



HOW MANY JEWS ARE THERE?

The history of census counts of the Jewish people, from the days of Moses through the times of kings Saul and David.
Plus the connection to counting ten for a minyan.

TEACHER'S MANUAL



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Published and Copyright 2024 by
Shluchim Office International
816 Eastern Parkway, Brooklyn,
NY 11213
718.221.0500

5784 - 2024

Founded in 2008 in memory of Rabbi Gabi and Rivky Holtzberg OB" M
Shluchim of the Rebbe to Mumbai India

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There is a mitzvah for every Jew to give a half-shekel towards the cost of the offerings in the Holy Temple. Each year at the beginning of the month of Adar, the obligation would be announced, and a month later, on the first of Nissan, the priests would purchase the communal offerings for the coming year. Today this mitzvah is no longer in effect, but we continue to read about it in the Torah around the time of the first of Adar, in commemoration of the mitzvah (Source 1), and so that we will be prepared to observe it again with the imminent coming of Mashiach. (Source 2)

The command is first given in Parshat Ki Tisa, where G-d instructs Moses that if he wishes to count the people he should not do so directly, but by counting the half-shekel contributions. This way, he will prevent a plague from striking. (Source 3)

B. Kings Saul and David Count the Nation.....5

King David counted the people directly, triggering a plague that killed thousands. The Talmud in Tractate Berachot explains that even schoolchildren know this commandment, but David was caused from Above to err in this matter as a punishment for speaking disrespectfully about G-d. (Sources 4-5)

The Rebbe cites from elsewhere in the Talmud—in Tractate Yoma—where the prohibition against counting the Jewish people directly is derived from stories of King Saul, who used shards and sheep to indirectly count the troops of his army. When Nachash of Ammon threatened to go to war with the Jews, Saul called up his army and counted them using shards (Source 6), and while preparing for war with Amalek, counted them using sheep. (Source 7)

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Why does the Talmud in Yoma cite the story of Saul as the source for the prohibition of directly counting instead of bringing proof from the Torah in Ki Tisa? The answer is that there are two kinds of counts: a mitzvah related count and a discretionary count. When the Torah says “when you count the sum of the Jewish people” that is referring to a discretionary count, and directly counting is prohibited. David’s mistake was with this kind

of discretionary count. A mitzvah related count, however, might be different. Thus, the Talmud cited Saul's count, which was for a mitzvah purpose, and nonetheless, Saul did not count the people directly, but via shards or sheeps.

If Moses wasn't commanded to count the Jews, why did he do so - at risk of causing a plague? The explanation is that through counting, the value of each Jews is accentuated in the eyes of the Creator.

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In the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the priests were counted by their fingers, and not by themselves (Source 8). When we wish to count if there's a minyan in the synagogue, we do not count directly—one, two, three, etc.—but indirectly. Rashi suggests using the following verse that contains ten words (in Hebrew): “And I, through Your abundant kindness, come into Your house; I bow toward Your holy sanctuary in awe of You.”

In the Concise Code of Jewish Law, written about 160 years ago, it states that the custom is to use the ten words of another verse: “Grant salvation to Your people and bless Your heritage; tend them and exalt them forever.”

Why, asks the Rebbe, did the custom change? Rashi's suggested verse speaks of prayer in the synagogue and would seem to be more appropriate. The Rebbe explains that in the later generations, as exile became more difficult, every opportunity was used to beseech G-d for salvation, and accordingly, this verse was used for counting the minyan.

Introduction

In the reading of Shekalim, we learn about the contribution campaign which also served as a census count. G-d informs Moses that census taking may only be done indirectly, via counting objects, and not a direct headcount.

This prohibition is recalled over and over throughout history, such as when Saul and David count the people, and in the Holy Temple. It is even featured today, with the indirect counting of ten people in the synagogue for the minyan.

Why is it prohibited to count people directly? Why do we count? And which verse do we use to count the people in the synagogue?

השיעור לפרשת שקלים

משיחת שבת פרשת כי-תשא ה'תשכ"ה, בלתי מוגה
[תורת מנחם, חלק מ"ב, עמ' 284 ואילך](#)

ומשיחת שבת פרשת ויקהל-פקודי ה'תשמ"ג
[תורת מנחם ה'תשמ"ג, ח"ב, ע' 1137 ואילך](#)

A. The History of the Half-Shekel

Source 1 Sefer Hachinuch 105

Student's
pg. 1

The mitzvah to give a half-shekel annually: Every Jew aged twenty and older must give a half-shekel to the priest every year. This is done by both poor and wealthy people the same, as the verse states: "This they shall give, everyone who goes through the counting." (Exodus 30:13) All the money was deposited in a room of the Holy Temple, and would be withdrawn to purchase offerings.

From the reasons for the mitzvah: G-d wants merit for the Jews, so He allows them to all participate equally in the offerings each year. All give equally, whether rich or poor, and all are included in the mitzvah and the merit it brings.

Pertinent laws: The Sages taught that on the first of Adar the announcement to bring the half-shekel was made, and even the poorest of the poor was obligated to give. If he does not have anything, he should borrow from someone else or sell his clothing, as the verse says: "The pauper shall not give less" (Exodus 30:15). One may not pay it in installments, and everyone must give: priests, Levites and Israelites; converts and freed servants.

מצות נתינת מחצית השקל בשנה – שיתן כל אחד מישראל מִכֶּן עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעֲלָה בֵּין עָנִי בֵּין עָשִׁיר מִחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בְּכָל שָׁנָה לִיד הַכֹּהֲנִים, שְׁנֵאֲמַר (שמות ל, יג) זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָּל הָעָבֵר עַל הַפְּקָדִים. וְהָיוּ מְנִיחִין הַכֹּל בְּלִשְׁכָּה אַחַת שֶׁבַּמִּקְדָּשׁ, וּמִשָּׁם הָיוּ מוֹצִיאִין (שקלים פ"ד) לְקָנוֹת תְּמִידִין וּמוֹסָפִין וְכָל קֶרֶבֶן הַקָּרֵב עַל הַצִּבּוֹר וְנִסְכֵיהֶם.

מִשְׁרָשֵׁי הַמִּצְוָה. שְׂרָצָה הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא לְטוֹבָתָה כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלִזְכוּתָם שְׁתִּהְיֶה יָד בָּלֵם שָׁנָה בְּדִבְרֵי הַקְּרָבָנוֹת הַקְּרָבִים לְפָנָיו כָּל הַשָּׁנָה בְּהַתְמַדָּה וּבְעֲנִיָּה אֵלּוֹ הַנּוֹכְרִים, וְשִׁיְהִיו הַכֹּל, אֶחָד עָנִי וְאֶחָד עָשִׁיר, שְׁוִים בַּמִּצְוָה אַחַת לְפָנָיו לְהַעֲלוֹת זָכוֹן בָּלֵם עַל יְדֵי הַמִּצְוָה שֶׁהֵם כָּלִילִים בָּהּ יַחַד לְטוֹבָה לְפָנָיו.

