

עֵפְרַת הַשָּׁבוּעַ

A Weekly Torah Publication from the Students of Mesivta Ateres Yaakov
Ruth & Hyman Simon High School

COUNTING ON KEHUNA

Ohr Tsadok, 10th Grade

פרשת במדבר
כ"ו אייר תשס"ה
June 4, 2005
מברכים חודש סיון
מ"א לעומר - יסוד שביסוד

Candle Lighting:	8:01
First זמן קריאת שמע:	8:36
Second זמן קריאת שמע:	9:09
Latest שחרית:	10:26
Earliest הַבְּדֵלָה:	9:15

This week's edition of
ATERES HASHAVUA
Is sponsored by
YEHUDA KARKOWSKY
In honor of his
recent engagement to
JENNIFER BARNETT

In this week's parsha, Hashem tells Moshe to count all the *Shevatim* between the age of 20-60, except for *Shevet Levi*. *Shevet Levi* was special, and Hashem wanted Moshe to count them from the age of a month old and up. Within this range they amounted to twenty-two thousand males.

A question arises, why is it that *Shevet Levi* is the smallest *Shevet*? They were counted from one month old while all the other *Shevatim* were counted from the age of twenty and yet they had many more than twenty-two thousand. Furthermore, Levi was in a certain way the chosen *Shevet* that Hashem adores and loves most because they didn't take part in the *chet ha'egel*.

The Be'er Yosef and many others who raise this question, quote the Ramban and Ohr HaChaim who discuss it at length. The Ramban answers that because *Shevet Levi* wasn't part of the blessing of, "וְכַאֲשֶׁר יַעֲנֶנּוּ, כִּן יִרְבֶּה", and when they torture them they shall increase", they ultimately remained small. *Shevet Levi* was warned beforehand by their ancestor Levi not to go to Egypt and be subjected to Pharaoh. The Ramban offers a second explanation. It is Yaakov's 'anger' towards Levi that resulted in the small number of his progeny.

These two answers can answer the famous question often asked by many; why is it that the Chosen People who are loved so much by Hashem are the smallest nation in the world? The Ohr HaChaim based on the Ohr HaChaim's understanding that Yaakov was angry at Levi. We can suggest

(Continued on page 3)

ATERES HA'ATARAH

Moshe Golombeck, 9th Grade

וְאלֹא תוֹלְדוֹת אַהֲרֹן וּמֹשֶׁה בַּיּוֹם דִּבֶּר ה' אֶת מֹשֶׁה בְּהַר סִינַי (ג:א)
THESE ARE THE OFFSPRING OF AHARON AND MOSHE
ON THE DAY HASHEM SPOKE TO MOSHE AT SINAI

Even though the *pasuk* begins by saying, "These are the offspring of Aharon and Moshe", it only lists the offspring of Aharon. Rashi quotes the Gemara in *Maseches Sanhedrin* that says that because Moshe taught Torah to the sons of Aharon they are also considered his children. As it states, "If a person teaches Torah to his friend's child it is as if he fathered that child."

The Rambam states in *Hilchos Talmud Torah* that there are three crowns given to the Jewish people: the Crown of Torah, the Crown of Kehuna and the Crown of Malchus. The Crown of Kehuna was given to Aharon and his sons. The Crown of Malchus was given to Dovid and his decedents. However, the greatest of the three is the Crown of Torah and it is, "lying in the corner of the room." Meaning, the Crown of Torah is available to any Jew who desires it.

The question we must ask, however, is, does merely wearing a crown make a commoner a king? If a person is not a descendent of Aharon and wears the clothes of the Cohen, does it make that person a Cohen? Of course not! Evidently, the Crown of Kehuna and the Crown of Malchus are identifiers of the essence of the

(Continued on page 3)

This week's edition of
ATERES HASHAVUA
Is in honor of our
beloved and honored
RABBI & REBBETZIN
MORDECHAI YAFFE AND FAMILY
upon the engagement
of their daughter
RIVKI to
ASHI MITTELDORF

