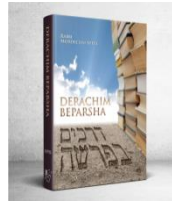


דרכים בפרשה במדבר

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אך את מטה לוי לא תפקד ואת ראשם לא תשא בתוך בני ישראל *However, the tribe of Levi you shall not count and you shall not take their head count among Bnei Yisroel. (1:49)*

Rashi comments, בדאי הוא לגיון של מלך להיות נמנה לבד (תנחומא); ד"א, צפה הקב"ה שעתידיה לעמד גזרה על כל הנמנין מן עשרים שנה ומעלה שימותו במדבר, אמר אל יהיו אלו בכלל, לפי *The legion of the King is worthy to be numbered by itself. — Another explanation is: HKB"H foresaw that a decree would once be made against all those that had been numbered from twenty years and upwards, that they should die in the Midbar. He therefore said: Let these (the Leviim) not be included amongst those now counted, in which case they must die, because they are Mine, since they did not sin by worshipping the golden calf.*

How strange is it then that when the count was concluded, the number of Shevet Levi was far lower than any of the other shevatim? The Ramban other Rishonim famously explain that כבאשר יענו אותו בן ירבה - the more that they were subjected to pain, the more they increased in their numbers. Therefore, Klal Yisroel had the bracha of giving birth to six children at a time. However, Shevet Levi learned Torah the entire time and were not subjected to the physical labor. Therefore, they did not receive the bracha of increasing. Accordingly, their numbers were significantly lower.

The seforim write that from here we can see that in front of Hashem, quantity is not what matters, but rather, the quality. The smallest of the shevatim were the most prominent.

Another answer is based on Parshas Ki Sisa. The reason why the Machatzis Hashekel was brought is because counting is never a good thing. Whenever there is counting, we find that disaster strikes. So the Machatzis hashekel was brought as a protection. Furthermore, one will never lose out as a result of a mitzvah. So instead of decreasing due to the counting, Hashem gave a bracha and they increased. However, the Leviim were not part of the counting and did not give the machatzis hashekel, so they also did not receive the bracha.

The Kli Yakar makes an interesting observation. The Gemara tells us that Amram divorced Yocheved due to the decree of Pharaoh. As a result, עמדו כלן - all the husbands got up and did the same. For years there was no one married in Klal Yisroel until Miriam said

something. Miriam saw told her father that "your decree is harsher than Pharaoh's, for he only decreed against the males but your decree was against the females as well." At that point, Amram and Yocheved remarried and the rest of Klal Yisroel did as well.

The Kli Yakar asks that we find that the woman gave birth to their children in the fields so that they would not be caught by the Mitzriyim. The Kli Yakar insists that this was during the same time frame and that there were in fact married families in Mitzrayim.

Furthermore, the Gemara tells us that it was the merit of the *nashim tzidkaniyus*/ righteous women, which brought Klal Yisroel out of Mitzrayim. The women would take two pails and fill them with hot water for bathing and fish. They would go out to their husbands in the fields, thus restoring their hope, faith and humanity and continuing with family life. This was what paved a path for Klal Yisroel's future.

The Kli Yakar suggests that *nashim tzidkaniyus* doesn't mean that they did a good deed over here and Hashem repaid them by taking out Klal Yisroel. Rather, the *tzidkus* was that they ensured that there would be a nation that was left to redeem. Their intention was not just to feed their husband but rather that there would still be husbands. The Kli Yakar points out again that this could not have occurred if עמדו כלן - everyone was divorced. (The Kli Yakar isn't asking a technical question here (how can we say that everyone got divorced if you clearly see that there were married people). He is suggesting that if everyone would have gotten divorced, the men would have all broken down completely and there would be nothing left of Klal Yisroel.)

Incredibly, the Kli Yakar understands that עמדו כלן does not mean all of Klal Yisroel, rather it refers to all of Shevet Levi. They were the ones that got divorced. Of course it was difficult on their husbands to be without their wives while sitting and learning Torah all day. But their need was not the same as the men that were performing their backbreaking labor whose spirits and purpose of existence seemed to have disappeared. They needed their spouses to keep them alive.

Accordingly, because they weren't married during those years, coupled with not receiving the bracha due to not working, their shevet had significantly less children than the other shevatim.

We are not in Mitzrayim but the world is faced with many questions; we live in difficult times! At this time, it is important for us to appreciate the contribution of the *nashim tzidkaniyus* in our lives that maintain our identity thus preserving Klal Yisroel. It was in their zechus that we left Mitzrayim, and it will be in their zechus that we will merit the coming of משיח צדקינו. **מרדכי אפפּעל**, במהרה בימנו- אמן. Good Shabbos,