מִדִּינֵי הַמִּצְוָה. כְּגוֹן מֶה שְׁאֲמָרוּ זְכוֹרִים לְבִרְכָּה (שקלים פ"א א"א) שֶׁבְּאֶחָד בְּאֶדָר מִשְׁמִיעִין עַל הַשֶּׁקֶלִים, וְשֶׁאֲפִלוּ דֵל שֶׁבְּדָלִים חֵיב בּוֹ, וְאִם אֵין לוֹ שׂוֹאֵל מֵאַחֲרִים אוֹ מוֹכֵר כֶּסֶתוֹ שֶׁעָלָיו וְנוֹתְנוֹ, שְׁנֵאֲמַר (שמות ל טו) וְהָדֵל לֹא יִמְעִיט, וְאִינוּ גּוֹתֵן בְּפַעֲמִים הֶרְבֵּה אֲלֵא הַכֹּל בְּפַעֵם אַחַת, וְהַכֹּל חֵיבִין לְתָנָם, (שקלים שם) כֹּהֲנִים לְוִיִּם וְיִשְׂרָאֵלִים, גֵּרִים וְעַבְדִּים מִשְׁחָרְרִין.

This applied during Temple times, and it obligated all Jews, whether they resided inside or outside of the Land of Israel. Nowadays, following the destruction of the Temple, nobody is obligated in this mitzvah, even in the Land of Israel. A person who failed to contribute violated a positive commandment and faced serious consequences, because by doing so they separated themselves from the community, and they could not attain penitence together with the public.

Nowadays, due to our sins, we do not have a Temple or the half-shekel, but the custom is to read this portion of the Torah, the beginning of Parshat Ki Tisa, each year on the Shabbat preceding Rosh Chodesh Adar.

Source 2 Rabbi Eliyahu Kitov, Sefer Hatodaah, p. 120

An additional reason

Another reason for the Sages enacting this custom of reading the portion of Shekalim nowadays is that very soon the Holy Temple will be rebuilt and we will need to be proficient in this mitzvah.

Extra cherished

This mitzvah is especially precious to us, because it teaches us to love every Jew greatly, for all are equal before G-d. When it comes to offering G-d communal sacrifices, all are equal; there is no rich and no poor, no close and no distant - all are close. The collective offering rises up before G-d and atones for our sins.

How does it work?

On the Shabbat when we read Shekalim we take two Torah scrolls out of the ark. From the first we read the weekly reading, calling up seven people, and for maftir we read from the second scroll the beginning of Ki Tisa, which is about the half-shekel.

וְנוֹהֲגִת בְּזֶמֶן הַבֵּית שְׁחִיבִים לְתֵת אוֹתָהּ כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל, בֵּין הָעוֹמְדִין בְּאַרְץ אוֹ חוּצָה לְאַרְץ. וְשֵׁלָא בְּזֶמֶן הַבֵּית, אֵין חֵיב בָּהּ אָדָם וְאֶפְלוּ הָעוֹמְדִים בְּאַרְץ. וְהָעוֹבֵר עָלֶיהָ וְלֹא נָתַנוּ בְּטֵל עָשָׂה, וְעָנְשׁוּ גְדוֹל מְאֹד, שֶׁפֶּרֶשׁ עֲצָמוֹ מִן הַצָּבוּר וְאֵינוֹ בְּכָלֵל בְּפִרְתָּן.

וְעִכְשָׁיו בְּעוֹנֵתֵינוּ, שְׂאִין לָנוּ מִקֹּדֶשׁ וְלֹא שְׁקָלִים, נִהְיָה כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל (מַגִּילָה כ"ט א) לְזָכֹר הַדָּבָר לְקִרְוֹת בְּבֵית הַכֹּנֶסֶת בְּכָל שָׁנָה וְשָׁנָה פֶּרֶשָׁה זֹאת שֶׁל כִּי תִשָּׂא עַד וְלִקְחָתָהּ אֶת כֶּסֶף הַכֹּפָרִים בְּשָׁבָת, שֶׁהוּא לִפְנֵי רֹאשׁ חֹדֶשׁ אָדָר לְעוֹלָם.

טעם נוסף

עוד טעם, לפיכך צווי חכמינו לקרא בפֶּרֶשַׁת שְׁקָלִים בְּמוֹעֵדָהּ, גַּם בְּזֶמֶן הַזֶּה – מִתְהַרָה יִבְנֶה הַמִּקְדָּשׁ, וְיִהְיוּ הַמִּצְוֹת סְדוּרוֹת בְּיָדֵינוּ.

חביבות מיוחדת

וְחֻבִּיבָה מְצוּה זוֹ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, כִּי מִמֶּנָּה לְעוֹמְדִים לְאַהֲבָה אֶת כָּל אֶחָד מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל אֲהֲבָה גְדוֹלָה, שְׁהָרִי בָלָם שְׁוִים לִפְנֵי הַקֹּב"ה, וְהַגְדוּלָה שֶׁבְּעֲבוּדוֹת הַמִּקְדָּשׁוֹת, אֵלּוּ קִרְבָּנוֹת הַכֹּפָרָה, נַעֲשִׂית עַל יָדֵי כָּל יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּשׁוּוֹה, וְאֵין עָנִי וְאֵין עָשִׁיר לִפְנֵי הַמִּקְדָּשׁ וְלֹא קְרוֹב וְרָחוֹק אֵלָּא הַכָּל קְרוֹבִים, וְקִרְבָּן בָּלָם עוֹלָה לְרִיחַ נְחוּחַ לִפְנֵינוּ, לְכַפֵּר עֲלֵיהֶם עַל כָּל עֲוֹנוֹתֵיהֶם.

איך זה עובד?

שָׁבָת שְׁקוֹרִין בָּהּ פֶּרֶשַׁת שְׁקָלִים, מוֹצִיאִים בְּבֵית הַכֹּנֶסֶת שְׁנֵי סִפְרֵי תוֹרָה: בְּאֶחָד קוֹרְאִין בְּפֶרֶשַׁת הַשְּׁבוּעַ שְׁבָעָה אָנָּשִׁים, וּבַשֵּׁנִי קֹרֵא מִפֶּטִיר בְּפֶרֶשַׁת "כִּי תִשָּׂא" שֶׁבָּהּ נִאֲמָרָה מִצְוֶה מַחֲצִית הַשְּׁקָל.