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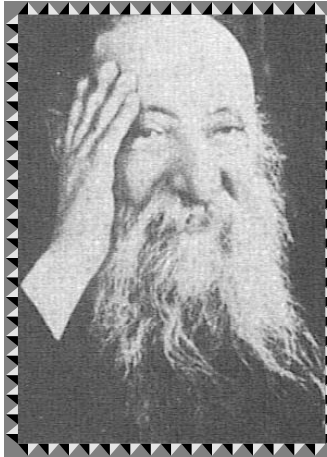
FOCUS ON GREATNESS

by Avi Lieberman

Rabbi Chaim Ozer Grodzensky
Leader of Polish Jewry
5623 / 1863 – 5700 / 1939

Part I

- Chaim Ozer was born in Ivey, a small town near Vilna where his father was Rav for forty years, preceded by his grandfather who had also served as Rav there for forty years.
- The young scholar was gifted with an infallible memory - never experiencing "forgetting," as he himself remarked, until his old age.
- When asked to deliver the customary Bar Mitzvah *drasha*, young Chaim Ozer refused, instead inviting guests to "open any page in the Ktzos Hachoshen or in the Nesivos Hamishpat, and I'll recite it from memory." They took up the challenge and he responded - page after page - without missing a word.
- At fifteen, Chaim Ozer went to the world-renowned yeshiva of Volozhin. In spite of his tender age, he was immediately accepted in Reb Chaim Brisker's select group.
- When twenty, he passed through Vilna with his fame preceding him. He accepted an invitation to address a learned group there, and overwhelmed them with his shiur. As effect of this, every father with an eligible girl and every *shadchan* in Vilna was after him.
- Reb Chaim Ozer followed the suggestion of his father, a talmid of Reb Yisrael Salanter, who advised him to marry the daughter of the Vilna dayan, Reb Lazer, son-in-law of Reb Yisrael Salanter.
- Reb Chaim Ozer had expected to engage full-time in *Talmud Torah* in his father-in-law's house, but after two years Reb Lazer died, and the kehillah of Vilna requested him to take his father-in-law's place.
- Since the time of the Vilna Gaon, Vilna never had an official rabbi. Instead, a group of *dayanim* formed the rabbinate - all of them elderly and great *lomdim* and *poskim*. Now the twenty-two year old *dayan* joined their ranks and over the following fifty-five years emerged as the unofficial Rav of Vilna - for it was apparent from the start that his vast Torah knowledge was complemented by great wisdom.
- Reb Chaim Ozer became the 'leader of the pact', and eventually it no longer seemed odd to see men great in Torah, old in wisdom and gray



in years, bending forward to catch every word uttered by the young man with the jet black beard.

- Reb Chaim Ozer had an amazing mind - names of places and people from all over the world were remembered from many years back. As a result of this, countless communities from the edge of Yerushalayim to Lomza, would consult him when in need of a Rav or Rosh Yeshiva.

- Reb Chaim Ozer had a yeshiva that was known as "Reb Chaim Ozer's Kibbutz." This was because Reb Chaim Ozer could not possibly give the talmidim much of his attention, and the yeshiva was set up specifically for the students to learn independently.

- Only on Shabbos would the boys from the yeshiva gather in their rebbe's home for discussions. Yet despite the limited hours, Reb Chaim Ozer was able to have a powerful influence on them and merited the emersion of such luminaries as Reb Moshe Shatzkes, Reb Eliezer Silver, Reb Avigdor Amiel, and Reb Yechezkiel Abramski.

- Reb Chaim Ozer's house was wide open day and night with no appointment required. His house was thus always full of people - the sick, widows, orphans, Rabbanim, Roshei Yeshiva, visitors from all over the world. It's a wonderment as to when Reb Chaim Ozer had time for learning, yet he published three volumes of his *teshuvos* in his monumental *Achiezer*.

- Reb Chaim Ozer's only child, a girl of seventeen, suddenly became seriously ill. She was bedridden for three years, and died at the age of twenty. Throughout this trying period, his activities for The Jewish People and his writing of his *Achiezer* did not diminish.

- He personally took care of funds for any number of charities. To people the world over, the Joint Distribution Committee, Vaad Hatzala, the Haffkine Fund all had but one address, for both givers and receivers: Reb Chaim Ozer's.

- Reb Chaim Ozer was one of the founders of Agudath Israel and the pillar of the movement throughout his life, participating in every Knessia Gedolah as long as health permitted.

- When the Moetzes Gedolei HaTorah was established, he was the first chairman and remained so throughout his life.

Continued next week!

