

Good Shabbos Everyone. We begin the Book of Bamidbar this week with some amazing lessons for spiritual growth and happiness. The Sages tell us that Bamidbar is called Chumash HaPekudim - the "Book of Numbers," because one of the Book's main themes is the census of the people. (From: The Stone Edition Tanach, introduction to Bamidbar) In this week's parsha Bamidbar alone, there are four different listings of the numbers of the Children of Israel. (R'M.Weissman, The Midrash Says, p.11 citing Bamidbar Rabba, 1:4, 2:19) The Book of Bamidbar contains another detailed census in the Torah portion Pinchas. (26:1-51)(Ibid)

Why does Hashem count the Jews so many times? The Holy Rashi explains that Hashem counts the Jews out of His love for the Jewish Nation. Anything that a person is fond of, he will count often. As the Midrash quotes Hashem as saying "Whenever the sum total of Bnai Yisroel is mentioned, I am happy, because it represents the number of soldiers in My army, who fulfill My will in the world."(Ibid, 2:19)

Bamidbar is therefore called the "Book of Numbers," to show Hashem's love for the Jewish people. (Ibid, citing Eysh Das, Bamidbar Rabba 2:10) As the Prophet Malachi tells us: "'I love you,' says Hashem." (Kuntres Ahavas Yisroel, citing Malachi 1:2)

The following continuation of our inspirational true story shows how much Hashem loves the Jewish people.

(continued from last week...) To Avrohom's surprise, John picked him up the next day and announced that the day's plans included flying via Cyprus to Syria! (Where the Americans had supported schools at the time.) Avrohom was shocked. Soon after, they were on a helicopter on their way to Syria, when the helicopter began to experience problems. The pilot told the passengers to hold tight, as they would need to make an emergency landing.

Avrohom sat tensely as the helicopter descended. The ground loomed up ahead, rushing forward as they lost altitude. He sighed with relief when they gently touched the ground, still in one piece. "Where are we?" Avrohom asked the pilot as he stood shakily from his seat. "We just entered Syrian territory." Said the pilot Phil as he leaned over and unlatched the door. "We're at the tip of Kuneitra."

Avrohom staggered out of the helicopter, taking deep, grateful breaths of the hot desert air. The area was completely deserted, without a soul or a structure in sight. As Phil and John began poking around the helicopter, Avrohom wandered around aimlessly. He knew he couldn't help them anyway. Walking away from the helicopter, Avrohom noticed a small structure standing half a mile away. The ruined house had no roof, and the windows were gone.

Even at that distance, Avrohom could see the building had been riddled with bullet holes. Curious, Avrohom began to step closer to the destroyed house. A flicker of movement brought his gaze around to the right—and there, out of nowhere, stood a man! Avrohom squeezed his eyes shut tight, shaking his head to dispel the mirage. But when he opened his eyes, the man was still there, looking at him with an anxious expression.

The swarthy, middle-aged man was clearly an Arab. The apparition walked closer. And then he began to speak! "You American?" the man asked in broken English. Avrohom hesitated. Should he answer? He knew Phil and John were right behind him. If the guy wanted to kill him, he would have done it before Avrohom had noticed him.

Ignoring Avrohom's silence, the man kept speaking. "I must talk to you. I good person. But something bother me, and I must tell somebody. "I Syrian and I guard prison. They take Yehudia (Jewish) man and torture him. He die, and they throw him outside like wild animal. Later I take him and bury him." "What was his name?" Avrohom asked suspiciously. "His name was Daadba." (The name of the woman which the Baba Sali had mentioned.)

Avrohom felt the world begin to spin. He tried to control his shaking hands. "Wait—don't go anywhere! I just want to call my friend here." He turned, gesticulating toward the nearby helicopter. "John! Come here, please!"

Avrohom turned to the Arab. "Could you please tell my friend what you just told me?" The Arab repeated, word for word, what he had told Avrohom. "Tell him the man's name," Avrohom prompted. "Daadba," the man said again.

Avrohom was in such a state of shock, that he John decided that they fly home immediately. The next morning, Avrohom received a call from Rav Ovadia Yosef. Later that morning, Avrohom related the story to Rav Yosef, thanking him for giving him the opportunity to participate in this holy task. "The one you should thank is Rav Yisroel Abuchatzzeira," Rav Yosef told him. "Only he could have accomplished such a feat." His greatness in Torah and his concern and caring for his fellow Jews, led Rav Abuchatzzeira to do whatever he could—even beyond the bounds of nature—to alleviate their suffering and pain. (Later, Avrohom met again with the Baba Sali, who requested that Avrohom not reveal this story until at least 7 years after the Baba Sali's death.)

Avrohom remained puzzled about one thing. Was it possible to accept the testimony of a non-Jew and allow a woman to remarry under these circumstances? When he voiced these concerns to Rav Yosef, the Rav described several cases where great sages in the past had relied upon a non-Jew in certain instances.

"Nevertheless," Rav Yosef concluded, "when you return to the States, I want you to discuss it with Harav Yosef Breuer; your own rebbe, Harav Yaakov Kamenetsky; and Harav Moshe Feinstein. Get back to me and let me know what they said."

When he went back to the States? But Avrohom wasn't planning on returning for at least a year! As soon as he arrived home, however, Avrohom discovered that the family's plans had changed. Distressed, his wife told him that she had gotten a call from her family in the States, telling her that her father had suddenly taken ill. They needed her there immediately.

Avrohom got on the phone to the State Department and explained the situation. "It's okay," he was told. "You can live in the States, and just travel back and forth as needed." So in September, Avrohom and his family returned to the United States. Avrohom immediately visited Rav Breuer and presented his question. Rav Breuer, who was unable to see at the time, nevertheless was able to quote twenty-four references, allowing the woman to remarry.

Avrohom next visited Rav Yaakov Kamenetsky, who also quoted twenty-four references—and in addition gave Avrohom a blessing, that he should be successful in his efforts to help klal Yisroel. Finally, Avrohom saw Rav Moshe Feinstein, who offered thirty-one references allowing the woman to remarry.

Avrohom contacted Rav Yosef and told him what each of the rabbanim had said. And then Rav Yosef gave Mrs. Daadba permission to remarry. In the meantime, Avrohom began planning his next trip to Israel. But those plans were cut short when the Yom Kippur War broke out a few weeks later. The United States government put a hold on all foreign funding, and Avrohom was basically out of a job. In the meantime, he was transferred to another position in New Jersey, where he could stay in contact with other U.S. officials in his field.

Mrs. Daadba was unfortunately left severely injured as the result of being shot in the back as she escaped Syria. Avrohom arranged for her to be brought to America for surgery. Boruch Hashem that the surgery was a success. Eventually, Avrohom was able to secure the exit visas for Mrs. Daadba's children, who later grew up to be outstanding members of the orthodox Jewish community. All because of the tremendous spiritual vision of the Baba Sali along with the dedication of Avrohom, who worked tirelessly for to help other Jews.

We see from this story how much Hashem loves the Jewish people, in that Hashem supervises our every move and guides us with His loving hand. **Good Shabbos Everyone.**