

Bamidbar, Yom Yerushalyim, Shavuos

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DO NOT “KNOW THYSELF”

Dedications:

Varda Birenbaum - for a refuah shelaima for her friend

Rivky Jungreis - Thank you to Hakadosh Baruch Hu and for continued good health for Godel Yehuda b Roizel and a refuah shelaimah b'karov l'cholei Yisrael.

Tamar Rabinowitz - L'iluy nishmat her mother Mirka Miriam bat Reuven

Joclyn Stern - In loving memory of my beloved mother Chaya Zlata bas Shaul & Idel on her 14th yarzheit.

As a child of the Great Depression, her mother learned the value of things & developed a strong Emunah. With only a Talmud Torah education because her parents could only send the boys to Yeshiva she learned mostly from her mother. She remained the only shomer Shabbos of her 4 siblings. Her mother was a strong believer in women learning & was an active member in our shuls, schools & women's organizations in New York & after retirement in Israel. She & her father were zocheh to realize their dream of Aliyah 36 years ago.

Know thyself means to understand your limits, the limitations of what you know and what you can perform. “Thou art mortal” is another way of expressing this concept, somewhat akin to the Delphic one, but with less fatalism.

A. Magical Numbers

Bamidbar 1: 45-46

וַיְהִי כֹל-פְקוּדֵי בְנֵי-יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם מִבֶּן עֶשְׂרִים שָׁנָה וְמַעְלָה כָּל-יִצְאָ צָבָא בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

All the Israelite males, aged twenty years and over, enrolled by ancestral houses, **all those in Israel who were able to bear arms—**

וַיְהִיו כָּל־הַפְּקֻדִים שְׁש־מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים:
all who were enrolled came to **603,550**.

The total population of Jews in Israel at the time of its establishment was 649,600 .

Bamidbar 2: 32-34

600k, not including the Leviim

אֵלֶּה פְּקֻדֵי בְּנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל לְבֵית אֲבֹתָם כָּל־פְּקֻדֵי הַמַּחֲנֶה לְצַבָּאתָם שְׁש־מֵאוֹת אֶלֶף וּשְׁלֹשֶׁת אֲלָפִים וַחֲמִשׁ מֵאוֹת וַחֲמִשִּׁים:

Those are the enrollments of the Israelites by ancestral houses. The total enrolled in the divisions, for all troops: **603,550**.

וְהַלְוִיִּם לֹא הִתְּפַקְדוּ בְּתוֹךְ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה:

The Levites, however, were not recorded among the Israelites, as ה' had commanded Moses.

וַיַּעֲשׂוּ בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל כְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה ה' אֶת־מֹשֶׁה כִּן־חָנּוּ לְדַגְלֵיהֶם וְכִן נָסְעוּ אִישׁ לְמִשְׁפַּחְתּוֹ עַל־בֵּית אֲבֹתָיו:

The Israelites did accordingly; just as ה' had commanded Moses, so they camped by their standards, and so they marched, each man with his clan according to his ancestral house.

B. More Magic

Bamidbar 3: 39-43

כָּל־פְּקֻדֵי הַלְוִיִּם אֲשֶׁר־פָּקַד מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן עַל־פִּי ה' לְמִשְׁפַּחְתָּם כָּל־זָכָר מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וָמַעְלָה שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף:

All the Levites who were recorded, whom at ה's command Moses and Aaron recorded by their clans, all the males from the age of one month up, came to **22,000**.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל־מֹשֶׁה פְּקֹד כָּל־בְּכֹר זָכָר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מִבֶּן־חֹדֶשׁ וָמַעְלָה וְשָׂא אֶת מִסְפָּר שְׁמֹתָם:

ה' said to Moses: Record every first-born male of the Israelite people from the age of one month up, and make a list of their names;

וְלָקַחְתָּ אֶת־הַלְוִיִּם לִי אֲנִי ה' תַּחַת כָּל־בְּכֹר בְּבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְאֵת בְּהֵמַת הַלְוִיִּם תַּחַת כָּל־בְּכוֹר בְּבִהֶמַת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

and take the Levites for Me, יהוה, in place of every male first-born among the Israelite people, and the cattle of the Levites in place of every male first-born among the cattle of the Israelites.