Let's read these verses in the Torah, as they are read in synagogues about a month before the beginning of Nissan, to remind the people to give a half-shekel.

Counting the People With Money

Student's **Source 3** Exodus 30:11-16
pg. 3

G-d spoke to Moses, saying: "When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, let each one give to G-d an atonement for his soul when they are counted; then there will be no plague among them when they are counted. This they shall give, everyone who goes through the counting: half a shekel according to the holy shekel. Twenty gerahs equal one shekel; half of such a shekel shall be an offering to G-d.

Everyone who goes through the counting, from the age of twenty and upward, shall give an offering to G-d. The rich shall give no more, and the poor shall give no less than half a shekel, with which to give the offering to G-d, to atone for your souls. You shall take the silver of the atonements from the children of Israel and use it for the work of the Tent of Meeting; it shall be a remembrance for the children of Israel before G-d, to atone for your souls."

וַיִּדְבֹר ה' אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר: כִּי תִשָּׂא אֶת רֹאשׁ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם וְנָתַנוּ אִישׁ כֶּפֶר נַפְשׁוֹ לַה' בִּפְקֹד אֹתָם וְלֹא יִהְיֶה בָהֶם נֶגֶף בִּפְקֹד אֹתָם. זֶה יִתְּנוּ כָל-הָעֵבֶר עַל הַפְּקֻדִים מַחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל בַּשֶּׁקֶל הַקֹּדֶשׁ עֲשָׂרִים גֵּרָה הַשֶּׁקֶל מַחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל תְּרוּמָה לַה'.

כָּל הָעֵבֶר עַל הַפְּקֻדִים מִבֶּן עֲשָׂרִים שָׁנָה וּמַעְלָה יִתֵּן תְּרוּמַת ה'. הָעֲשִׂיר לֹא יִרְבֶּה וְהַדָּל לֹא יִמְעֹט מִמַּחֲצִית הַשֶּׁקֶל לְתֵת אֶת תְּרוּמַת ה' לְכַפֵּר עַל נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם. וְלִקְחֹתָ אֶת כֶּסֶף הַכֹּפָרִים מֵאֵת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְנָתַתָּ אוֹתוֹ עַל עֲבֹדַת אֹהֶל מוֹעֵד וְהָיָה לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לְזָכְרוֹן לִפְנֵי ה' לְכַפֵּר עַל נַפְשֹׁתֵיכֶם.

This portion was said to Moses during the Mishkan building campaign.

In the reading of Terumah, we read about a large collection of gold, silver, copper and other materials, and then detailed instructions on how to use those materials to build the Mishkan and its sacred vessels, how to sew the priestly garments and so on.

During all of this, G-d tells Moses that if he wants to count the people he should not do so in the normal way. Rather, he should count them with half-shekel coins. The money would go to fund the atonement offerings on everyone's behalf.

Moses immediately began a half-shekel drive for the purpose of a census count. With the proceeds, he built silver sockets for the wooden beams which made up the walls of the Mishkan.

Several months later, once the Mishkan was completed, Moses called a second half-shekel drive to count the Jews, and the proceeds went towards the communal offerings. In this way, every Jew became an equal partner in the communal sacrifices.

This collection drive became an annual tradition. Every year in the month of Adar a half-shekel was collected from every Jew. On the first of Nissan these funds would begin to be used for the sacrifices of the coming year, on behalf of the people as a whole.

The Reason: Preventing a Plague

In addition to fundraising for the Mishkan and the offerings, there's a warning here for future Jewish leaders: You may count the people, but not by a direct headcount. Rather, count an object that represents the person who gave it. The reason behind this prohibition is to prevent a plague that could occur as a result of the evil eye.

B. Kings Saul and David Count the Nation

>> The Rebbe

Inappropriate Expression

Student's The Talmud relates in Tractate Berachot
pg. 4 that because King David spoke about G-d inappropriately. "G-d said to him . . . I will cause you to trip up in a matter that even schoolchildren know, as the verse states: 'When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, let each one give to G-d an atonement for his soul.' Immediately after this incident with David, 'He incited David to number Israel.' "

במסכת ברכות¹ מסופר שכיוון שדוד התבטא כלפי הקב"ה באופן בלתי-רצוי, "אמר לו הקב"ה... הרי אני מכשילך בדבר שאפילו תינוקות של בית רבן יודעים אותו, דכתיב כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקודיהם ונתנו איש כופר נפשו וגו', מיד ויעמוד שטן על ישראל² וכתוב³ ויסת את דוד בהם לאמר לך מנה את ישראל".

The book of Samuel tells of Saul's pursuit of David and the attempts he made on David's life. In one attempt, Saul closed in on David's hiding place. David knew that Saul was in the vicinity and under the cover of darkness, he entered Saul's camp and took Saul's arrows and water container from his side as he slept. David made his way to the top of a nearby hill and began a dialogue with Saul, begging him to end his obsessive pursuit of him.

"If G-d incited you against me," David told Saul, "I will pray that he turns your negative plans to good."

The Talmud explains that G-d was - so to speak - "unhappy" that David used the term "incite," as though G-d was causing Saul to sin, and punished David measure for measure.

3. שמואל-ב כד, א.

1. סב, ב.
2. דברי הימים-א כא, א.

Source 4 Talmud Berachot 62b

Student's As for David's statement to Saul: "If it be G-d that
pg. 4 has incited you against me, let Him accept an offering" (I Samuel 26:19), Rabbi Elazar said that G-d, said to David: Do you call Me an inciter? In retribution, I will cause you to trip up in a matter that even schoolchildren know, as it is written: "When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, let each one give to G-d an atonement for his soul when they are counted; then there will be no plague among them when they are counted" (Exodus 30:12). Immediately after G-d said this to David, "Satan stood up against Israel" and "David was incited to count Israel" (I Chronicles 21:1). When David counted them, he did not take an atonement from them, and he was punished, as it is written: "So G-d sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning even to the appointed time" (II Samuel 24:15).

"אם ה' הסיתך בי ירח מנחה",
אמר רבי אלעזר: אמר ליה
הקדוש ברוך הוא לדוד: "מסית"
קרית לך? הרי אני מכשילך
בדבר שאפילו תינוקות של
בית רבן יודעים אותו. דכתיב:
"כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל
לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר
נפשו וגו'". מיד, "ויצמד שטן
על ישראל", וכתיב: "ויסת את
דוד בהם לאמר לך מנה את
ישראל". וכיון דמניניהו לא
שקל מינייהו כופר. דכתיב:
"ויתן ה' דבר בישראל, מהפקר
ועד עת מועד".

Years later, when David ruled over the Jewish people, he decided to take a census. The Torah doesn't give a reason as to why he chose to count them. It was a punishment for David's words years earlier, saying that G-d "incited" Saul, and now G-d "incited" David to count directly, triggering a plague that killed many.

