
baked on the coals, and a jar of water.
He ate and drink, and laid him down again.*

*The angel of the Holy One came again the second time, and touched him, and said,
"Arise and eat, because the journey is too great for you."
He arose, and ate and drank,
and went in the strength of that food forty days and forty nights to Horev the Mount of God.
[1Kings 19:3-8]*

[A] What was *Eliyahu's* first stop after leaving *Yizreel* [Jezreel]?

[B] Where did *Eliyahu* go after this first stop?

[C] Imagine you were the angel who was assigned to feed *Eliyahu* at this place. Write a "journal entry" describing what you saw, did, and thought at this place.

5. Turning now to the selected B'rit Chadasha reading for parsha *Pinechas*, in the aftermath of the near riot which erupted out of *Yeshua's* overturning the tables of the moneychangers and sellers of "kosher-approved" sacrificial animals and driving their proprietors away with a braided whip, *Yochanan* [John] considers *Yeshua's* actions and His countenance as He performed those deeds. In order that we might understand the passion with which *Yeshua* cleansed His Father's "House" *Yochanan* describes *Yeshua's* countenance by quoting and applying to *Yeshua* a verse from today's meditation [above]:

Zeal for your house has consumed me/will eat me up.

[A] From what book, chapter, and verse of the TaNaKh is this quote drawn?

[B] In Strong's and Gesenius look up the Hebrew words our English Bibles translate (in the quoted Psalm) as "zeal", "house", and "eat". Write each of these Hebrew words, in Hebrew letters with their vowel points, and in their English transliterations. Then, after studying out each word in Gesenius, and looking up the "first instance" of usage of each of those words in the Bible, describe the Hebraic word picture you see developing with regard to each.

[C] Based upon what you have discovered in connection with answering subpart [B] above write a paragraph describing what you think the phrase quoted above “*Zeal for your house will eat me up*” really means.

May you never be satisfied with anything less than the inheritance specially designed for you by the Holy One Himself.

The Rabbi's son

Meditation for Today's Study

Psalm 69:1-9

*Save me, O Holy One, for the waters have come up to my neck!
I sink in deep mire, where there is no foothold.
I have come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me.
I am weary with my crying; my throat is dry.
My eyes fail, looking for my God.*

*Those who hate me without a cause are more than the hairs of my head.
Those who want to cut me off, being my enemies wrongfully, are mighty.*

*I have to restore what I didn't take away.
O Holy One, you know my foolishness.
My sins aren't hidden from you.*

*Don't let those who wait for you be shamed through me, O Holy One, GOD of Hosts.
Don't let those who seek you be brought to dishonor through me, God of Yisra'el.
Because for your sake, I have borne reproach.
Shame has covered my face.*

*I have become a stranger to my brothers, an alien to my mother's children.
For the zeal of your house consumes me.
The reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me.*