

Parsha Plug: Parshat BaMidbar

| BaMidbar 1:1-19  | במדבר א: א-יט  |
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| <p><b>1</b> The Lord spoke to Moshe in the Sinai Desert, in the Tent of Meeting on the first day of the second month, in the second year after the exodus from the land of Egypt, saying. <b>2</b> Take the sum of all the congregation of the children of Israel, by families following their fathers' houses; a head count of every male according to the number of their names. <b>3</b> From twenty years old and upwards, all who are fit to go out to the army in Israel, you shall count them by their legions you and Aharon. <b>4</b> With you there shall be a man from each tribe, one who is head of his father's house. <b>5</b> These are the names of the men who shall stand with you; for Reuven, Elitzur the son of Shedeur. <b>6</b> For Shimon, Shelumiel the son of Tzurishadai. <b>7</b> For Yehudah, Nachshon the son of Amminadav. <b>8</b> For Yisaschar, Netanel the son of Tzuar. <b>9</b> For Zevulun, Eliav the son of Cheilon. <b>10</b> For the children of Yosef: for Efraim, Elishama the son of Ammihud; for Manasheh, Gamliel the son of Pedatzur. <b>11</b> For Benyamin, Avidan the son of Gidoni. <b>12</b> For Dan, Achiezer the son of Ammishadai. <b>13</b> For Asher, Pagiel the son of Ochran. <b>14</b> For Gad, Elyasaf the son of Deuel. <b>15</b> For Naftali, Achira the son of Einan. <b>16</b> These were the ones summoned by the congregation, the princes of the tribes of their fathers; they are the heads of the thousands of Israel. <b>17</b> Then Moshe and Aharon took these men, who were indicated by [their] names, <b>18</b> and they assembled all the congregation on the first day of the second month, and they declared their pedigrees according to their families according to their fathers' houses; according to the number of names, a head count of every male from twenty years old and upward. <b>19</b> As the Lord commanded Moshe, so did he count them in the Sinai desert.</p> | <p><b>א</b> וַיְדַבֵּר ה' אֶל-מֹשֶׁה בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי, בְּאֵהָל מוֹעֵד: בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי בַשָּׁנָה הַשְּׁנִיָּה, לְצֵאתְכֶם מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם--לֵאמֹר. <b>ב</b> שָׂאוּ, אֶת-רֹאשׁ כָּל-עֵדַת בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְמִשְׁפְּחֹתָם, לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם--בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁמוֹת, כָּל-זָכָר לְגִלְגֻלְתָּם. <b>ג</b> מִבְּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְעֹלָה, כָּל-יֵצֵא צָבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל--הַפְּקֹדוּ אֹתָם לְצִבְאוֹתָם, אֹתָהּ וְאֶהְרֹן. <b>ד</b> וְאֹתְכֶם יִהְיוּ, אִישׁ אִישׁ לְמִטָּה--אִישׁ רֹאשׁ לְבֵית-אֲבֹתָיו, הוּא. <b>ה</b> וְאֵלֶּה שְׁמוֹת הָאֲנָשִׁים, אֲשֶׁר יַעֲמְדוּ אִתְּכֶם: לְרֵאוּבֵן, אֶלִּיצִיזֵר בֶּן-שְׁדִיאֹוֹר. <b>ו</b> לְשִׁמְעוֹן, שְׁלֹמִיאֵל בֶּן-צֹוּרִישַׁדַּי. <b>ז</b> לַיהוּדָה, נַחֲשׁוֹן בֶּן-עַמִּינָדָב. <b>ח</b> לְיִשָּׂשְׁכָר, נֹתָנָאֵל בֶּן-צֹוּעֵר. <b>ט</b> לְזְבוּלֹן, אֶלִּיאָב בֶּן-חֶלֶן. <b>י</b> לְבְנֵי יוֹסֵף--לְאֶפְרַיִם, אֶלִּישַׁמָּע בֶּן-עַמִּיהוּד; לְמַנַּשֶּׁה, גַּמְלִיאֵל בֶּן-פְּדָטְזוּר. <b>יא</b> לְבִנְיָמִן, אַבִּידָן בֶּן-גִּדְעֹנִי. <b>יב</b> לְדָן, אַחִיעֶזֶר בֶּן-עַמִּישַׁדַּי. <b>יג</b> לְאַשֶׁר, פַּגְעִיאֵל בֶּן-עַכְרָן. <b>יד</b> לְגָד, אֶלְיָסָף בֶּן-דְּעֹוֹאֵל. <b>טו</b> לְנַפְתָּלִי, אַחִירֵעַ בֶּן-עֵינָן. <b>טז</b> אֶלֶּה קְרִיאֵי (קְרוּאֵי) הָעֵדָה, נְשִׂאֵי מִטּוֹת אֲבוֹתָם: רֹאשֵׁי אֶלְפֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, הֵם. <b>יז</b> וַיִּקַּח מֹשֶׁה, וְאֶהְרֹן, אֶת הָאֲנָשִׁים הָאֵלֶּה, אֲשֶׁר נָקְבוּ בְשֵׁמֹת. <b>יח</b> וְאֵת כָּל-הָעֵדָה הִקְהִילוּ, בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁנִי, וַיַּתְּיָלְדוּ עַל-מִשְׁפְּחוֹתָם, לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם: בְּמִסְפַּר שְׁמוֹת, מִבְּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְעֹלָה--לְגִלְגֻלְתָּם. <b>יט</b> כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה', אֶת-מֹשֶׁה; וַיִּפְקְדֵם, בְּמִדְבַר סִינַי.</p> |