The Count and the Consequence

Source 5 II Samuel 24:1-4, 9, 15, 17, 18

Student's (1) Again the anger of G-d was kindled against Israel
pg. 5 and He incited David against them, saying, "Go count Israel and Judah." (2) The king said to Yoav the commander of the army that was with him, "Go please, to and fro throughout all the tribes of Israel, from Dan as far as Be'er Sheva and take a census of the people, so that I may know the number of the people." (3) Yoav said to the king, "May the L-rd your G-d add to the people a hundredfold of whatsoever they may be, and the eyes of my lord, the king may see it; but my lord the king, why does he desire such a thing?"

ויסף אף ה' לחרות בישראל,
ויסת את דוד בהם לאמר: "לך
מנה את ישראל ואת יהודה".
ויאמר המלך אל יואב שר
החיל אשר אתו: "שוט נא בכל
שבטי ישראל, מן דן ועד באר
שבע, ופקדו את העם, וידעתי
את מספר העם. ויאמר יואב אל
המלך, ויוסף ה' א-להיך אל-
העם כהם וכהם מאה פעמים
ועיני אדני המלך ראות, ואדני
המלך למה חפץ בדבר הזה?"

(4) But the word of the king prevailed against Yoav, and against the captains of the army. Yoav and the captains of the army went out from the presence of the king, to number the people, the Israelites.

וַיַּחֲזֹק דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ אֶל יוֹאָב וְעַל שָׂרֵי הַחֵיל, וַיֵּצֵא יוֹאָב וְשָׂרֵי הַחֵיל לִפְנֵי הַמֶּלֶךְ לִפְקֹד אֶת הָעָם, אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל.

David's general, Yoav, tried talking David out of the census, but David insisted. Yoav had no choice, so he went out to all the Jewish towns and counted the people, and returned to David with the results:

(9) Yoav presented the sum of the number of the people to the king: Israel consisted of eight hundred thousand valiant men that drew the sword; and the men of Judah were five hundred thousand men.

וַיָּתֵן יוֹאָב אֶת-מִסְפַּר מִפְּקֹד הָעָם אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ, וַתְּהִי יִשְׂרָאֵל שְׁמֹנֶה מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף אִישׁ חֵיל שְׁלֹף חֶרֶב וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה חֲמֵשׁ-מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף אִישׁ.

The punishment comes:

(15) G-d sent a pestilence upon Israel from the morning until the appointed time; from Dan to Beer Sheva, 70,000 people died.

וַיָּתֵן ה' דָּבָר בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל, מִהַבְּקָר וְעַד עֵת מוֹעֵד. וַיָּמָת מִן הָעָם מִדָּן וְעַד בְּאֵר שֶׁבַע שֶׁבַע שָׂבָעִים אֶלֶף אִישׁ.

(17) David said to G-d when he saw the angel that smote the people, and he said, "Behold I have sinned, and have acted sinfully; but these sheep, what have they done? I beg that Your hand be against me, and against my father's house." (18) Gad came to David on that day, and said to him, "Go up to erect an altar to G-d in the threshing-floor of Aravnah the Jebusite."

וַיֹּאמֶר דָּוִד אֶל ה' בְּרֹאאוֹ אֶת הַמִּלְאָה הַמַּכָּה בָּעָם וַיֹּאמֶר: "הִנֵּה אֲנֹכִי חָטָאתִי וְאֲנֹכִי הִעֲוִיתִי, וְאַלֶּה הַצֹּאן מָה עָשׂוּ? תְּהִי נָא יָדְךָ בִּי וּבְבֵית אָבִי." וַיָּבֹא גָד אֶל דָּוִד בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא, וַיֹּאמֶר לוֹ: "עֲלֵה הָקֵם לָהּ מִזְבֵּחַ בָּגֶרֶן אֲרֻנָּה הַיְּבֻסִּי."

The prophet tells David to erect an altar on the site of the future Temple, and the plague would stop.

>> The Rebbe

Proper Counting

The Talmud in Tractate Yoma states: "It is forbidden to directly count Israel even for a mitzvah purpose. As the verse states regarding King Saul, 'And he counted them with bezek' (interpreting bezek as "shards," meaning that every person laid out a shard and they counted the shards)."

ובמסכת יומא⁴ שנינו: "אסור למנות את ישראל אפילו לדבר מצוה, דכתיב⁵ ויפקדם בבזק (לשון שברי חרסים, נטל כל אחד ואחד חרס והשליך לפניו ומנו החרסים).

Student's
pg. 6

Rav Ashi objects to this interpretation of the verse, arguing: "What is your source that the word bezek is related to the verb meaning to break apart, so that it means shards? Perhaps it is the name of a town, and it means that Saul counted them in Bezek, as another verse states, 'And they found Adoni-bezek in Bezek.' " [The Gemara answers] "Rather, the proof is from this verse, 'And Saul summoned the people and numbered them by sheep' (meaning that Saul tallied his soldiers by having each one take a sheep and then counting the sheep)."

Source 6 | Samuel 11:1-8

Student's
pg. 6

Nachash the Amonite went up and camped against Yavesh-Gilead. And all the people of Yavesh-Gilead said to Nachash, "Make a treaty with us, and we shall serve you." Nachash the Amonite said to them, "On this (condition) will I make a treaty with you, by gouging out the right eye of every one of you, and I shall make it an insult against all of Israel."

Student's
pg. 7

The elders of Yavesh said to him, "Give us seven days respite, that we may send messengers throughout the entire border of Israel, and if there is no one to save us, we shall come out to you." The messengers came to Givat of Saul, and spoke the words in the ears of the people. And the people raised their voices and cried. Behold, Saul came after the cattle from the field. And Saul said, "What is troubling the people, that they cry?" And they told him the words of the people of Yavesh.

A spirit of God passed over Saul when he heard these words, and his wrath was kindled greatly. He took a pair of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout the entire border of Israel in the hand of the messengers, saying, "Whosoever does not go forth after Saul and after Samuel, so shall be done to his oxen," and a fear from G-d fell upon the people, and they went forth as one man.

מקשה על כך רב אשי: מנין ש"בזק" זה שבכתוב לשון שבירה הוא? ושם עיר הוא, כמו שנאמר "וימצאו את אדני בזק בבזק" (שופטים א, ה) הרי שבזק שם מקום הוא! אלא מכאן הראיה: נאמר: "וישמע" שאול את העם ויפקדם בטלאים" (שמואל א' טו, ד), הרי שלא מנה אותם אלא את הטלאים, שכל אחד נטל טלה מעדר המלך והעמידו במקומו.