OHR TSADOK (continued from page 1)

Hashem is most likely 'angry' at us (*chas v'shalom*) because we aren't behaving properly or following the mitzvos correctly.

According to the Ramban's answer was that *Shevet Levi* is the smallest because they weren't included in the *bracha* given to the rest of Klal Yisroel, since they weren't tortured during the slavery in Egypt. When taking a closer look at the above *pasuk*, it is interesting to note that it's written in future tense – "and when they torture they shall increase." We can derive a great blessing from here, that just like they were tortured, we are tortured, and we will ultimately increase and be prosperous like our ancestors did in their time of affluence. May we merit this momentous juncture speedily in our day. Good Shabbos.

MOSHE GOLOMBECK (continued from page 1)

person. One must be a descendent of Aharon to be a Cohen or the descendent of Dovid to be a King. The same must be true with the Crown of Torah since it is put together with the Crown of Kehuna and the Crown of Malchus.

The Crown of Torah is an identifier that the essence of the person who wears it is rooted in purity and Torah that is passed on from a lineage of other people whose essence is Torah. Evidently, if a person would try to wear the Crown of Torah by teaching himself Torah without consideration for the Mesorah transmitted by our rabbanim, or by learning from someone who is not part of that special lineage, then his crown would be no more meaningful than the commoner wearing a Crown pretending to be a king. That person would simply be a repository of knowledge lacking the essence of Torah.

Chazal are teaching us that every person in Klal Yisrael has the ability to change his essence and acquire the Crown of Torah. If a

Jew studies Torah with dedication and commitment from a Rebbe who is rooted in Torah, then it is possible for that person to transform himself and change his essence. Just like a child is the product and a descendent of his father and mother, so too is the student the product of his Rebbe. This is because the Rebbe mentors the child and teaches him Torah in a way that transforms the child's essence. The student is the essence and the extension of the Rebbe because the entire development of the person is based in Torah. This person can acquire the Crown of Torah and he will be more than a repository of knowledge since his essence is the same as his Rebbe who is the embodiment of Torah. We can now understand the Gemara, "If a person teaches Torah to his friend's child it is as if he fathered that child." May we all merit such connections and closeness to our rabbeim and leaders of Torah Jewry. Good Shabbos.

STORIES OF TZADDIKIM

When Rav Chaim Soloveichik *zt'l* was to marry off a child, he asked that the Telsher Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Eliezer Gordon *zt'l*, officiate under the *chupah*. This was cause for surprise, as among the wedding guests there were many other distinguished people who were quite older than Rav Gordon.

Rav Chaim explained his decision by relating the following: He had once received a letter from Rav Eliezer inviting him to move to Telshe and serve as the yeshiva's head lecturer. Rav Chaim declined the invitation. Soon after, he received a letter, in which Rav Eliezer offered to relinquish the position of Rosh Yeshiva to Rav Chaim and remove himself entirely from yeshiva affairs - if Rav Chaim would except the invitation. This offer he too declined.

Rav Eliezer made one final try. He wrote to Rav Chaim stating that he was prepared to step aside as both rav and Rosh Yeshiva of Telshe, and remain in the city as a common resident! This offer was also amazingly declined!

"Imagine," Rav Chaim concluded, "a man so revered; a *gaon* and *gadol* in his own right, and a very successful rav and Torah teacher – and he is willing to give up everything so that his talmidim can receive what he perceives as a proper method in *talmid Torah*. Where does one see such a display of *ahavas Torah*?! This is the reason I asked him to officiate at my son's wedding.

In another instance, Rav Yitzchak Hutner *zt'l* recalls that as a young boy growing up in Warsaw, he would frequently visit the home of Reb Yosef Engel. Reb Yosef took pleasure in the questions posed to him by young Yitzchak and his friends and by the genuine love of Torah they expressed.

One day, Yitzchak Hutner knocked on Reb Yosef's door only to be informed that the rav was resting. The boy was overcome by a desire to see how the *gadol* was resting from his rigorous studies. Stealthily, he tiptoed into the living room. There was Reb Yosef, his eyes closed as he dozed on the couch - while his hands and fingers moved as though he was making a point in the midst of a gemara!