| Shemot 30:12  | שמות ל:יב  |
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| <p>When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their counting, then each man will give atonement for his soul to the Lord when you count them; then there will be no plague as you count them.</p> | <p><b>יב</b> כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת-רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל, לְפַקְדֵיהֶם, וְנָתַנּוּ אִישׁ כֹּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ לַה', בְּפַקְדֹת אֹתָם; וְלֹא-יִהְיֶה בָהֶם נֶגֶף, בְּפַקְדֹת אֹתָם.</p> |

| Masechet Yoma 22b   | מסכת יומא כב:   |
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| <p>Rebbe Eleazar said: Whoever counts Israel, transgresses a [biblical] prohibition, as it is said, ‘And the children of Israel shall be as the sand of the sea, which will be neither measured nor counted’ (Hoshea 2:1). Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak said: He would transgress two prohibitions, for it is written: ‘Which cannot be measured nor numbered’.</p> | <p>אמר רבי אלעזר כל המונה את ישראל עובר בלאו שנאמר והיה מספר בני ישראל כחול הים אשר לא ימד רב נחמן בר יצחק אמר עובר בשני לאוין שנאמר לא ימד ולא יספר.</p> |

| Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 15:3   | קיצור שולחן ערוך טו:ג  |
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| <p>We must be careful not to count people per capita in order to discern if there is a minyan, because it is prohibited to count Jews per capita even for the purpose of a mitzvah. It is written, ‘And Shaul summoned the people and numbered them with telaim [sheep]’ (1 Shmuel 15:4). Our practice is to count them by saying the verse, ‘<i>Hoshiah et amecha u'varech et nachalatecha ur'em venas'em ad ha'olam...</i>’ for there are ten words within that verse (Tehillim 28:9).</p> | <p>צריכים לזהר שלא למנות את האנשים לגולגלותם לידע אם יש מניין, כי אסור למנות את ישראל לגולגלותם אפילו לדבר מצווה, דכתיב: "וישמע שאול את העם ויפקדם בטלאים" (פר"ח). ונוהגין למנותם באמירת הפסוק "הושיעה את עמך" וגו', שיש בו עשר תיבות.</p> |

| Rashi on BaMidbar 1:1   | רש"י על במדבר א:א  |
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| <p>The Lord spoke in the Sinai Desert on the first of the month: Because they were dear to Him, He counted them often. When they left Egypt, He counted them (Shemot 12:37); when [many] fell because [of the sin] of the golden calf, He counted them to know the number of the survivors (Shemot 32:28); when He came to cause His Divine Presence to rest among them, He counted them. On the first of Nissan, the Mishkan was erected, and on the first of Iyar, He counted them.</p> | <p>וידבר במדבר סיני באחד לחדש: וגו' מתוך חיבתו לפניו מונה אותם כל שעה, כשיצאו ממצרים מגאן, וכשנפלו בעגל מגאן לידע מנין הנתרים. כשבא להשרות שכינתו עליהן מגאן. באחד בניסן הוקם המשכן, ובאחד באייר מנאם:</p> |