ויעל נחש העמוני ויחן על יבש גלעד, ויאמרו כל אנשי יבש אל נחש כרת לנו ברית ונעבדה. ויאמר אליהם נחש העמוני, בואת אכרת לכם בנקור לכם כל עין ימין ושמתייה חרפה על כל ישראל.

ויאמרו אליו זקני יבש הרף לנו שבעת ימים ונשלחה מלאכים בכל גבול ישראל ואם אין מושיע אתנו ויצאנו אליה. ויבאו המלאכים גבעת שאול וידברו הדברים באזני העם וישאו כל העם את קולם ויבכו. והנה שאול בא אחרי הבקר מן השדה, ויאמר שאול, "מה לכם כי יבכו?". ויספרו לו את דברי אנשי יבש.

ותצלח רוח א-להים על שאול כשמעו את הדברים האלה, ויחר אפו מאד. ויקח צמד בקר וינתחהו, וישלח בכל גבול ישראל ביד המלאכים לאמר: אשר איננו יצא אחרי שאול ואחר שמואל – כה יעשה לבקרו. ויפל פחד ה' על העם, ויצאו כאיש אחד.

Nachash threatens to go to war with the Jews, but he's ready to make a treaty on one condition: that he gouges out the right eye of every Jew. The people run to Saul, begging him to save them, and Saul gathers his army and vanquishes Nachash.

Before going to war, he had to count his troops. He did so like this:

Student's
pg. 7

He counted them in Bezek, and the children of Israel were three hundred thousand, and the men of Judah thirty thousand.

וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּבֶזֶק, וַיְהִיו בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
שְׁלֹשׁ מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וְאִישׁ יְהוּדָה
שְׁלֹשִׁים אֶלֶף.

Rashi:

Student's
pg. 7

He counted them in Bezek: The sages say this means clay shards. Others say it means stones; he took a stone from each person and counted the stones.

וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּבֶזֶק. רַבּוֹתֵינוּ אָמְרוּ
(יִזְמָא כב ב): בְּשִׁבְרֵי חֲרָסִים.
לְשׁוֹן אַחֵר: בְּבֶזֶק, בְּאַבְנִים,
שֶׁנֶּטַל מִכָּל אֶחָד אֶבֶן וּמִנָּאֵם.

Source 7 | Samuel 15:1-4

Student's
pg. 8

Samuel said to Saul, "G-d sent me to anoint you to be king over His people, over Israel; and now listen to the voice of the words of G-d. So said the L-rd of Hosts, 'I remember what Amalek did to Israel, how he ambushed him on the way, when he came up out of Egypt. Now, go, and you shall smite Amalek, and you shall utterly destroy all that is his, and you shall not have pity on him: and you shall slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and donkey.' " Saul called the people together, and he counted them in Telaim, two hundred thousand footmen, and ten thousand were the men of Judah.

וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁמוּאֵל אֶל שָׁאוּל:
"אַתָּה שָׁלַח ה' לְמַשְׁחָה לְמִלְחָה
עַל עַמּוֹ עַל יִשְׂרָאֵל, וְעַתָּה
שָׁמַע לְקוֹל דְּבָרֵי ה': כֹּה אָמַר
ה' צָבָאוֹת פִּקְדָתִי אֶת אֲשֶׁר
עָשָׂה עִמָּלֶק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל, אֲשֶׁר
שָׁם לוֹ בְּדֶרֶךְ בַּעֲלֹתוֹ מִמִּצְרָיִם.
עַתָּה לָךְ, וְהִכִּיתָה אֶת-עִמָּלֶק...
וַיִּשְׁמַע שָׁאוּל אֶת הָעָם וַיִּפְקְדֵם
בְּטַלַּיִם, מֵאֲתִים אֶלֶף רַגְלִי
וַעֲשֵׂרֶת אֲלָפִים אֶת אִישׁ יְהוּדָה.

Rashi:

Student's
pg. 8

He counted them with sheep: He instructed them all to take a sheep from the king's flock and then he counted the sheep, because it is forbidden to count the Jews, as the verse says, "You will not be able to count them due to their great number," (Genesis 32:12).

וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּטַלַּיִם. אָמַר לָכֵן
אֶחָד וְאֶחָד, שֶׁיִּקַּח טָלָה מִצֹּאֲנוֹ
שֶׁל מֶלֶךְ, וְאַחֵר כֶּךָ מִנֶּה אֶת
הַטַּלַּיִם, לְפִי שֶׁאִסּוּר לְמִנּוֹת
אֶת יִשְׂרָאֵל, שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר בָּם
(בְּרֵאשִׁית לב יב): לֹא יִסְפָּר
מֶרֶב.

When preparing for war with Amalek, Saul needed to count the Jewish people and he did so indirectly. He told each one to take a sheep from the royal flocks and put it aside and then he counted the sheep.

C. Two Kinds of Counting

>> The Rebbe

Student's The question can be asked:
pg. 9

Why does the Talmud in Yoma derive the prohibition against counting the Jewish people from the verse regarding Saul, "and he counted them with bezek," or "and he counted them with sheep"? Why not derive it from the verse, "When you take the sum of the children of Israel according to their numbers, let each one give to G-d an atonement for his soul," as the Talmud does in Berachot? Deriving the law from a verse in the Torah rather than from a verse in Prophets would make the law Biblical in status, and this verse is something that "even schoolchildren know."

ולכאורה אינו מובן ⁸:

מהו הטעם שבמסכת יומא למדים האיסור למנות את ישראל ממה שכתוב בשאול "ויפקדם בבזק" או "ויפקדם בטלאים", ולא ממה שכתוב "כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקדיהם ונתנו איש כפר נפשו גו", כמו במסכת ברכות - בה בשעה שהלימוד מהפסוק "כי תשא גו" הוא "דברי תורה", ואם כן, הרי זה איסור מן התורה (ולא רק מדברי קבלה, כמו הפסוקים "ויפקדם בבזק" או "ויפקדם בטלאים"), והוא "דבר שאפילו תינוקות של בית רבן יודעים אותו"?

The Talmud in Berachot relates how King David erred in counting the people, even though it was something that every schoolchild knows from the explicit verse in the Torah. But then the Talmud in Yoma states that it's forbidden to count the Jewish people, but derives this law from the story of Saul in Prophets. Why? There's an explicit verse in the Torah about this! The Talmud in Berachot mentions the verse, so why does the Talmud in Yoma need stories about Saul to prove the point?

Student's pg. 9 Moreover, the verse regarding Saul "he counted them with bezek" or "he counted them with sheep" is not a new law that was first established in the time of Saul. If it was, it wouldn't be binding on King David, who would be entitled to a different opinion. Rather, Saul's conduct was based on the verse "When you take the sum . . . they shall give every man a ransom for his soul." If so, why does the Talmud derive this law from the story of King Saul and not from the verse King Saul himself based it on?

