

רמב"ן על התורה

Selected Pieces from the Ramban's Commentary on the Torah

מלוקט ע"פ קונטרס של הרה"ג ירחמיאל פרייד

פרק הקדמה	פסוק	ענין
		ביאור כלליות ספר במדבר
א	ג ד"ה תפקדו	קדושת המשכן הנעתקת מהר סיני, וביאור הא דבעינן שמירת הכהנים והלויים סביבה כבהר סיני ענין פקידה, וטעם לאיסור לפקוד את בני" במספרים ומה שטעה דוד המלך ואחרים בזה
ב	ב	ג' טעמים בצורך למנות את ישראל ציורי הדגלים וכוונת הציורים. ביאור נפלא לסדר המחנות ומקום כל שבט ושבט
ג	יד	הנס הגדול שהיה בפקודת העם
ד	ז	הטעם בהיות שבט לוי הקטן שבשבטים
		ביאור הצבעים השונים בכיסויי כל חפצי ההקדש

גור אריה להמהר"ל

Selected Pieces from the Maharal's Gur Aryeh

מלוקט ע"פ קונטרס של הרה"ג יהושע דוד הרטמן

פרק	אות (ע"פ הוצאת ממכון ירושלים)	ענין
א	א	החיבה במנין כל שעה
ב	ב	השארת השכינה חייבה מנין רק בר"ח אייר, ולא בר"ח ניסן והטעם
ג	א	מדוע בני אהרן נחשבים לתולדות משה משאר ישראל
ו	ו	הלויים נחשבים ל"שומרי משמרת הקודש" משיצאו מכלל נפילים
ז	ז	האם התורה נכתבה לפי שעת המעשה, או לפי זמן משה
ט	ט	בבית א' היתה האש רבוצה כארי, ובבית ב' ככלב
ד	ט ד"ה ויש	שלשת הבתים האבות, ולכך בבית שני נחסר האור, כי יצחק כהו עיניו
י	י	"ומתו" הוא בידי שמים, וב' ועמים לכך

5 Parsha Highlights for Further Discussion

- See introduction of the **Netziv** to Sefer Bamidbar who discusses the transition of the Jewish people in this sefer.
- **Rashi** (3:1) explains that Moshe was considered the father to Ahron's children because he taught them Torah. See Torah Temimah 3:1 who explains why this didn't apply to all the Jewish people.
- R. Yaakov Kaminetsky in **Emes L'Yaakov** explains why the details of the Mishkan are followed by a description of flags the Jewish people used. He explains that only after the unity of the Jewish people was solidified through the building of the Mishkan, could each tribe highlight their individual strengths and differences.
- **Midrash Rabbah Bamdbar** #2 explains that the Jewish people wanted flags after seeing the angels in heaven each had flags. Flags symbolize an concrete area of perfection and mastery which is why they were first learning from angels – which only function based on their purpose. Are flags then a positive or negative?
- **Baal HaTurim 2:7** discusses the equality of Yissachar and Zevulun

Foundations
מנין ישראל
Counting Jews

Sefer Bamidbar begins with the commandment to count Am Yisroel. Every male between the ages of 20 and 60 contributed a machatzis hashekel in order to be counted.

1. Why conduct a census?

- a. Whenever Hashem counts the Jewish nation, it is done in order to demonstrate His love and affection towards us (Rashi Bamidbar 1:1). Rashi there also briefly teaches us about each census that occurred thus far in Jewish history.
- b. Many meforshim discuss the counting as a meaning of solidifying Jewish Unity:
 - i. Counting everyone together creates a single cohesive unit; because of this unity, the less worthy Jews aren't distinguishable from the righteous ones, this will save them from extensive retribution (R. Bachya, Ex. 30:12).
 - ii. Unity in it of itself is a source of atonement for the nation (Maharal on Zavachim 88b).
 - iii. Counting unifies people under one idea, each counted individual who contributes ultimately becomes a living representative of the ideology of Bnei Yisroel (S. R. Hirsch- Ex. 30:12).
- c. The contribution of the machatzis hashekel (which was the set amount given by everyone regardless of age, class, or financial status) went towards the upkeep of the mikdash and sponsored the communal offerings. This way, all Jews were equally represented before Hashem (Chinuch 105).

2. Is it permissible to count Jews?

- a. Talmud in Brachos 62b and Yoma 22b both indicate that Jews should not be counted – even for a mitzvah.
- b. See Rashi Shemos 30:12 who explains that counting can create an עין הרע.
- c. The Ramban (Shemos ibid.) explains that Dovid HaMelech erred when he counted the Jews in Shmuel 2 Ch. 24 because he counted the *entire* nation as opposed to just those above the age of 20. The Rambam rules that it is prohibited to count Jews directly (Tamidin Umusafin 4:4), that is why the Gemara states that the Kohanim were counted by their fingers and not by their heads when selecting people for the avoda (Yoma 22b).
- d. Nowadays, Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 15:3 explains that we use pesukim to count rather than actually count people. Reb Moshe Feinstein (Igros Moshe y"d 3:117, 2) points out that it is only prohibited to count Jews precisely, if you don't get an exact number it is permitted. Many poskim discuss the permissibility of the census in Israel, for a lengthy discussion see Yabia Omer vol. 10 Choshen Mishpat #2.

3. Making Jews Count

- a. Tehillim 147:3-4 writes that God “heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds, he counts the number of the stars, he calls them all by name.” One of the ways to comfort and strengthen someone is by emphasizing and eliciting their unique strengths.
- b. See the final paragraph in Messilas Yesharim that explains that every Jew, no matter the profession or station in life is capable of spiritual greatness.
- c. See Ksav V'Kabbalah who while explaining the distinction between לספור and לפקד explains that the word לספור to count is the same word for סיפור, meaning story. Through knowing and telling people's unique story, we can make them count.