| Ramban on BaMidbar 1:2  | רמב"ן על במדבר א:ב  |
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| <p>Count them: The term ‘pekidah’ is an expression meaning remembrance of and attention to a certain matter, as in the phrase, ‘God remembered Sarah as He had said’ (Bereshit 21:1)...When God commanded a count of Israel, He said ‘tifkedu otam’ as if to hint that Moshe should not count them by person but rather that they should give half a shekel as atonement for their souls, and he should supervise them [the half shekels] and thereby know the number of the people...I saw in BaMidbar Sinai Rabbah (2:17) that Rebbe Eliezer in the name of Rebbe Yossi ben Zimra says that whenever Israel is counted for a purpose, they are not diminished. Whenever they are counted without a purpose, they are diminished. When is a time with a purpose? During the days of Moshe, for the setting up of the banners, and at the division of the land. When is a time without a purpose? During the days of David.</p> | <p>תפקדו אותם: ענין "פקידה" זכרון והשגחה על דבר כלשון וה' פקד את שרה כאשר אמר (בראשית כא א)...וכאשר צוה למנות את ישראל יאמר "תפקדו אותם" לרמוז שלא יספרם רק שיתנו כופר נפשם מהצית השקל ובהם ישגיח וידע מספר העם...וראיתי במדבר סיני רבה (ב יז) ר' אליעזר בשם ר' יוסי בן זמרא אמר כל זמן שנמנו ישראל לצורך לא חסרו שלא לצורך חסרו איזה זמן נמנו לצורך בימי משה ובדגלים ובחלוק הארץ שלא לצורך בימי דוד.</p> |

| Panim Yafot on Shemot 30:11-13  | פנים יפות על שמות ל:יב   |
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| <p>It seems that the inhibiting of our counting per capita is because the root of Israel is unity, as it is written, ‘Who is like Your people Israel, one nation’ (I Chronicles 17:21)...When they are unified at their core, they do not need safeguarding [counting], as it is said, ‘For you said, “The Lord is my refuge”, the Most High you made your dwelling’ (Tehillim 91:9). But when they divide into many branches, each one needs</p> | <p>ונראה כי ענין מניעת המנין לגולגלותם ממש כי שורש כל ישראל הוא האחדות כמ"ש [דה"א יז, כא] ומי כעמך ישראל גוי אחד...ובהיותם באחדות בשורשם אין צריכים שמירה כמו שנאמר [תהלים צא, ט] כי אתה ה' מחסי עליון שמת מעוניך, אבל כשמתחלקים לענפים רבים</p> |

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| safeguarding [counting]. | צריך כל אחד שמירה. |
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### **HaRav Yehoshua Pfeffer *Kosher Census: Counting People in Halacha***

In the Israeli census of 5743 a number of modifications were introduced as a result of an agreement between the government and the Chief Rabbinate. This agreement made provisions that only names of family members would be recorded, that the accompanying numbers on the blank lines provided for this purpose would be eliminated and that the number of persons in the household would not be totaled by the census-takers. The agreement further provided that the tabulation of all demographic information be performed entirely by electronic devices and that the process in no way involve calculations performed by human beings (*Techumin*, IV, 336; *Mispar Bnei Yisrael* p.38). As the years progress, the place of humans in tallying the count get progressively smaller, and as the role of computers grows, there seems to be more general grounds for leniency. Nonetheless, we can expect the dispute over participation in the national census to rage on.

### **Rabbi Dr. Asher Meir *Counting Jews***

This prohibition [of counting Jews] emphasizes the uniqueness of each human being. A person's unique qualities can never be reduced to some numerical quantity...The most common way of calculating a minyan is to count according to the words in a Scriptural verse (usually Tehillim 28:9). This is a very beautiful way, because each word in a sentence is unique and without it the sentence would lose its meaning.