אמת ליעקב

Weekly Insights from Moreinu HoRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l

שאו את ראש כל עדת בני ישראל למשפחתם לבית אבתם במספר שמות כל זכר לגלגלתם (א:ב)

COUNT THE ENTIRE CONGREGATION OF BNEI YISROEL ACCORDING TO THEIR FATHER'S FAMILIES,
BY THE NUMBER OF NAMES, EVERY MALE ACCORDING TO THEIR HEAD COUNT

In this week's *parsha*, Moshe is instructed by Hashem to count Bnei Yisroel. Interestingly, the word that is used to mean count, is "שאו," literally, "to raise." The Midrash explains that the word "שאו" can have both positive and negative connotations. It can mean to raise oneself to greatness, or it can mean to raise oneself to death. Through the usage of the word "שאו," Hashem was telling Moshe that if Bnei Yisroel would be *zoche*, they could attain great heights during their sojourn through the *midbar*. At the same time, Hashem was also warning Moshe of the potential pitfalls along the way that could cause Bnei Yisroel to perish in the desert. However, since Hashem knew that in the end Bnei Yisroel would stumble during the episode of the *meraglim*, and would end up dying in the desert, Hashem made sure to count *Shevet Levi* separately, so that they would not be deserving of the death penalty along with the rest of Bnei Yisroel.



HaRav Yaakov Kamenetzky zt"l asks two questions on this *Midrash*. First of all, what connection is there between the counting of Bnei Yisroel, and the *chet ha'meraglim*? Second, how would being counted separately protect *Shevet Levi* from being punished along with Bnei Yisroel?

Rav Yaakov answers these questions by explaining the *Midrash* in the following way. The purpose of counting Bnei Yisroel was to set up the order in which they would camp. The Ramban brings a *Midrash* that explains that Hashem's intention was for the organization of Bnei Yisroel to be an earthly manifestation of the four directions, and the four animals that surround the *Kesei HaKavod*. However, some of Bnei Yisroel mistakenly understood this as a

measure taken to decide whether Bnei Yisroel were strong enough to conquer *Eretz Yisroel*. This mistake was lacking in *emunah*, for Bnei Yisroel should have understood that the conquering of *Eretz Yisroel* was not dependent on their might, but rather on *siyata d'shimaya*. This was the same mistake that was made by the *chet ha'meraglim*, when Bnei Yisroel realized that indeed, they did not possess the physical prowess necessary to defeat the thirty one kings of *Eretz Yisroel*. As such, we can understand the connection between the census taken in the *midbar* and the *chet ha'meraglim*. The census could have raised Bnei Yisroel to tremendous heights in *kedusha*, but it instead caused the mistake that eventually led to the *chet ha'meraglim*.

Based on this *pshat*, we can now understand how a separate census was able to protect *Shevet Levi* from the punishment endured by the rest of Bnei Yisroel. In reality, the *chet ha'eigel* was also caused by a lack of *emunah*. When Bnei Yisroel realized that Moshe was not returning from Har Sinai, they immediately began to worry about how they would survive. Instead of putting their trust in Hashem, they built the *eigel*. However, *shevet Levi* was the only *shevet* that did not participate in the *chet ha'eigel*, thus demonstrating that they were not lacking in their *bitachon*. Because of their lofty level of *emunah*, *Shevet Levi* was not subject to the same misunderstanding of the census, as the rest of Bnei Yisroel. As such, the fact that they were not counted with the rest of Bnei Yisroel protected them from being punished as a result of the tragic error that took place during the census.

Rabbi Baruch Rabinowitz was once walking with the Novominsker Rebbe *shlit"a* at an Agudah Convention. As they were leaving the session, the hallway was narrowed by a long *mechitza*, making a separation for the men and women. Apparently, two women had mistakenly placed their coats in the men's coatroom, and were standing on both sides of the men's hallway as they waited for their coats.

Being that a man is not allowed to walk between two women and there was no room for the two men to walk in between together, the Novominsker Rebbe asked for the women to move aside so he could pass through. The women ignored the request, as well as the second appeal the Rebbe gave for them to move aside. Finally, Rabbi Rabinowitz stated, "The Novominsker Rebbe would like to go through, can you please move aside?"

To this, the women jumped backed with cries, "Oh! The Rebbel!" and quickly moved out of the way. To this reaction, the Rebbe said aloud, with eyes still focused on the ground, "I didn't know this halacha was only for Rebbes."

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