ועוד ועיקר: מה שכתוב בשאול "ויפקדם בבזק" או "ויפקדם בטלאים" - הרי אין זה חידוש שנתחדש בבית דינו של שאול, שאין זה מחייב את בית דינו של דוד שיכולים לסבור באופן אחר (כפי שמצינו שהיו חלוקים ביניהם כו'), אלא הנהגת שאול באופן כזה הייתה בגלל מה שכתוב "כי תשא את ראש בני ישראל לפקודיהם ונתנו איש כופר נפשו גו'", ואם כן, למה למדים האיסור מהנהגת שאול, ולא מהפסוק "כי תשא גו' ונתנו איש כופר נפשו" עצמו?!

If the source of the law would just be from Saul's conduct, then David would be entitled to disagree. The real source for the counting law is explicit in the Torah. Why then does the Talmud choose to derive it from the Saul stories?

Mitzvah and Non-Mitzvah Counting

Student's pg. 10 To answer this question we must adopt the approach of the commentators who distinguish between a census for a mitzvah purpose and counting for a non-mitzvah purpose.

The Talmud in Yoma explicitly states "it is forbidden to count the Jewish people, even for a mitzvah purpose." The Talmud therefore brings the verses "he counted them with bezek" and "he counted them with sheep," which were stated in the context of the wars—mitzvah purposes. The Talmud did not quote the verse "when you take the sum" as the source because that verse is stated in the context of non-mitzvah purposes. The non-mitzvah meaning can be deduced from the term "when you take," which Rashi explains means "when you wish to know their number," referring to a choice made at Moses's discretion.

ובהכרח לומר כדברי המפרשים⁹ שמחלקים בין דבר מצוה לדבר הרשות:

במסכת יומא נאמר במפורש "אסור למנות את ישראל אפילו לדבר מצוה", ועל זה הובאו הפסוקים "ויפקדם בבזק" "ויפקדם בטלאים", שמנינים אלו היו לצורך המלחמה - "לדבר מצוה"; ולכן לא הובא שם הפסוק "כי תשא גו'", שעוסק במנין שאינו דבר מצוה אלא רשות, כמשמעות לשון הכתוב "כי תשא", וכפי שמדייק רש"י: "כשתחפוץ .. לדעת כמה הם", והיינו, שזהו דבר הרשות שתלוי ברצונו של משה.

⁹ראה עירובין נג, סע"א. סנהדרין יט, ב. הובא בתוד"ה יוסי - חגיגה טז, א.

⁸ראה חידושי הלכות גדולות מהרש"א יומא שם. באר שבע תמיד כח, א.

Student's The census during the time of King David
pg. 10 was also not for a mitzvah purpose, and that is why the Talmud in Berachot quotes the verse "when you take the sum" as a source. The discretionary nature of David's count is evident from the fact that his general Yoav argued with David and asserted that the census wasn't necessary.

ובאופן כזה היה גם המניין בימי דוד (שמזכיר רש"י בהמשך פירושו), שעל זה מביאה הגמרא בברכות את הפסוק "כי תשא גו'" - שמנין זה לא היה לצורך מצוה, כפי שמוכח מזה שיואב התווכח עם דוד וטען שאין צורך למנות את בני ישראל, ועל כן צריך לומר שמנין זה היה באופן של רשות.

There are two types of censuses: a count for a mitzvah purpose, and a discretionary count, carried out at the king's desire. The Torah's verse "When you take the sum of the Children of Israel" which forbids a direct count is referring to a discretionary census. Therefore, the Talmud cites this verse as a source for the prohibition against direct counting when discussing David's census, which was also a discretionary count.

But the above sources don't address a census for a mitzvah purpose. Perhaps such a count may be carried out directly? Only the stories about Saul's counts, which were for the mitzvah purpose of counting the soldiers going out to necessary wars, can serve as proof that even a mitzvah count must be performed indirectly. This is why the Talmud in Yoma cites the Saul stories, because it seeks to establish the prohibition of direct counting even for mitzvah purposes.

Why Count?

Student's We explained, based on Rashi, that our
pg. 10 Torah portion is addressing a census carried out at Moses's discretion. This raises a question:

אמנם, על פי האמור לעיל שמדובר כאן אודות מנין בני ישראל שתלוי ברצונו של משה, כלשון רש"י "כשתחפוץ .. לדעת כמה הם" - אינו מובן:

Student's A census carries the risk of triggering
pg. 11 a plague, and neutralizing that danger requires specific steps. How is it then that Moses, the faithful shepherd of the Jewish people, independently chose to carry out a census, despite the associated risk?

כיצד יתכן שמשה רבינו, רועה נאמן, "רעיא מהימנא", יחפוץ למנות את בני ישראל, בה בשעה שענין המנין כשלעצמו כרוך עם סכנה של נגף¹⁰, שלכן צריכים לחפש עצה ש"לא יהיה נגף"!!

עוונותיו של אדם .. עיון תפלה", כיון שע"ז "מפשפשים למעלה במעשיו כו" (פרש"י שם).

10. בזכרון אחדים, שנתבאר, שהסכנה שע"י ענין המנין היא - ע"ד מאד"ל (ברכות נה, רע"א) "שלשה דברים מזכירים

The explanation: The verse at the beginning of the portion of Shemot states, "these are the names of the Children of Israel who came to Egypt." Rashi comments, "although they were counted earlier in the portion of Vayigash, they are counted again here in order to show their preciousness." Counting out the people expresses the importance of each individual, without any distinction between great people and ordinary folk—all are counted equally.

We can extrapolate from this to Moses's count of the Jewish people. Moses counted them in order to show their preciousness to G-d.

G-d counted the Children of Israel once in the portion of Vayigash, and then for a second time in Shemot, after they had gone down to Egypt. Rashi asks why G-d counted the Jewish people again, and explains that it is an expression of G-d's love for the Jewish people. Moses learned from G-d to count the people, in order to express their preciousness.

Responding to Moses's intentions, G-d said "When you wish to know their number, don't do a direct headcount. Rather, every person should contribute a half-shekel, and when you count the shekels you will get the number of the people. When the count is carried out according to this process, the risk of a plague is neutralized.

והביאור בזה: על הפסוק¹¹ ואלה שמות בני ישראל הבאים מצרימה", מפרש רש"י: "אף-על-פי שמנאן .. (בפרשת ויגש¹²) חזר ומנאן .. להודיע חיבתן כו'". וכמבואר בזה¹³, שענין המנין מדגיש את החשיבות של כל אחד מישראל ללא חילוק בין גדול במעלה לאיש פשוט, שכולם נימנים בשווה.

