

D'var Torah by Rabbi M. Jaroslawicz for Parshas Bamidbar 5775 (2015)

With a three-day Yom Tov right around the corner, and all of the time-slot allocations for drashas, learning, Tikun Leil Shavuos, etc., I contemplated not writing anything at all for the Rabbi's Message this week. And then I saw the following thought and felt that it would actually be UNFAIR for me not to share this with you as a prelude to Kabbolas Hatorah.

Our Parsha tells us that Hashem tells Moshe, on the first day of the second month of the second year from when the Jewish people left Mitzrayim, that he should make a count.

"Se'ue es rosh kol adas Bnei Yisroel." Another count.

We have been told many times that G-d loves us and, therefore, He continues to count us. This is His way of letting us know that not only is He counting us... but also that... "We Count!"

So, here is the question: Did Moshe and Aaron simply do a head count, or did we have to submit Shekalim to be counted? Interesting question. Rashi here clearly states that this count was WITH Shekalim, just the same as the count taken when we came out of Egypt. The Klei Yakar says that many, many commentators disagree with Rashi -- and say that the count was done by counting actual people and NOT Shekalim.

This raises somewhat of a difficulty. Let's refer back to Parshas Ki Sisa. The main reason given as to why Shekalim were used then to count the B'nei Yisroel, and a direct head count was not used, was to avoid any type of "evil eye," "Ayin Harah."

Why aren't we worried about the same Ayin Harah over here?

The very first Rashi in this week's Parsha lists four different times that Hashem counted the B'nei Yisroel out of love. When they left Mitzrayim -- when they survived the Golden Calf -- when He was about to rest His Sh'china upon them -- and now, on the first of the month of Iyar after the raising of the Mishkan. When is there a need to fear an Ayin Harah and when is there no concern about an Ayin Harah?

The answer to this question is a concept that behooves us all to keep with us on a regular basis, especially before receiving the Torah on Shavuos.

Chazal have a rule that, "Shomer Mitzvos lo yada davar rah." A person who heeds Mitzvos deflects evil.

There is a fundamental difference between the count in our Parsha and the count in Parshas Ki Sisa. The difference is the word "ki" versus the word "se'ue."

"Ki" implies "IF." Choice. It's up to you. If and when you count them, use a coin to avoid the Evil Eye. However, in this week's Parsha the Torah does not say "Ki"; it does not offer an option. The Torah commands a count. "Se'ue!" Count!

Now when we count we are fulfilling a commandment from Hashem and, therefore, no harm can befall us. In this environment, we need not fear any Ayin Harah.

As I mentioned at the very beginning, this lesson is extremely important this week. We are reliving our original receiving of the Torah. We are learning with extra "Geshmak" to experience the feeling of accepting G-d's laws. We stay up late for Tikun Leil Shavuos to "LEARN," not to sit in Shul and discuss "Narishkeit." We are reinforcing within ourselves our commitment to "Na'aseh Ve'nishma," "We will Do and we will Listen." This, in turn, will serve as our protector. If we are sincere in listening to Hashem's commandments, they will shield us from all evil. If we always perceive ourselves as being actively involved in doing a Mitzvah, then we will always have the protection of "Sheluchai Mitzvah Aion Nizakin," no harm comes to those in the process of doing a Mitzvah.

This can be seen as an insurance policy from Chazal --that costs us nothing other than sincerity.

May Hashem help us turn our desire to comply into an actual reality. May our children and grandchildren crave to replicate the Holy spark that they see within us, and may we all be meritorious to deflect the evil around us and help pave the path for the coming of Moshiach.

Have a Torahdik Shabbos, and a great Yom Tov.