וַיִּפְקֹד מֹשֶׁה כְּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּהָה אֲתוֹ אֶת-כָּל-בְּכוֹר בְּבִנְיֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל:

So Moses recorded all the male first-born among the Israelites, as ה had commanded him.

וַיְהִי כָל-בְּכוֹר זָכָר בְּמִסְפָּר שְׁמֹת מִבֶּן-חֹדֶשׁ וּמַעְלָה לִפְקֻדֵיהֶם שְׁנַיִם וְעֶשְׂרִים אֶלֶף שְׁלֹשָׁה וּשְׁבַעִים וּמֵאָתָיִם: {פ}

All the first-born males as listed by name, recorded from the age of one month and up, came to **22,273**.

C. Math time:

22,273 first borns= < 3.7 percent of 603,550 adult men (20-60)

Less than 3.7% of the fighting force were first born males!

This means that a huge percentage of first borns in the 19 to 59 years before the Geulah were girls!!

This was in order to ensure that the numbers of first born males and the number of leviim were almost equal.

The *entire tribe of Levi* was <3.7 % of the adult male population.

Out of 22,300 leviim, , 8,580 were between 30-50 , the age required to work in the Mishkan-

8,580 is 39% of 22,000.

So for 20 years, specifically 29-49 years before the Geulah, 8,580 leviim were born within a tribe that otherwise was very small in numbers. Levi was much smaller than the other tribes because they did not receive the bracha of "6 at one time" . This bracha was only for those who were enslaved.

Hashem is working through us, we are the vehicles through which hashem will bring humanity to its destiny

This is the extreme opposite of
"My body My choice"

D. Learning about “ani”

1. Devarim 4:9-10

רָק הַשְּׁמֵר לָךְ וְשָׁמַר נְפֶשְׁךָ מֵאֵד פְּנֵי־תִשְׁכַּח אֶת־הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר־רָאוּ עֵינֶיךָ וּפְנֵי־יְסוּרוֹ מִלְּבַבְךָ כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ וְהוֹדַעְתָּם לְבְנֶיךָ וּלְבְנֵי בְנֵיךָ:

But take utmost care and watch yourselves scrupulously, so that you do not forget the things that you saw with your own eyes and so that they do not fade from your mind as long as you live. And make them known to your children and to your children's children:

יוֹם אֲשֶׁר עָמַדְתָּ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּחַרְבַּבְּאֵמֶר ה' אֵלַי הִקְהֵל־לִי אֶת־הָעָם וְאֶשְׁמַעֵם אֶת־דְּבָרֵי אֲשֶׁר יִלְמְדוּן לִירְאָה אֹתִי כֹל־הַיָּמִים אֲשֶׁר הֵם חַיִּים עַל־הָאֲדָמָה וְאֶת־בְּנֵיהֶם יִלְמְדוּן:

The day you stood before your God יהוה at Horeb, when יהוה said to me, “Gather the people to Me that I may let them hear My words, in order that they may learn to revere Me as long as they live on earth, and may so teach their children.”

2. Ramban Devarim 4:9

this verse, in my opinion, **is a negative commandment** in which he admonishes [us] severely [as follows]: For, as he stated that we should be careful concerning all the commandments and be heedful to perform the statutes and the ordinances, he again stated:

“Only I warn you exceedingly to take heed and guard yourselves very, very much to remember whence the commandments came to you, *that you should not forget the Revelation on Mount Sinai, nor all the things which your eyes saw there — the thunderings, and the lightnings, His glory and His greatness and His words that you have heard there out of the midst of the fire.*

And you should convey all the things which your eyes saw at that glorious Revelation *unto thy children and thy children's children* forever.” He explained the reason [for this prohibition]: G-d made that Revelation so that you might learn to fear Him all the days and teach your children during all generations.

Therefore, do so [remember the Revelation and convey it to your offspring] and do not forget it.