ומזה מובן גם בנוגע למשה רבינו - שיחפוץ למנות את בני ישראל כדי לעורר ולגלות את חיבתן לפני המקום.

ועל זה אמר לו הקב"ה: "כשתחפוץ לקבל סכום מנינם לדעת כמה הם, אל תמנם לגולגולת, אלא יתנו כל אחד מחצית השקל, ותמנה את השקלים ותדע מנינם", וכאשר המנין יהיה באופן כזה, אזי "לא יהיה בהם נגף גו'".

משיחת שבת פרשת תשא ה'תשכ"ה, בלתי מוגה.
תורת מנחם, כרך מ"ב, עמ' 284 ואילך.

13. ראה גם לעיל ע' 116. וש"נ.

11. ר"פ שמות.
12. מו, ח ואילך.

D. Is There a Tenth?

>> The Rebbe

Student's It is forbidden to count the Jewish people directly, even when it is done for a mitzvah purpose, as the Alter Rebbe, the founder of Chabad, rules in his Code of Jewish Law. We see this expressed in the count that was done for the purpose of determining who would perform the day's service in the Temple. Rather than counting the priests, the officer would announce, "Raise your fingers. Each priest would raise as many fingers as they wished and the officer would count the fingers." The reason why they would count fingers rather than the priests themselves is because it is forbidden to count the Jewish people directly. Counting must be done indirectly, as the verse says, "He counted them with sheep."

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והנה, בנוגע למנין בני ישראל - "אסור למנות את ישראל... אלא מוציאים אצבעותיהם ומונים האצבעות", וזאת - אפילו כאשר מדובר אודות מנין לצורך דבר מצוה, כפסק-דין אדמו"ר הזקן בשולחן ערוך¹⁴. וההוכחה לדבר - מאופן המנין עבור הפיס לעבודה בבית המקדש, שלא היו מונים את הכהנים עצמם, אלא "הממונה אומר הצביעו. והן מוציאים אצבעותיהן... ומונה על אצבעותיהן"¹⁵, וטעם הדבר, "למה מונה המניין... על האצבעות שהוציאו ולא היה מונה על האנשים עצמן. לפי שאסור למנות ישראל אלא על ידי דבר אחר. שנאמר ויפקדם בטלאים"¹⁶.

The service in the Holy Temple was run by the Kohanim, the priests, the messengers of the Jewish people. Being that all the Kohanim present wanted to work on the Altar, a lottery was needed to choose who would serve there. How was the lottery done?

16. (שם הלכה ד')

14. אורח-חיים סימן קנ"ו סעיף ט"ו
15. (רמב"ם הלכות תמידין פרק ד' הלכה ג')

Source 8 Maimonides' Mishneh Torah, Temidin U'musafim 4:1, 3-4

Student's All of these services that were performed in the
pg. 12 Temple every day were performed on the basis of a lottery. How would they conduct themselves? All of the priests of the clan of that day enter the Chamber of Hewn Stone after dawn, while garbed in the priestly garments. The priest appointed to supervise the lotteries stands with them and they stand in a semicircle. The supervisor takes a hat from one of the priests and returns it to him. This marks the person from whom they will begin to count and thus determine the lottery, as will be explained.

Student's How would the lottery be carried out? The priests
pg. 13 would stand in a semicircle. They would decide on a number, e.g., 80, 100, 1000, or any other number that they would choose. Afterwards, the supervisor says: "Stick out your fingers" and they would stick out one or two fingers ... The supervisor begins counting from the priest who was identified by the removal of his hat. They count on their fingers and then repeat until they reach the number they agreed upon. The person upon whose finger the counting was completed is the one who is chosen in the first lottery for the Temple service.

Why do they count the number they have agreed upon by the fingers they stuck out instead of counting the people themselves? Because it is forbidden to count Jews except via another object, as I Samuel 15:4 states: "And he counted them with sheep."

כָּל הָעֲבוֹדוֹת הָאֵלּוּ שְׁעוֹשִׁין בְּכָל יוֹם – בְּפִסֵּס הָיוּ עוֹשִׂין אוֹתָן. וְכִיצַד הָיוּ עוֹשִׂין? כָּל כֹּהֲנֵי בְּתֵי אָבוֹת שֶׁל יוֹם נִכְנָסִין לְלִשְׁכַּת הַגְּזִית אַחֵר שִׁיעֲלָה עֲמוּד הַשָּׁחַר, וּמִלְבָּשֵׁין הֵן בְּבִגְדֵי כֹהֵנָה. וְהַמְמַנֶּה שֶׁעַל הַפִּסִּסוֹת עֲמָהֵן וְהֵן עוֹמְדִין בְּהֶקְפָּה וְהַמְמַנֶּה נוֹטֵל מִצְנַפְתּוֹ מֵעַל רֹאשׁוֹ שֶׁל אֶחָד מֵהֶן וּמַחְזִירָהּ וְהוּא הָאִישׁ שֶׁמִּתְחִילִין לְמִנּוֹת מִמֶּנּוּ וּמְפִסִּין כָּמוֹ שִׁיתְבָּאָר:

כִּיצַד מְפִסִּין? עוֹמְדִין בְּהֶקְפָּה וּמְסַבִּימִין עַל מִנְּהֵן שְׁמוֹנִים מֵאָה אוֹ אֶלֶף אוֹ כָּל מִנְּהֵן שֶׁיִּסְבִּימוּ עָלָיו. וְהַמְמַנֶּה אוֹמֵר לָהֶם: הִצְבִּיעוּ! וְהֵן מוֹצִיִּאִין אֶצְבָּעוֹתֵיהֶן אַחַת אוֹ שְׁתֵּים... וּמִתְחִיל הַמְמַנֶּה לְמִנּוֹת מִן הָאִישׁ הַיָּדוּעַ שֶׁהִסִּיר מִצְנַפְתּוֹ תְּחִלָּה. וּמוֹנֶה עַל אֶצְבָּעוֹתֵיהֶן וְחוֹזֵר חֲלִילָה, עַד שִׁשְׁלִים הַמִּנְּהֵן שֶׁהִסְבִּימוּ עָלָיו, וְהָאִישׁ שֶׁשָּׁלַם הַמִּנְּהֵן אֶצֶל אֶצְבָּעוֹ הוּא שִׁיִּצֵּא בְּפִסֵּס רִאשׁוֹן לְעִבּוּדָהּ.

וְלָמָּה מוֹנֶה הַמִּנְּהֵן שֶׁהִסְבִּימוּ עָלָיו עַל הָאֶצְבָּעוֹת שֶׁהוֹצִיאוּ וְלֹא הִיָּה מוֹנֶה עַל הָאֲנָשִׁים עֲצָמָן? לְפִי שְׁאָסוּר לְמִנּוֹת יִשְׂרָאֵל אֲלָא עַל יְדֵי דְבָר אַחֵר שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (שְׁמוּאֵל א טו ד) "וַיִּפְקְדֵם בְּטֹלָאִים".

>> The Rebbe

Practical Ramifications

Student's The purpose of the contribution of the half-shekel was in order to not count the people directly, but rather do so through their half-shekel contributions. The count of the people would be deduced from the sum of shekels.
pg. 13

For the same reason, when we need to count if there is a minyan of ten present for prayers, we don't count the people directly. There are various alternative methods: either we count "not one," "not two," etc., or we count by reciting a verse that has ten words. One word is said for every person present, and when the verse is finished we know that the minyan is complete.

וזהו גם כללות הענין של מנין בני-ישראל על-ידי נתינת "מחצית השקל" - שלא ספרו את בני-ישראל עצמם, כי אם את ה"מחצית השקל" שנתן כל אחד ואחד מישראל, ועל-ידי זה ידעו את מספרם של בני-ישראל.

ולכן, כאשר רוצים לדעת אם יש "מנין" (עשרה יהודים) כדי לומר דבר שבקדושה - לא מונים את האנשים עצמם, אלא עושים זאת באופנים שונים: או שאומרים 'לא אחד', 'לא שנים', וכן הלאה, או על-ידי אמירת פסוק שיש בו עשר מילים - מילה אחת לכל יהודי, וכאשר מסיימים את הפסוק יודעים שיש מנין.

Ten-Word Verses

Student's Rashi writes in Sefer Hapardes: "When we gather in the synagogue and wish to know if there are ten present, the rule is that we do not count directly, even for this mitzvah purpose. The count should be done by reciting the words of the verse, 'And I, through Your abundant kindness, come into Your house; I bow toward Your holy sanctuary in awe of You,' saying one word for each person present. When the verse (which has ten words in Hebrew) is concluded we know that ten are present."
pg. 14

וכמו שכתוב בספר 'הפרדס' לרש"י¹⁷: "כאשר מתכנסים לבית הכנסת ורוצים לדעת האם יש עשרה, מוחזק לנו שאסור למנות אפילו לדבר מצוה. וכך לעשות ולמנות: 'אחד' - 'ואני', 'שתיים' - 'ברוב', וכו' (הפסוק 'ואני ברוב חסדך אבוא ביתך אשתחוה אל היכל קדשך ביראתך', שיש בו עשר מילים), וכאשר מסיימים את הפסוק יודעים שיש עשרה.

Student's However, in the Concise Code of Jewish Law it says: "It is customary to count the assembled through the verse 'Grant salvation to Your people and bless Your heritage; tend them and exalt them forever,' which has ten words [in Hebrew]."

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What is the reason for the change of verse? The rationale for Rashi's verse is clear, because it includes the words "come into Your house," which refers to the synagogue. It makes sense that when we gather in the synagogue to pray to G-d we should use a verse on this theme. Why then was the change made to use the verse "Grant salvation to Your people?"

והנה, בקיצור שולחן-ערוך¹⁸ מובא ש"נוהגים למנותם באמירת הפסוק הושיעה את עמך וגו'. שיש בו עשרה תיבות."

ולכאורה צריך עיון מהו המקור לדבריו? הרי מפורש בספר הפרדס לרש"י שמונים בפסוק "ואני ברוב חסדך כו!" וכמובן בפשטות טעם הדבר (שמונים בפסוק זה דווקא) - מכיוון ש"אבוא ביתך" נסוב על בית-הכנסת, כמו שכתוב "כי ביתי בית תפלה". ולכן, כאשר יהודים באים לבית-הכנסת כדי להתפלל לקדוש-ברוך-הוא, אזי מונין בפסוק שתוכנו מתאים לבואם לבית הכנסת: "ואני ברוב חסדך אבוא ביתך גו". ועל-פי-זה, צריך עיון מהו המקור למנהג למנות בפסוק "הושיעה את עמך כו"?

Grant Salvation to Your People

Student's Indeed, the verse "And I, through Your abundant kindness, come into Your house" is more topical. However, the latest generations are the era preceding the arrival of Mashiach, during which we experience a great darkness, as the appropriate time for Mashiach's arrival has already come. When ten Jews gather together, G-d's presence is felt, as explained in Tanya, ch. 23. This Divine presence is found even when the people aren't discussing Torah matters, and it is all the more present when they are gathering in the synagogue to pray to G-d. Therefore, the people's first request at this auspicious gathering is "Grant salvation to Your people and bless Your heritage; tend them and exalt them forever." This is why the custom has developed to use this verse, because it gives voice to the prayer of the

pg. 15

והביאור: מצד תוכן העניין של בית-הכנסת, מתאים יותר למנות בפסוק "ואני ברוב חסדך אבוא ביתך כו", מכיוון שבפסוק זה מדובר אודות בואו של היהודי לבית-הכנסת - "אבוא ביתך כו". אבל אף-על-פי-כן, בדורות האחרונים דעקבתא דמשיחא, חושך כפול ומכופל דזמן הגלות, לאחר ששכר מזמן "כלו כל הקיצין" - אזי כאשר עשרה מישראל מתאספים יחדיו שאז מורגש העניין של השראת השכינה, כמבואר באגרת הקודש¹⁹ גודל העילוי דהשראת השכינה במעמד עשרה מישראל, אף שאינם מדברים בדברי תורה, ועל אחת כמה וכמה כאשר מתאספים לבית-הכנסת כדי להתפלל לקדוש ברוך הוא, הנה לכל לראש מבקשים הם: "הושיעה

Student's Jewish people for the redemption, "Grant
pg. 15 salvation to Your people!"

May we merit the speedy fulfillment of our prayer and request "Grant salvation to Your people and bless Your heritage; tend them and exalt them forever" in the true and complete redemption through the righteous Mashiach. May it be in the most speedy fashion.

את עמך וברך את נחלתך ורעם ונשאם עד העולם!" ולכן נהגו למנות בפסוק זה דווקא - מכיוון שבו מתבטאת בקשתם של בני-ישראל על כללות ענין הגאולה: "הושיעה את עמך גו!"

ויהי רצון שבקרוב ממש תקויים תפלתם ובקשתם של בני-ישראל: "הושיעה את עמך וברך את נחלתך ורעם ונשאם עד העולם" - גאולה האמיתית והשלמה על-ידי משיח צדקנו, באופן ד"אחישנה" ב"אחישנה" גופא.

משיחת שבת פרשת ויקהל-פקודי ה'תשמ"ג
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