E. Rav Moshe : Bamidbar 5775-

1. Shemos 20:1

וַיְדַבֵּר אֱלֹהִים אֵת כָּל־הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה לְאֹמֶר:

God spoke all these words, saying:

Rashi: This statement (that God spake all these words) tells us that the Holy One, blessed be *He*, **said all these words in one utterance, something that is impossible for a human being to do** — to speak in this manner.

Now if this be so, why does Scripture again say the first two Commandments, *אני* and *לא יהיה לך*? But the explanation is that He repeated and expressly uttered each of these two commandments by itself (Mekhilta d'Rabbi Yishmael 20:1:1).

Transparency:

2. מדרש רבה שמות פרשה יב פסקה ג 2.

כשברא הקב"ה את העולם גזר ואמר השמים שמים לה' והארץ נתן לבני אדם כשבקש ליתן התורה בטל גזירה ראשונה ואמר התחתונים יעלו לעליונים והעליונים ירדו לתחתונים ואני המתחיל שנאמר (שמות יט) וירד ה' על ה'הר סיני וכתוב (שם כד) ואל משה אמר עלה אל ה'

3. Haftorah of Shavuot: Seeing our true selves

Yechezkel 1:26

וּמַמַּעַל לָרִקִּיעַ אֲשֶׁר עַל־רֹאשֵׁם כְּמֵרָאָה אֶבֶן־סַפִּיר - דְּמוּת כֶּסֶא - וְעַל דְּמוּת הַכֶּסֶא דְּמוּת כְּמֵרָאָה אָדָם עָלָיו
מִלְמַעְלָה:

Above the expanse over their heads was the semblance of a throne, in appearance like sapphire; and on top, upon this semblance of a throne, there was the semblance of a human form.

4. Iyov 19:26

ואחר עורי נקפוי-זאת זמבש'י אחזה אלוה:

This, after my skin will have been peeled off.
But I would behold God while still in my flesh,

Plan B

5. Devarim 32:6

הוא עשה ויכננה:

עם נבל ולא חכם הלוא הוא אביך קנה

ה ל ה תגמלו-זאת

Do you thus requite יהוה,
 O dull and witless people?
 Is not this the Father who created you—
 Fashioned you and made you endure!

6. The Gra and Medrash Tanchuma vayigash 11

וימהיכן למד אברהם את התורה. רבי שמעון בן יוחאי אומר, נעשו שתי כליותיו כשני כדים של מים והיו
 נובעין תורה, שנאמר: אף לילות יסרוני כליותי (תהלים טז, ז). רבי לוי אומר, מעצמו למד את התורה

7. Nefesh Hachaim: 1;1

It is written (Bereshit 1:27): "God-Elohi"m [thus] created man with His tzellem; with the tzellem of God-Elohi"m, He created him." And it is also written (Bereshit 9:6): "... for with the tzellem of God-Elohi"m He made man." This is a reference to the deep inner meaning of tzellem, it being one of the loftiest concepts in creation, containing within it most of the Zohar's innermost secrets. That said, herein we will address the term tzellem in the manner of the early plain-text commentators on the verse "Let us make man with our tzellem and per our d'moot" (Bereshit 1:26).

F. Finding our Ani

Matan Torah was a blinding burst of self understanding that was seared into our collective psyche forever. However, we still need to go through the original path too, the natural process of ever increasing self understanding.

This explains why Torah and Mitzvot can make us wise

Devarim 4:6

וּשְׁמַרְתֶּם וְעִשִׂיתֶם כִּי הוּא חֲכַמְתְּכֶם וּבִינְתְּכֶם לְעֵינֵי הָעַמִּים אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁמְעוּן אֶת כָּל־הַחֻקִּים הָאֵלֶּה וְאָמְרוּ רַק
 עַם־חָכָם וְנָבוֹן הַגּוֹי הַגָּדוֹל הַזֶּה:

Observe them faithfully, for that will be proof of your wisdom and discernment to other peoples, who on hearing of all these laws will say, "Surely, that great nation is a wise and discerning people."

This also explains why we couldn't maintain this level of clarity and sunk back into our undeveloped self .